

**DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN EDUTAINMENT-BASED INTERVENTION TO ENHANCE
CONTENTMENT AND LIFESTYLE ASPIRATIONS AMONG FEMALE ADOLESCENTS IN SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OWERRI MUNICIPAL, IMO STATE**

Alex C. Asigbo, PhD

Department of Theatre and Film Studies
Faculty of Arts
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
ac.asigbo@unizik.edu.ng
&

Glory Anjorin

Department of Theatre Arts
Faculty of Humanities
Imo State University, Owerri
gloryolaife@gmail.com

Abstract

It is widely believed that educating a girl equates to educating an entire generation, as today's girls grow into tomorrow's women and mothers, bearing the inherent responsibility of nurturing lives. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how carefully curated edutainment intervention can reposition their thought pattern and modify their behaviour. The research employed a mixed-method approach, combining surveys, focus group discussions, edutainment workshop, observations and questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 300 adolescents, drawn from two Government Girls' Secondary Schools within Owerri Municipal. Eric Erikson's Psychosocial Theory provided the theoretical framework for the study. Data analysis revealed that exposure to edutainment content had a significant positive impact on their sense of satisfaction with life and aspirations for the future. The post-test conducted at the conclusion of the workshop revealed a strong commitment from majority of the participants to abandon identified antisocial behaviours and embrace virtues that will guide them toward becoming well-rounded and successful adults in the near future. Qualitative feedback further suggested that edutainment approaches resonated more deeply with these adolescents than conventional instructional methods. The study concludes that edutainment is an effective tool to engage female adolescents and recommends its integration into educational curricula, youth development programs, and community sensitization campaigns. It also suggests further research into the long-term effects of edutainment interventions across different cultural contexts in Nigeria.

Key Words: Edutainment, Lifestyle, Contentment, Adolescents, Design, Implementation.

Introduction

The adolescent stage of life is often complex and marked by a deep sense of exploration, without proper guidance, adolescents may make choices that have long-lasting, even damaging consequences. At this point, they are no longer children but not yet adults, and as such, they crave a degree of freedom and independence from parents or guardians. They begin to feel capable of making decisions on their own and resist external interference. However, when this newfound autonomy lacks structure or support, it can become harmful to their overall development.

Female adolescents are often perceived by society as vulnerable and an at-risk group due to their gender-specific characteristics. However, they also represent a powerful force in shaping future societal roles. This underscores their significant influence on the development of future generations hence, when female adolescents are supported and guided effectively, society as a whole benefits. But unfortunately, there is increasing concern about growing discontentment, materialistic tendencies, premature sexual exploration, and unrealistic ambitions among them. These issues are often exacerbated by parental neglect and the unregulated influence of entertainment media.

The virtue of contentment is a core virtue that needs to be inculcated in these female adolescents to curb other negative tendencies. Contentment is the psychological state of satisfaction with life, and whatever you have at the present and possessing the will power to resist undue peer and media pressure, while Lifestyle aspiration focuses on goals, ambitions, and desires about career, relationship, family, social class, and possessions.

Adolescents are increasingly exposed to media-driven content that shapes their worldview, contentment, and lifestyle aspirations. This tendency also poses a threat to their proper development and growth because unguided influence of these media can jeopardize their future.

Hence, this study examines the role of edutainment in promoting contentment among female adolescents and assesses how participation in carefully curated edutainment workshops influences their lifestyle aspirations—specifically in the areas of career, relationships, and material possessions.

Conceptualizing Edutainment

Edutainment is based on the integration of two pedagogical strategies: “**education**” and “**entertainment**”. Obiageli and Osberg elucidate that:

Edutainment applies the mechanisms of performative pedagogy. In either form, educative entertainment interventions are used by educators (teachers and communicators), either in educational institutions, community development centres, museums, amusement centres etc. with the aim of stimulating the emotion and processing of values, in order to promote knowledge and understanding for ultimate transformation of the educatee. (75)

Currently in education there is a transition to more interactive, engaging, experiential learning methods in many countries. Agreeing to this, Contemporary theorists of education Nel Noddings in his work *Happiness and Education* criticized the existing education system, argues that education shall be directed to the main aim and purpose of human life - happiness (Noddings 203). According to Grady Christopher et. al.

Many broadcast media interventions in the development sphere fall into the category of entertainment-education programming (also known as “edutainment”), where behavioral change messages are embedded in programming with high entertainment value so as to better engage audiences. Such programming typically features an ongoing story where behavioral change messages are embedded into a narrative arc. Edutainment programs have the potential to hold audiences’ attention, providing exposure to repeated messages, more complex messages, or messages dramatically delivered through delayed outcomes or plot reversals (78).

Hence, developing creative and exciting strategies that will make learners receive educative information and lessons in an entertaining and exciting way is expedient. Edutainment has been adjudged as an efficacious strategy of changing behavior, sensitizing and mobilizing for action. For Singhal and Roger it is the “process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate in order to increase audience and members knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitude, right social norms and change overt behavior” (45) on the other hand some scholars view it in term of a performance whose sole aim is both to entertain as well as educate its audience. Singhal explains that edutainment is “a performance which captures the interest or attraction of an individual, giving him pleasure, amusement or gratification, which simultaneously help the individual to develop skill to achieve a particular end by boasting his or her mental, moral, physical powers (98). Adora emphasize that Edutainment is targeted towards “impacting knowledge, attitude, building self and collective efficiency, perception necessary for change”. As communicative strategy he adds that it has the “potency to increase awareness, combat noncompliance, correct misconceptions, sensitizing communities, inducing mass mobilization and participation”. (70)

There is need for an interactive pedagogy to convince learners that learning can be both an exciting and entertaining process. Consequently, Edutainment gives new opportunity to acquire knowledge in an interesting way. The methodologies used in Edutainment are “mix medium of Folklores, films, soap operas, music, songs, dance, cartoons, comic and drama advocacy advertisement to transmit information and educate individuals, targeted groups and communities towards pro-social behaviours” (Adora 70). Obiageli and Osberg adds that “it covers a range of media including magazines, books, educational software, televisions, radio and so on” they further explain that irrespective of the medium one chooses to use, the material intended for use should “appeal to emotion” such as “emotive pictures, photographs and art works that aim to create an atmosphere or impression of grandeur, beauty or pathos (such as beautiful mountain scenes, or photograph of an atomic explosion; or as stories, drama, films, soap operas, puppets, models, etc. that encourage emotional response” (75). Buckingham and Scanlon sees this strategy as useful on many levels, due to creative approaches to teaching students who wish to study, as they can see the practical results of their activities (205).

Soul City Institute explains Edutainment to be “any communication project that sets out to use popular culture to educate and challenge people. Edutainment is not a theory but a strategy to bring about individual and social change. It uses popular entertainment formats to tackle serious social issues in an innovative and entertaining way” (5). New World Encyclopedia defines edutainment as

a form of entertainment designed to educate as well as to amuse. Edutainment typically seeks to instruct or facilitate social interaction in its audience by embedding lessons in some familiar form of entertainment... Most often, edutainment seeks either to tutor in one or more specific subjects, or to change behavior by engendering specific socio-cultural attitudes. Successful edutainment is discernible by the fact that learning becomes fun and teachers or speakers educate an audience in a manner which is both engaging and amusing.

Hence, if this unique method of applying theatre with the participants is employed, it is believed that it has the potency of conveying information in an entertaining way and also possesses the ability to influence behavior; it could also be an interactive avenue to discuss important issues that bothers on their proper growth and development.

Theoretical Framework

The **study** directly relates to Eric Erikson’s psychosocial theory in the aspect of **adolescents in the identity stage** since the age group of the study which is female adolescence is at the “Identity vs. Role Confusion” stage, making them highly impressionable and in search of models to shape their values and choices. **Theatre is seen as a Safe Space** where adolescents can explore identity issues, experiment with roles, and learn positive ways of resolving conflicts. Through edutainment, **behavioral modification is achieved** by watching and participating in theatrical performances, adolescents are exposed to scenarios that model responsible decision-making, resilience, and health-conscious behaviors thereby helping them develop a clearer sense of identity and aspiration. Also the aspect of **cultural relevance is attended to** since Erikson highlights the role of society and culture, using theatre rooted in their indigenous context (Owerri, Imo State) this strengthens identity formation and makes the learning more authentic and lasting.

Research Methodology

The research employed a mixed-method approach, combining surveys, focus group discussions, edutainment workshop, observations and questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 300 adolescents, purposive sampling technique was used to select female adolescents from Ikenegbu Girls Secondary School and Imo Girls Secondary School in Owerri Municipal, Imo State, based on their enrollment status and willingness to participate. Participants were aged between 13 and 15 years, actively attending the selected schools, and provided informed consent.

The edutainment-based intervention incorporated multimedia educational sessions combining entertainment elements such as drama, music, dance, spoken word performance, games and interactive activities focused on enhancing contentment and lifestyle aspirations. The workshop was conducted within the school premises during designated periods. Facilitators engaged students through discussions and reflective exercises to reinforce learning outcomes and encourage positive lifestyle changes.

Design and Implementation of Edutainment-Based Intervention

Designing the Intervention: The intervention design process began with a **needs assessment** to identify negative behaviours prevalent among adolescents, the findings generated from the questionnaires, focused group discussion and interview include: Lack of Contentment, Materialism, Premarital Sex, lack time management, Covetousness/Gluttony, Disobedience, Low self-esteem, Negative Peer Influence

Once identified, the intervention was developed with the following guiding principles of **cultural relevance** using indigenous proverbs, and popular music genres to ensure resonance with adolescents’ cultural background. Ensuring **message clarity by making** each performance, song, or story addressed a specific negative behaviour and emphasized positive alternatives. Also the aspect of **adolescent participation was given due consideration by ensuring that** students were co-creators and performers in the interventions, fostering ownership and peer credibility. The implementation strategies took the form of multiple creative activities such as:

- 1. Drama and Role-Play:** Participants watched scenarios that mirrored real-life challenges. These dramatizations allowed participants to experiment with positive alternatives in a safe environment. Below are the synopses of the drama acted in the two schools.

Synopsis of the Drama at Ikenegbu Girls' Secondary School

A short drama was employed at Ikenegbu Girls' Secondary School Owerri as an edutainment tool to sensitize the adolescents on salient behavioural concerns such as contentment, the dangers of premarital sex, obedience to parents, and the influence of peers. The play illustrated the predicament of an adolescent girl raised in a strict home who, under negative peer influence, became involved in a relationship with a young man. In an attempt to win her trust and affection, the young man enticed her with gifts and promised to purchase the iPhone she had always desired. Despite her initial resistance to premarital sex, motivated by fear of the consequences and of parental disapproval, she was eventually deceived into visiting his home under the guise of collecting the promised gift. During this visit, she was drugged, sexually assaulted, and subsequently abandoned. The incident left her traumatized and socially humiliated

Synopsis of the Drama at Imo Girls' Secondary School Owerri

The play "The Bait" begins with schoolgirls leaving school when two boys approach and flatter them. Chidera, intrigued by their wealth, agrees to go with them for a bite to eat, while her friends advise caution and choose to leave. Ignoring their warnings, Chidera follows the boys, who then persuade her to visit their house with promises of gifts. Upon arrival, she discovers the boys are part of a ritualist group trading in human body parts. Terrified, Chidera begs for her life, mentioning she is an only child and her mother's fragile health. Despite her desperate pleas, the boys show no mercy and hand her over to the ritualists.



Drama Presentation



Participants watching with rapt attention.

2. **Spoken Words Performance:** A spoken word performance was presented titled 'I am Enough'. The students were motivated and inspired to have a positive self-esteem/image.



Spoken Word Performance in Ikenegbu Girls' Secondary School.

Multi Media: The workshop used a multimedia approach combining a short playlet and videos from social platforms to enhance storytelling and address sensitive issues. This style helped create emotional connections and raised participants' awareness for making informed decisions. A powerful video by "Teacher Chike" was shown, comparing boys' affection for girls to a ram fattened for slaughter, warning girls not to be deceived by gifts. Another video, "My Past" by Abiola Adumati, was also projected as a flashback during a drama presentation. The multimedia format captivated the audience, increasing engagement and interest throughout the workshop.



A projected YouTube video

3. **Music and Dance:** Lyrics and rhythms familiar to adolescents were employed to reinforce behavioural lessons. Music, as a memorable medium, ensured that key messages lingered beyond the intervention (Boal 37). The song "*Time na Money*" by Mike Okri was mimed, showing a girl distracted during an errand who loses her mother's money to a pickpocket and gets punished. Another scene showed students gossiping before exams instead of studying. They later fail their exams badly and regret their negligence. The performance highlighted the consequences of distraction and poor time management.



Dance Drama

4. **Games:** To help participants feel relaxed and encourage conversation, they started with an icebreaker game. Each participant stood up, introduced themselves, shared one unusual fact about themselves, and used an adjective beginning with the first letter of their name to describe their personality. The activity was engaging and sparked creativity, spontaneity, and innovation among the participants. Most importantly, it helped them loosen up, enabling easier interactions and establishing necessary familiarity between the facilitators and respondents.



5. **Interactive Discussions/Facilitation:** After each activity, facilitators led group reflections where adolescents shared personal experiences and strategies. This reinforced learning and promoted peer-to-peer influence. The participants were asked to proffer solutions to the challenge encountered by actors. This edutainment intervention was designed to improve the knowledge and attitude of the participant. In one of the drama presentation, one of the characters was at the verge of committing suicide since she could not bear the consequences of her action and the participants were asked to intervene and proffer solutions to her challenges. Most of them advised her against committing suicide that the best thing is to let her parents know about the whole situation, that her family may be the best support system she needs now, since she's their only child, they will be angry with her mistake but will still forgive her and guide her on how to overcome her challenges.

The findings revealed that adolescents responded positively to the edutainment interventions. Drama and Role-play was particularly effective in enabling them to visualize themselves in risky situations and consider healthier alternatives. Music, owing to its entertainment value, helped reinforce messages in a memorable manner. The researchers observed greater openness among students to discuss sensitive issues, confirming the interventions' effectiveness in promoting dialogue and behavioural reflection.



Interactive moments / facilitation

Effectiveness of Edutainment Strategies in Influencing Positive Behaviour.

The findings of this study indicate that edutainment strategies were effective to a considerable extent in influencing positive behavioural changes among adolescents in the study area. Quantitative analysis of the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires revealed significant improvements in key behavioural indicators. For instance, 98% of respondents reported an increased awareness of the consequences of premarital sex after participating in the drama and role-play sessions, compared to 36% before the intervention. Similarly, 88% of participants affirmed that they were more confident in resisting peer pressure, while 93% reported that the drama and interactive activities enhanced their willingness to make responsible choices. These results suggest that the integration of drama, role-play, and music within the learning environment provided adolescents with relatable and engaging platforms through which behavioural lessons were internalized.

Qualitative findings from focus group discussions, edutainment intervention and classroom observations further corroborated these results. Participants consistently described the edutainment activities as “practical,” “interesting,” and “memorable,” noting that the role-plays, songs, and drama sketches made abstract behavioural expectations more concrete and relevant to their everyday lives. Many students affirmed that the stories and performances enabled them to “see themselves in the characters,” which in turn encouraged critical reflection and the adoption of healthier behaviours. These findings are consistent with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the role of modeling and observational learning in behavioural change.

Summary of Themes and Responses from Imo Girls/Ikenegbu Girls’Secondary School, Owerri

Difference Between Love and Lust: One of the students says she has understood clearly what lust is, that lust is different from love, that what Chioma’s boyfriend had for her was lust, he only wanted to sleep with her to satisfy his sexual urge and that is why he didn’t care about her again when he had achieved his aim, hence there is a huge difference between love and lust and what most men and boys profess to teenagers is not love but lust..

Dangers of Premarital Sex: Most of them also admitted to the fact that it is not good to engage in pre-marital sex with any one until they are married, because it is a distraction and can result to pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, which will at the long run ruin their future.

Nothing goes for nothing: One of the participants responded that she learnt that some good things can be bait, just like Chidera agreed to follow the unknown boys to eat and accepted gift from them, she eventually followed them home and discovered that they only lured her to harvest her organs to enrich themselves. That gift was just a bait to get her.

Materialism: one of the also explained that it is good to be contented with what you have and not have unguided desire to have what you cannot afford at the main time. Chioma’s unguided desire for an iPhone made her enter into the trap of her boyfriend Ikenna. Most of them also attested to the fact that not all that glitters is gold and that some of gifts are baits to lure them into something deadly.

Disobedience: Never to ignore their parents or teacher’s instruction because rules are set to keep one from perceived harm or danger, Chioma sneaked to Ikenna’s house against the consent of her parents and teachers at school and the consequence- rape damaged her life.

Covetousness/Gluttony: One of the participants explained that most girls her age struggles with covetousness in her word “*Long Throat*” they want to eat *suya*, chicken, meat pie, cake, coke, Hollandia Yoghurt, juice and other goodies. They are ready to do anything to get those things; she admonished all including herself to trim their appetite so that

they will not fall into the trap of evil people because of gluttony and covetousness. (This response elicited laughter from many of the participants but they all concur that she is saying the fact just that the way she presented it and her gesticulations were funny).

Value of Time/Effective Time Management: Participants reflected that Chidera was distracted by the boy's sweet words and did not follow the sensible path of going straight home to help her parents. They learned from the mime that one should not give in to distractions when sent on errands and should stay focused. Another participant emphasized the importance of managing time well as a student, studying properly to avoid failing exams. One noted a powerful lyric from the spoken word, "Leave Facebook and face your book," highlighting how social media often distracts students from their studies. Overall, the performance taught valuable lessons about prioritizing responsibilities and staying focused in the face of distractions.

Positive Self-Image/Esteem: One of them explains that she learnt from the spoken words performance that she needs to value herself and be a better version of herself that she realized that she's enough and she can be the best only if she's focused, determined and hardworking.

Collated Resolve of the Participants in

Imo Girls' Secondary School Owerri

Ikenegbu Girls' Secondary School

<i>To listen to their teacher's advice in school</i>	<i>To avoid having boyfriends at this young age</i>
<i>Never go to anybody's house without their parent's consent</i>	<i>Never keep secrets from my parents</i>
<i>Avoid gifts from men</i>	<i>Control my appetite</i>
<i>Abstain from sex until I are married</i>	<i>Abstain from sex until i am married</i>
<i>Resolve to value, love and accept who they are</i>	<i>Obey my parents and teachers</i>
<i>focus on my studies and avoid distractions</i>	<i>Never visit a boy alone in his house or a secluded place</i>
<i>"I will not allow myself to be deceived by any boy or man"</i>	<i>Always be contented with what i have and mange whatever my parents can afford for me</i>
<i>"I won't accept things from boys that I don't know"</i>	<i>Focus on my education and not dating because there is time for everything</i>
<i>To be contented with whatever they have</i>	<i>Not to accept gift from men because it can be a trap</i>
<i>Avoid bad company</i>	<i>Not all that glitters is gold</i>
<i>Never dismiss from school and go to a boy's house or follow a boy out</i>	<i>Avoid bad friends because they will influence one negatively.</i>
<i>Focus on my education so that I will not bring shame and pain to their family</i>	<i>To avoid having boyfriends at this young age</i>
<i>Obey and listen to my parent's advice</i>	<i>Never keep secrets from my parents</i>
<i>Study hard in order to pass</i>	<i>Control my appetite</i>
<i>Be the best version of myself.</i>	<i>Abstain from sex until I am married</i>

Conclusion

Prior to the exposure of these adolescents to edutainment workshop, it was discovered from the pretest exercise that a greater percentage of them had obsession with luxury, unrealistic standards of beauty, and material possessions but after the workshop, posttest exercise revealed higher aspiration for academic excellence, career advancement, and social impact. However, the extent of behavioural change varied across domains. While significant improvements were recorded in assertiveness, peer resistance, awareness of risky behaviours and academic focus, relatively lower levels of change were observed in punctuality and classroom discipline. This suggests that while edutainment strategies are highly effective in fostering awareness and attitudinal change, some behavioural outcomes may require reinforcement through parental involvement, school regulations, and broader community engagement. On this basis, it can be concluded that edutainment strategies were effective to a large extent in promoting positive behavioural change among adolescents in the study area. However, complementary measures are needed to sustain and broaden these outcomes, and edutainment should be integrated into the school curricula.

Works Cited

- Adora, Charles and Nancy Irek. "Theatre as Tool for the Actualization of the Agenda of Change in Governance in Nigeria". *Ikoru Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. Vol.10 No.1&2 . 66-75. 2018.
- Balme, Christopher & Hakib, Abdulkarim (Eds.) *Threatre for DevelopmentL Historical and Institutional Perspective*. Germany: Georg Olms & University Libereay of LMU Munchem. 2023.
- Erikson, Eric. (1980a). *Identity and the life cycle: A reissue*. New York: Norton.
- Erikson, Eric. (1980b). "Elements of a psychoanalytic theory of psychosocial development". In Greenspan S. I. & Pollack G. H. (Eds.), *The course of life: Psychoanalytic contributions toward understanding personality development*. Vol. I: Infancy and early childhood. Washington, DC: National Institute of Mental Health.
- Grady, Christopher., Iannantuoni, Alice., Winters, Matthew S. "Influencing the means but not the ends: The role of entertainment-education interventions in development" *World Development*, Volume 138,2021, 105200, ISSN 0305-750X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105200>.
- Noddings, Nell. *Happiness and Education*. USA: Cambridge University Press. 2003
- Obiageli, Caroline and Deborah Osberg. "Power, Persuasion and Democracy in Educative Entertainment: Interrogating Some Pedagogic Assumptions". *IMSU Theatre Journal. A Contemporary Journal of Arts and Theatre Practise*. Vol.5 No. 1 2020: 74-92.
- Obadiogwu, Chiduo C. *Play for Transformation: Reflection on Classroom Drama for Learners Empowerment*. Awka: Eunique Press and Computers, 2019.
- Ragnarsdottir, Asa Helga and Bjornsson Hakon Saeberg. *Drama in Education: Exploring Key Research Concepts and Effective Strategies*. London& NewYork: Taylor and Francis Books. 2020.
- Soul City Institute Health and Development Communication. *Edutainment: Using Stories and media for Social Action and Behaviour Change*. 2013.
- Singhal, Arvind Cody, Rogers, Michael J., Everett and Sabido, Miguel. *Entertainment-Education and Social Change: History, Research, and Practice*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2008

YouTube.

Adumati Abiola My Past. www.youtube.com/@odideretheatre4529.

Tiktok.

@Teacherchike "Don't be a Sallah Ram". <https://linktr.ee/teacherchike1>.