

Influence of Television Anti-FGM Messages on Beere Residents' Perception of FGM Practice: A Review of Cultivation TheoryTolulope Ayodele Ajayi^[1], Toyin Adinlewa^[2]^[1,2]Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria^[1]<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5361-7993>^[2]<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2343-9046>

Abstract. Gerbner and Gross's cultivation hypothesis explains that individuals cultivate the viewpoint depicted on television after extended exposure to it. Given the documented prevalence of FGM practice in Oyo State, despite media anti-FGM messages and people's extensive exposure to television, observation shows that this hypothesis appears to be logically inconsistent in the context of FGM practice in the state. Thus, the theory's premise was empirically tested to assess the influence of television campaigns on the views of FGM practice among residents of the Beere community in Oyo State, Nigeria, where the practice and media campaigns against the practice are ostensibly prevalent. Survey and FGDs methods were adopted, with a questionnaire and FGDs guide as instruments of data gathering. Two hundred and sixty-nine residents were chosen purposively from the population to answer questions regarding their FGM viewing and beliefs. The views of one hundred and six respondents who were heavy viewers were subjected to further analysis. Findings suggest that increased exposure of a few heavy viewer respondents to anti-FGM efforts may have led to a shift in their perception of FGM practice. However, cultivation theory may not apply in all contexts in the increasingly and ever-emerging digital climate to debate what shapes people lived construct, as other channels have continued to play a significant impact in shaping people's perceptions of reality. In the light of this, therefore, it is concluded that, while some of the respondents who were excessively exposed to TV anti-FGM messages claimed their view of FGM practice changed, cultivation effects were insignificantly seen.

Keywords: Cultivation Theory, Anti-FGM messages, Television, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Beere community

Contribution/Originality

This research adds to the current literature, particularly those that investigate the foundations of television viewership's cultivation effects. While most studies focused on violent movies, health behaviours, and other topics, few have tested cultivation theory on issues rooted in tradition and culture. This study examined the media's ongoing campaigns in the Beere community against the tradition and practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) with the tenets of cultivation theory and discovered that the tenets appear to be logically inconsistent with FGM practice, which is rooted in people's tradition, despite little evidence of reduction.

Introduction

The goal of media content is obviously to influence the perception, attitude, or behaviour of its target audience. This is because society has placed onerous responsibilities on the shoulders of the media to design various campaigns that will not only educate, inform, enlighten, warn, persuade, but also dissuade the heterogeneous, critical, and sophisticated audience from no longer popular practices. As a result, the media have been audible and visible in the campaign against societal ills and dangerous traditional practices. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is one obvious harmful traditional practice that the mass media has recently passionately campaigned against. These campaigns, without a doubt, are designed to change

perception, attitude, and behaviour to combat the practice. This media's ongoing campaign against the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is admirable.

However, it is important to examine such efforts in the context of cultivation theorists' propositions. Cultivation theory is a mass communication theory proposed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross (1976) to investigate media effects in the context of the growing popularity of television (Aina, 2003). They established the cultural indicator research to investigate how watching TV influences viewers' perceptions of what life is like daily. The central idea is that television shapes people's perceptions of social reality. Certain propositions were identified, which led to the development of the cultivation theory. This theory was originally intended to test whether regular viewing of violent television cultivated the belief that the world is more violent than it is (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). The theory's application, however, has expanded beyond the topic of violence to include potential perception effects of heavy viewing of a variety of different media genres. According to Potter (1994), TV viewers who watch more TV develop perceptions and beliefs that reflect the television world's messages. In essence, excessive TV viewing influences people's perceptions of reality and behaviour by instilling in them a distorted view of the world.

As a result, this research is framed within one of the propositions of cultivation theory, which states that people cultivate the perception depicted on television after prolonged exposure to it.

Statement of the Problem

The media, particularly television, has continued to crusade against FGM through a variety of means, including news coverage, documentaries, movies, soap operas, well-researched feature stories, and thought-provoking editorials, all of which highlight the negative consequences of the practice in the country (Adeoti, 2016). According to authorities such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO), FGM is a flagrant violation of girls and women's rights that has no medical benefits; can cause serious injury, infection, and death, deprive women of sexual pleasure and cause complications during childbirth. According to Omenugha and Ekwugba (2015, p. 12), despite media campaigns, the practice is "still waxing strong in some parts of the country." According to Maryam Enyiazu, a United Nations child specialist, FGM is still practiced in every part of the country, with Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Ebonyi, and Imo State topping the lists of states with the highest cases in Nigeria. The United Nations Population Fund also reported a high prevalence of FGM in Oyo state in 2016, with 60 percent of Oyo state families still engaging in the practice. This situation contradicts the cultivation theory proposition that 'people cultivate the perception portrayed on television after long exposure to television content.' Even where there is evidence of reduction, Adeoti (2016) finds that there is still a high prevalence in rural or peripheral areas. This study seeks, therefore, to further investigate this apparent inconsistency of the concerned theory's assumption, with a focus on media's ongoing campaigns in the Beere community against the tradition and practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). It also investigates other possible factors that may come into play in determining the 'cultivation effect' of television on its audience concerning FGM practice in the Nigerian context.

Research Questions

- 1) To what extent have extensive exposure to Television anti-FGM messages influenced 'Beere' residents' perception about the practice of FGM?
- 2) To what extent have excessive exposure to TV FGM messages by 'Beere' residents changed their perception about the practice?
- 3) What other sources, if any, determine how people perceive FGM messages in the real world?

Literature Review

Cultivation Theory and Television

The cultivation hypothesis was created to investigate how general media watching patterns can cultivate expectations about real-life brutality, and that much of our understanding of the world is influenced by both fictional and non-fictional accounts of others' encounters, rather than experiences of our own (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). This was accomplished by comparing the rate of violence depicted on television to the rate of violence occurring in the real world. According to the findings, there was significantly more violence depicted on television than was occurring in the real world. Another step was taken to discover how different levels of viewership affected viewer perceptions of violence. Gerbner and colleagues discovered two major effects. The first is that general television viewing has fostered the perception that the world is more violent than it is really (Gerbner et al., 1980, cited by Finnegan & Viswanath, 2002). This meant that the consistent portrayal of an issue in the media has the potential to instill in viewers the belief that the issue is the same way in the real world. This effect has been consistently supported by communication research (Hammermeister et al., 2005; Hetsroni & Tukachinsky, 2006; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). The second effect is that perceptions vary depending on how much television one watches (Gerbner et al., 1980, cited by Finnegan & Viswanath, 2002). Gerbner and colleagues distinguished between viewing levels by simply labeling people as light, medium, or heavy viewers. This study focuses on the heavy viewing effect.

Cultivation research focuses on comparing perceptions across different levels of viewership. Heavy television viewers perceived the world to be more violent than light television viewers in the original cultivation studies (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, cited by Okoro, 2015). However, in rare instances, light viewers rated the world as more violent, such as after watching a violent episode (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). Despite its history of being used to predict violence perceptions, cultivation theory can be used to observe perception differences between viewership levels of any television genre.

Cultivation theory suggests that intense viewing of health-related topics has an impact on a heavy viewer's understanding of those issues. Television audiences today are subject to a significant number of negative health habits such as cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal drugs, which cultivation theorists believe may affect interpretation (Gerbner & Ozyegin, 1997, DuRant et al., 1997). Several experiments of health settings have been published, such as the one performed by Niederdeppe, Fowler, Goldstein & Pribble, (2010). This research aimed to examine the impact of local TV news exposure on perceptions of cancer prevention across various levels of viewing. According to the findings, the greater the respondents' exposure to local TV coverage, the more fatalistic they considered cancer to be. This study promoted the theory that intense viewing of an often-depicted medical condition in any genre, as opposed to light or non-viewing, could foster an irrational impression of that situation in practice. In Nigeria, however, the case seems to be different concerning FGM practice.

The Concept of Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation is described as the act of incising the female vaginal with a blade or a knife, resulting in physical and emotional harm to the female. According to WHO (as cited in Okoro, 2015), FGM is an operation that entails the partial or complete removal of the female external genitals for cultural or other purposes. According to WHO (2012, p. 2), FGM entails destroying and injuring protective and normal female genital tissue, as well as interfering with the basic workings of girls' and women's bodies. Female Genital Mutilation, also known as female circumcision, has become a common practice in Nigeria, especially in rural areas. According to Carson (2016), approximately 20 million Nigerian women and girls

have undergone FGM. Mutilation may occur at various stages of a female's life, including puberty, infancy, maturity, marriage, and the first labor. Okoro (2015, p. 24), quoting WHO divides FGM into four sections, which are:

Type I: Clitoridectomy of the prepuce, with or without clitoris excision. Excision of the prepuce and clitoris, as well as partial or complete excision of the labia minora, is Type II. Type III: Excision of most or more of the external genitalia and vaginal opening stitching (infibulation). Pricking, piercing, or excision of the clitoris and/or labia, stretching of the clitoris and/or labia, cauterization by burning of the clitoris and adjacent tissues, rubbing of the vaginal orifice or cutting of the vagina, and injection of corrosive agents into the vagina to inflict leakage to tighten or shrink the vagina are all examples of unclassified FGM.

Female genital mutilation is a dangerous traditional procedure with mental, social, and physical implications. Though FGM is a dangerous procedure due to the unsanitary conditions and instruments used in the act, the impact of FGM becomes intolerable when combined with early marriage, as some girls who have undergone this phase suffer unbearable pain during pregnancy and childbirth. According to Tahzib (2003), one-third of the women involved in 80 percent of cases of vesicovaginal fistula induced by obstructed labour had experienced any kind of genital mutilation or another. This demonstrates that if female circumcision is not discouraged, it will raise the rate of maternal mortality. According to Okoro (2015), female circumcision and the injection of caustics into the postpartum vagina can cause birth canal injury, predisposing to prolonged labour and the production of fistula.

Factors Influencing Female Genital Practice

For a long time, female genital mutilation (FGM) has been in practice. FGM is a centuries-old tradition that goes back hundreds of years (Ofor & Ofole, 2015). According to WHO (2012) report, 100–140 million girls and women worldwide are dealing with the effects of FGM. Despite the adverse effects of FGM (both physical and psychological) on females, the practice has persisted, which can be attributed to a variety of societal influences, most notably cultural factors. People normally cling tenaciously to their cultural ideologies, no matter how meaningless or ridiculous they can seem to be. This hinders their belief in media efforts against such activities as FGM, which would shift their view of the practice. According to WHO (2012), a significant reason for FGM in most societies is the belief that the ritual ensures the female conforms to core societal standards such as sexual discipline, femininity, respectability, and maturity. FGM is regarded as an important cultural activity that cannot be disputed, owing to the act's continued existence. In essence, FGM is performed by different cultures for a variety of purposes. According to Okoro (2015), circumcising a girl child gives honour to the child's skin, and such a family is valued in the community. Several researchers have described the following causes as being responsible for this prolonged practice:

1. *Religious purposes*: FGM is most common among Muslims, but it also exists among Christians, animists, and Jews (AIDS, 2013e). According to the WHO (2012), the assumption that FGM is endorsed or prescribed by tradition, or that it encourages living up to moral standards of sexual restraint, has raised the degree of practice.
2. *Hygiene*: It is widely held that female genitalia is unsightly and filthy, so circumcision is performed to strengthen a woman's hygiene. According to a study by (AIDS, 2013), some FGM-practicing communities consider un-mutilated women to be unclean and forbid them from handling food and drink.
3. *Chastity*: Some indigenous Africans claim that circumcising a girl child prevents her from becoming promiscuous. According to Ofor and Ofole (2015), some Africans claim that circumcised girls will regulate their sexual impulses and therefore avoid sin. Female genital mutilation is thought to reduce a woman's sexual appetite and discourage her from

engaging in extramarital relations. Female circumcision is used to protect a girl's virginity.

4. *Enhancing fertility*: Since uncircumcised children are thought to be less fertile than circumcised women, some indigenous Africans insist on having their girl child circumcised. According to Ofor and Ofole (2015), citing Ahmadi (2013), uncircumcised women have lower fertility powers than circumcised women, and uncircumcised women have difficulty controlling their sexual desires. Furthermore, those who were not circumcised as children are thought to have a variety of physical disabilities at birth.
5. *Fear of social exclusion*: FGM is used to establish a feeling of identity in certain cultures, and any female who refuses to be mutilated is considered unclean. According to Ofor and Ofole (2015), mutilation is performed as part of the initiation process into adulthood. FGM determines who is a member of the group. In such communities, unless a girl has undergone FGM, she is not considered an adult in an FGM-practicing society (AID, 2013).

Consequences of Female Genital Mutilation

FGM, although thought to be a positive thing by some indigenous Africans, is a dangerous practice that has a variety of detrimental effects on females. These negative effects include physical, social, and psychological consequences. According to the WHO Fact Sheet (2012), FGM has no health benefits and affects girls and women in a variety of ways. The health impact of FGM is determined by factors such as the technique used, the degree of cutting, the abilities of the operators, the cleanliness of the equipment and environment, and the physical state of the girl or woman involved. Extreme pain and shock, bleeding, poisoning, urinary retention, psychological damage, sexual dysfunction, and complications during childbirth are all possible. FGM's implications on a child or woman and society are discussed below.

1. *Implications for Health*: According to a WHO (2012) report, 28000 women in African countries who had undergone FGM had a greater chance of childbirth complications than those who had not been circumcised. FGM has a significant impact on maternal mortality. Women that have undergone FGM also have pains during sexual intercourse, making it impossible to enjoy sex and leaving them sexually unsatisfied. Others include infection, shock, heavy bleeding, and so on.
2. *Implications for Society*: Although there have been few systematic studies on the social effects of FGM, some study has recognized the possible negative implications for families, children, and women of abstaining from the practice (WHO, 2012). Failure to adhere to the practice often results in abuse and alienation from significant communal activities and support networks, as well as prejudice by peers. Anyone who does not want to be circumcised is stigmatized and barred from participating in communal events.

Different Media Interventions on FGM Practice

The issue of FGM has piqued the attention and concerns of global development partners. In this respect, every year on February 6th, the International Day for Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation is observed. In addition, USAID has reportedly included the abolition of FGM in its reform plan (WHO, 2015). The media has been successful in rallying attention and mobilizing development partners in support of the abolition of FGM. The topic of FGM is occasionally discussed on Radio Nigeria Network's weekly program dubbed "Health Watch," which airs every Monday at 5:30 p.m. According to Okoro (2015), FGM was a subject of conversation in the said programme on September 20, 2010, and October 18, 2010, as well as other times not reported, with experts such as Dr. Sa'ad Idris and Dr. Amir Yola (both fistula

surgeons) serving as resource persons to offer detailed explanations on the reality of FGM as well as answers to questions posed by the audience.

In addition, through their news coverage, well-researched feature stories, and thought-provoking editorials, daily newspapers have tended to crusade against the practice of FGM. For example, on March 14, 2013, the Punch newspaper ran a story titled "Niger Establishes Panel on Female Genital Mutilation." A related article appeared on the front page of the Daily Times on March 13, 2013, under the heading "Gov. Aliyu Establishes Committee on Gay Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation." In the same way, on May 23, 2012, Thisday ran a story entitled "Experts Deplore Female Genital Mutilation." Recently, anti-FGM films such as 'Onikola' by Funmilayo Fioresima were made to raise awareness about female genital mutilation. Southwest television stations have led the crusade against the practice of FGM. Importantly, Galaxy Television, which is based in Beere, Ibadan, has consistently tackled this issue due to the high occurrence of FGM in her host community. With this, the practice of FGM is predicted to dwindle and become extinct among those who are exposed to it, particularly those who are heavy viewers of these television campaigns.

Empirical Review

Gbadebo et al. (2021) conducted a cohort analysis of the state of Female Genital Cut (FGC) in Nigeria between 2009 and 2018 and discovered that FGC has dropped considerably, from 56.3 percent in the 1959–1963 birth cohort to 25.5 percent in 1994–1998 cohorts, although there was a rise in FGC between the 1994–1998 cohorts (28.4 percent). Also, they found that the proportion of parents who circumcised their daughters decreased from 40.1 percent in the oldest birth cohort to 3.6 percent in the younger birth cohort. FGC was shown to be associated with the birth cohort, religion, education, residence, region, and ethnicity. Birth cohort, religion, locale, region, ethnicity, money, marital status, responder's FGC status, and religiously required FGC were all variables in the daughter's circumcision. Similar factors were identified for discontinuation intention. They observed that FGC is still practised in Nigeria, but that it is diminishing among younger birth cohorts. Also observed is the fact that the public's opinion on the abolition of FGC hasn't altered significantly. They recommended more awareness of the harmful effects of FGC, particularly among Nigerian women with low levels of education.

In another study, Wogu et al. (2019) investigated the impact of a media campaign opposing female genital mutilation (FGM) in rural Enugu State. The sample for this cross-sectional study consisted of 183 women who visited prenatal clinics in six rural regions, as well as twenty-four women's group leaders. Their findings revealed, among other things, that Enugu state's anti-FGM media campaign has been ineffective; cultural values (51 percent), poor network reception (23 percent), epileptic power supply (18 percent), difficulty to access media, and the nature of the campaign's content were responsible for its ineffectiveness. Based on the findings, they suggested that the media and the contents of its FGM campaign be overhauled for rural reach/accessibility, pro-Igbo cultural programs against FGM practice be developed, and that visual method is used to establish/prove the relationship between FGM, infections/diseases, and maternal deaths. They claimed, despite public outcry, FGM is still performed in Enugu's rural areas. They concluded that the media campaign against FGM in Enugu State has been a failure.

Also, Ibekwe et al. (2012) performed a survey of women of reproductive age in Abakaliki, southeast Nigeria, to examine current awareness and practice of FGM. A semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to 320 women using simple random selection. The required information covers socio-demographic characteristics as well as personal information concerning FGM, such as knowledge and practice. Half of those questioned (49.6 percent) had been genitally mutilated, and a similar number (47.7 percent) said FGM is still practiced today.

Eighty-two percent oppose FGM but do nothing about it, and 36 percent were unaware of any FGM issue. They discovered that FGM has a 50% prevalence rate. Even though the great majority of people were opposed to the practice, nothing was done to modify it. As a result, they discovered that strong campaigning, government backing, and legislation are required to address this significant health issue, as vast portions of the population remain uninformed of the hazards of FGM.

Research Methods

The survey and Focus Group Discussion approaches were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data for the research. A survey was conducted to determine the impact of television FGM messages on the perceptions of residents of the Beere community in Oyo state, to determine whether comprehensive exposure to TV FGM messages was effective in improving viewers' perceptions of the discipline. This is to suggest or disprove that cultivation theory is still applicable in this setting. Since they are mature and can make choices individually, the target demographic was all Beere neighbourhood parents of the girl child(ren) between the ages of twenty and sixty. Both parents were chosen because they play an important role in determining whether or not their child(ren) should be circumcised. The Beere population was purposefully sampled because it has a culture of FGM due to the prevalence of circumcisers. The demographic numbers issued by the National Population Commission in the last census were aggregates for Local Government Areas rather than district level. As a result, Beere's demographic forecast becomes unworkable. The researchers estimated the overall number of adult parents to be between 700 and 900 individuals in the relevant age brackets based on direct observation. The study's sample size of 269 was estimated using Wimmer and Dominick's online sample size calculator. Again, the purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents into the sample. A standardized questionnaire was administered to gather data from respondents, and systematic sampling was used to pick every fifth house out of every ten houses for the study. The parents of a family in a house were chosen using purposeful sampling. A total of 95 (246) copies of the questionnaire were validly returned out of the 110 (259) copies distributed, yielding a recovery rate of 95%. The 13 copies that did not receive legitimate responses were omitted. To gather primary data from respondents, a structured questionnaire in Likert scale format with a list of statements was used. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each of the claims. Questions were translated into Yoruba for respondents who were not literate enough to speak English. The study is focused on the 95 percent (246) of recovered questionnaire versions. All valid questionnaires were then subjected to descriptive analysis.

Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

SECTION A: Level of Exposure to FGM Messages by Residents of Beere Community

The focus of the study is to investigate if extensive exposure to anti-FGM messages on television influences its perception by Residents of the 'Beere' Community. Therefore, in trying this, the researcher tried to find out the 'Beere' community level of exposure to FGM messages on television and other media. Find below in Tables 1, 2, and 3, findings from the data analysed.

Table 1. Respondents' frequency of exposure to anti-FGM messages on television

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentages %
Strongly Agree	54	22%
Agree	52	21%
Undecided	37	15%
Disagree	64	26%

Strongly Disagree	39	16%
Total	246	100%

The level of reference to anti-FGM ads on television is broken down in Table 1. According to the data, 106 respondents (54+52; 43 percent) are frequently exposed to anti-FGM messages on television, while 103 respondents (64+39; 42 percent) are not. 37, on the other hand, did not respond (15 percent). Respondents who are frequently exposed to anti-FGM messages are heavy viewers of FGM-based messages on television, while those who are not regularly exposed to FGM messages on television are considered light viewers.

Table 2. Number of hours viewing anti-FGM messages on television

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentages %
Strongly Agree	54	22%
Agree	52	21%
Undecided	37	15%
Disagree	64	26%
Strongly Disagree	39	16%
Total	246	100%

Table 2 indicates how many hours respondents spent watching anti-FGM advertisements on TV. According to the data, 106 (54+52; 43 percent) of respondents watch anti-FGM messages on television for several hours, while 103 (64+39; 42 percent) do not watch anti-FGM messages on television for several hours. 37, on the other hand, did not respond (15 percent). Respondents who devote a greater number of hours watching anti-FGM messages on TV are considered heavy viewers of FGM-related messages. Hence, those who strongly disagreed and disagreed in Tables 1 and 2 are regarded as light viewers and are therefore eliminated from other analyses.

SECTION B: Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: To what extent have extensive exposure to Television anti-FGM messages influenced 'Beere' residents' perception about the practice of FGM?

Table 3. Exposure to anti-FGM Television messages and perception change about the practice among 'Beere' residents

S/ N	ITEM	SA	A	U	SD	D	TOTAL
1	TV influenced my perception of FGM practice as being barbaric	30 28.3%	13 12.2%	15 14.1%	28 26.4%	20 19%	106 (100%)
2	I agree with most anti-FGM television campaign content that the practice is an abuse of women's rights.	20 18.8%	15 14.1%	3 2.8%	12 11.3%	56 53%	106 (100%)
3	Despite its sexual control, I won't continue to perceive the practice of FGM as necessary due to my exposure to TV campaigns against FGM practices.	30 28%	7 7%	16 15%	20 19%	33 31%	106 (100%)
4	Regardless that FGM is a tradition handed over to us by our earlier generations; my perception about FGM has changed as a result of my	17 16%	14 13%	13 12%	17 16%	45 43%	106 (100%)

	exposure to television campaigns on the issue.						
5	I believe in the anti-FGM television campaign and agree that the practice causes medical problems such as fistula disease.	23 22%	32 30%	4 4%	21 20%	26 24%	106 (100%)

The first research question aimed to decide whether excessive exposure to female genital mutilation advertisements on television changed the perception of 'Beere' residents about the practice. Table 3 shows that 43 (i.e., 30+13; **40.5%**) of 106 respondents who were heavy viewers of anti-FGM messaging on TV agreed that television affected their view of the procedure as being barbaric. Also, 3 out of every 10 (i.e. 20+10; **32.9%**) heavily exposed to anti-FGM television advertisement material agreed that that the practice is a violation of women's rights. 6 out of every 10 respondents (12+56, **68%**) did not see FGM is a violation of women's rights. 3 (**35%**) out of every 10 respondents would not continue to view FGM as appropriate for sexual control as the result of their exposure to FGM material on TV. Also, 2 (**29%**) out of every 10 respondents stated that FGM is a tradition handed over to us by our earlier generations, nevertheless, their view on FGM practice has been significantly altered. 4 (**42%**) out of every 10 respondents also stated that Anti-FGM campaign on television has persuaded them that the practice triggers medical complications such as fistula disease. Less than **40%** of the 106 respondents who are regarded as heavy viewers related their change of perception about FGM to the impact of prolonged exposure to anti-FGM campaigns on television, while slightly above **50%** of the respondents saw nothing wrong with the practice of FGM despite being heavily exposed to Anti-FGM campaigns on television. This is consistent with the finding of Gbadebo et al. (2021) when they observed that FGC is still practised in Nigeria, but that it is diminishing among younger birth cohorts. Also observed is the fact that the public's opinion on the abolition of FGC hasn't altered significantly. Also, the findings of Wogu et al. (2019) revealed, among other things, that Enugu state's anti-FGM media campaign has been ineffective; cultural values (51 percent) among other factors were responsible for its ineffectiveness. They claimed, despite public outcry, FGM is still performed in Enugu's rural areas. They concluded that the media campaign against FGM in Enugu State has been a failure.

Meanwhile, the inconsistency in the responses of those who claimed their perception of FGM has changed suggests an innate struggle with pre-existing tradition. Despite media anti-FGM messages and people's extensive exposure to television, Gerbner and Gross's cultivation hypothesis appears logically inconsistent in the context of FGM practice among the respondents categorized as heavy viewers. It becomes reasonable to posit that people's cultural beliefs and values have already structured their reality, and thus television content may not be necessary. This is in tandem with the finding of Gbadebo et al. (2021) when they observed that religion, locale, region, ethnicity, money, marital status... were all variables in the daughter's circumcision.

With this pattern, it becomes very difficult to categorically posit that their exposure to Anti-FGM has greatly affected their view of the practice. To buttress this, one of the discussants during the FGD session declared that:

I agree that FGM practice is not healthy. This I learned from my elder sister, who works as a nurse at a general hospital in Ibadan. Despite hearing several times from television and other sources that the procedure should be avoided, I believed it when my sister told me about the consequences of the practice.

Another participant, a nursing mother from the 'Beere' culture, spoke on this, saying:

When I gave birth to my daughter last year, one of the nurses told me it is not appropriate to circumcise her. She told me that's how it's done now, and that changed my mind. My daughter was not circumcised by me.

In the fact that respondents who are overly subjected to anti-FGM messaging on TV said that TV was effective in shaping their view of the procedure as barbaric and bad, the practice has persisted or increased in the face of these media initiatives, including television. A participant specifically noted that:

While I consider female genital mutilation to be dangerous, I would continue to circumcise my daughters for sexual control; I recognize that the procedure can trigger certain health problems, however, they are manageable. I tried it and it worked perfectly, so I'm hoping it would work for my daughters as well.

As a result, it emphasizes the fact that cultural acts are difficult to modify. Their view may have shifted, but this may not have affected the practice's abolition. As a consequence, it is necessary to investigate the role of other sources of information than the news media to achieve the desired result. Growth communication is important in this context because it is a strategy that "involves the use of all means of communication in the publishing, publicizing, and promotion of change at all levels of a society" (Edeani, 1993, cited by Okoro, 2015, p. 12). It is deep and allows for the use of all modes of communication in the development process by integrating the use of social media with all local and conventional forms of communication such as market place, town crier, visits, church, families, and village square (Wogu, 2006, p. 16; Chukwu, 2006, p. 111). This is because FGM practice is prevalent in an urban and peripheral setting as mass media messages may not result in a change of attitude by the rural people, since they would arguably prefer known credible traditional media to the mass media.

Research Question Two: To what extent have excessive exposure to TV FGM messages by 'Beere' residents' change their perception about the practice?

Table 4. TV influenced my perception of FGM practice as being barbaric

S/ N	ITEM	SA	A	U	SD	D	TOTAL
1	TV influenced my perception of FGM practice to a great extent.	27 69.2%	10 25.6%	1 2.6%	1 2.6%	0	39 100%
2	As a result of my extensive exposure to anti-FGM TV campaigns, my perception of the practice has changed.	25 62.6%	13 32.5%	0	2 5.0%	0	40 100%

According to the data in Table 4, of the 39 respondents who have been excessively exposed to anti-FGM messages on television, 37 (i.e. 27+ 10%) said that their view of the practice has been much influenced. This is reinforced when 38 (i.e. 25+ 13; 95%) of respondents stated that their opinion on FGM has altered as a result of extensive exposure to anti-FGM television programs. With these findings, it is evident that respondents' increased exposure to anti-FGM efforts may have led to a shift in their view of the practice of FGM. However, this represents less than 40% of the 106 respondents who are considered heavy viewers. Meanwhile, 2 of these respondents were unsure of the extent to which anti-FGM campaigns had influenced their perception of FGM practice. Corroborating this finding, Wogu et al. (2019) revealed, among other things, that Enugu state's anti-FGM media campaign has been ineffective; cultural values (51 percent), were responsible for its ineffectiveness. They claimed, despite public outcry, FGM is still performed in Enugu's rural areas. They concluded that the media campaign against FGM in Enugu State has been a failure. Also, Ibekwe et al.

(2012) revealed that half of those questioned (49.6 percent) had been genitally mutilated. Eighty-two percent oppose FGM but do nothing about it, and 36 percent were unaware of any FGM issue.

Research Question Three: What other sources, if any determine how people perceive FGM messages in the real world?

Table 5. Regularly exposure to Anti-FGM messages in other sources

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentages %
Yes	34	87.2%
No	5	12.8%
Undecided	0	
Total	39	100%

Table 6. Satisfactoriness of Anti-FGM messages from other sources

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentages %
Yes	34	87.2%
No	2	5.1%
Undecided	3	7.7%
Total	39	100%

Table 7. Satisfactoriness of religion's preaching on FGM

Responses	Number Of Respondents	Percentages %
Yes	09	23.1%
No	10	25.6%
Undecided	20	51.3%
Total	39	100%

Data, as seen in Tables 5, 6, and 7 provide insight into other factors that influence respondents' perception of FGM practice. Most of the respondents (34; **87.2%**) said that they were regularly exposed to anti-FGM messages from other outlets. They further indicated in Table 6 that they were satisfied with Anti-FGM messages from all other outlets (i.e. partners, midwives, health workers, nurses, friends, and family). But, they seem to exhibit a level of distrust in their religious leaders when it comes to endorsing or otherwise the FGM practice as seen in Table 7.

Data from the FGDs confirmed that the people are equally exposed to anti-FGM campaigns from other outlets such as partners, midwives, health workers, nurses, friends, and family. The majority of the discussants disclosed that they were exposed to anti-FGN campaigns in other outlets. A discussant said: "I don't think my excessive exposure to anti-FGM messaging on TV altered my view of the practice. I learned about it by other means as well."

Another discussant said: "I learned a lot about the practice from the radio, particularly about the need to quit. This medium, I believe, made me believe that the activity is not good or necessary." Similarly, a discussant said:

I would not have changed my mind about FGM if it hadn't been for my husband's insistence that we not circumcise our last baby. My first two daughters were circumcised, but by the time my third daughter was conceived, the government had banned the procedure for a variety of purposes. I had no choice but to give in to my husband's insistence.

Another discussant said: “During my antenatal appointments, I learned about anti-FGM campaigns, which opened the way for me to change my mind about the procedure.”

It is therefore necessary to state that these data give no clue to categorically suggest that the change of perception of respondents who were overly exposed to anti-FGM messages on television was as a result of their exposure to only Television campaigns. This is because they had access to other outlets where they got anti-FGM messages.

Conclusion

Despite recent debate among cultivation researchers about the value of television as a medium influencing perception of social reality, results suggest that cultivation theory may not apply to all contexts, especially, in this increasingly and ever-emerging digital climate to debate how people shape lived construct, as other channels have continued to play a significant impact on people’s perceptions of reality. In the light of this, therefore, it can be concluded that, although some of the respondents who were excessively exposed to TV anti-FGM messages claimed their view of FGM practice changed, cultivation effects were insignificantly seen. This is because there is insufficient evidence to establish a cultivation effect on the respondents’ response pattern. Furthermore, considering the reported prevalence of FGM practice in Oyo State and the ongoing media crusade against the practice, one would have been expecting to establish evidence of cultivation effect on the respondents who are heavy viewers. Thus, it is further concluded that people’s cultural ideas and values may have already structured their reality, which media contents may not readily change.

Recommendation

Observably, people’s cultural beliefs and values, for example, may have already moulded their reality, which media contents may not easily modify. Therefore, it is recommended that people who serve as cultural identities should thus be active in crusading anti-FGM campaigns. This will aid in the termination of the practice.

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