

IMPACT OF ZEE WORLD SOAP OPERAS ON ROMANTIC EXPECTATIONS AMONG MARRIED WOMEN IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: Soap operas impacted women in both positive and negative ways. The tenacity of soap operas to be creative may enable viewers to emulate certain tenets of the show in their relationships, making them more aware of the authenticity and intentions of their partners. This study investigated the impact of Zee World soap operas on romantic expectations among married women in Ilorin, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative method using questionnaires to collect data from respondents in the ancient and new settlements of Ilorin. A total of 444 copies of the questionnaire were distributed using purposive sampling and snowballing sampling designs to reach individual respondents who are married women between the ages of 18 and 65 years, while 400 copies of the questionnaire were valid and analysed. The findings showed that married women in Ilorin are active viewers of Zee World soap operas, as the overwhelming majority of married women in Ilorin (90%) watch Zee World soap operas on an average seven (7) to three (3) days a week. They used to derive positive messages from watching Zee World soap operas, as the majority of respondents (74%) ($M=3.3$, $SD = 0.8$) said Zee World soap operas taught them to develop sexually intimate relationships with their partners in order to enjoy romantic relationships. The majority of married women in Ilorin (71%), ($M=3.2$, $SD= 0.7$) have a positive perception towards Zee World soap operas, while the overwhelming majority of them (92%), ($M=2.6$, $SD=0.9$) said that Zee World soap operas are used to promote realistic romantic expectations. Also, the majority of married women in Ilorin (63%) ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.6$) agreed that Zee World soap operas have increased their affective expectations in their romantic relationships. The study concluded that exposure to Zee World soap operas and their messages have positively influenced the romantic expectations of married women in Ilorin. The study recommended that more educative and informative women-related messages are necessary to be included in Zee World soap operas in order to promote a healthy and prosperous married life devoid of violence and other abuses.

Keywords: Soap Operas, Zee World, Married Women, Romantic-Expectations, Ilorin

INTRODUCTION

The rise of Indian soap operas over the past few years has given culture a completely new, distinctive, and varied dimension. Today, soap operas have ingrained themselves into the lives of many people all over the world (Andeso, 2019). Soap operas also serve as an effective intervention for preventing intergroup violence in conflict-ridden areas by shaping social norms, promoting

understanding of different perspectives, and encouraging people to create change (McClain, 2024). Television plays a huge role to create or change the lifestyle of people. TV shows have highly acceptance and impact among viewers (Srivastava et al., 2023). TV shows become part of its viewers' life and it is a kind of addition that viewers watch regularly without missing any single episode. With the emergence of Telemundo and Zee World soap operas as dedicated to television channels where one could watch series of these dramas met with delight by the audience, it has been observed recently that the entertainment industry in Nigeria is blossoming, especially in its dominance in the contents of the zee world soap operas (Andeso, 2019).

Romantic relationships, which are typically accompanied by attachment, caregiving, and sex, are among the most impactful social interactions (Arikewuyo et al., 2019). The majority of the films on Zee World soap operas are centred on love and romantic relationships, which manifests in several dimensions (Andeso, 2019). As AbdulBaqi (2021) noted that films present a moral evaluation of the real and ideal worlds, which may also lead to expectations in romantic relationships, it has been claimed that adults who watch television shows with frequent allusions to romantic relationships have more idealised views of marriage (Tonoah, 2010). Arikewuyo (2021) noted that romantic partnerships have a mutually beneficial emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, and economic relationship, which most of the time is instilled by what is being encountered from film or societal experience.

The whole gamut of soap operas may warrant women to think that perfect and unrealistic romantic moments in soap operas can be applied to their regular love lives or relationships. According to Johnson and Holmes (2019), many marriages and families have disintegrated as a result of the soap opera industry's rapid expansion. Soap operas trick women's imaginations, and as a result, they attempt to incorporate what they saw into their typical romantic relationships (Johnson & Holmes, 2019).

Previous studies have shown that viewers of popular soap operas take what they learn from the show and apply it to their own relationships in real life. Therefore, it is believed that soap operas are widening and affecting the viewers' understanding of relationships. The tenacity of soap operas to be creative may enable viewers to emulate certain tenets of the show in their relationships, making them more aware of the authenticity and intentions of their partners. However, limited studies have been carried out on Zee World soap operas and expectations on romantic relationships. It's on this premise that this study seeks to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the impact of Zee World soap operas on romantic expectations among married women in Ilorin, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Soap operas

A soap opera is a serialised TV or radio programme that showcases interconnected storylines centred on the lives of different characters. According to Okinyi et al. (2014), the stories in soap opera episodes typically focus on passionate relationships to the point of melodrama. The genre conventions of the soap opera are astounding. Soap operas have an impact on how viewers derive

messages. Since they cover a wide range of topics pertaining to women's real-life situations, soap operas - defined as a programme genre that chronicles characters' daily lives over an extended period of time - have long been a favourite among female audiences. The soap opera discusses socially significant issues such as relationships, kinship, reproduction, sexual orientation, and society's role in these issues, which is the sixth feature (Hobson, cited in Andeso, 2019). The audience is consistently in a better position than the producer because the soap operas focus is ordinary day-to-day existence as portrayed via the lives of the performers (Hobson & Pitout, cited in Andeso, 2019). Soap operas' storylines frequently address the same issues. Examples of such topics include emotion, solitary parenting, and loss. The youthful, the sentimental heroine, the sentimental hero, the mother and the father are only a few examples of character groups that frequently appear in soap operas (Pitout in Andeso, 2019).

According to Hoekstra (2020), viewers' social behaviours and some facets of adult personality development have been found to be considerably impacted by soap opera viewing. The effects of visual stimuli, whether they be shown on movie screens, soap operas, or other types of media, have an incredible impact on people. Although this effect has been observed and has furthermore been the focus of multiple studies, it is generally not evident to media consumers. The majority of studies on soap operas that are now available highlight how viewers' lives are impacted by the broadcasts (Hoekstra, 2020). O'Guinn and Shrum in Mahlatsi (2018) discovered that devoted soap opera viewers have essentially higher levels of simplicity when retrieving concepts from memory after watching a soap opera and then use these concepts by means of heuristics (mental shortcuts) in their interpretation of the real world. Watching soap operas exposes viewers to information that may affect their decisions and judgments in the real world (Mahlatsi, 2018). When analysing the scripting theory, these academics noted that messages that are thought to be precise will be simpler to include in people's sexual scripts since they do not conflict with people's pre-existing sexual scripts (Mahlatsi, 2018).

Zee World Broadcasts Indian domestic programming that has been dubbed into English from a variety of languages. Since the introduction of the Zee World channel on Nigeria's cable television network, the majority of married women there seldom ever watch Nigerian drama series, let alone listen to network news, because most of them have a schedule of various soap opera series that air on the Zee World cable network. As witnessed in Married Again, Guddan, Twist of Faith, and many more soap operas, Zee World soap operas frequently have themes of love, mistrust, jealousy, and hatred (www.indiannetzone.com).

Women and Soap operas

Soap operas have become increasingly popular since the 1970s and are thought to be more realistic than their predecessors and other genres (Aaliya & Zahra, 2012). In fact, a fictionalised version of our social structure and interpersonal relationships is offered through various soap opera scenarios. According to Mahlatsi (2018), there are three reasons to watch soap operas specifically: for the sex and romance, for the good and sophisticated character development, and for the serial format's never-ending and unexpected nature. Most of the female leads in modern soap operas that are broadcast on satellite channels are strong, traditional women. Since soap operas were first geared toward women and had a female-dominated audience in order to advance the status of women in

society, the majority of them focus on problems pertaining to women (Aaliya & Zahra, 2012). The emphasis on interpersonal relationships, and particularly interpersonal conflicts, is a major and defining aspect of all soap operas. For instance, there is a relatively high rate of extramarital relationships among the characters in soap operas. Thus, it may be concluded that watching soap operas may have an impact on viewers' marital relationships (Ashifa, 2018).

Women may be impacted by soap opera exposure in both positive and negative ways (Mbogori, 2018). On the one hand, because they include female characters in strong main roles and intricate plots, these kinds of shows have the potential to empower women (Andeso, 2019). They frequently impart relationship lessons as well, including how to communicate successfully and handle challenging circumstances. Additionally, some soap operas might encourage negative body images and gender stereotypes, particularly if the female characters are highly sexualised or unrealistic. Unfortunately, self-esteem and investments in one's personal growth may be negatively impacted by these messages (Mahlatsi, 2018). Otto et al. (2014) examined the potential effects of women's viewing of soap operas and other television programmes on their wellbeing. The findings indicated that women who watched a lot of these programmes had more unfavourable emotions, which had an impact on their general mental health. This study is significant because it demonstrates the need to take precautions to minimise women's exposure to these programs because they may have a negative influence on their wellbeing. In order for women to better safeguard their mental health, the authors also recommended that treatments that promote a more balanced viewing of programming be developed.

Aaliya (2012) evaluated the appeal, representation, and attitude toward women in soap operas. One of the most-watched television genres is soap operas, and as a cultural product, it is very well-liked by the general public, especially women. In this context, many television programs frequently feature concerns and difficulties specific to women. The study demonstrates that television, especially for women viewers, has more lasting and persuasive effects. Hagemann (2020) investigated the viewership of soap operas after interviewing 1,500 female viewers in 2018. The study discovered that how viewers saw themselves was significantly influenced by the representations of femininity in these programmes.

Soap operas and romantic expectations

Television and movies have the greatest impact on how people view dating and romantic relationships (Gala & Ghadiyali, 2020). In order to build strong relationships with others, whether familial, amicable, or romantic, communication is essential, which can be projected through lessons cultivated or learnt from mainstream media (Crone & Konijn, 2018). However, according to Hefner and Kretz (2021), if there is less interaction among people, it seems to affect someone's capacity to comprehend good love sentiments. Additionally, attitudes toward interpersonal interactions might be readily persuaded due to the prevalence of many forms of broad media (Gala & Ghadiyali, 2020). Beliefs about these social interactions and how they portray various sorts of interpersonal relationship skills and sexuality may be influenced by films and television.

Media exposure can lead to the development of beliefs or expectations for one's own self-validation, relationship maintenance, and displays of affection (Vaterlaus et al., 2018). A

stereotypical view of dating may result from expectations induced by media exposure, which may enforce notions around stereotypical relationships and gender roles (Vaterlaus et al., 2018). Investigations into how unrealistic movie expectations affect romantic relationships are still ongoing (Vaterlaus et al., 2018). The wellbeing of a person who transforms their expectations into a false impression of reality as a result of idealising romanticised notions presented in the media may be harmed (Hefner et al., 2017; Hefner and Kretz, 2021). Strong media appeal and cultural saturating factors may boost romantic movie exposure, impacting how realistic an individual perceives romantic views. It is unknown, nevertheless, if these validated media representations have an impact on the happiness of actual relationships.

However, Gala and Ghadivali (2020) asserted that exposure to unhealthy media portrayals can promote beliefs and attitudes, such as possessiveness, jealousy, and unrealistic expectations, that can lead to unhealthy relationship outcomes. According to them, the quality of relationships from unhealthy exposures is assumed to make a person less satisfied in their relationship. Discrepancies in the representation of relationship quality result in a lack of self-worth, conflicts in relationships and disharmony, as well as levels of dissatisfaction. Although movie media exposure may have an impact on beliefs, its influence on satisfaction levels is inconsistent with previous research.

According to Vannier and Sullivan (2017), romantic expectations are hard to fulfil in genuine partnerships since romantic ideas naturally give rise to them. As a result, it is anticipated that a gap between beliefs and reality will impact satisfaction. Participants acknowledged unrealistic expectations while yet being content with their love relationships despite an apparent discrepancy between expectations and reality. High levels of perceived pleasure and false ideas may have something to do with the way healthy role models—those who are self-assured and confident - are depicted in the media. Because they are encouraged to respond to and discuss needs with their spouse, participants claim they are more likely to be fulfilled in their relationship (Gala & Ghadivali, 2018). On the other hand, how satisfied might participants feel when media portrays distortions that elicit negative feelings rather than encouragement or motivation?

However, it appears that seeing romantic films in college has primed students' pre-existing views and attitudes about relationships. The ability to quickly recall an emotional perception's intensity for predetermined beliefs shown during adolescence may be improved by priming ideals (Tukachinsky & Dorros, 2018). One is more likely to see their current relationship partner as less favourable or unsatisfactory the stronger the emotional attachment and idealisation engendered by extensive media exposure (Tukachinsky & Dorros, 2018). Movie media can strongly influence romantic attitudes and beliefs for people of different ages, most likely as a function of consumption rates (Jalilova, 2020). The level of exposure does not, however, represent the sole factor that affects expectations or pleasure in romantic relationships (Jalilova, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura, explains human behaviour as a dynamic interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental influences. This triadic reciprocal

causation emphasises that individuals actively shape and are shaped by their surroundings. SCT posits that behaviour, personal factors (such as cognitive, affective, and biological events), and environmental factors continuously influence one another. For example, a person's beliefs can affect their behaviour, which in turn can shape their environment (Bandura, 1997). Central to SCT is the idea that individuals learn by observing others. This learning can occur through direct observation or mediated experiences, such as watching a role model in a social setting or media content (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

A critical determinant of behaviour in SCT, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to execute actions necessary to achieve specific outcomes. High self-efficacy enhances motivation, persistence, and resilience, while low self-efficacy can hinder goal attainment (Pajares, 1996). For a person to perform a behaviour, they must have the knowledge and skills required. SCT emphasises the importance of education and skill-building in behaviour change interventions (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). These are the beliefs about the likely outcomes of a behaviour, which can influence decision-making. Positive expectations can promote behaviour, while negative ones may deter it (Bandura, 1986). SCT incorporates the concept of reinforcement, both direct (rewards or punishments) and indirect (vicarious reinforcement), as critical for behaviour acquisition and maintenance (Schunk, 2012).

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is highly relevant to understanding the influence of soap operas on women's romantic expectations as it highlights the role of observational learning, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations in shaping behaviour and attitudes. Soap operas often portray romantic relationships in dramatised and idealised ways, which viewers may internalise through observational learning, especially when they identify with the characters or scenarios. This can lead to the development of unrealistic romantic expectations, as women may model their beliefs and attitudes on the outcomes depicted in the shows, particularly when positive portrayals of love and conflict resolution reinforce these.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a quantitative method with the use of questionnaires to collect data. The population consist of married women residents living in the Ilorin metropolis. According to the results of the 2006 population census of Nigeria as published by the National Population Commission (NPC), the population of married women in Ilorin is 393,140, while those that fall within eighteen (18) to sixty-five (65) years amounted to 200,265. According to the sample schedule of Krejcie and Morgan, 384 samples were used in this study. A total of 444 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and 400 copies of the questionnaire were valid and returned. The stratified sampling method was used to allocate the questionnaires equally between ancient (Oloje and Akerebiata) and new settlements (Government Residential Area and Lower Niger River Basin Area). (Source: Ilorin West Local Government Secretariat). Purposive sampling and snowballing sampling designs were used to distribute the questionnaires to individual respondents who are married women between the ages of 18 and 65 years. The researcher considered the stratified method to ensure that each settlement is represented in this study. Ilorin was divided into two strata for this study, and the strata are ancient and new settlements (source: Ilorin West Local Government Secretariat). Hence, the questionnaires were divided equally among each settlement.

Purposive sampling was considered because the researcher purposively gave the questionnaires to the married women in Ilorin.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Variable

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25 years	15	3.8
	26-33 years	233	58.2
	34-41 years	90	22.5
	42-49 years	23	5.8
	50 and above	39	9.7
	Total	400	100.0
Level of Education	SSCE	16	4.0
	NCE/HND	47	11.8
	BA/BSc	282	70.4
	PG	55	13.8
	Total	400	100.0
Employment Status	Employed	237	59.3
	Unemployed	57	14.2
	Self-Employed	106	26.5
	Total	400	100.0
Indigeneship	Ilorin	272	68.0
	Non-Ilorin	128	32.0
	Total	400	100.0

Results from the demographics (Table 1) show that the majority of respondents, representing 62%, were between the ages of 18 and 33, while those between 34 and 41 years came second, representing 23%. Thus, the overwhelming majority of the respondents are within the age range of 18 to 41, representing 85% of respondents. This is in tandem with the age range of most married women in Ilorin. Also, on the level of education, the majority of respondents (71%) are BA/BSc holders, while 14% of the respondents are PG and 12% are NCE/HND holders. This may not be a true representation of the qualification of married women in Ilorin because convenient sampling was applied to distribute questionnaires to the respondents in this research. Results from table 4.2.1 show that the majority of respondents, representing 62%, fell between the ages of 18 – 33 years, while those between 34 – 41 years came second, representing 23%. Thus, the overwhelming majority of the respondents are within the age range of 18 – 41 years, representing 85% of respondents. This is in tandem with the age range of most married women in Ilorin. On employment status, more than half of the respondents (60%) are public employed, while self-employed came second with 26%, and unemployed (14%). On citizenship, the results show that the majority of the respondents (68%) are indigene of Ilorin while (32%) are non-indigene. This is not surprising because the research was carried out in Ilorin City.

Table 2: Respondents' Perception of Zee Word Soap Operas

Respondents' Positive Responses on the Perception of Zee World Soap Operas	Level of Agreement (%)						
	1	2	3	4	M	SD	%
Zee World Soap Operas increase self-esteem in romantic relationships	1.0	20.0	38.3	47	3.2	0.8	69.5
Zee World Soap Operas bring cordiality to romantic relationships	3.8	9.8	66.0	20.4	3.0	0.7	84.7
Zee World Soap Operas educate women on ways of handling marital crisis	1.2	6.6	64.2	28.0	3.2	0.6	79.0
Zee World Soap Operas inculcate positive romantic values in women	2.5	5.0	33.5	59.0	3.5	0.6	55.8
Zee World Soap Operas promote non-violent romantic relationship	1.0	1.0	47.5	50.5	3.5	0.5	62.1
Zee World Soap Operas strengthen romantic relationship	2.0	1.5	50.5	46.0	3.5	0.5	65.5
Zee World Soap Operas promote fidelity in romantic relationship	1.5	20.5	25.2	52.8	3.3	0.8	60.4
Zee World Soap Operas raise realistic romantic expectation	22.0	11.5	56.0	10.5	2.6	0.9	92.1
Total					3.2	0.7	71.1
Respondents' Negative Responses on the Perception of Zee World Soap Operas							
Zee World Soap Operas decrease self-esteem in romantic relationships	40.8	23.2	34.0	2.0	1.9	0.6	98.5
Zee World Soap Operas bring enmity to romantic relationships	44.5	31.5	21.0	3.0	1.8	0.8	97.8
Zee World Soap Operas misinform women on ways of handling marital crises	37.0	41.0	21.0	1.0	1.9	0.8	99.3
Zee World Soap Operas inculcate negative romantic values in women	22.5	55.2	21.0	1.3	2.0	0.7	99.0
Zee World Soap Operas promote violence in romantic relationship	40.0	57.8	1.2	1.0	1.6	0.5	99.3
Zee World Soap Operas weaken romantic relationship	50.7	45.5	2.6	1.2	1.5	0.6	99.1
Zee World Soap Operas promote infidelity in romantic relationship	20.0	48.2	29.8	2.0	2.1	0.7	98.5
						0.7	97.2
Zee World Soap Operas raise unrealistic romantic expectations	12.3	44.7	39.2	3.8	2.3		
Total					1.9	0.7	98.6

Table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents with 71% [$M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.9$] have positive perception of Zee World Soap Operas. For example, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (92%) said that Zee World Soap Operas used to raise realistic romantic expectations. Another high percentage of respondents representing 85% said that Zee World Soap Operas bring cordiality to romantic relationship. Also, 79% of the respondents said that Zee World Soap Operas educate women on ways of handling marital crisis. However, almost all respondents with 99% [$M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.7$] disagreed to negative perception of Zee World Soap Operas. For example, almost all the respondents (99%) disagreed that Zee World Soap Operas weakens romantic relationship. Also, another 99% of respondents disagreed that Zee World Soap Operas promote violence in romantic relationship and also, that Zee Word Soap Operas does not inculcate negative romantic values in women.

Table 3: Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas

Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas on Affection	Level of Agreement (%)						
	1	2	3	4	M	SD	%
I expect my partner to be treating me with kindness, love, and respect	2.0	10.0	17.8	70.2	3.6	0.7	47.4
I expect my partner to show me affection by giving me flowers and gift regularly	1.8	6.0	60.5	31.7	3.3	0.6	76.2
I expect my partner to assist me in house chores	1.2	2.6	68.2	28.0	3.2	0.5	79.0
I expect my partner to spend quality time with me	2.4	5.4	26.0	66.2	3.7	0.5	50.4
I expect my partner to kiss me more often	1.2	2.6	47.5	48.7	3.5	0.6	63.5
Total	M =	3.5	SD = 0.6		% = 63.3		
Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas on Protection							
I expect my partner to fight for me when the need arises	2.2	5.3	25.5	67.0	3.6	0.6	49.8
I expect my partner to take my side on every issue	3.8	8.2	33.0	55.0	3.4	0.6	58.8
I expect my partner to protect and shield me in all circumstances	3.8	12.0	29.7	54.5	3.5	0.8	59.1
I expect my partner to protect me from all kinds of danger	5.0	2.5	37.5	55.0	3.7	0.9	58.8
I expect my partner to protect me from bullying, even from his relatives	9.0	1.0	36.3	53.7	3.3	0.7	59.7
Total	M = 3.5		SD = 0.7		% = 57.2		
Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas on Fidelity							
I expect my partner not to cheat on me	6.3	9.2	38.2	46.3	3.4	0.7	65.3
I expect my partner to be loyal to me in all aspect	1.3	2.5	67.7	28.5	3.2	0.5	78.6

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I expect my partner to trust and be committed to me	1.0	6.5	35.5	57.0	3.5	0.6	57.3
I expect my partner never to have concubine	1.5	1.0	33.0	64.5	3.6	0.5	51.6
I expect my partner never to be promiscuous	1.2	2.0	36.0	60.8	3.6	0.5	54.4
Total	M = 3.5		SD = 0.6		% = 61.4		
Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas on Self-Disclosure							
I expect my partner to tell me the truth always	4.6	1.2	41.2	53.0	3.5	0.8	60.3
I expect my partner not to be secretive	6.0	2.3	31.7	60.0	3.8	1.2	55.0
I expect my partner to open up to me about his concerns	9.0	2.2	32.5	56.3	3.6	1.0	57.8
I expect my partner to open up to me about his feelings	6.0	1.2	41.0	51.8	3.7	0.9	61.2
I expect my partner to open up to me about his financial status	4.2	1.8	28.4	65.6	3.4	0.6	50.8
Total	M = 3.6		SD = 0.9		% = 57.0		
Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas on Sexual Satisfaction							
I expect my partner to have a satisfying sexual connection with me	1.2	1.0	44.0	53.8	3.5	0.6	59.7
I expect my partner to meet my sexual needs	1.2	1.1	36.0	61.7	3.6	0.8	53.7
I expect my partner to meet my sexual preferences	1.1	1.0	21.4	76.5	3.8	0.9	42.6
I expect my partner to be sensitive or aware of my sexual desires	2.0	1.0	14.2	82.8	3.8	0.7	37.9
I expect my partner to be sexually compatible with me.	1.0	2.0	45.0	52.0	3.5	0.6	61.0
Total	M = 3.6		SD = 0.7		% = 51.0		
Respondents' Romantic Expectations from Zee World Soap Operas on Gender Equality							
I expect my partner to treat me as equal in a romantic relationship	2.3	3.4	48.0	46.3	3.4	0.6	65.2
I expect my partner to carry me along in all decision-making	1.2	1.0	37.0	60.8	3.6	0.5	54.4
I expect my partner to split family bills with me	16.0	36.0	32.5	15.5	2.5	0.9	88.4
I expect my partner to handle some of the house chores	2.8	4.2	81.7	11.3	3.0	0.4	91.5
I am expected to pursue a career just like my partner	2.3	7.5	49.7	40.5	3.3	0.6	69.6
Total					3.2	0.6	73.8

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree, M= Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Results from Table 3 show the kinds of expectations respondents bring into their romantic relationship. The expectations were categorised into six, which are affection, protection, fidelity, self-disclosure, sexual satisfaction and gender equality. For affection, the majority of the respondents, 63% [$M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.6$], agreed that Zee World soap operas increase their affective expectations in their romantic relationships. For example, 76% of the respondents said that they expect their partner to show them affection by giving them flowers and gift regularly. For romantic expectations on protection, more than half of the respondents, representing 57% [$M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.7$], said that Zee World soap operas increase their protective expectations in their romantic relationships. For example, the majority of the respondents (60%) said that they expect their partners to protect them from bullying, even from their relatives. Also, 58% of the respondents said that they expect their partners to take their side on every issue.

Romantic expectations on fidelity show that the majority of the respondents, 61% [$M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.6$], said that Zee World soap operas increase their fidelity expectations in their romantic relationships. For instance, the overwhelming majority (79%) agreed that they expect their partners to be loyal to them in all aspects. Also, more than half of the respondents (65%) said they expect their partners not to cheat on them. Romantic expectations on self-disclosure reveal that more than half of the respondents, 57% [$M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.9$], said that Zee world soap operas increase their expectations on self-disclosure in their romantic relationship. For example, the majority of the respondents (61%) said that they expect their partners to open up to them about their feelings. Also, 60% of the respondents said they expect their partners to tell them the truth always. Romantic expectations on sexual satisfaction: more than half of the respondents, representing 51% [$M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.7$], said that their romantic expectations on sexual satisfaction increased due to their exposure to Zee World soap operas. For instance, 61% of the respondents agreed that they expect their partners to be sexually compatible with them. In the same vein, 60% of the respondents said that they expect their partners to have satisfactory sexual connections with them. For the gender equality category on romantic expectations, the majority of the respondents, 74% [$M = 3.2$, $SD = 0.6$], agreed that their exposure to Zee World Soap Operas increased their romantic expectations on gender equality treatment from their romantic partners. For example, the overwhelming majority, 91% of the respondents, said that they expect their partners to handle some of the house chores. Also, 65% of the respondents said that they expect their partners to treat them as equal in a romantic relationship.

Test of hypothesis

Table 4: Relationship Between Level of Exposure to Zee World Soap Opera and Romantic Expectations

Variables		Level of Exposure	Romantic Expectation
Level of Exposure	Pearson Correlation	1	.960
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	400	400
Romantic Expectation	Pearson Correlation	.096	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	400	400

Decision rule: Reject H_0 if p-value $< \alpha$; otherwise, do not reject H_0 .

Decision: Since p-value = 0.001 $< \alpha$ -level = 0.05, we reject H_0 .

The correlation coefficient (Table 4) indicates a strong positive relationship between respondents' level of exposure to Zee World soap operas and romantic expectations, with a 96.0% correlation. The P-value was found to be statistically significant at a 5% level of significance with the p-value < 0.05 . There is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between respondents' level of exposure to zee world soap operas and their romantic expectation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research findings showed that Zee World soap operas are very popular among the respondents. The overwhelming majority of the respondents, 96%, exposed themselves to Zee World soap operas, while a few respondents, 4%, often and rarely watch Zee World soap operas. The results show that a large number of respondents have positive perceptions towards Zee World soap operas, with 86.4% of the respondents agreeing that Zee World soap operas bring cordiality, increase self-esteem (79%), educate women on ways of handling marital crises, and inculcate positive romantic values in women. However, the majority of the respondents disagreed with the negative perceptions of Zee World soap operas. The results are similar to the findings of Hagemann (2020), who examined soap opera viewing and found that the images of femininity in soap opera programmes have a significant impact on how the viewers perceive themselves. On romantic expectations from watching Zee World soap operas, the questions were segmented into affection, protection, fidelity, self-disclosure, sexual satisfaction and gender equality. All these segments were agreed upon by the majority of the respondents, with affection (92%), protection (93%), fidelity (85%), self-disclosure (94%), sexual satisfaction (100%), and gender equality (94%). Therefore, this shows that Zee World soap operas highly increase the romantic expectations of the respondents. The findings are in line with the findings of Reizer and Hetsroni (2014), who believe that romantic relationships are not based on systematic and formal training; instead, they develop

from observation and exposure to relevant images and messages in different arenas, including mass media. Results indicate that the majority of the respondents agreed on the personality question, and this shows that they are highly extroverted and that just a few are introverted, which may highly increase their romantic expectations. This is supported by Cherry (2023), who states that personality not only influences how we move and respond in our environment but also determines how we act in certain ways.

The findings in this study also supported using correlation analysis in testing the first hypothesis which show that there is a strong positive relationship between respondents' level of exposure to zee world soap operas and romantic expectation. The findings are in line with the work of Mbogori (2018), who states that high viewers of Telenovelas soap operas are motivated by a number of reasons, such as learning about romantic relationships, relaxing, and learning about people and the world.

Conclusion

The study revealed that women in Ilorin are highly exposed to Zee World soap operas. Their messages, perceptions, and attitudes are on positive levels, and their romantic expectations are high. Therefore, this study concluded that exposure to Zee World soap operas and messages have positively influenced the romantic expectations of married women in Ilorin.

Recommendations

1. Zee world soap operas should be educative and informative with women related messages that can promote programmes on marital affairs, preach on rape, breast cancers and women's violence
2. Since women's perceptions, attitudes and messages derived from watching Zee World soap operas are positive, this channel should be regulated, i.e., the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and other regulation bodies need to increase the level of competence on media literacy and regulation by enforcing proper implementation of its purpose to ensure characters. These scenes will promote a positive portrayal of Nigerian indigenous cultural values and practices.
3. It is recommended that everything to be advertised or used in scenes needs to be controlled to avoid negative perceptions from the viewers.

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