



## ABSTRACT

*Unmonitored media exposure has been linked with negative psychographic development in children. This is a concern especially with television viewership. In 2011, the Digital Satellite Television (DStv) – the foremost satellite TV provider in Africa introduced the Parental Control (PC) feature enabling parents totally control viewership by restricting and monitoring*

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## DOPTION OF DStv PARENTAL CONTROL FOR TELEVISION MEDIATION AMONG PARENTS IN ETI-OSA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE

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### Introduction

**M**odern technology continues to make it easier than ever before for children to have access to varied forms of media content that highly influence how they perceive the world as well as shape their behaviour. The curiosity of a child while exposed to one form of media or the other often leads to exploring a variety of content that are age inappropriate. This necessitates the need for Parental Mediation – the intentional act of monitoring and or restricting media interaction with an intent to limit exposure to age appropriate media content.

Parenting appears to be more challenging in these times as the world now revolves around technology which has paved the way for a multimedia generation. Beyond ensuring the safety of a child, it is the responsibility of every parent to ensure the transmission of positive values. Parental mediation amongst other things is a step in the right direction towards the



attainment of this responsibility. Basically, Parental Mediation seeks to empower parents by proffering strategies via which parents are in charge of exposure to the mass media (television, internet, mobile phone) by their ward(s).

Steele and Brown (1995), posit that young people often spend more time with the media than they do with their parents. Parents and other socialization agents have arguably shirked their responsibilities when it comes to directing the youth away from risky forms of behaviour; thereby allowing the media a more fundamental influence. For instance, Children who are exposed to media content that depict violence and crime are most likely to exhibit violent behaviour amongst their peers.

Television is a common mass medium among children. It is often utilized by parents to pacify children while they focus on work, domestic chores, or get some rest. It is a captivating medium that provides numerous channels with a variety of content. The advent of cable television broadcasting in Nigeria in the 1990's gave rise to the assortment of channels via which media audiences (children

*access to TV stations whether or not they are home. Anchored on social learning theory, this study empirically determined the extent to which awareness of DStv's PC and perceptions among parents in Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos state results in its use. 400 parents were Purposively surveyed from Ikota/Ikate Village, Igbo-Efon/Ikota Housing Estate, Victoria Island, Ikoyi II. Awareness of DStv PC was found to have a strong positive significant relationship with parents' perception of DStv PC ( $r = 0.932, p < 0.05$ ), and their use of DStv's PC ( $r = 0.897, p < 0.05$ ). However, the use of PCs among parents was found to be insignificant. There is a need for parents to be intentional about the need to mediate their children's television viewership and also, they should combine restrictive mediation with active mediation or co-use mediation.*

**Keywords:** Parental mediation, Digital Satellite Television, Parental control, Awareness, Perception, Use



inclusive) are exposed to both local and foreign content. The *Digital Satellite Television (DStv)* is currently the leading cable television in Nigeria. It was launched in 1995 by *MultiChoice*- a South African owned media organization. While *DStv* is not the only cable TV in Nigeria, it is considered to be elitist essentially because of the subscription cost and the exclusive broadcast of some channels.

In 2011, *DStv* introduced the Parental Control Feature in a bid to provide a form of parental mediation that enables parents and adults to checkmate the viewership of children. It is a regulatory feature on *DStv* with options to: block a channel(s) and restrict viewership to selected contents and channels based on Parental Guidance (PG) ratings. An advertising campaign detailing the steps for its use was launched on both television and *YouTube*. This study sought to determine the awareness, perception, and use of *DStv* parental control among resident parents of Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos state who have children not older than 17 years of age. This scope was utilized because it is an elite neighbourhood guaranteed to have a *DStv* in virtually each home because of the high cost of subscription.

This study sought to empirically determine the extent to which the awareness of *DStv* parental control amongst parents and their perception of the feature resulted in the actual utilization for parental mediation. Specifically, the study aimed to:

‘Home n Harmony’

### **Research Objectives**

1. Ascertain the awareness of *DStv* parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA.
2. Find out the perception of parents in Eti-Osa LGA to *DStv* parental control.
3. Establish the level of use of *DStv* parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the awareness of *DStv* parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA?



2. How do parents in Eti-Osa LGA perceive *DStv* parental control?
3. To what extent do parents in Eti-Osa LGA utilize *DStv* parental control?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The study postulates that:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between awareness of *DStv* parental control and perception of *DStv* parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA, Lagos.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Awareness and use of *DStv* parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA, Lagos.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Parental mediation is an intervention process that seeks to filter media exposure among children. In the context of this study with focus on the television medium, parental mediation is an intentional act of adopting “practices designed to influence response to television content through joint discussion or through simply watching together with the child as well as more controlling practices designed to restrict or manage overall time spent watching television or the particular programs” (Austin 1993; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2000 in Helsper 2008 p.583). It is a form of parent media regulation whereby parents set parameters to guide the media exposure of their children. The essence of parental mediation in the media interaction of children is to limit (as much as possible) the exposure to inappropriate contents and negative influence from the media.

Violetta and Melzer (2015), opine that parental mediation is beyond the adoption of restrictive strategy to the media exposure of children, it also includes what they refer to as “parents’ educative explanations” which is a form of parental mediation whereby parents take time to explain to their children the fact that the media does not present a holistic reflection of the realities of life. This is a mediation strategy that could result in the practice of ‘self-mediation’ whereby a child is able to discern between media contents that could potentially yield positive and or negative influences.



There are three major Parental Mediation strategies of: Active Mediation, Co-use Mediation, and Restrictive Mediation. Active Mediation is a strategy that requires parents to engage in parent-child discussion during media interaction. Discussions centre on the risks associated with the exposure to media technology and content (Vaterlaus, 2018). According to Austin (1993) as cited by Collier, Coyne, Rasmussen, Hawkins, Padilla-Walker, Erickson, and Memmott-Elison (2016 p.1), active mediation “occurs when parents discuss character’s choices, central themes, or other components of the media consumed with their child, with the intent to promote critical thinking of the media”.

Active mediation is a form of explanatory mediation process that requires parents to spend ample time viewing television programmes with their children, paying close attention as things unfold so as to properly guide their children. This is definitely a process that requires patience among parents, children often have difficult questions and a parent who is not patient will find it quite difficult to follow through with this mediation strategy.

The Co-Use Mediation occurs when a parent participates in media interaction alone with their children. It is also referred to as co-viewing mediation. Livingstone and Helsper (2008), posits that it is a mediation strategy whereby parents become co-viewers alone alongside their children in order to share in the experience. This form of mediation will require parents to desist from making comments or engaging their children in any form of dialogue while engaged with the media which is not the easiest thing for a parent to do.

Restrictive Mediation on the other hand is a total control strategy whereby parents totally regulate the media exposure of their children. This is done by: blocking access to certain media content or channels, creating a password, setting a timer, or regulating the use of technological devices on which children can have access to any form of media. This strategy is a more drastic approach to parental mediation. According to Atkin, Greenburg, & Baldwin (2006), restrictive mediation is just as it sounds. It is sometimes referred to as Rule Making mediation. The DStv parental control is a classic example of restrictive mediation.



Of the three mediation strategies, active mediation appears to be most demanding as parents have two levels of responsibility of first experiencing the media along with their children and secondly engaging in discussions resulting from the media content experienced. A limitation concerned with this strategy lies in the fact that it is most convenient for parents to adopt this strategy during traditional media such as: television and radio exposure as opposed to during new media interaction. This is because of the channels via which the new media is assessed, and the time of exposure which might not be convenient for parents.

### ***Digital Satellite Television (DStv) Parental Control: How It Works***

DStv is the premium cable TV with over 11 million subscribers in Nigeria. Though leading the cable TV market, it is not the only provider and certainly not the most affordable. DStv parental control is a feature on the DStv platform that enables the restriction, and monitoring of viewership. Programs can be blocked based on Parental Guidance (PG) rating. It can also be used to block an entire channel as long as it falls with the PG blocking option and viewing is only accessible with a valid PG PIN. The essence of the feature is to give parents an avenue through which they can ensure that their children are not exposed to adult content whether they are home or otherwise.

The feature involves three major steps all of which are found in the “Settings” on the DStv remote control. Once Settings is activated, the “Parental Control” option is displayed, with a dropdown for “Parental Guidance (PG) Settings”. At this point, options such as: Global Blocking, Parental Control, Select Blocked Channels, Change PG Pin, and Undo Changes are displayed. The process is simple and can be set up with ease.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on social learning theory. Social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977. The theory is of the assumption that learning occurs through watching the behaviours of others. This theory has been particularly valuable in analysing the possible effects of television violence but it can also be applied to other areas of mass communication media effects. Social learning theory



acknowledges that people can bypass this rather inefficient method of learning and can acquire some behaviour simply by observing this and storing the observation as a guide for future behaviour. The theory recognizes that much learning takes place by watching others display their individual or collective behaviours.

Severin and Tankard (2001), observed that much of the effects of the mass media take place through a process of social learning. The theory suggests that individuals learn by watching the behaviour of others portrayed via mass media, thereby imbibing the observed into their lives. Also Baran and Davis (2012), opine that media audiences are led into a process of imitation resulting from social learning. This is especially true of children whose ability to decipher what is right from what is wrong need to be guided by some form of parental mediation.

According to Collier et al (2016 p.2):

*children are very perceptive of what their parents are doing and may model their behaviours and attitudes toward media to conform to parents' use. Unlike restrictive and active mediation, parents who co-view send an implicit message of approval of any media content consumed together by their mere presence of viewing the joint content, intentional or inadvertent.*

Therefore, parental mediation can guide the social learning of children with regulated television viewing that leads them to focus solely on age appropriate content likely to portray positive influence through restrictive mediation. Also, the active involvement of parents during television viewing, and discussions could correct impressions among children on certain lifestyles and behaviour depicted in television contents, basically nipping it in the board before they imbibe such into their lives.

### **Parental Mediation Effect**

The power of television has brought a lot of changes and challenges to the viewing situation. This is because the world is becoming a global village and people including children can view all they desire. Parental



mediation strategies have been found to be effective when it is adopted to the right media. Schooler, Kim, and Sorsoli (2006), examined the role of parents as mediators of adolescents' television viewing. The study sought to determine the connection between the mediation strategy and self-esteem, body satisfaction, and sexual experience among female adolescents.

Findings reveal that adolescents whose parents were more involved in their television viewing (co-use mediation) reported greater self-esteem, greater body satisfaction among female adolescents, while those whose parents adopted the restrictive mediation had less sexual experience. This study showcases the unique advantages of both mediation strategies. The use of restrictive mediation however is seen to yield a less sexual experience among female adolescents meaning that the less they are exposed to such content, the less they are prone to indulge in sexual activities which is an area of dire concern among parents.

Testing an integrated model of parental mediation that involved: family communication, parental mediation styles, children's perceptions of televised realities and the actual world, An and Lee (2010), sampled 348 Korean adolescents. Their study found that the use of restrictive mediation along with open family communication significantly increased the perceived disparity between televised realities and the actual world among children, while co-viewing mediation was not found to directly affect either. This reveals the effectiveness of restrictive mediation.

Lippold, Greenberg, Graham, and Feinberg (2013), assessing the media monitoring process among families as it relates to adolescent problem behaviour found that parental mediation of monitoring media interaction of adolescents were most significantly related to maternal knowledge within families with high levels of positive effect as opposed to families with low levels of positive effect. The impact of gender in mediation is showcased suggesting that mothers tend to exert this role more than fathers. This is up for debate as there are quite a number of factors such as: career, culture, environmental indices that determine the mediation capacity of both parents in these times.

In a study on the influence of parental mediation on aggressive behaviour, substance use, and sexual behaviour among youths, Collier et



al (2016), found that there was a significant relationship between restrictive mediation, co-viewing mediation, and all four child outcomes (aggressive behaviour, substance use, and sexual behaviour), while active mediation was insignificant, although it was individually related to lower levels of aggression, and sexual behaviour. This implies that parents may have the ability to diminish some of the adverse effects of the media by using certain mediation strategies.

Most studies on parental mediation focus on its diverse effects on children. The awareness and use of these mediation strategies among parents is however identified as a major gap which this study sought to fill.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The quantitative survey research design was adopted in this study. A sample size of 400 was drawn from Eti-Osa LGA of Lagos state which houses a concentration of elite parents who can afford the *DStv* subscription. The sample size was determined statistically with the Taro Yamane formula. A 95% confidence level and a 0.05 level of marginal error were assumed for the calculation. The multistage sampling approach which involves the use of two or more sampling techniques to derive each respondent in an empirical study was used. A combination of stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling technique was utilized in this study. Stratified sampling is a technique that is adopted in a research to sample a particular stratum within a population.

The first step of sampling in this study was to determine the various strata within Eti-Osa LGA. The LGA is divided into two constituencies. There are six wards in constituency 1 and four in constituency 2. Simple random sampling precisely the fish bowl method was utilized to select two wards from each constituency. The fishbowl simple random sampling technique was utilized to select two wards from each constituency. The selected wards were: Ikota/Ikate Village, Igbo-Efon/Ikota Housing Estate, Victoria Island, Ikoyi II.

One hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed in each ward to make for a total of four hundred. The purposive sampling technique was used at the third and final stage of sampling. It is a technique in which



the researcher selects specific respondents based on the fact that they possess unique characteristics necessary to participate in the study. In this case, this approach was adopted in order to sample resident parents from the four wards with children ages 1 to 17 years. The research instrument was validated using face validity Cronbach alpha statistical test. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher and three trained research assistants. The Statistical Product and Services Solutions (SPSS) software package V.20 was used to analyse the field data while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to test the hypothesis while findings are illustrated using descriptive and inferential statistics.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Respondents' Demography**

This study recorded 98% response rate. Three hundred and ninety-two (392) copies of the questionnaire distributed were retrieved. Only parents with children within the minor age (0-17 years) participated in this study. The age distribution of respondent's children was; 133 respondents (34%) have children ages 0 to 5 years, 204 (52%) have children ages 6 to 10 years, while 56 (14%) have children ages 11 to 17 years. The data reveals that the majority of the respondent's children are Grade-schoolers between ages 6 to 10 years.

The occupational distribution of respondents was as follows; 232 respondents (58%) are employed, 156 (39%) are self-employed, while 12 (3%) are unemployed. Majority of parents who participated in this study are employed which implies that they are most likely to be absent from home for most of the day. Atkin, Greenburg, & Baldwin (1991), "rule making mediation" otherwise known as restrictive mediation would be a more realistic mediation strategy among such parents.

### **Awareness of DStv Parental Control**

The awareness of DStv parental control among respondents was significant as 215 respondents (55%) were fully aware of DStv parental control, 108 (28%) partially aware, while 69 (17%) are unaware about DStv



parental control. This implies that there is a high level of awareness of DStv parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA.

### **Knowledge of DStv Parental Control**

The findings of the study reveal that 184 respondents (47.0%) completely understand how the DStv parental control works, 117 (30%) partially understand how the feature works, while 91 (23%) do not understand how the feature works. This implies that not all respondents who claim to have full aware of DStv parental control completely understand how the feature works. Out of 55% who are completely aware, 8% of them do not know how it works.

However, this does not negate the fact that a majority (47%) of the respondents have significant knowledge of how the feature works.

### **Perception of DStv Parental Control**

Adopting the following Decision Rule: if  $\bar{x}$  is  $\leq 1.49$  = Undecided; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 = Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49 = Agree; 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree, the findings revealed that respondents had a positive disposition cum perception of the feature as majority “Agreed” to statements on the functions of the feature and its relevance for parental mediation of television viewership of children ( $\bar{x}=4.07$ ). Specifically, they agreed they liked the DStv parental control feature ( $\bar{x}= 4.23$ ), they felt DStv parental control feature gave parents control over what their children watched ( $\bar{x}= 4.07$ ), they thought it was a good idea to use the DStv parental control feature ( $\bar{x}= 4.01$ ) and that DStv parental control feature was a good way of ensuring their children were less exposed to inappropriate media content.

### **Adoption of DStv Parental Control**

Table 2 depicts that parents agreed they adopted the DStv parental control feature ( $\bar{x}= 3.68$ ). Parents blocked selected channels that have strong adult themes ( $\bar{x}= 4.28$ ), they kept selected channels on DStv blocked at all times ( $\bar{x}= 3.73$ ), they used DStv parental control for their children ( $\bar{x}= 3.64$ ) and they blocked selected channels based on their PG ratings ( $\bar{x}= 3.64$ ).



### Research Hypotheses

***H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between awareness of DStv parental control and perception of DStv parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA, Lagos.***

Table 3 indicates that awareness of DStv parental control has a strong positive significant relationship with parents' perception of DStv parental control ( $r = 0.932, p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that increased parental awareness of DStv parental control features has a high tendency to improve parents' perception of DStv parental control. In other words, parents' attitudinal disposition to the DStv parental control feature is largely dependent on their awareness of such features. Therefore, parents' perception of DStv parental control can be improved when their awareness of the features is increased.

***H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Awareness and use of DStv parental control among parents in Eti-Osa LGA, Lagos***

Table 4 shows that awareness of DStv parental control has a strong positive significant relationship with parents' use of DStv parental control ( $r = 0.897, p < 0.05$ ). The analysis implies that increased parental awareness of DStv parental control will increase the likelihood that they use the DStv parental control feature. The implication of this is that parents will likely use the DStv parental control feature when their awareness is increased and may not use it when their awareness of such features is reduced.

### CONCLUSION

The study therefore concludes that there is a high level of awareness of DStv parental control among the resident parents of Eti-Osa LGA Lagos. While 55% are completely aware of the feature, only 17% of them do not know anything about the feature. However, as far as understanding how it works, only 47% of parents who are fully aware of DStv parental control do. This implies that a majority of the parents do not understand how the feature works. As is expected, there is a positive perception of DStv parental control features among parents. The awareness of DStv parental control was found to have a strong positive significant



relationship with parents' perception of DStv parental control ( $r = 0.932$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

As far as the actual utilization of the feature among parents in Eti-Osa LGA Lagos is concerned, the awareness and positive perception most definitely informed the use of the feature, however the level of use is insignificant. This is concerning because the majority of them have children ages 6 to 12 years which is a critical stage of character formation. The more these children are exposed to unmediated television, the more they are at risk of negative influence.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study recommends that more awareness should be created about the DStv parental control feature on the path of DStv as Hypotheses 2 has shown the significant relationship between awareness and level of usage amongst parents. There is a need for DStv to run parental control advert campaigns on their major channels and not just on the Dish platform.

Furthermore, this study recommends that there is a need for parents to be intentional about the need to mediate their children's television viewership and also, parents should combine restrictive mediation with active or co-use mediation. If properly adopted, it has the potential of nurturing self-mediation among children.

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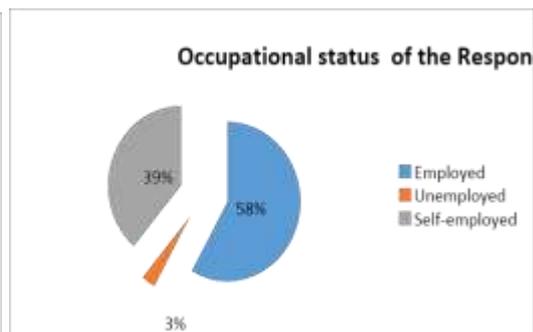
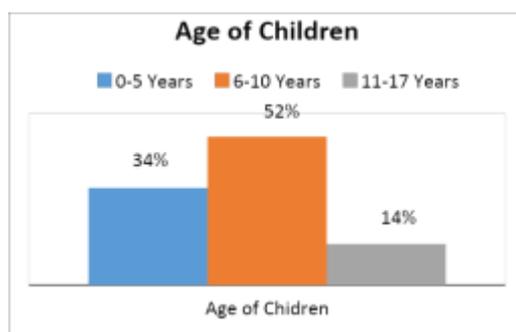
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**FIGURES**



**Figure 1:** Age Distribution of the respondent’s Children  
 (source: Ernest-Dnuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

**Figure 2:** Distribution of Respondents by Occupational Status  
 (source: Ernest-Dnuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

**Table 1:** Awareness of DStv Parental Control

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Fully aware	215	55.0
Partially aware	108	28.0
Unaware	69	17.0



Total	392	100.0
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(source: Ernest-Onuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

**Table 2: Knowledge of the DStv Parental Control Feature**

	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Completely understands how it works	184	47.0
partially understand how it works	117	30.0
Do not understand how it works	91	23.0
Total	392	100.0

(source: Ernest-Onuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

**Table 3: Perception of the DStv Parental Control**

Items	$\bar{x}$	SD
I like that there is a DStv parental control feature	4.23	0.94
I feel DStv parental control feature gives parents control over what (channels, programs, shows etc.) children watch	4.07	1.12
I think it is a good idea to use the Dstv parental control feature	4.01	1.14
I feel DStv parental control feature is a good way of ensuring my children are less exposed to inappropriate media content (sex, nudity, violence, crime etc.)	3.98	1.07
<b>Maximum Scale Score = 20;</b>	<b>Actual Scale Score= 16.29;</b>	<b>4.07 1.07</b>
<b>Average Mean =</b>		

(source: Ernest-Onuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

(NOTE: Items are on a five-point scale, maximum score for each item is 5 least is 1)

Decision Rule: if  $\bar{x}$  is  $\leq 1.49$  = Undecided; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49= Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Agree; 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree

**Table 4: Use of the DStv Parental Control Feature**

Items	$\bar{x}$	SD
I block selected channels that have strong adult themes (rape, sex, nudity, violence etc.) from my children	4.28	0.94
I keep selected channels on DStv blocked at all times	3.73	1.15
I use DStv parental control for my children	3.64	1.18
I block selected channels based on their PG ratings	3.50	1.16
I block selected channels on DSTV only when I am not around monitoring my children	3.26	1.14
<b>Maximum Scale Score = 25;</b>	<b>Actual Scale Score= 18.41;</b>	<b>3.68 1.12</b>
<b>Average Mean =</b>		

(source: Ernest-Onuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

(NOTE: Items are on a five point scale, maximum score for each item is 5 least is 1)

Decision Rule: if  $\bar{x}$  is  $\leq 1.49$  = Undecided; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49= Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Agree; 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree

**Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Testing the Relationship between Awareness of Parental Control and Parents' Perception of DStv Parental Control**

	Perception of DStv parental control
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<b>Awareness of DStv Parental Control</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.932**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	392

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(source: Ernest-Onuiri et al. Field work, 2019)

**Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Testing the Relationship between Awareness and Use of DStv Parental Control**

		<b>Use of DStv Parental Control</b>
<b>Awareness of DStv Parental Control</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.897**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	392

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(source: Ernest-Onuiri et al. Field work, 2019)