

**EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITV'S IZIGAN PROGRAMME IN CULTISM
AWARENESS AND PREVENTION IN BENIN CITY**

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UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

AUGUST, 2025

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**A PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
FACULTY OF ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, EDO STATE,
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION.**

AUGUST, 2025

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented here is a report of research conducted by me and that it has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other institution.

PEACE AKPOBOME

ART2100881

DATE

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Peace Akpobome wrote this project with the matriculation number ART2100881 of the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City. It was approved by the Mass Communication department of the University of Benin, Benin City, as meeting the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Mass Communication.

Mrs Amenze Bazuaye
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STUDENT'S THESIS
AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God, whose unwavering strength is always available in times of weakness.

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ABSTRACT

The study looks at the topic “Evaluating the Effectiveness of ITV’s Izigan Programme in Cultism Awareness and Prevention in Benin City. The objectives of this study were to assess the effectiveness of ITV’s Izigan programme in raising public awareness about cultism in Benin City. To evaluate the influence of the Izigan programme on youth attitudes and behaviours toward cult-related activities. To examine the factors that affect audience reception, understanding, and engagement with the Izigan programme. To explore potential strategies for enhancing the content and delivery of the Izigan programme to improve its impact on cultism prevention. The study employed the Cultivation theory and the agenda-setting theory, and then the survey research design with a questionnaire as an instrument was used to collect responses from a sample size of 400. The study discovered that *Izigan* is highly effective in raising public awareness of cultism, while also maintaining relevance through audience engagement. It also found that through the consistent framing of cultism as a destructive social problem, *Izigan* cultivates rejection attitudes and reinforces preventive behaviours among youths. In addition, it was discovered that, while *Izigan* successfully engages its audience, infrastructural and institutional challenges remain significant barriers to its full potential in combating cultism. Lastly, it was found that enhancing the impact of *Izigan* requires strong involvement of security experts, expanded access through digital platforms, and the inclusion of more real-life stories. These strategies, supported by audience feedback, would improve credibility, engagement, and long-term effectiveness in cultism prevention. The study then recommended that the programme should collaborate more closely with security agencies, psychologists, and community leaders to provide expert perspectives that boost credibility and authority in addressing cultism. Moreover, to overcome barriers like poor electricity supply and reach a wider youth audience, *Izigan* should increase its presence on social media and other online platforms, making the content accessible anytime and anywhere. In addition, the inclusion of testimonies from former cult members, victims, and community stakeholders would make the programme’s message more relatable, impactful, and persuasive to viewers. Lastly, it was recommended that sustained coverage, dramatisations, and interactive segments should be developed to keep the issue of cultism at the forefront of public discourse, reinforcing long-term behavioural change among youths.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is no longer news that cultism has become a thorn in the flesh of many major cities in today's society. An idea that started in the colonial era as a non-violent organization, has become one of the major security challenges in Nigeria, particularly in educational institutions and urban centers. Benin City, the capital of Edo State, has been significantly affected by the menace of cult-related violence, which has led to loss of lives, destruction of property, and a general atmosphere of fear among residents (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004). Cult groups, originally formed as fraternities in universities, have evolved into criminal syndicates involved in armed robbery, drug trafficking, and political thuggery (Ojo, 2016). The proliferation of these groups has been linked to societal decay, unemployment, and the erosion of moral values among youths (Salawu, 2010). The Nigerian government has implemented various measures to curb cultism, including legislation such as the Anti-Cultism Law in several states and increased policing. In Edo state, for instance, the incumbent governor, Monday Okpebholo, on January 28, 2022, signed into law a 21-year jail term for cult members and their sponsors (Punch, 2022). However, these efforts have yielded limited results due to cult groups' secretive nature and deep-rooted influence in communities (Ikoh, 2018). This explains the need for alternative strategies, particularly in the area of awareness and prevention.

The media, especially broadcast media, plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and disseminating information on security issues (McQuail, 2010). Television, as a powerful medium of mass communication, has the ability to reach a wide audience, including young people who are most vulnerable to cult recruitment (Okunna, 2002). Studies have shown that effective media

campaigns can influence behavior, educate the public, and promote social change (Ugboaja, 1985). For instance, programmes like NTA's Inside Story and AIT's Focus Nigeria have provided platforms for discussing security challenges and proffering solutions. The effectiveness of such programmes lies in their ability to combine entertainment with education, a strategy known as "edutainment," which enhances audience engagement (Uyo, 1987).

The prevalence of cult-related activities in Benin City showcases the need for sustained awareness campaigns. In accordance with this, Nwabueze (2018), pinpointed that public enlightenment through the media can significantly influence youth behavior and deter them from engaging in criminal activities. Independent Television (ITV) Benin, as a leading broadcast station in Edo State, has contributed to the discourse on cultism through its programme IZIGAN. The programme, which airs in both English and Pidgin, adopts a talk-show format featuring security experts, reformed cultists, and community leaders who discuss the dangers of cultism and ways to prevent involvement. The choice of Pidgin English is strategic, as it ensures wider comprehension among the local population, particularly youths who are the primary targets of cult groups. Through the presentation of real-life testimonies from ex-cultists, IZIGAN demystifies the perceived benefits of cultism and highlights its devastating consequences. This initiative aligns with the social responsibility theory of the media, which mandates broadcasters to promote societal well-being (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). It also qualifies them as the "fourth estate of the realm". Similar programmes in other regions, such as Bereketi Family on Human Rights Radio Abuja, have demonstrated the media's potential to address social vices through participatory communication (Daudu, 2021).

It is against this background that this study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of ITV *Izigan* in cultism awareness and prevention. An evaluation of this programme will help provide a

detailed understanding of how effective and how successful the programme has been over the past years in ensuring that the menace of cultism is reducing to the barest minimum in the state and in Benin City in particular.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Efforts made by government and law enforcement agencies can be tagged as wasted over the years, as cultism remains a pervasive security threat in Benin City, with increasing youth involvement in violent cult activities. While media campaigns have been recognized as vital tools for social change, the extent to which specific programmes, such as ITV's IZIGAN, effectively influence cultism awareness and prevention remains understudied. Existing research highlights broadcast media's role in crime prevention (Nwabueze, 2014), but few studies assess the measurable impact of local programmes in curbing cult-related violence. Additionally, while IZIGAN employs edutainment strategies to engage youths, there is limited empirical evidence on its reach, audience perception, and behavioural influence. Therefore, there is a need for empirical evaluation of their effectiveness. While some scholars argue that television programmes can lead to attitude and behavioral changes (Gerbner, 1998), others suggest that media messages alone may not be sufficient to drive social transformation (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2006). This study, therefore, seeks to assess the impact of ITV's Izigan programme on cultism awareness and prevention in Benin City by examining its reach, audience reception, and influence on behavior.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to;

1. To assess the effectiveness of ITV's Izigan programme in raising public awareness about cultism in Benin City.
2. To evaluate the influence of the Izigan programme on youth attitudes and behaviors toward cult-related activities.

3. To examine the factors that affect audience reception, understanding, and engagement with the *Izigan* programme.
4. To explore potential strategies for enhancing the content and delivery of the *Izigan* programme to improve its impact on cultism prevention.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How effective is ITV's *Izigan* programme in raising public awareness about cultism in Benin City?
2. In what ways does the *Izigan* programme influence youth attitudes and behaviors toward cult-related activities?
3. What factors affect audience reception, understanding, and engagement with the *Izigan* programme?
4. What strategies can be adopted to enhance the content and delivery of the *Izigan* programme for better impact on cultism prevention?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study poses numerous benefits to different spheres of the society. For media practitioners, the study will help understand the effectiveness of television programmes in influencing social behavior. It will also guide content creators on how to design more impactful anti-cultism campaigns. In the academic terrain, researchers and scholars will benefit as it adds to the body of knowledge on media intervention strategies in crime prevention. It will serve as a reference for future studies on media influence and youth behavior. The findings will also aid policymakers in evaluating the effectiveness of media-based initiatives in tackling cultism. It will provide recommendations for incorporating media interventions into broader crime prevention policies. Law enforcement and security personnel can also use the study's findings to enhance

their strategies for combating cultism. Understanding the influence of media on public perception and behaviour can support more effective community policing efforts.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study will be geographically delimited to Benin City residents where a large amount of ITV radio viewers is located due to its proximity to them. Limiting the scope to Benin residents will ensure that all data and findings are grounded in observable realities rather than speculative assumptions.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Awareness: Awareness in this study is defined as the extent to which the target audience gains knowledge and understanding of the dangers, consequences, and alternatives to cultism through the *Izigan* programme.

Cultism: This is the security concern that will be focused on in the course of this study.

Effectiveness: Effectiveness refers to the measurable impact of the *Izigan* programme in reducing cult-related activities and increasing awareness among its target audience.

Evaluating: This entails systematically assessing the reach, audience reception, and behavioral impact of the *Izigan* programme using qualitative and quantitative research methods.

ITV: Independent Television (ITV) is a media organization operating in Benin City, Nigeria. It serves as a platform for broadcasting the *Izigan* program and other local content.

Izigan: Refers to a television program broadcast by ITV in Benin City, Nigeria. The program is designed to address and discuss various security issues affecting the community.

Prevention: prevention refers to the ability of the *Izigan* programme to deter individuals, particularly youths, from engaging in cult-related activities through awareness campaigns and positive behavioral influence.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Preamble

This chapter gives a total breakdown of the concept of the study by extensively examining key concepts of the study, alongside a historical examination of some of the concept. Furthermore, the study review opinions of different studies that have been conducted to this regards and it was hinged on a theory which is perceived to have established a foundation for this study and also gave a proper understanding of the study.

2.2 Historical Development of Cultism

Cultism in Nigeria as earlier stated, stretches back to the pre-colonial era, when a group of people gathered to perform rituals and ask their ancestors for protection. As at that time, getting initiated into the cult was a standard, for people seeking membership in the secret society. Once you become a member of the cult, you must adhere to the holy rules and rituals of the group. In the early stage of cultism practice in Nigeria, four cult groups were prominent which include, the Ogboni society, which is common among Yorubas. The Efik people and some other people in the South East belonged to the hidden Ekpe cult. In Delta and Edo State, the Ekine and Owegbe. At its inception, the core mandate of these cult organizations was to offer social, financial, economic, and political security.

However, the modern-day practice of cultism, did not align with the initial mandate of the traditional cultism practice, but was inspired by the “Ku Klux Klan” popularly known as (KKK), The Ku Klux Klan was a secret cult founded on the 24th of December 1765 in Pulaski, Tennessee, USA. Their activities were targeted toward the ex-slaves and those who gave them freedom. KKK sought to restore white supremacy through threats and violence, including murder against Black and those who supported them. These activities inspired our nationalists to

intensify their fight against colonialism in Nigeria and thrive for independence. It therefore, led to the establishment of the first recognized Cult group in Nigeria – Sea Dog Confraternity. The Sea Dog Confraternity that is also known as the Pirates was formed in 1952 at the University of Ibadan. By a group of seven students whose names are: Wole Soyinka, Pius Olegbe, Olumuyiwa Awe, Aig-I'moukhuede, Ralph Opara, Olu Agunloye, and Tunji Tubi. Their objective was to fight non-violently but intellectually and effectively against the imposition of foreign conventions, to review the age of chivalry, and to find a lasting solution to the problems of tribalism and elitism. This Pirate Confraternity consisted of brilliant students who went about their Academic business without trampling on the Fundamental rights of other students. In the early stage, there is no violence or social vices by the secret cult. All of the cult's members engaged in open social interaction, provided charitable contributions to orphanages, and motivated people to struggle for Nigeria's independence from colonialism. The Pirate Confraternity persisted and ruled the scene even after its founders left the University of Ibadan, until 1972, when Members started to abandon the cult, which was however as a result of unresolved leadership issues inside the group and changes in Nigeria's social, political, and educational landscape.

This further created a division within the confraternity; some of the members were expelled and they promptly started a rival organization, buccaneer's confraternity. About the same time, an informal association friends who got together in Nnamdi Hall of UI in 1965, was transformed into the Eiye Confraternity. Worthy of note is that, the three confraternity started from University of Ibadan (UI). More of Universities were subsequently established in different parts of the country. During the 1970s as a result of this development, the three confraternities started to spread to other tertiary level educational institutions throughout the country and even

to our own very streets. It was until the early 1990s, that the female students started their own cults (Muyiwa, 2004).

In recent times the original idea behind the formation of cult groups by some Nigeria nationalist, has been defeated. This is because their mode of operation can now be compared to that of a terrorist group, whereas they were originally formed to be peacemakers.

2.2.1 Concept of Cultism

The term cultism has been widely studied and defined by various scholars and legal frameworks. Ajayi (2015) defines cultism as a ritual practice by a group of individuals whose membership, admission, policies, and initiation formalities, as well as their mode of operations, are conducted in secrecy. He further explains that their activities often have negative consequences, not just for members but also for society at large. This secrecy makes it difficult for authorities to monitor and control their operations, leading to the persistence of cult-related violence in many parts of Nigeria. Similarly, Ogundade (2002), cited in Oyemwinmina & Aibieyi, (2015) describes a secret cult as an enclosed, organized association or group devoted to a particular cause. These groups often operate under an exclusive ideology, reinforced by a series of rites and symbols that are kept hidden from the public. The exclusivity of these groups is what differentiates them from regular social or religious organizations, as their activities are deliberately kept secret to maintain loyalty and control among members. The institution which started as a peaceful group of people, fighting for the good of youths in the society, later diverted into fulfilling negative purposes due to some political alignment with the military government in the 1950's. confraternities operated at no degree of violence when they emerged in the 1950's. Unfortunately, they were later high-jacked by military governments who were anxious to consolidate their holds on University students who might challenge their authorities. For

example, virile student Unionism was perceived by military authorities as a threat to their power consolidation (Thomas, 2002, cited in Oyemwinmina & Aibieyi, 2015). According Oyemwinmina & Aibieyi, 2015, p.222), “secret cults were used to neutralize student unions and their “anti-government activities”, especially those which questioned or challenged the authorities of military dictatorship. Consequently, what started as club or some socially conscious students, who chose to be different has become club of bloodthirsty and blood-sucking monsters who parade themselves as students”.

The legal definition provided in Section 318 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that a secret cult is any association, group, or body (whether registered or not) that operates using secret signs, oaths, rites, or symbols. These groups are formed to promote a specific cause, often prioritizing the interests of their members over justice, fairness, and merit. The law further highlights that such organizations thrive on secrecy, making it difficult for outsiders to fully understand their operations and motives. Adewale (2017) further emphasizes that cultism is not just a Nigerian phenomenon but a global issue, often linked to youth radicalization and organized crime. He explains that secret cults originally emerged in traditional African societies as a means of social bonding, spiritual guidance, and community leadership. However, modern cult groups, especially in tertiary institutions, have deviated from these traditional values and are now associated with violence, criminality, and political manipulation. In the view of Adebayo (2019), cultism in Nigerian universities started as fraternity groups with the purpose of promoting unity, leadership, and activism among students. However, these groups gradually transformed into violent organizations involved in criminal activities such as armed robbery, drug abuse, extortion, and murder. He points out that cult groups in Nigeria today recruit members through coercion and intimidation, making it difficult for students to resist involvement.

Furthermore, Oladipo (2020) argues that the media plays a significant role in shaping public perception of cultism. He asserts that television programmes such as *Izigan* have the potential to counteract the appeal of cult groups by educating young people on the dangers associated with cult membership. According to him, a well-structured media intervention can help dismantle the myths surrounding cultism and reduce its influence in society. From the foregoing, it is evident that cultism remains a major social issue in Nigeria, with significant implications for security, education, and youth development. Various stakeholders, including the government, academic institutions, and the media, must work together to combat the spread of cult activities and promote a culture of peace and lawful coexistence.

The Quest for Power and Respect: One of the primary reasons students join cult groups is the desire for instant respect and fear from their peers. Many young men, in particular, are drawn to the perceived power and special treatment cult members receive. Once initiated, these students often engage in violent behaviors such as assaulting fellow students, intimidating lecturers, and projecting an aura of invincibility. The “power-drunk” mentality leads to increasing misconduct, as they eliminate anyone who stands in their way, fostering a culture of fear on campuses. Some students are made to believe that as members of secret cults, they are certainly free to command respect from fellow students. They see it as a way of getting rid of their timidity (Oyemwinmina & Aibieyi, 2015)

Peer Pressure and the Need for Belonging: So many youths have placed their destinies at the mercy of their peer groups due to their negative decision (Ufuoma, 2007). Students with low self-esteem or those who struggle with social acceptance often fall prey to cult recruitment. Cult groups exploit this vulnerability by offering a false sense of belonging, luring them with gifts, protection, and promises of elevated status. Weak-willed students, seeking validation, join these

groups to avoid bullying or to gain an unrealistic sense of security. The fear of isolation pushes them into cultism, where they become trapped in a cycle of violence and dependency. The period of adolescence is marked by intense social relationship in any environment he or she finds himself (Oyemwinmina & Aibieyi, 2015). At adolescent, there is a shift of emphasis on social relationship from parents to peer group (Ibeh, 2005).

Academic Weakness and Desperation: This is a common strategic employed in campuses to cajole young minds to participate in Cult activities. Academic failure is another major factor driving students into cultism. Struggling students, unable to meet academic demands, resort to cult membership as a shortcut to success. They intimidate lecturers into awarding them unearned grades, using threats and violence to manipulate the system. Rather than improving their studies, they rely on fear tactics, further deteriorating their educational and moral standing.

Economic Hardship and Material Desires: The harsh economic realities many students face make them susceptible to cult recruitment. Those lacking basic necessities such as food, clothing, and financial support, see cults as a means to secure material wealth. The promise of quick money, luxury, and influence tempts them into criminal activities, including robbery and extortion. For these students, survival outweighs the moral consequences, pushing them deeper into cult-related crimes.

Thrill-seeking and Reckless Behavior: Some students join cults purely out of curiosity and a desire for adventure. Drawn to risky behaviors such as drug abuse, violence, and theft they seek excitement and dominance over others. This reckless mindset leads them to experiment with dangerous substances and engage in antisocial acts, ultimately trapping them in a destructive lifestyle. What begins as mere curiosity often spirals into addiction, crime, and irreversible damage to their futures.

2.2.2 Cultism and its Adverse Effect

Cultism in Nigeria, particularly in Benin City, has evolved into a formidable social menace that transcends the walls of campuses and spills into broader society. While its origins may have been rooted in fraternity-like groups with perceived noble intentions, modern-day cultism is associated with violence, crime, academic disruption, and psychological damage. Edewor (2021) posits that cultism in Nigeria today is largely driven by power dynamics, a desire for control, and societal failures. According to him, when young individuals feel disempowered by a system that does not reward merit or provide a clear path to success, they seek alternative forms of power, thus, cultism provides this illusion. For many young people, joining a secret cult becomes a response to marginalization, insecurity, and peer influence. The result is the normalization of violence, extortion, and other criminal activities as mechanisms for asserting dominance. In academic institutions, cultism has been a persistent destabilizer. As observed by Onwe (2018), cult groups contribute to the breakdown of discipline in schools. Their activities often lead to violent clashes, resulting in loss of lives, school closures, and a general atmosphere of fear. Students and staff alike may be threatened, leading to a decline in academic engagement. According to Ukaegbu (2020), the prevalence of cultism also undermines institutional authority. School administrators find it increasingly difficult to enforce discipline when cult members wield influence through fear and intimidation. This also contributes significantly to academic decline, as students involved in cult groups often neglect their studies, prioritizing gang activities over academic success. Obasi (2017) argues that cultism promotes mediocrity by rewarding loyalty to the group over academic or intellectual performance. Members are sometimes protected from academic failure or disciplinary actions through threats or bribes, which corrodes the credibility of educational institutions and weakens the quality of graduates entering the workforce.

Although, the psychological impact of cultism is rarely discussed, yet it is profound. According to Okonkwo (2019), the fear of being targeted or coerced into joining cult groups leaves many students mentally unsettled. Victims of cult-related violence may suffer from anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or depression. Even cult members themselves are not immune, the violent acts they are forced to commit or witness can leave lasting psychological scars. Okonkwo emphasizes that this toxic environment is not conducive to personal growth or learning. Criminality is another breed of cultism, Nwankwo (2022) notes that, many cult groups serve as a pipeline to more organized criminal networks. They are often involved in arms trafficking, kidnapping, drug distribution, and political violence. In some cases, politicians sponsor cult groups as instruments of coercion during elections. This merging of cultism with broader political and criminal agendas threatens national security and undermines democratic institutions. Nwankwo describes it as “a strategic alliance between youthful recklessness and state-level corruption.” Culturally, cultism erodes the moral fabric of society. this aligns with Akpan (2016) who noted that cult groups operate on values that are fundamentally anti-social such as secrecy, loyalty to the group above the law, revenge, and disregard for human life. These values run counter to the principles of justice, equity, and peaceful coexistence that societies are built on. When young people are indoctrinated with such mindsets, they grow into adults who may perpetuate violence and corruption in different forms. There’s also an economic dimension to the problem. Cult-related violence often leads to the destruction of infrastructures, and increased costs for security. Ojo (2019) noted that universities and colleges now spend significant resources on security surveillance, anti-cultism units, and crisis management. These funds could have been better directed toward development, or youth support services. Additionally, families incur medical bills, legal fees, and psychological counseling for victims, all of which contribute to economic strain.

Despite its overwhelming negative impact, the fight against cultism remains hampered by poor enforcement and societal complicity. Oyelade (2021) argues that anti-cult laws, while present, are often weakly enforced due to corruption within law enforcement agencies. Cultists with political backing or influential family ties frequently escape justice, thereby emboldening others to follow suit. Oyelade recommends a systemic overhaul of the justice system to ensure that cult-related offenses are swiftly and transparently prosecuted. Public enlightenment is another area of focus. According to Alabi (2020), many students are unaware of the long-term consequences of cultism when they are first recruited. Cults often lure them with promises of protection, brotherhood, and financial support. Alabi stresses the need for consistent, targeted sensitization campaigns using both traditional media and digital platforms to educate youth most especially students about the risks involved. Religious and community leaders also have a role to play. According to Salawu (2022), cultism cannot be effectively tackled in isolation from community values. Many cult members are recruited from neighborhoods where violence, peer pressure, and substance abuse are normalized. Faith-based organizations, community groups, and parents must reinforce values such as integrity, hard work, and empathy from an early age. Salawu calls for a grassroots approach that tackles the socio-economic roots of cultism alongside its manifestations in the society.

From the foregoing, cultism is a broad societal challenge with far-reaching consequences. It compromises academic integrity, political destabilisation, inflicts psychological damage, fosters criminal networks, and destabilizes communities. To effectively combat it, stakeholders must adopt a multifaceted strategy involving education, law enforcement, community engagement, and institutional reform. Cultism is not just a youth problem, it is a reflection of societal failures that must be urgently addressed to safeguard Nigeria's future.

2.3 Brief History of Independent Television

Independent Television and Radio (ITV & Radio) is one of Nigeria's leading private broadcast stations, headquartered in Benin City, Edo State. The station, established by Sir Chief Dr. Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion (Esama of Benin), a prominent businessman and philanthropist, officially commenced operations in 1997, thereby earning the distinction of being the first privately owned broadcasting station in Edo State, Nigeria. The station, which is committed to high-quality programming, quickly gained popularity for its balanced news reporting, entertainment, and educational content. The radio arm, Independent Radio (92.3 FM), was introduced alongside the television station in 1998 and was inaugurated by the Oba of Benin, Omo 'N' Oba Nedo, Uku Akpolokpolo Oba Erediawa. The main objective was to expand its reach and cater to diverse audiences, this helped them bridge the information gap between rural and urban audiences.

The station, became a household name in the South-South region of Nigeria, offering content in English and local languages to serve a broad audience. Over the years, it has played a significant role in promoting culture, public enlightenment, and socio-political discourse. It has also been actively involved in advocacy campaigns against social issues such as cultism, drug abuse, and electoral violence. The station's impact extends beyond entertainment, as it has partnered with various organizations to create awareness on national and community-based issues. The *Izigan* programme is one of its notable initiatives aimed at educating the public about the dangers of cultism.

Today, ITV & Radio remains a key player in Nigeria's media landscape. Interestingly Independent Television/Radio on 1 September 2007, received approval from the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to commence transmission on Channel 42 UHF in the Federal Capital Territory. Furthermore, in December 2009, Independent Television/Radio obtained a license for digital satellite broadcasting, allowing global broadcasting of its programs.

2.3.1 Concept of Television

Television according to Asemah (2011), describes television as a tool of mass communication which combines sound, visual and motion in the process of disseminating information and meanings on human's social living in the society. As a medium of communication, television communicates using audio-visual messages. He further highlighted that, television as an electronic media which serve as information carrying technology which are used for information dissemination to educate, informing, socializing and entertaining viewers. In accordance with this, Hasan (2013) opines that as a channel of communication, television combines its characteristics of communicating information and meanings using graphic pictures, words and motion to communicate to the viewers, issues events and about people places. Since it is the most dramatic form of communication, television captures viewers' attention as a channel. Television is a dramatic type of communication that broadcasts information that mimics, represents, illustrates, and depicts actual life. Television serves as a means for communication and information dissemination, using both audio and visual content to enlighten viewers. It is also a method of communication that teaches viewers social behaviors and promotes social behavior and learning through the use of audio and images, serving as a channel for information that teaches viewers who are members of society how to behave in social situations. The new

Macpherson constitution, which was adopted in 1951, marked the beginning of the development of television in Nigeria.

As a well-known media of communication, television performs quite a number of roles in the society, Daramola (2003), highlighted some roles of television to the society, which will be explained below;

Information: Many important pieces of information that are necessary for a person's everyday existence are disseminated by television as a communication medium. The primary medium for the dissemination of news and current events about the government's economic policy is television. According to John (2010), the core role of television is the information role it performed mainly through news and current affairs programmes. Through the provision of easy access to information to users of public services, television empowers citizens to demand quality and accountability from the governments. Television stations provides the necessary information about the security status of any location and also empower the residents with tips of surviving in that location.

Education: Television is a kind of communication that simultaneously offers instruction and information. It offers instruction on socially relevant topics and works to educate viewers directly or indirectly through a variety of programming options. According to Baran (2010), education function of the television also includes television role in communicating information and meanings which provides members of the society with complete idea of a problem confronting the society. In line with this, Onabajo (2000), avers that in the developed world, the television has become widely accepted and available as a source to supplement and enrich the circular of elementary and secondary schools and as medium of transmitting formal knowledge. Educational broadcasting should be undertaken in partnership in order to meet the educational

needs of the public so as to democratize decision making and for effective production and delivery of educational programmes.

Persuasion: McQuail (2010), notes that the television as a medium of communication is expected to have a considerable potential to influence the attitude and behaviours of members of the society. More than any other social institution, television provides the basis for people to formulate their attitudes, and when they are not directly involved, they act on the sidelines, reinforcing attitudes and behaviors that already exist in society. Television can positively influence the decisions of people who engage in cult activities, which can lead to a halt in human violation in society.

Entertainment: Television as a mass medium of information and communication has gradually become part of our daily lives and from the major source of information, education, and entertainment for youths. Lasswell (1948), cited in Folarin (2005) described the entertainment function of the television to include the use of the television as a communication medium to provide for relaxation or self-satisfaction. He further states that people use television for play than for work, more for pleasure and entertainment than information and serious work.

Surveillance: Daramola (2003 p.25) suggests that the surveillance function of the television as a communication medium refers to “keeping close watch over someone or something. In the context of television, surveillance means that the medium first function is to inform and provide information to the society and keep watch on the government and correct uncomplimentary occurrences”. In addition to this Asemah (2011), Accedes that, the television becomes the eyes and ears of the public, adding that news media provide information and alert us of the changes that is going on around us. This function helps to promote human right, by paying close watch to any information or policies that will affect the right of the citizens.

2.3.2 Television as a Tool for Social Change

Television has long been recognized as a potent medium for shaping societal values, influencing behavior, and promoting development. According to Acharya (1987), cited in Nidhi (2017), television was seen as a catalyst for social change and national development, sensitizing society to social justice, educating the population, and developing and uplifting its human resources. Television overtime, has contributed to breaking the social barriers and inculcation of scientific temper in our masses. Studies have revealed that, constant exposure to television content, has the ability to change the mentality of an individual. For any social change to take place flow of information is of prime importance. It increases the understanding of the people regarding the issues and develops common feeling for the need for social change. This is easy to achieve because adequate and constant information bridges the gap of understanding between the people and helps them to unite for the cause. Television has done this job by contributing to the information explosion Devi, Meena (2009, p-166,167).

In Nigeria, television serves not just as a source of entertainment but as a strategic tool for communication and transformation. According to McQuail (2010), mass media, particularly television, plays a crucial role in information dissemination, education, and mobilization, which are key components of social change. Television's power lies in its audio-visual nature, which allows for direct engagement with diverse audiences. Unlike print media, television goes beyond literacy barriers, making it accessible to both educated and less-educated viewers. This accessibility has been instrumental in promoting civic awareness, challenging social norms, and fostering behavioral change across various spheres in Nigeria. One significant area where television has driven social change in Nigeria is in public health. The *Heart of the Matter* programme, for example, aired on Silverbird Television and other networks, tackled health

issues such as HIV/AIDS awareness, reproductive health, and hygiene practices. The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) has collaborated with television stations to air sensitization campaigns, contributing to increased public awareness and a decline in stigma associated with HIV/AIDS (Nwosu, 2017).

Television has also played a role in political education and democratization. During election periods, programmes like *The Verdict* on Channels Television, *Politics Today* on ITV and *Sunday Politics* on AIT have informed citizens about electoral processes, candidate policies, and the importance of civic participation. These broadcasts not only inform but also encourage accountability by providing a platform for political debates and public discourse. According to Ojebuyi and Salawu (2013), television has helped to enhance political literacy and citizen engagement in Nigeria's democratic process. Furthermore, television is instrumental in advocating gender equality and women empowerment. Programmes such as *Moments with Mo* and *Your View* on TVC have addressed issues related to women's rights, domestic violence, and gender roles. These shows have sparked national conversations that challenge patriarchal norms and empower women to speak out and seek justice. Oso and Pate (2011) argue that television, when effectively deployed, becomes a medium for breaking stereotypes and reconstructing gender narratives. Television drama has also been an effective agent of change. Dramatized stories often convey social messages in relatable formats. For instance, the television series *Shuga Naija*, supported by MTV Base and international health organizations, addresses issues such as safe sex, drug abuse, and domestic violence. By portraying these issues through compelling narratives, the programme engages young audiences and encourages dialogue around taboo subjects. According to Edeani (1994), the emotional connection built through storytelling is more likely to influence attitudes and behaviors than conventional messaging. Religious and

cultural tolerance has also been promoted through television. Programmes that showcase interfaith dialogue and cultural festivals have contributed to a greater appreciation of Nigeria's diversity. The *Big Story* on NTA has highlighted stories of unity in diversity, helping to counteract the divisive narratives often fueled by ethnic and religious differences.

In education, television has supported distance learning and curriculum delivery, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Educational programmes like *Tales by Moonlight* on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), and Lagos State's *Classroom on Air* initiative ensured continuity of learning when schools were closed. This demonstrated the adaptability and societal value of television in emergencies. Despite its potential, television's influence is not without challenges. Commercialization, political interference, and poor funding often affect the quality and independence of content. Still, when used purposefully, television remains a critical tool for shaping societal values and driving development.

From the foregoing, television is not just a medium for entertainment, but also a medium for societal advocacy, which can help achieve certain goals in the society.

2.3.3 Overview of ITV *Izigan* Programme

As part of the social responsibility requirement of the media in any society, *Izigan* programme, pioneered by Osaze Omogiate is a television initiative broadcast introduced by Independent Television (ITV) in Benin City, Nigeria. It is often aired on ITV Channel 22 UHF Benin, Startimes Channel 130, GOTV Channel 140 and also aired on YouTube. The programme was developed in response to the pressing security challenges faced by residents of Benin City, including armed robbery, kidnapping, and cult-related violence. The programme seeks to inform, educate, and engage the public on matters of security and crime prevention, playing a vital role

in community safety efforts. This programme was introduced to fulfill the following objectives below;

Raising Awareness: The programme aims to increase public awareness about various security threats facing the community. Through the highlighting of current crime trends and providing information on how to recognize potential dangers, *Izigan* helps viewers become more vigilant and proactive in safeguarding their environment.

Educating the Public: *Izigan* provides practical safety tips and strategies for crime prevention. This includes advice on personal security measures, such as how to secure homes and businesses, and what to do in case of emergencies. The programme also educates viewers on their legal rights and how to engage effectively with law enforcement agencies.

Encouraging Community Involvement: A key aspect of *Izigan* is its focus on community engagement. The programme encourages residents to participate in neighborhood watch schemes, report suspicious activities, and collaborate with local authorities to enhance security. By fostering a sense of collective responsibility, *Izigan* promotes a culture of active citizenship and community vigilance.

Through expert interviews, real-life crime stories, public service announcements, and interactive discussions with security agents and articulate leaders, the programme is designed to keep the audience informed and engaged, promoting their safety. Furthermore, the programme over the years, has been well-received by the community for its relevance and practicality in addressing local security concerns such as cultism in Benin City. Hence, it has become a trusted forum of information and a catalyst for community action. Beyond enlightenment, the programme empowers Benin residents to take proactive steps in protecting their communities.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Cultivation Theory

According to Asemah (2022, p.145), the theory was proposed by Gerbner and his Associates in 1976. It argues that television plays an extremely important role in how people view their world. The theorist behind the theory believes that in modern culture, most people get much of their information in a mediated fashion rather than through direct experience. Mediated sources can shape people's sense of reality (Asemah, 2022). This is especially the case with regard to violence. The theory says that television has become the main source of storytelling in today's society. Those who watch four or more hours a day are labelled heavy television viewers and those who view less than four hours per day, according to Gerbner, are light viewers (Asemah, 2022).

In the words of Evra (1990), cited in Asemah (2022), "cultivation research looks at the mass media as a socialising agent and investigates whether television viewers come to believe the television version of reality the more they watch it. People who watch a lot of television programmes are likely to be more influenced by the ways in which television programmes frame the world than individuals who watch less, especially regarding topics of which the viewer has little first-hand experience. Light viewers may have more sources of information than heavy viewers." Evra argues that by virtue of inexperience, young viewers may depend on television for information more than other viewers do. Put succinctly, the idea of cultivation theory on the media is that the media should endeavour to portray programmes that will build the audience positively, that is positive programmes should be shown on television. This is because, children especially, mostly believe that whatever they see on television screen is real since the media mirror reality (Asemah, 2022).

This theory relates to this research as it outlines the impact of television on the mind of the audience. Hence the portrayal of programmes that narrates the adverse effects of cultism in the life of youths will help them get a refined mindset about cultism and prevent them from being easily cajoled by just anybody.

2.4.2 Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory, established by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, examines how media strongly influence public perception by determining which issues are considered important. The theory argues that although the media do not tell people what to think, they are always successful in telling people what to think about by giving more attention to certain topics. This emphasis causes the audience to view these topics as more critical than others that receive minimal coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In their foundational study during the 1968 U.S. presidential election, McCombs and Shaw found that the issues most prominently featured in the media were also regarded by the public as the most significant. The theory shows a clear connection between the amount of coverage a topic receives and the level of importance the public assigns to it. Though this influence is often indirect, it can significantly affect public dialogue and influence political priorities (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Agenda-setting consists of two levels. The first level refers to the media's ability to highlight certain topics, thus guiding the public's focus. The second level, known as attribute agenda-setting, goes further by emphasizing specific characteristics of an issue, thereby shaping how people think about it (Ghanem, 1997).

Media play a significant role in spotlighting security concerns such as cultism. This is often done by giving priority to cult-related violence, which in turn push these matters into public focus, encouraging responses from citizens and government.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a step-by-step explanation of the methods adopted in getting and analyzing data for the study. Hence the following areas were examined; Research design, population of the study, sample size, sampling procedure, research instrument/administration, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and the method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The design of a study is simply the style or format of conducting the research, it is often the design that determines the other steps that will be followed. Thus, the style or design adopted for this study is the survey design. The Survey design according to Asemah (2012), is an empirical study that uses a questionnaire or interview to discover descriptive characteristics of a

phenomenon. For a study like this that is based on peoples' opinion the survey design is most suitable.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of study is the total number of subjects to be sampled. Okwechime (2013) notes that the population is any group of individuals, items or variable that has one or more characteristics in common with what the researcher wants to study. Following recent population update, from Macrotrends (2025) the population of Benin City is 1,841,000.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample size is a subset of participants chosen from the broader population who are thought to be representative of the actual population under investigation. The trustworthiness of research findings and their capacity to be generalized to a broader population are significantly impacted by the sample size, making it an essential factor to take into account. Okwechime (2011), describes it as any part of a population taken in a specific manner, and the larger the population of the study, the larger the sample size for the study. The sample size of this study is 400 and was determined using the Taro Yamene formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population

e = margin of error

Calculation:

$$n = 1,841,000 / 1 + 1,841,000 \times (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 1,841,000 / 1 + 1,841,000 \times 0.0025$$

$$n = 1,841,000 / 4602$$

$$n = \text{approximately } 400$$

Hence, the sample size for this study was 400.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

To select respondents for this investigation, the stratified procedure/technique was adopted for this study. This strategy entails splitting your population into homogeneous subgroups and then taking a simple random sample in each subgroup (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo, and Okpanachi, 2012). In doing this, Benin City population was first divided into local governments (Orhionwon, Uhunmwonde, Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba-okha, Ovia north east, and Ovia south west), before random sampling participant who the researcher deemed fit for the study.

3.6 Research Instrument / Administration

The instrument employed for this study was the questionnaire that was created based on the research questions of the study. The questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections. Section A was used to collect the demographic data of the respondents, while Section B collected their psychographic data (opinions).

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

The supervisee provided a copy of the questionnaire, which the supervisor reviewed and scrutinized in accordance with the study objectives to ascertain the instrument's validity in gathering data for the study.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, the test-retest method was adopted. In applying the test-retest method 10 copies of the questionnaires were given to 10 residents

from different local governments in the city and were retrieved and analysed, the same task was repeated after two weeks and it yielded the same result.

3.9 Method of Data Collection

This relates to the manner in which the researcher plans to conduct the data collecting or administer the questionnaire. Personal delivery was used to administer or distribute the surveys to the respondents.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The data analysis method in this research work was a frequency table as a statistical tool. This method was adopted because of the ease of analysis and clarity of presentation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	218	55%
Female	182	45%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

From the data above, 218 respondents which is 55% of the total sample were male, 182 respondents which is 45% of the total sample were female. The above analysis shows that majority of the respondents were male.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
18-25years	84	21%

26-35years	98	24%
36-45years	67	17%
46-55years	103	26%
56years and above	49	12%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above analysis shows that 84 respondents which is 21% of the total sample were within the age of 18-25years, 98 respondents which is 24% of the total sample were within the age 26-35years, 67 respondents which is 17% of the total sample were within the age of 36-45years, 103 respondents which is 26% of the total sample were within the age of 46-55years, while 49 respondents which is 12% of the total sample were within the age of 56years and above. The above analysis indicates that majority of the respondents were within the age of 46-55years.

Table 3: Distribution of Religion of Respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage %
Christian	327	82%
Muslim	51	13%
Others	22	5%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

From the above data, 327 respondents which is 82% of the total sample were Christians, 51 respondents which is 13% of the total sample were Muslims, while 22 respondents which is 5% of the total sample practice d other religions. The above analysis indicates that majority of the respondents were Christians.

Table 4: Are you Aware of the *Izigan* on ITV Benin?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	315	79%
No	85	21%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 315 respondents which is 79% of the total sample were aware of *Izigan* on ITV Benin, while 85 respondents which is 21% of the total sample were not aware. This indicates that majority the respondents were aware of the programme.

Table 5: How Often do you Watch the Programme?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Often	52	13%
Occasionally	248	62%
Never	100	25%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 52 respondents which is 13% of the total sample often watch *Izigan* programme, 248 respondents which is 62% of the total sample watch it occasionally, while 100 respondents which is 25% of the total sample has never watched the programme.

Table 6: Do you agree that *Izigan* programme has improved your understanding of the dangers of cultism?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	178	44%
Agree	44	11%

Neutral	115	29%
Disagree	16	4%
Strongly Disagree	47	12%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above indicates that 178 respondents which is 44% of the total sample strongly agree that *Izigan* programme has improved their understanding of the danger of cultism, 44 respondents which is 11% of the total sample agreed to the assertion, 115 respondents which is 29% of the total sample were neutral, 16 respondents which is 4% of the total sample disagreed to the assertion, while 47 respondents which is 12% of the total sample strongly disagreed to the assertion. The above analysis shows that majority of the respondents agreed that *Izigan* programme has improved their understanding of the dangers of cultism.

Table 7: How Often do you find yourself discussing cultism or related issues after watching *Izigan*?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Often	139	35%
Occasionally	205	51%
Never	56	14%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above table shows that, 139 respondents which is 35% of the total sample often discuss cultism or related issues after watching *Izigan*, 205 respondents which is 51% of the total sample do it occasionally, while 56 respondents which is 14% of the total sample never do it. The above analysis shows that majority of the respondents occasionally discuss cultism or related issues after watching *Izigan* programme.

Table 8: Has *Izigan* programme changed your perception of cult groups (e.g., from admiration to rejection)?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	343	86%
No	57	14%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 343 respondents which is 86% of the total sample said that *Izigan* programme has changed their perception of cult groups, while 57 respondents which is 14% of the total sample said it hasn't. This indicates *Izigan* has changed the perception of the respondents from admiration to rejection.

Table 9: Do you agree that *Izigan* has reduced your likelihood of joining a cult group?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	63	16%
Agree	141	35%
Neutral	118	30%
Disagree	35	9%
Strongly Disagree	43	11%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 63 respondents which is 16% of the total sample, strongly agreed to the assertion that *Izigan* has reduced their likelihood of joining a cult group, 141 respondents which is 35% of the total sample agreed to the assertion, 118 respondents which is 30% of the total sample were neutral, 35 respondents which is 9% of the total sample disagreed, while 43 respondents which is 11% of the total sample strongly disagreed.

Table 10: Have you taken any specific actions (e.g., avoiding certain groups, reporting cult-related activity) based on what you learnt from *Izigan*?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	347	87%
No	53	13%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

From the above data, 347 respondents which is 87% of the total sample said they have taken actions against cultism based on what they have learnt from *Izigan*. 53 respondents which is 13% of the total sample said they have not. This shows that majority of the respondents have taken actions against cult related activities after watching *Izigan*.

Table 11: Do you agree that the characters and stories presented in the *Izigan* programme are realistic?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	114	28%
Agree	103	26%
Neutral	98	24%
Disagree	83	21%

Strongly Disagree	2	1%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 114 respondents which is 28% of the total sample strongly agreed that the characters and stories presented in the *Izigan* programme are realistic, 103 respondents which is 26% of the total sample agreed to the assertion, 98 respondents which is 24% of the total sample were neutral, 83 respondents which is 21% of the total sample disagreed, while 2 respondents which is 1% of the total sample strongly disagreed to the assertion.

Table 12: To what extent do you trust the information shared in the programme?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high extent	124	31%
High extent	59	15%
Neutral	102	26%
Low extent	37	9%
Very low extent	78	19%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that, 124 respondents which is 31% of the total sample said they trust the information shared in the programme to a very high extent, 59 respondents which is 15% of the total sample said it is to a high extent, 102 respondents which is 26% of the total sample were neutral, while 37 respondents which is 9% of the total sample said it is to a low extent, while 78 respondents which is 19% of the total sample said it is to a very low extent. This

analysis implies that majority of the respondents trust the programme's information to a very high extent.

Table 13: What are the major challenges you feel the *Izigan* programme faces in effectively addressing cultism issues?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Limited reach or access to the programme	27	7%
Lack of diverse perspectives or expert opinions	66	16%
Perceived Bias in Reporting	38	10%
Epileptic Power Supply	211	53%
Threats to lives of informants	58	15%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 27 respondents which is 7% of the total sample said limited reach or access to the programme is the challenge they feel *Izigan* programme is facing in effectively addressing cultism issues, 66 respondents which is 16% of the total sample said it is lack of diverse perspectives or expert opinions, 38 respondents which is 10% of the total sample

said it is perceived Bias in reporting, 211 respondents which is 53% of the total sample said it is epileptic power supply, while 58 respondents which is threats to lives of informants. This analysis implies that the major challenge making *Izigan* less effective is Epileptic power supply.

Table 14: Which of the following aspects of the *Izigan* programme are effective in discouraging cultism?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Expert Commentary	86	22%
Testimonies from former cult members	42	10%
Visual warnings or re-enactments	71	18%
Sensitisation by security personnel	201	50%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data display that 86 respondents which is 22% of the total sample said expert commentary is the aspect of the programme that is more effective in discouraging cultism, 42 respondents which is 10% of the total sample said it is testimonies from former cult members, 71 respondents which is 18% of the total sample said it is visual warnings or re-enactments, while

201 respondents which is 50% of the total sample said it is sensitisation by security personnel. This indicates that sensitisation by security personnel is the most effective way of discouraging cultism.

Table 15: What improvements would increase *Izigans'* impact?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Include more real-life stories	64	16%
Increase social media presence (e.g YouTube, Instagram, Facebook)	107	27%
Improve production quality	41	10%
Make it more youth-focused	20	5%
Increased power supply	168	42%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above shows that 64 respondents which is 16% of the total sample believes that more real-life stories would increase *Izigans'* impact, 107 respondents which is 27% of the total sample said it is increase social media presence, 42 respondents which is 10% of the total sample said it is improved production quality, 20 respondents which is 5% of the total sample said it is

when the programme becomes more youth focus, 168 respondents which is 42% of the total sample said it is increased power supply. This indicates that majority of the respondents believe that if the power supply is improved, the impact of *Izigan* programme will also improve.

Table 16: *Izigan* is worth recommending to others as a valuable tool for anti-cultism education.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	235	59%
Agree	73	18%
Neutral	92	23%
Disagree	-	0%
Strongly Disagree	-	0%
Total	400	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above shows that 235 respondents, which is 59% of the total sample, strongly agreed that *Izigan* is worth recommending to others as a valuable tool for anti-cultism education, 73 respondents which is 18% of the total sample, agreed to the assertion, 92 respondents, which is 23% of the total sample, were neutral. This analysis indicates that majority of the respondents believe that *Izigan* is worth recommending to others as a valuable tool for anti-cultism education.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: How effective is ITV's *Izigan* programme in raising public awareness about cultism in Benin City?

To address this research question, the data presented in Tables 4 and 5 are examined. From Table 4, it was observed that a significant majority of respondents, 79% are aware of the *Izigan* programme, while only 21% reported no awareness. This indicates that the programme has achieved a high level of visibility among residents of Benin City. Awareness alone, however, is not sufficient in determining effectiveness; what matters is whether exposure translates into consistent audience engagement. The data in Table 5 further enrich this understanding by showing that, beyond mere awareness, 62% of respondents watch the programme occasionally, while 18% indicated they watch regularly. This suggests that not only do people know about *Izigan*, but a considerable proportion also interact with its content. Although occasional viewership is higher than regular viewership, the figures reveal that the programme is reaching a broad spectrum of audiences across different levels of exposure. These findings align with McQuail (2010), who argues that the effectiveness of media programmes lies in their ability to secure both audience awareness and active engagement. Similarly, Ojebuyi and Salawu (2013) note that consistent exposure to broadcast messages is a key determinant of public enlightenment, as it reinforces knowledge and sustains attention on social issues. Applying this to the present study, the combined results from Tables 4 and 5 show that *Izigan* has been successful in placing the issue of cultism on the public agenda by ensuring wide awareness and measurable levels of continued viewership. Thus, the data demonstrate that *Izigan* is highly effective in raising public awareness of cultism, while also maintaining relevance through audience engagement.

Research Question 2: In what ways does the *Izigan* programme influence youth attitudes and behaviours toward cult-related activities?

To answer this question, the data presented in Tables 7–12 are reviewed. In Table 7, a majority of respondents reported that the *Izigan* programme has shaped their perception of cultism, with 86% affirming a shift from admiration to rejection of cult groups. This indicates that the programme is effective in reframing how youths perceive cultism, transforming it from something aspirational into a destructive practice that must be avoided. Further evidence of behavioural influence is seen in Table 8, where 51% (16% strongly agree, 35% agree) stated that the programme reduced their likelihood of joining cult groups. This suggests that *Izigan* is not only shaping perceptions but is also actively dissuading youths from engaging in cult-related practices. In Table 9, the data show that 87% of respondents took specific actions against cultism after watching the programme, actions such as avoiding suspected groups, discouraging peers, or reporting cult activity. This demonstrates that the programme moves beyond awareness to inspire concrete behavioural outcomes. Audience reception also plays a role in this influence. According to Table 10, respondents found the characters and stories portrayed in the programme to be realistic (54% agreed/strongly agreed), while Table 11 shows that 46% of respondents trusted the information to a high or very high extent. This combination of relatability and credibility strengthens the programme's persuasive capacity. However, Table 12 highlights barriers to engagement, particularly poor electricity supply (53%) and safety concerns for informants (15%), which may limit full behavioural impact. The findings relate to the Cultivation Theory, which argues that consistent exposure to media narratives shapes how audiences interpret social reality. Through the consistent framing of cultism as a destructive social problem, *Izigan* cultivates rejection attitudes and reinforces preventive behaviours among youths. In the same vein,

McCombs and Shaw's (1972) Agenda-Setting Theory supports the observation that by consistently highlighting cultism, the programme directs public attention to it, making it a salient issue that influences youth choices.

From the foregoing, the data suggest that *Izigan* strongly influences youth by reshaping attitudes, reducing willingness to join cult groups, and motivating proactive actions against cultism.

Research Question 3: What factors affect audience reception, understanding, and engagement with the *Izigan* programme?

The study reveals both positive and limiting factors influencing audience reception, understanding, and engagement with the *Izigan* programme. On the positive side, a significant proportion of respondents (54%) agreed or strongly agreed that the characters and stories featured in the programme are realistic (Table 11). This relatability is crucial since audiences are more likely to engage with content that reflects their lived experiences. Furthermore, 46% of respondents expressed a high or very high level of trust in the information shared in the programme (Table 12), indicating that *Izigan* has established credibility as a reliable source of information on cultism. Trust and realism enhance audience connection, making the programme more impactful. Nevertheless, certain challenges hinder optimal reception. The most prominent issue identified was epileptic power supply, cited by 53% of respondents as the primary obstacle to consistent viewing (Table 13). This infrastructural challenge reflects broader systemic problems in Nigeria's communication environment. Other barriers include lack of diverse expert perspectives (16%), perceived bias in reporting (10%), and threats to the lives of informants (15%). These challenges suggest that while the programme's content is strong, external factors and contextual limitations reduce its overall effectiveness. These findings align with McQuail's

(2010) assertion that effective media communication requires both strong content and an enabling environment. Similarly, Ojebuyi and Salawu (2013) argue that audience reception of broadcast programmes is shaped not only by content quality but also by access, credibility, and contextual constraints. Thus, while *Izigan* successfully engages its audience, infrastructural and institutional challenges remain significant barriers to its full potential in combating cultism.

Research Question 4: What strategies can be adopted to enhance the content and delivery of the *Izigan* programme for better impact on cultism prevention?

The data from Tables 14, 15, and 16 point to several strategies that could improve the content and delivery of the *Izigan* programme. According to Table 14, half of the respondents (50%) identified sensitisation by security personnel as the most effective element of the programme. This finding underscores the importance of integrating expert perspectives, particularly from law enforcement, to enhance credibility and deepen audience trust in the anti-cultism message. Table 15 highlights the challenges and recommendations for improvement. The most pressing challenge was poor electricity supply, identified by 42% of respondents, which hampers consistent viewing. Although electricity supply is outside the control of producers, expanding into digital platforms such as social media was recommended by 27% of respondents as a viable solution. This would broaden reach, especially among young people who are more active online. Additionally, 16% of respondents suggested including more real-life stories, which would make the programme's message more relatable and impactful. Furthermore, Table 16 shows strong endorsement from the audience, with 59% strongly agreeing that the programme is worth recommending as an anti-cultism education tool. This positive feedback suggests that the foundation of the programme is solid, but its delivery mechanisms and content variety can be strengthened. These findings are consistent with McQuail's (2010) assertion that effective media

programming requires not only wide accessibility but also audience-centered content that resonates with lived experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter entails the summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

5.1 Summary

This study evaluated the effectiveness of ITV's *Izigan* programme in cultism awareness and prevention in Benin City. The objectives were to assess the effectiveness of ITV's *Izigan* programme in raising public awareness about cultism in Benin City, evaluate the influence of the *Izigan* programme on youth attitudes and behaviours toward cult-related activities, examine the factors that affect audience reception, understanding, and engagement with the *Izigan* programme, explore potential strategies for enhancing the content and delivery of the *Izigan*

programme to improve its impact on cultism prevention. The study adopted the agenda-setting and cultivation theories, which provided the foundation for further discussions. A survey research design was employed, using a questionnaire as the data collection instrument, with a sample size of 400. The data were analysed using simple percentage tables.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The results of this study, drawn from 400 Benin residents, are as follows;

1. *Izigan* is highly effective in raising public awareness of cultism, while also maintaining relevance through audience engagement.
2. Through the consistent framing of cultism as a destructive social problem, *Izigan* cultivates rejection attitudes and reinforces preventive behaviours among youths.
3. While *Izigan* successfully engages its audience, infrastructural and institutional challenges remain significant barriers to its full potential in combating cultism.
4. Enhancing the impact of *Izigan* requires strong involvement of security experts, expanded access through digital platforms, and the inclusion of more real-life stories. These strategies, supported by audience feedback, would improve credibility, engagement, and long-term effectiveness in cultism prevention.

5.4 Conclusion

The study set out to evaluate the effectiveness of ITV's *Izigan* programme in raising awareness and preventing cultism in Benin City, and the findings show that the programme has made significant progress in this regard. First, *Izigan* has proven highly effective in raising public awareness about the dangers of cultism, with a majority of respondents not only aware of the programme but also reporting increased understanding of cult-related risks. Importantly, the

programme goes beyond awareness by cultivating attitudes of rejection toward cult groups and encouraging preventive behaviours among youths, thus positioning itself as a credible tool for social change. However, despite these achievements, the study also identifies infrastructural and institutional barriers that limit its overall impact. Top among these are unstable power supply, limited expert perspectives, and concerns about informant safety, which hinder both access and deeper engagement. To address these challenges, audience feedback highlights practical solutions, including stronger collaboration with security experts, expansion into digital and social media platforms, and the inclusion of more real-life testimonies to reinforce relatability. By adopting these strategies, *Izigan* can strengthen its credibility, broaden its reach, and enhance its long-term effectiveness as a media-based intervention against cultism in Benin City.

5.5 Recommendation

The following are the recommendations of this study;

Strengthen Expert Involvement: The programme should collaborate more closely with security agencies, psychologists, and community leaders to provide expert perspectives that boost credibility and authority in addressing cultism.

Expand to Digital Platforms: To overcome barriers like poor electricity supply and reach a wider youth audience, *Izigan* should increase its presence on social media and other online platforms, making the content accessible anytime and anywhere.

Incorporate More Real-Life Stories: The inclusion of testimonies from former cult members, victims, and community stakeholders would make the programme's message more relatable, impactful, and persuasive to viewers.

Enhance Content Consistency and Engagement: Sustained coverage, dramatisations, and interactive segments should be developed to keep the issue of cultism at the forefront of public discourse, reinforcing long-term behavioural change among youths.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Mass Communication,

Faculty of Arts,
University of Benin,
Benin city,
Nigeria.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student of the Department of Mass Communication of the above-mentioned institution, conducting research on the topic: Evaluating the effectiveness of ITV's Izigan programme in cultism awareness and prevention in Benin City.

This is my project work, and it is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Mass Communication.

You have been carefully selected to help respond to the items in the questionnaire. The responses you provide will be used for academic purposes and treated with utmost confidentiality in accordance with research ethics.

Thank you in anticipation for your time, understanding and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,
Peace Akpobome
(Researcher)

QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: *Please kindly respond by ticking in the appropriate box that corresponds to your opinion.*

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. What is your Gender ? (a) Male [] (b) Female []
2. What is your age group? (a) 18 years – 25 years [] (b) 26 years – 35 years [] (c) 36 years – 45 years [] (d) 46 years – 55 years [] (e) 56 years and above
3. What is your Religion? (a) Christian [] (b) Muslim [] (c) Others (Please specify)

SECTION B: PSYCHOGRAPHIC DATA

INSTRUCTIONS: *Please kindly respond by ticking in the appropriate box that corresponds to your opinion.*

4. Are you aware of the *Izigan* Programme on ITV Benin? (a) Yes (b) No
5. How often do you watch the programme? (a) Often (b) Occasionally (c) Never
6. Do you agree that *Izigan* programme has improved your understanding of the dangers of cultism? (a) Strongly agree (b) agree (c) Neutral (d) disagree (e) strongly disagree
7. How often do you find yourself discussing cultism or related issues after watching *Izigan*?
(a) Often (b) Occasionally (c) Never
8. Has *Izigan* programme changed your perception of cult groups (e.g., from admiration to rejection)? (a) Yes (b) No
9. Do you agree that *Izigan* has reduced your likelihood of joining a cult group? (a) Strongly agree (b) agree (c) Neutral (d) disagree (e) strongly disagree
10. Have you taken any specific actions (e.g., avoiding certain groups, reporting cult-related activity) based on what you learnt from *Izigan*? (a) Yes (b) No
11. Do you agree that the characters and stories presented in the *Izigan* programme are realistic?
(a) Strongly agree (b) agree (c) Neutral (d) disagree (e) strongly disagree

12. To what extent do you trust the information shared in the programme? (a) Very high extent (b) high extent (c) neutral (d) low extent (e) very low extent
13. What are the major challenges you feel the *Izigan* programme faces in effectively addressing cultism issues (a) Limited reach or access to the program (b) Lack of diverse perspectives or expert opinions (c) Perceived bias in reporting (d) Epileptic power supply (e) Threats to lives of informants?
14. Which of the following aspects of the *Izigan* programme are effective in discouraging cultism? (a) Expert commentary (b) Testimonies from former cult members (c) Visual warnings or reenactments (d) sensitisation by security personnel.
15. What improvements would increase *Izigan's* impact? (a) Include more real-life stories (b) Increase social media presence (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, Facebook) (c) Improve production quality (d) Make it more youth-focused (e) Increased power supply
16. *Izigan* is worth recommending to others as a valuable tool for anti-cultism education. (a) Strongly agree (b) agree (c) Neutral (d) disagree (e) strongly disagree