

# Drama Theory and Entertainment Education: Exploring the Effects of a Radio Drama on Intentions to Abstain from Sex to Limit HIV Transmission in Ethiopia

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Innovative HIV Interventions among Vulnerable Populations  
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# The challenge: HIV & Ethiopia

What if many people need to take action? How does one provide observational learning to a mass audience?

- ▶ 1989, 4.6% women (Ethiopian Ministry of Health, 1998)
- ▶ 2001, 15% tested positive (Tsegaye, Rinke de Wit, Mekonnen, et al., 2002).
- ▶ Heterosexual contact (Buvé, Caraël, Hayes et al., 2001)
- ▶ 87% of new infections - sexual contact with multiple partners (Astatke & Serpell, 2000).
- ▶ Women aged 15-19 most at risk (Astatke & Serpell, 2000).

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# Entertainment Education

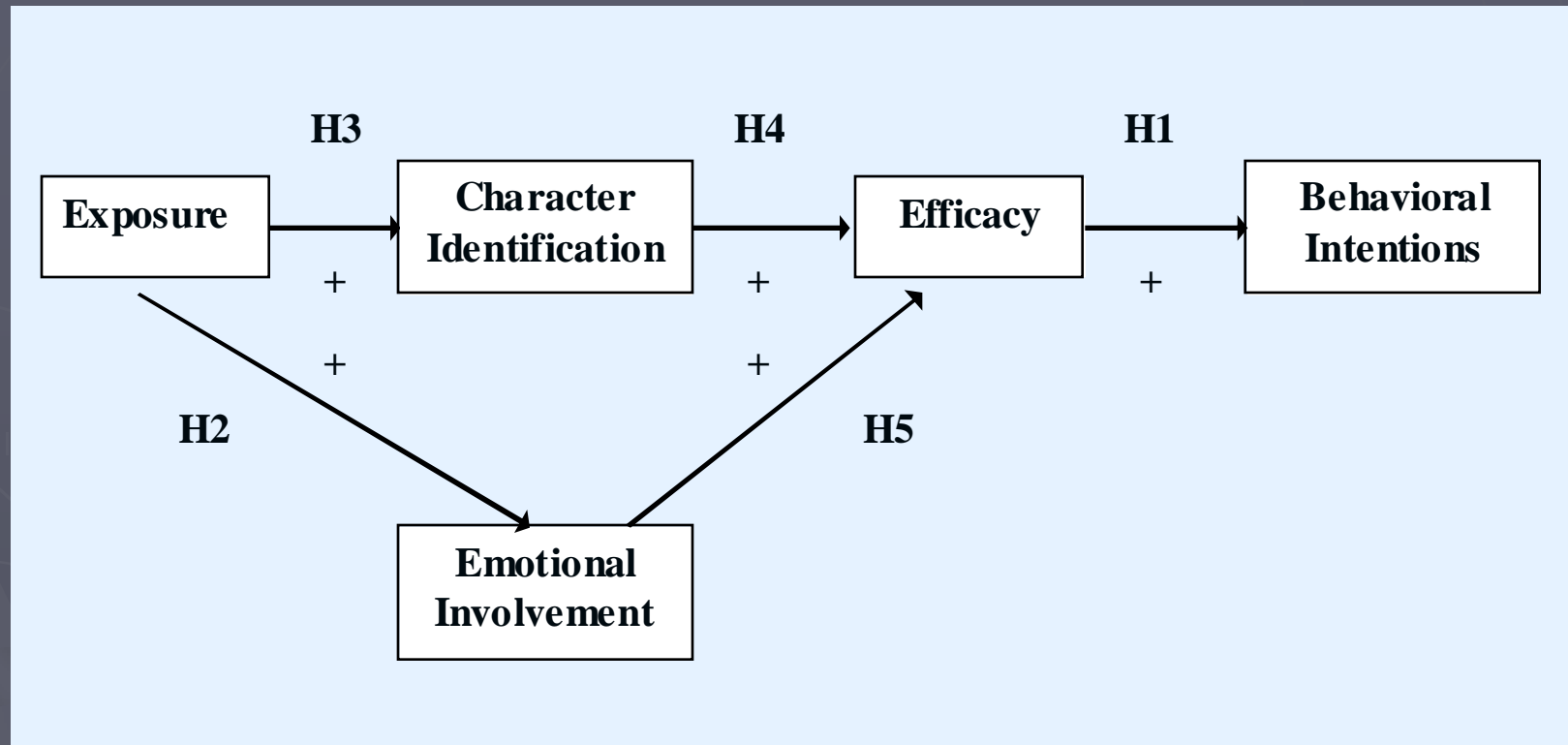
- ▶ *Edutainment*: Intentionally place educational content in entertainment programming (Singhal & Rogers, 2002)
  - health education in a radio serial dramas or television shows
  - ER – April 10, 1998 – one show about emergency contraception
    - ▶ Awareness up 17%, knowledge up 23%
  - ER – 24 Feb, 2000 – vignette about HPV (less than 60 sec)
    - ▶ Awareness – from 24 to 47%; correct knowledge = from 9 to 28%
- ▶ Most focus on "*edu*" – Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)
- ▶ What about "*tainment*"
  - Kincaid (2002) – drama theory



# Audience involvement/ identification

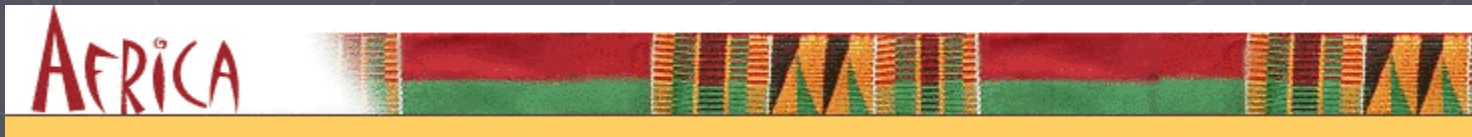
- ▶ Potential: ideal stimulus
  - Identification/ involvement (Cohen, 2001; Sood, 2002).
  - Observational learning (Bandura, 1986)
    - ▶ Watch more, gain more efficacy, leading to greater intentions
- ▶ Drama theory
  - as a drama's plot unfolds, people's emotional involvement in the dramatic plot facilitates identification with key characters,
  - which, in turn, increases the likelihood of incorporating a character's actions into the viewer's own life.
- ▶ Combine theories of *learning* and *entertainment* to evaluate edu-tainment

# Hypothesized model



# Study: Radio serial drama in Ethiopia addressing HIV/AIDS

- ▶ Serial radio drama designed with Social cognitive theory & drama theory:
  - Identification with lead characters – attention, motivation, retention...
- ▶ Test how well attachment to protagonists predicts listeners' reports of protective behaviors
  - Abstinence, monogamy, or condoms
- ▶ Evaluate theory in practice



# Sample & Methods

- ▶ Cross-sectional, random sample: 126 Listeners in Ethiopia
  - Demographics: female (75%), single (76%), 22 years old ( $SD = 4.39$ ), owned a radio (96%) all reported a radio-listening habit.
  - belonged to an Orthodox religion (86%), and had completed 4<sup>th</sup> grade (96.7%).
  - Respondents reported listening to 15 of the 26 episodes ( $SD = 7.74$ ).
- ▶ Propensity scores – comparison group
  - 126 match, non-listeners



# Radio drama: Journey of Life

- ▶ Protagonists: Askale (a police investigator) and Bahiru (her husband)
  - The affectionate, married couple
  - actively educated and taught others about health topics including attitudes and behaviors to protect themselves from HIV, such as using condoms and testing for HIV.



# *Transitional characters*

- ▶ Amelwork (Bahiru's mother), Saba (Askale's sister), and Elias and Azeb (couple next door).
  - Amelwork often disagrees with the young couple's beliefs and decisions.
  - Saba does not heed Askale's concerns for safe sex and contracts HIV. In an extra-marital affair with Saba, Elias contracts HIV and transmits it to his wife, Azeb. Both Elias and Azeb die from AIDS-related illnesses.

# *Villains*

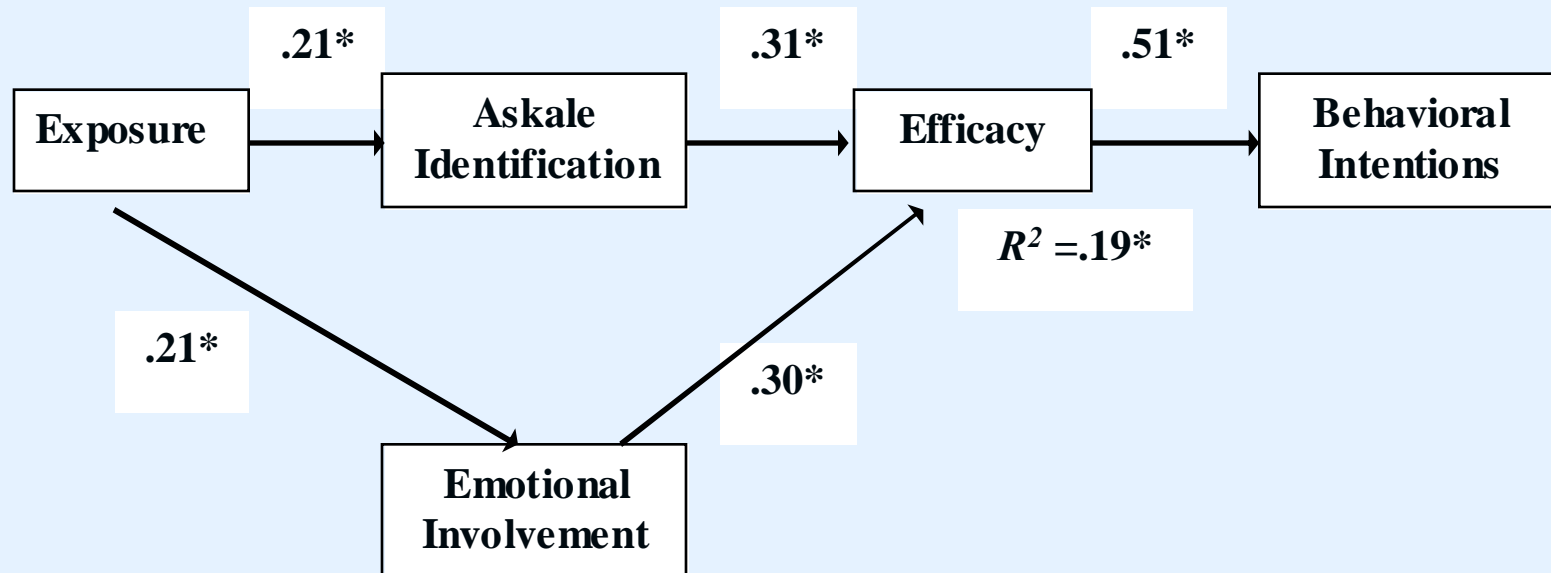
## ▶ Zeleke and Alemu

- Alemu cripples children, forcing them to work as street beggars.
- Zeleke (husband of another character) betrays his wife. She turns in both her husband and Alemu to the police.
- The authors designed Zeleke as a warning that people may have hidden agendas

# Identification with Main Characters

Character	<i>SI <math>\alpha</math></i>	<i>Identification (M)</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	Favorite Frequency	Least Favorite Frequency
<i>Askale</i>	.79	3.79	1.0	79	0
<i>Bahiru</i>	.83	3.47	1.08	5	3
Saba	.92	1.87	1.10	11	42
Amelework	.89	2.91	1.13	3	3
Elias	.88	2.52	1.09	5	7
<u>Azeb</u>	.88	2.99	1.16	14	1
<u>Zelege</u>	.96	1.54	0.95	0	60

# Results



$\chi^2 (N = 126) = 8.47, p = .13, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06$

Listeners ( $M = 4.67, SD = .53$ ) reported stronger intentions to take a preventative action in comparison to non-listeners ( $M = 4.44, SD = .65$ ),  $t(250) = 3.07, p < .01, r = .19$

# Results II – rest of the story

- ▶ Support for Social cognitive theory and drama theory
- ▶ In fact, intriguing reactions to Elias
  - More identification, greater intentions to engage in prevention behavior
  - NOT mediated by model

# Further considerations

- ▶ Multiple reactions to fictional characters: e.g., learning, emotional, and affinity.
  - Reactions related to listeners' assessments of threat and efficacy, often substantially.
  - Reactions extended to all characters: positive and negative role models, even transitional characters.

# Limitations and Future Research

- ▶ Limitations:
  - Sample size (gender split), self-reports
- ▶ Future work:
  - More components of identification/ involvement beyond affinity
  - Spurring discussion and diffusion (social network analysis)
- ▶ Greater understanding of how audience reactions to characters in entertainment education impact message processing