
Perceptions of Mothers' regarding the Effect of Cartoon Programs on Primary School Children

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Abstract: This research study assesses whether cartoon programs, the most famous entertainment among children and elders globally, are affecting the behaviour of our children. The researchers conducted interviews, and a survey from mothers of Lahore city. By using convenient sampling technique, researchers selected 100 mothers of primary school going children who have television set with internet or cables in their homes. The survey research was conducted by utilizing a self-constructed instrument. Fifteen mothers were interviewed using a self-constructed, semi-structured interview protocol. The study design is mixed method research. The results from both methods were quite similar and consolidated. Study showed that the cartoon programs are influencing our children to a considerable extent. Especially they have a strong and negative effect on the language and verbal responses of children. In today's scenario in which children use to watch cartoons for a great stretch of their day it was recommended that the cartoon programs should be deeply screened and should be carefully developed keeping in view the social and moral values. There should be valid laws for censor policies for national and international cartoon programs. A great responsibility is also on the shoulders of parents, especially mothers and teachers who have to play critical role in this whole process as they can help them learning something out from a negative experience too.

Keywords: cartoon programs, gender, animation, schoolchildren, impact, effect.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1950's television has been criticized by parents, media specialists, child developmental experts and various social critics as to be a major factor which is responsible for shaping and influencing viewer's especially childrens' behaviours. In particular television's impact on kids's emotional, social, and behavioral responses has been recognized and documented in a good manner ¹. Similarly, development of negative and aggressive behaviors due to television viewing were also reported by past research studies ².

Klein & Shiffman said³, cartoons are the most preferred programs of kids which are among those packages that most kids enjoy from the very beginning of their life journeys constantly. Because of the extensiveness of cartoons in youngsters' lives, their impact on youngsters has been tested on many aspects, such as violence, health, rules in playing games, taking challenges, interest in different subjects and communication and relationships etc. Our budding generations are becoming sluggish and lethargic in their everyday life. Potter and Warren claimed ⁴, "Cartoon applications contained violence as its critical issue. It's far found that cartoon content material is complete of violence than serial performs and comedies"

The results of different researches ^{5,6} additionally depicts that children who are slow and possess more disabilities, emotional issues, and show intellectual retardation are among those who highly consumes television, in particular children, are at great risk of being effected badly with violence and hostility induced by television. At the same time as there's growing help for healthcare experts to evaluate media histories of children.

Television programs acts as a site for children to take a look at several types of exemplary interpersonal interactions, especially in the perspective of family existence lifestyle. Various research studies⁷⁻⁹ determined that youngsters are more inclined towards TV programs in which infant characters are included. With reference to TV-viewing, a massive majority of these over mature children consider a baby male or female under the age of 18 as their preferred person. Moreover they appeal to desired characters which might resemble them and belongs to their same sex.

In a research study Gökçearsan ¹⁰ discussed that innocent cartoon images and pictures conveys very sensitive messages which possesses different disadvantages such as gender representation of the cartoon characters. Corsaro ¹¹ mentions the term early life representational culture to describe the numerous representations or

expressive symbols of kids' beliefs, challenge and values. Bell ¹² examined the bodily exposes of ladies in Disney energetic movies, which have been classified by means of way of "best women", and "femme fatales". According to Klein and Shiffman³, cartoons gave the messages about physical enchantment.

Basically kids programs show males in main character roles and women in docile submissive roles and as eye candies. This portrayal has the capability to negatively impact girls" and boys" perspectives in their roles in the society ¹³.

In recent researches ¹⁴ our mother language is seriously afflicted by the special philological expressions which are probably being presented on television e.g. "break ke bad" (After the break). In a similar manner, youngsters additionally influenced by an enormous amount of a kind of linguistic terms furnished on television in their cartoons. Watching additional TV in formative years enlarged possibilities of dropping out of school ¹⁵. Youngsters were injured seeking to repeat dangerous stunts they have seen in children indicate like superheroes spider man and batman ¹⁶. Excessive TV watching and less physical activity was also found to be a bigger cause as compared to diet ¹⁷.

Parents reported being extremely worried about the time their kids watch and how a good deal they watch ¹⁸. Moreover children's programs also divert them from reality.

Statement of the problem

The purpose of this particular study is to describe possible negative effects of television viewing on children among elementary students such as children's attitudes, behaviour, health, language and decreased school performance.

Objectives

To investigate and explore the perceptions of mothers about the:

1. Representation of gender roles, stereotypes and images in cartoon programs and their effect on children?
2. Effect of cartoon programs on the language of children?
3. Effects of watching too much cartoon programs on the the physical health of children?

Research Design

This research study was a Quan-qual study. For quantitative research study the nature of study was descriptive so survey questionnaire with closed ended questions was utilized while for qualitative research study which was based on phenomenology, semi- structured interviews were conducted .

Population

Population consisted of all the mothers found in Lahore city.

Sampling

Convenient sampling technique was used by researcher and one hundred mothers of school going children, who have television set and cables in their homes were selected for data collection through survey research. Fifteen mothers were further selected for conducting interviews.

Instrument

A survey was conducted through self-constructed questionnaire which was used to examine mothers' thoughts and opinions about the effects of cartoons programs on their children. The questionnaires were prepared on five points Likert scale. Semi-structured Interview protocol was self-constructed for conducting interviews.

Data Collection

First of all, the questionnaire was distributed among the selected sample. mothers found in Lahore. They are requested to fill the survey questionnaires. They were introduced and informed about the research topic, its purposes and ethics Interviews were conducted from 15 mothers till saturation point was reached.

Reliability and validity of the instrument

Reliability was estimated through Cronbach's alpha and its value was found to be 0.788 which is deemed to be acceptable hence no item was discarded. The questionnaire and Interview protocol was validated by a panel of experts.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Program was utilized for data analyses and interpretation. The data was coded and entered into this software. The results based on collected data were analyzed and concluded.

Findings

1. 39% mothers agreed that children at an early stage should be watching T.V. Whereas 40% mothers disagreed to this statement and mothers who are uncertain is 21%.
2. 47% respondents agreed that cartoon is the best way of entertainment for children. It is found only 25% disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 28%.
3. 68% mothers agreed that cartoons and animated movies divert children from real life. Whereas 20% are disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 12%.
4. 71% mothers said that only few cartoons contains educational principle for children .Whereas 17% are disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 12% .
5. 87% mothers agreed that children imitate what they watch on television .It is found only 6% are disagreed to this statement and mothers who are uncertain is 7% only.
6. 66% mothers agreed that children programs can cause violence in children. Whereas 19% are disagreed to this statement and mothers who are uncertain is 15% .
7. 57% mothers said that children will grow in weight if they are constantly watching T.V. It is found only 27% are disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 16%.
8. 61% mothers agreed that Gender Role Stereotyping in cartoons affect the way children develop their identities .Whereas 15% disagreed to this statement and mothers who are uncertain is 24% .
9. 80% respondents agreed that messages conveyed by cartoons moves around physical attractiveness, cartoons have bad impact on youngsters' beginning ideas whereas best 5% disagreed to this statement and moms who are unsure is 15% .
10. 77% mothers agreed that punishment of bad cartoon characters in TV programs encourages the concept of violence in kids .it's far determined simplest 10% disagreed and moms who are uncertain is 13%.
11. 62% mothers agreed that cartoons like, Ben 10, Scooby-Doo etc. are bad example of cartoon as these contains Violence, gunshot, supernatural things and these should not broadcast for children. Whereas 24% mothers disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 14%.
12. 71% mothers agreed that children's programs pushing girls to look, dress, and act much older than they are. It is found only 15% disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 14%.
13. Almost 85% mothers agreed that too much watching T.V can cause children poor performance in school .Whereas only 6% disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 9% only.
14. 53% mothers agreed that children programs like Tom & Jerry help children to realize that it is absolutely normal to beat someone .Whereas 24% disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 23%.
15. 42% mothers agreed that many children had got injuries while doing stunts and actions like Spiderman and Superman. Whereas 45% mothers disagreed to this statement and mothers who are uncertain is 13%.
16. 63% mothers said that parents are to be blamed for and are responsible for their children's psychological and physical injuries by cartoon. It is found 26% disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 11%.
17. 26% mothers agreed that after watching cartoons children feels difficulty in discriminating between real world and fantasy world. Whereas 14% are disagreed and mothers who are uncertain is 20%.
18. 89% mothers agreed that parents should check the cartoons before allowing their children to watch them. It is found only 5% mothers disagreed and mothers who are uncertain 6% only.
19. 85% mothers agreed that acts like smoking on TV and use of abusive language should be banned. Whereas only 10% disagreed and mothers who are uncertain 5% only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Almost similar kind of results were found through analysis of questionnaires and interviews. Different themes emerged through the analysis of interviews. Most of the mothers said that pupil at very early level must not watch television; Some said that there is no harm in watching TV at early ages. A few mothers stated that cool animated film is important for intellectual growth for a kid at early degree. When mothers were asked about the positive and negative effects of cartoon programs which they have observed in their children most of the mothers told they have seen aggression, anxiety, violence and meanness in their children. Almost half of the mothers stated that their children and their friends are developing bad behaviour , like gender discrimination and bullying or hooting children younger and weaker than themselves. Some mothers opined that we should not blame such programs for bad behavior of our children as it all depends on parents and especially mothers training and relationship with their kids. When mothers were asked that whether their children have got inspired by cartoon characters etc. majority of the mothers replied that their children especially sons are very much inspired by those superheroes and try to do those actions at homes which sometimes results in injuries or serious consequences. Mothers of almost 70% girls told the researcher that their daughters blindly copies Disney princesses and female characters. They wanted to look super slim and sexually attractive like them. Researcher asked mother that how do they perceive their children language after watching television. A few mothers said that they haven't observed any such change in their children language. More than half out of the total mothers who were being interviewed replied that Hindi Dubbed cartoons have spoiled their children

languages both Urdu and English. Less than half of the mothers (who were relatively better qualification level) stated that they try to keep a check on the cartoons their children watch and only allows them to watch educational and less violent cartoons which are in English or Urdu language. They also admitted that it is really hard to always keep an eye on their children that what type of cartoons they are viewing so it is the duty of the state to make a proper policy for kid's programs especially cartoons.

Mothers were also asked that how do they perceive the physical health of children after watching too much television, Sixty percent of the mothers told that their children do less physical activity as compared to their childhood when they have relatively less exposure to TV cartoon programs. Some mothers said that although they blame cartoon programs for making their kids sluggish but actually it is their own fault also because most parents especially working mothers who do not have time for their children to take them to parks or outside likes to make their children busy in watching cartoons so that they can do their different tasks without disturbance. A few mothers also reported that due to some favourite cartoon programs and advertisements of junk food items between their breaks their children have become obese, lazy and physically inactive.

Children who view more television have more chances to become lazy, sluggish and have a tendency to eat during watching TV programs¹⁹. Genuinely, the parents who showed unsupportive thoughts about TV may additionally lead their children to much less television viewing²⁰.

Almost 85% mothers agreed that too much watching T.V can motive kids bad performance in schools. Parents reported being extremely worried about the time their kids spent watching as well as the content they watch¹⁸. According to Woodward²¹, less than 17% of parents said there is big portion of worth watching top TV programs for his or her children. Almost two-thirds of parents document controlling programs which their children watch²¹.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed that youngsters are frequently exposed to TV programs which has an enormous effect in shaping their behavior. Cartoons have content that fluctuate our children from our subculture; morals, values, language, norms and culture. Now this is the time to become concious of this alarming situation and take necessary steps on individual as well as national and governmental level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As children programs is very important for the mental growth of a child so parents should keep a check on the themes and content of the cartoon programs before permitting their child to watch.
2. Parents should spend some time watching kids TV programs with their children so that they can see what they are watching and can explain their children about the consequences of such violent scenes.
3. Allow your child to look at programs that he's going to revel in, however which can be appropriate for his age and level of improvement, and not using grownup topics.
4. All the authorities and our government in addition to companies and many others. Should also play an essential position inside the sponsorship and merchandising of young and upcoming animators as a way to inspire them to expand indigenous cartoons.
5. There should be clear censor policy for Childrens' programs including cartoons. All the important stake holders i.e. educationists, teachers, parents etc should also be given representation in this policy development.

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