

EFFECTS OF CARTOON SHOWS ON CHILDREN: A STUDY FROM PARENTS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The booming stages of electronic media have indeed persuaded children to look upon them, feed upon them and depend upon them. The developmental stage of children is often hampered with maximum exposure to cartoon shows and cartoon characters. Extensive and rampant influence of cartoon shows and characters have been a root cause to many psychological changes among children. According to the parent's perspective, cartoon shows have deeply disturbed the characteristics of children, thus misleading them to adopt attitudes, thought process and mannerisms as that of the cartoon characters. This study gives a much in depth meaning and understanding of the psyche of the children and essentially focuses on the parent's role in controlling the viewership standards of their wards. Using a qualitative method of survey, the paper delves into the pros and cons of binge TV watching among children and the possible ways of rescheduling their TV watching time, which is a result of effective parental guiding technique.

Keywords: *Binge watching, Cartoon shows, Children, Parents, Psychological*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition

Cartoon is defined as a TV programme or short film, usually a funny one, made using characters and images that are drawn rather than real (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). With reference to the above, cartoon is essentially an animated piece that is used to portray the contemporary world affairs with a direct reflection from the hand drawn images. This fictional piece carries a message that is multi-cultural, thus indicating upon the reality of the society we humans are surviving in.

1.2 About the Study

The very essence of a cartoon directly lies in the representational purpose of the creator of the cartoon, through which a communication is established between the creator and the receiver. Ultimately, the ideological process that goes into crafting a cartoon is clearly hinting at making a psychological difference in the social space, proving that the degree of fiction involved is thoughtful enough to impact the trends or behaviour of the society. Technology and Globalization has taken the society by storm that has hugely impacted their lifestyle. When cartoons and technology blend to produce entertainment, the end result is always disastrous. Children and cartoon are two factors that can cause far reaching implications on the well-being of the society. Cartoon as defined above, is a factious portrayal of societal affairs, which are boiled down to the moral understanding of the children. Presumably 70% of children are fanaticized and carried away by content in the cartoon. Inspired by cartoon characters like Tom and Jerry, some children are observed to have picked up conflicts with their siblings

and closed ones. Although this is carried out in a lighter sense, it does have serious psychological ramifications. (Ghilzai, 2018).

This paper explains the psychological effects upon the children that leads to aggressive behaviour and leaves the children with lack of moral values. Upon the observation by the psychologist's children exposed to violent cartoon shows are more susceptible to invoke the sense of aggression. The rate of incorporating the same is comparatively higher than the children who watch nonviolent cartoons. They also argue that lack of decisive cognitive capability and a huge impression of negative conduct upon the children would endanger their social life(P, 1961).

Children are highly considered as the target of cartoons. This inevitable fact takes a whole new turn while the children experience a journey to a new world and new ideas and get exposed to ideas they weren't exposed to. Moreover, this is an argument that contestants do blame against cartoons and relates the cartoon shows as an educational tool for children. This notion also believes that the upbringing of the children does not lie upon the content produced by cartoons but on the mere upbringing of the parents and guardians. According to boxofficemojo.com, the most entertaining activity for children for a time span of more than 80 years, is cartoon shows and animated films(Acheampong, Richmond, 2017).

Consistent watching of TV shows since the age of 2 or years, become enthusiastic viewers and these TV shows become more family friendly, thus grabbing more eye balls. Cartoon produce content that may not be children friendly. Quite often the content in the cartoon might propagate ideologies that may not be appropriate to the children. The standards of content would be in no match to the developmental stage of the child. Sometimes the child also perceives content this might be contradictory to that of what he/she has acquired from their parents. Among all other activities that keep the children engaged, it is cartoon shows that eat up most of their time. Ultimately, a long exposure to a content that is propagating and manipulating the mass intelligence of the children would pose as a major hurdle in building basic fundamental values in the children. In modern day life, generally, most of the parents are working professionals who barely dedicate time to their children, which is another add on factor for the persistent watching of cartoon among the children(Habib, 2015).

However, many counter narratives also flourish that speak in favour of cartoon shows. Many parents agree that, TV cartoon keeps their ward pre occupied and a positive cartoon always represents morality and communicates effective life skills to the children to learn. Not many people show a soft corner to this aspect of the story, instead are very critical about cartoon pre occupying them so much, to an extent that could jeopardize their life skills. The counter narrative strongly believes that the positive cartoon portrayed could possibly teach and educated moral values that would install a sense of obedience, decency, punctuality and kindness. Basic kindness like helping the poor, helping colleagues without much jealousy, friendship values and respecting parents are some of the factors that could possibly glue the children to watch the cartoon. This eventually is helping them to possess skills with a logical sense of mind without hammering them too much for maintaining discipline (Priyambada Tripathi, Anita Singh, 2016).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Children have become very much interested in cartoons over many years and it has become the root cause to some lives. This has become a major threat because children watch a lot of cartoon programmes and seeing that they have become addictive and violent in nature. According to the environment in which kids are brought up, they get moulded accordingly. The TV programmes initially becomes a part of this environment that in turn adversely affect the growth and development of a child. Hence, it is mandatory for all the parents to understand how TV programmes effect and influence the child (Shailesh Rai, 2016). In the late 1800s Cartoon have been a part of history from the time of first motion picture were discovered. A cartoon is basically a portrayal of movie made by animation instead of live actors, especially a funny or humorous film intended for children. It can also be represented as the movie making by shooting a sequence of slightly several of drawings or models so that they appear to move and change when the sequence is shown. These are the prime elements that keep viewers especially children glued to their seats. Cartoons at first were so short because people used to watch this shorts before their feature films in movie theatre. When cartoonists started putting up their shows on TV, they began to extent longer, creating half an hour block shows that are on cartoon network, nickelodeon, and the Disney channel today. Moreover the cartoon shows was supposed to become more family friendly so that ample of people would watch their shows (Kapelian, 2009).

Various production houses like The Walt Disney productions and a few other prominent cartoon shows like Tom & Jerry, Popeye, Bugs Bunny, etc. in the eighties and the nineties clearly had a magnificent clout when it came to children's entertainment market. The overpowering existence of Japanese cartoons in the market cannot be ignored, and this happened due to the invention of satellite TV. In today's world there is no denial of the fact that these Japanese cartoons are placed the highest position in our children's favourite list (Shailesh Rai, 2016). Few popular examples are *Sinchan*, *Ninja Hattori*, *Doraemon*, *Winx Club* and so on. Without children playgrounds and streets look empty and deserted, and one of the major cause that children are affected by cartoons and they are totally engrossed in them. Children gets deviated very easily and especially when it comes to cartoons with funny animated characters. A cartoon is a sort of movie that is made by using all sort of animation instead of live actors, especially a funny and a humorous film especially intended for kids (Thomson, 2015).

Television is what attracts the children mostly and shapes their behaviour. The personality and behaviour of a child can be detected very easily as they are like blank paper. Any outer influence and information that are negative might affect their character as because they are accepting whatever comes to their way. So, any action or behaviour the child comes across may affect his personality trait. To avoid this parents and other grownups must be very careful with what the children watch especially on television. Children's behaviour is mostly shaped by the television because they are in front of it almost all the time. Children usually from the age of 6th month till 3 years watch are cartoon and that is the sole reason why parents should be totally aware of all types of cartoons their children are watching and spending most of their time on (Priyambada Tripathi, 2016). Children watching cartoons on television at early age of six months and by the age of two or three they become much more enthusiastic viewers, and the cartoons ought to become more of family friendly so that maximum number of people would watch their show (Kapelian, 2009). This has become a serious

problem as because too many children around the world are becoming addictive to television shows that are being shown and at the same time they are engrossing themselves being violent and aggressive in nature. In today's world it is very difficult to find a television channel dedicated purely to children and are children friendly. Most of the channels have children's programmes that are mixed with commercials or movie previews that are completely inappropriate for children to view those things (Priyambada Tripathi, 2016). Cartoon shows could be very much harmful for the children as because the content driven there would confuse as well as manipulate the child as to what he experience in real life. In modern lifestyle where the parents are busy and held up with their work, so they can devote very minimal time proportion to their kids from their daily routine work. Due to this mostly kids spent time in front of a cartoon (Khaled Habib, 2015). (Ali Hassan, Muhammad Daniyal, 2013) studied after watching cartoon it was examined that the effects on children's behaviour was totally different as to how they behaved before watching those shows.

One of the most favourite cartoon channels for children is Cartoon Network and it is watched by humongous kids all around the world. As per the content with just having children but also give them some positive and negative habits. One of the most important factors affecting children in watching cartoons is aggression and violence. Anything that is negative in content might lead the child to doubt the skills, his lifestyle, his raising skills according to his religion (Anton-Aluja Fabregat, Rafael-Torrubia Beltri, 1997). It's not that cartoons have only negative impacts on children but they are the prime focus of many children's lives that parents use manipulatively in helping them to keep the children occupied while they are busy with their office or household work or schedules. Many parents also expresses their satisfaction with the educational benefits of television and can touch positive attitudes and behaviours (Priyambada Tripathi, 2016). A positive cartoon should be used to teach a child how to obey his parents, control his temper, speak in a polite way, help the poor, aid the old, lend hand to the young and to work in group without feeling jealous from his colleagues. Concerning life experience a well-built cartoonish scenario could teach a toddler how to be a leader, how to analyse problems in a scientific manner (Priyambada Tripathi, 2016). There is a form of learning process that goes on while children are watching cartoons.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology

For this research quantitative method is used in order to get an accurate and diversified solution to the problems the research focuses on. Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. The purpose of quantitative research is to generate knowledge and create understanding about the social world. Quantitative technique such as questionnaire, survey method will help us to find out the problems and results from the grass root level and as it is a first-hand information it is much relevant and a credible source to access. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables and generalize results from a larger sample population.

3.2 Research Questions

3.2.1 .How does Cartoons influence violence on children?

3.2.2 Why do cartoon programmes like BenTen, Powerpuff Girls and Tom and Jerry trend amongst the kids?

- 3.2.3 How has these kids been psychologically affected to become addicted to binge watching?
- 3.2.4 How do parents control and manage their children who are watching cartoon programmes in electronic media?
- 3.2.5 How excessive watching of these shows affects the relationships with their parents?
- 3.2.6 How does it affect the children's behaviour?
- 3.2.7 Has it caused a decline in outdoor activities?
- 3.2.8 Are Hindi dubbed cartoons hindering their exposure to the English ones?

3.3 Research Objectives

- 3.3.1 To know about the children's interest on type of cartoons and their favourite channels
- 3.3.2 To analyse the parental perception towards children viewing cartoon programmes
- 3.3.3 Effect on children due to binge watching
- 3.3.4 Negative impacts of cartoons on children's behaviour and language
- 3.3.5 To understand the affect in relationship between parents and children due to over watching of cartoon shows

3.4 Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory is a theory of learning and social behaviour which proposes that new behaviours can be acquired by observing and imitating others. It states that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. The theory expands on traditional behavioural theories, in which behaviour is governed solely by reinforcements, by placing emphasis on the important roles of various internal processes in the learning individual. This theory aims at trying to analyse the observation of behaviour, learning also occurs through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. When a particular behaviour is rewarded regularly, it will most likely persist; conversely, if a particular behaviour is constantly punished, it will most likely desist. This theory works well in explaining the research questions of this study, as the researcher mainly wants to understand the behavioural changes that children undergoes after they watch cartoons. The researcher aims at using the ideas of this theory while conducting the survey in order to get hold of the real opinions.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

The researcher opted for an online questionnaire with mainly "yes or no/ maybe" questions and check boxes, that would be sent out via social media platforms and apps, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, as this would provide incredibly wide reach to a large number of potential participants. A survey conducted offline would prove to be difficult, a time consuming task, with a much narrower reach, restricted only to the area targeted. While the interviews would be detailed, long, one-on-one, face-to-face done for about 10 minutes and recorded to understand the interviews technical knowledge.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW

A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and /or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.

The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes. The portion of data to be coded during First Cycle coding processes can range in magnitude, from a single word to a full sentence to an entire page of text, and even a reconfiguration of the codes themselves manually developed thus far.

4.1.1 Language Development

Language development is a procedure that initially starts in a human life. Human learn languages pertaining to their ages like infants start without even knowing the language that is spoken around him/her, but initially within 9-10 months babies can differentiate between sounds, speech, voice modulation and so on and in turn they start grasping them slowly by babbling. This leaning pattern starts when the foetus is in utero and starts somewhat recognizing its mother's voice and distinguish it from other sounds once when they are born.

Exemplarily, children develop a language ability which is called the receptive language abilities before their eloquent or verbal language develops. Receptive language is the internal understanding and processing of language. The more the receptive language continues to increase, the receptive language starts developing slowly, because that is when the children starts learning distinguishing between the different forms of languages.

Generally it is seen that a child gets to learn productive language when they attain the stage of pre-verbal communication where infants use articulations and gesture to express their feelings, interests and emotions.

4.1.2 Emotions

Emotional learning begins at a very early age, as children uncover an extensive range of emotions and expands as they grow. It is an emergence of expression, understanding, experience and regulation of emotion from birth and changes takes place throughout adolescence, childhood and adulthood. The emotional development takes place in co-occurrence with neural, behavioural and cognitive development.

The children today are well versed with the televised cartoons. These channels are well aware about the children's likings and dislikes so they come up with such programs that attracts them and keeps them glued to television. The children are unaware as to what they should choose to view so the parents should help them in categorising the good and bad.

Apart from this, timing is one of the major factor that a parent should encounter, there must be a limitation on viewing cartoon shows as excessive watching causes ample problems. There are ample of emotions and these emotions play different roles at different stages. The expression of emotions at the time of infancy promotes transition from dependency to complete autarchy. Intentional smile and other such related expressions build up social interaction and promotes healthy social interactions and attachments and similar thing happens at the time of sadness where they tend to show aggression, anger and so on.

4.1.3 Mental stability

Mental stability is defined as a state of being well where each and every individual understands or realizes his or her capacity, can cope with normal stresses of life, able to make contribution to his or her community and can work productively and profitably.

Watching cartoons does impact on a child's mental stability as because they are glued to these cartoon shows all the time due to which they keep thinking about it over and again as their mind is occupied with all of those visuals that they are exposed to. Certain cartoon shows are so funny and jolly that they end up making the

kids laugh and enjoy the entire show which is a positive side when it comes to mental stability as because staying happy is a positive sign of mental stability. But on the other hand there are situation where it does effect the kids negatively if the content of the cartoon contains violence, murder, theft as because the kids learn to practise these things which is again a form of negative mental stability. This adversely affect the child as they connect all of these to emotions that are negative so in both the ways the kids are being affected negatively.

Cartoons do affect a child's mental stability as because when cartoon portrays things like seasons a child understand it lot better and learn a lot from it. When it is visual and that too in the form of cartoon they understand things and accept them in a better way than the actual facts or if they are taught verbally by someone. So, it is affecting in both the ways positively as well as negatively.

4.1.4 Religious Understanding

Religious understanding is basically when a child learn about the religion and related things to it. Children usually acquire the views of the religion from their parents mostly as because they spent maximum number of times with them so they get to see, learn and understand religion through them. They do not understand the concept of religion and their history and propaganda behind it. The only one thing that they gets to adapt is faith and fear in God because from the beginning they have been told to pray God and believe in him as he is the most powerful one and if they don't pray means some bad thing is bound to happen. Until then a child is not aware of anything as such, as their brain develops they start questioning but parents do supress their question and ask them to pray and believe in God so thing is inherited by the parents for which they are bound to listen and follow.

4.1.5 Cultural Influence

Culture moulds experience and influences the development in a child. Children gets to learn different behaviours through their culture and they even gets to know which the preferred ones are and which are not. For example, self-esteem and independence are valued in some culture and non- aggression and non-violence are preferred by another culture. So, it actually depends on people and their culture. Since the childhood the professors or the educators should bridge the gap of culture amongst different kids, so that later on they don't differentiate each other via culture.

4.1.6 Moral Development

Morals are something which are taught by parents and teachers to the kids. They should be taught as to what is right and what is wrong and this understanding depends on which environment they are growing. Morality is the ability to view the difference between right and wrong in terms of thoughts, actions, and behaviours and so on. As a parent teaching this concept is the primary goal. Moral Development deals with the concept of morality that a child learns from infancy to adulthood.

There are various stages of moral development like in infants they cannot moralize as their sense of categorizing right or wrong depends on their desires. After a couple of months there sense of rightness depends if their needs are fulfilled. Apart from that hunger, loneliness, being cuddled and fed is also a part of desire that they crave for. This feelings of desire keep changing pertaining to their age group because the more they develop their understanding level of the moral development will increase for which they will be able to distinguish things between right and wrong.

4.1.7 Imitation

The term imitation in psychological terms refers to mimicking or copying of behaviour patterns. Young child's ability to imitate an action of other is a crucial mechanism for social learning that is for earning new knowledge. The ability of a child to imitate is important because it tells us about the knowledge that the child already possess. Children do learn by imitation as it is the ability to learn behaviours by observing others action. Through imitation they make connection with their social partners. They get to learn that even others are like them. Imitation is a part of interaction at the early stage because it allows children to synchronize actions with another person. It is a form of social learning that leads to the development of culture, tradition etc.

4.1.8 Learning Capacity

Learning skills is one of the major and the most vital part of a child development. Learning skills like walking, sitting, talking and so all of these are learned during the developmental process. First five years are especially crucial for intellectual, Physical, and emotional development. Their learning capacity depends on their age and their ability to understand and grasp things. There are seven learning styles starting from visual, aural, verbal, physical, logical social and solitary that is intrapersonal. They are exposed to all of these styles which they tend to learn at every stage in a better way when they grow.

Children learns and grasp things very easily and this is how their communication skills also increases. It is very important for a parent to understand that their kids minds are really delicate and they will understand whatever they are being taught so this is a very crucial stage where parents should give their time to the kids so that they learn and understand things in a better way and inculcate the best of their learning. Learning Capacity again depends on a child's brain every child is different from one another and their grasping power is also different keeping that on mind parents should give them lessons which are good for them.

4.1.9 Holistic Development

Holistic Development is a practical approach to a wide learning system where social, physical, and mind spiritual and emotional growth of a child is been taken care. This type of education not only focuses on mere learning but also on implementing what is learnt. Childhood is a sensitive phase of an individual's life. The nurturing and the resources that one receives during their childhood has an impact which will bloom as an adult. This is the reason why an individual requires nurturing according to their needs. The parents and the teacher must take extra care of these kids as they are yet to develop and to meet their specialized needs so that holistic development of their mind, physical and emotional aspects is possible.

Holistic development is very important and crucial in one's life. Gone are those days were parents wanted their child to become a doctor or an engineer, parents in today's modern world listen to their kids as to what they want to become and what they want to pursue, be it singer, photographer or a journalist. What a child needs from school is not only academic learning but also those sets of life skills which will help them later to handle challenges in life and become all-rounder. An education system which will help a child know self, teach them how to build and maintain healthy relationships.

4.1.10 Outdoor Games

Outdoor Game is a sort of a game that stimulates military combat, players on one team try to eliminate players on the opposing team by any means. Outdoor paly enables children to enjoy the natural environment and

learn to seek out exercise, activity and fresh air. There is something fundamentally healthy about using outdoors. Thus outdoor play develops disposition for the outdoors, for physical activity, and for care of environment.

Playing outdoor or outside helps children to develop their learning ability and capacity. By putting educational equipment outdoors, children are soon learning through play, which is a fun way of helping children to learn new sort off information and skills. This form of games not only build the children physically strong but at the same time mentally. Their motor skills like running, pedalling, throwing etc. becomes strong at the same time skills like painting, writing etc. also become strong.

4.1.11 Health Problems:

Every kid suffers from health problems. Some are serious and some are not and these health issues can cause due to imbalance in their daily routine. Kids in today's generation has a lot of problems and issues related to health. The most common health problems that a child suffers due to watching excessive cartoons are eye problem, back pain, neck pain and even digestion related issues. Over watching of the cartoon shows affect their behaviour and they tend to believe and take up everything seriously whatever is shown in cartoon as their mind is not yet developed and they are not matured enough to see things in real world as they believe in virtual things because they tend to attract them more. For example they see schools that the cartoon character goes is different and they expect to go to same kind off school and expect their schooling to be same as theirs and this happens when they are over watching or over-seeing the cartoons. Then they start pretending like their favourite character be it good or bad, a child idealizes a situation and starts enacting like the cartoon characters. These kids they do not understand what the cartoons wants to portray and even the adults are unaware as to what their kids are learning from it.

4.1.12 Colour

Colour is a very important aspect for a child's developmental process. Colour can help to connect the neuropathways in the brain. Children also do react to colours on a physical level. There are few colours like blue, pink, red, yellow which are easily accepted by the children as they are quite vibrant in nature and grasps the attention of the young minds.

On discussing with the interviewees about the way colour is featured in cartoon the data stated that cartoons do promote lots of colours which helps the children to understand colours in a better way and can easily grasp it. Most of the cartoons are very colourful they promote vibrant colours than the dull and dark colour. Psychologically speaking dull colours doesn't invite the young minds attention and they get distracted very easily but on the other hand if they are shown colours which are vibrant in nature it is seen that it attracts their attention.

4.1.13 Sound

Sound is another important aspect for a child's developmental process. As a child or maybe a toddler it is very difficult to understand sound and voice modulation so for them even if they get to hear music they can relate things very well. Children do react to different sound in a different way.

Cartoons do promote sound and sound effects, and through this a child gets to learn about the sounds. In this thesis the researcher and the interviewees discussed about the influence of sound on children through cartoon and the impact is huge. Sound effects adds meaning to the storyline and children relates in a better way and learn different kinds of sounds. Children do associate their feelings and emotions through his sound and sound effects. If in case it is a good tone it does influence the kids with positivity and positive way. For anger they use loud, prominent sound that helps a child to understand as to what is happening. Similarly a soft tone is used to portray something very happy and joyful apart from that there is a typical sound that is used when something goes in flop or not successful. So there are various kinds of sounds that are portrayed in cartoons through which a child gets to understand and differentiate between sounds and the tone of those sound. So, as per data it is seen that sound.

5. CONCLUSION

The research aimed to study the effect of cartoon shows on children from a parent's perspective and analyse the behavioural changes due to immense exposure to animation at a very tender age. The paper essentially explains the attributions and abstract that a cartoon show display because of which children are addicted to them. There is a sense of critical analysis from the parent's point of view and has established in becoming an eye opener to the problem of binge watching of cartoons. The paper breaks down the components of a cartoon show and describes the way each component is conceived by the children and leaves the children with far reaching implication. The purpose if the research is to identify the rapid changing of psychological and cognitive aspects among children who extensively consider cartoons as their sole source of entertainment. The paper goes on to put further onus on the parents who's mending way stands as a testimony to their children's development. The thesis also explains the fluctuating code of conduct among children who tend to imitate the cartoon characters and carry upon them the sense of illusion narratives that is far beyond reality and subsequently impeding their developmental stage.

In conclusion, the research has drawn clear parallels between fiction and reality. The current generation of children are living and performing duties based on the affairs in a cartoon show. This worrying issue can be resolved only through parent mediation. The paper has effectively managed to deliver the perception of parents on cartoon shows and their influence on their children. Despite learning the ill effects of cartoon shows, parents fail to acknowledge the immediacy this issue provokes. Although cartoon shows has a positive impact in terms of exposure and cultural narratives, however it is clearly on the verge of jeopardizing their skills and personality, given the explanation of social learning theory. Academics is a quintessential part of any budding individual and children cannot consider to be alien to this. This implies that cartoon shows are eating up most of their time and the ground realities suggest that parents believe adequate time is not given by their children to focus on academics. As a result, they are falling alien to this gradually. Therefore, parental guidance is quintessential in monitoring the TV watching time of their children and this small step can create real bright and young minds for tomorrow.

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