

Impact of Cartoon Channels on Children

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Abstract

There is no doubt that television has a great influence on children from a very early age itself and it will affect children's cognitive and social development. The role that television plays in socializing children is very great. Television can be educational and beneficial, but their negative aspect, such as the amount of aggressive and violent activity it displays daily, is causing grave concern to parents and educators around the world.

Children do not generally become consistent viewers until they are about 2½ to 3 years old. Even then they do not watch the set constantly because their span of attention is very short. So they get easily distracted. Now a day the working parents are so busy, they don't have enough time to spend with their kids. The mother has to do the cooking and look after the child simultaneously; there may not be servants also. So she switches on the TV and puts the child in front of it. Slowly it becomes a habit. After some time the kid becomes addicted to the television. And the mother blames the child for regularly watching it.

Keywords: Children, Cartoon channels, Television, Socialisation, Television

Introduction

More fondly known as the 'idiot box', television has become a necessary evil in today's world. It has become an indispensable household commodity and has taken the place of physical childhood activities. Moreover, children are becoming more of a couch potato, with many physical and mental problems. They have become absolutely unaware of the fun of childhood, like flying kites, making castles out of sand, playing in fields and the innocence revealed in being stubborn. Though a potential medium of mass communication, it has actually cut kids off from the world, at a very tender age. This implies that parents should make the facility available to their child judiciously. Given below are some vital points on how TV affects your child both positively and negatively. Keep them in mind while deciding on the TV time for your kids.

Good Effects of Television on Children

- Television gives exposure to children on different cultural experiences.
- Television also keeps children aware of current events and news related items.
- Watching educational programs on television help the kids use it effectively, as a complement to school education.
- Quality shows on television can impart knowledge and important values and lessons.

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- Watching music concerts and art shows can make the kids aware of the various genres of music around the world.
- Television helps a child in spending time with family members, when all of them are watching the same show.
- Watching documentaries, especially fragmented for children, opens doors of world in their mind.

Bad Effects of Television on Children

- Excessive television viewing is seen to trigger violence or aggression in children.
- Watching violent scenes at an early stage might make the kids scary of the world and find every other human being as mean. Often known as 'mean and scary world' syndrome, it might push them backwards in taking decisions of life.
- Sitting in front of the television, for long hours, has been linked with obesity, as physical activity gets diminished considerably.
- Children become influenced towards eating junk food, as there is a lot of promotion on the television, regarding the same.
- The bombardment of sexual content on TV exposes teens to half-baked knowledge about sex at an early age, which is harmful for their mental growth. There is seldom mention of proper sex education or issues and risks related to it.
- Devoting more time towards watching television leads to poor academic performance, as child neglects his/her studies.
- Many advertisements and programs shown on television focus on beauty products and physical beauty, shifting kids' interest from studies. They start paying more attention to their overall outlook. In extreme cases, they develop inferiority or superiority complex; leading to depression and underestimating themselves.
- Television watching also promotes lack of creativity and enhances passivity. The child shies away from mental and physical workout.
- The sense of relaxation that kids feel while watching television diminishes completely when it is switched off. This makes them watch TV for longer periods of time and makes them addicted to it.
- Television viewing creates the concept of gender-role and racial stereotypes in children, as they start considering it as very natural phenomena. Heroic acts are expected out of males, while women are displayed as objects and less powerful.

Television shows and animated films, for over 80 years, have been entertaining the kids. Felix the Cat the first ever cartoon icon, which started its journey in 1920s. In the next 10 years, Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse and Pluto was the cartoon character which are being introduced by Disney Brother's Cartoon Studios (Box Office Mojo.com, 2004). Now a day, children's physical activities are limited by excessive watching of television. As cartoon watching is the most favorite hobby of children in their leisure time, so they like to watch the cartoons on television rather than to do any physical activity.

Cartoon watching affects the attitude and behavior of kids i.e. their liking and disliking, way of talking, and behaving with other children. It also has a strong effect on their language and the way of their dressing and eating. Cartoon Network is the most favorite cartoon channel in the world. Cartoon network started its transmission in 1992, and has gained record breaking

popularity. Since August 2002, it has been watched in more than 80 million homes in United States of America and in 145 countries throughout the world. It is one of the top add supported channels for cable television network. Cartoon Network is the 24/7 channel and broadcasting only "Cartoons", yet its 68 percent audience belong to children of the age group from 2 to 17 years, whereas, rest 32 percent belongs to the age group of above 18 years and adults. The children from the age group from 6 to 11 are the core audience of the Cartoon Network (Stabile and Harrison, 2003). Cartoon programs contained violence as its integral part. It is noted that cartoon content is full of violence than serial plays and comedies (Potter and Warren, 1998). As the result, children are more exposed to violence showed in the cartoon program than any other television program broadcasted during prime time i.e. 8pm to 11pm (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorelli, 1994).

Children have become much more interested in cartoons over many years and it has become a primary action to some lives. Typically, children begin watching cartoons on television at an early age of six months, and by the age two or three children become enthusiastic viewers. This has become a problem because too many children are watching too much television and the shows that they are watching (even if they are cartoons) have become violent and addictive.

Review of Literature

Cartoons and animated films were once the favorite program of viewers of the different age groups in the society. These cartoons and films were enjoyed but all most every person, from different walks of life on their television sets and theatres. In the beginning when the animated movies and cartoons started their journey, the program contents of both contained humor and entertainment for all ages and sophistication levels.

Cartoons, however, now lacked their cross-generational appeal and converted into "kids stuff" (Kellogg, 1992). Cartoon is not a precise term now a day as it is applied to multifaceted graphic form. It is the most entertaining source for kids as they developed a strong affiliation and attachment with it (Kemnitz, 1973). Animated programs and cartoons are playing a vital role in enhancing the profit of companies manufacturing toys as cartoons are source of advertisement for corporate companies. It can be said that cartoon are generally half-hour commercials for profit oriented companies. The last decade has seen an astronomical change in the genre of animated programs broadcasted on television. We are in the midst of "toon-boom" (Kellogg, 1992).

Cable television network is now available to about 75 percent of the US houses. Nickelodeon and cartoon network broadcasts 16 hours/day and 24 hours/day respectively, having a Lion's Share of TV viewership and about 80 percent of advertising impacts. Revenue generated by Cartoon Network in the year 2000 was \$500 million (Westcott, 2002). Most of the classic animations on Cartoon Network are now no longer broadcasted on regular basis with the exception of Tom and Jerry and Loony Tunes due to their popularity in kids (Susan, 2000).

The main stream press, however, did not highlight the harmful effects of Cartoons and animations on kids. Cartoon Network is now no longer safe for kids due to its adult contents. Before it was

believed by both the parents and children that cartoons which are being presented on television is safe e.g. a cartoon character of Joe Camel. But it is obviously having an adverse effect on children, if they watch cartoon character is smoking. We must assure the safe contents of cartoon programs and address the harmful effects of cartoon programs like Space Ghost and Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law on kids.

Now a day, in social communication research, the impact of cartoons has gained a new status. Today, animation is used to convey the messages to target audience, e.g. in marketing and learning (Ginmann, 2003). The results of the research has shown that there are different variables having affects such as liking and disliking of cartoon characters, based on their gender, accessories and costumes they use, physical attractiveness, age, intelligence, anti and pro-social behaviors and over goodness and badness (Klein and Shiffman, 2006).

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To study the impact of cartoon channel on children.
- To find out the popular cartoon channel.
- To find out the popular cartoon character.
- To find out how many hours children watch the T.V.
- To find out in who's company children watch the T.V.

Methodology

The design used in this study was survey. The school going children of the age group 5-12 years, from Patan and Sidhpur district of North Gujarat were selected through Simple Random Sampling. A sample of 66 children having television set and cable connection in their homes was selected.

Data Analysis

Age Groups of Respondents

The age groups of samples are presented in the table 1:

Table 1: Students & Age

Age Group	Boys	Girls	Total
5 to 8 Years	12(18%)	12(18%)	24(36%)
9 to 12 Years	27(41%)	15(23%)	42(64%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

The table 1 shows that a 36 percent respondent belongs from 5 to 8 years age group and rest 64 percent belongs to 9 to 12 year's age group. The table 1 also shows that the percentage of boys and girls were 59 and 41 percent respectively.

Medium of Schools

The medium of schools is shown in the table 2:

Table 2: Students & Medium

Medium	Boys	Girls	Total
English	23(35%)	17(26%)	40(61%)
Gujarati	16(24%)	10(15%)	26(39%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

The table 2 shows that samples have been taken from the two types of school. One is from English & another from Gujarati medium. 61% students are from English medium school. In which 35% were boys & 26% were girls belonging from English medium school. 39% students were from Gujarati medium school. In which 24% were boys & 15% were girls from Gujarati medium school.

Educational level of Respondents

The educational level of students is shown in the table 3:

Table 3: Educational Standard of Students (in %)

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
1	6(9%)	7(11%)	13(20%)
2	9(13%)	5(7%)	14(21%)
3	8(12%)	2(3%)	10(15%)
4	7(11%)	5(7%)	12(18%)
5	9(14%)	8(12%)	17(26%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

The table 3 shows that out of 66 students 20 percent, 21 percent, 15 percent, 18 percent and 26 percent students were from first, second, third, fourth and fifth standard respectively. The table 3 shows that highest percentage of cartoon viewing was from fifth standard and lowest was from third standard.

Occupation of Respondent's Father

The occupation of student's father is shown in table 4:

Table 4: Occupation of Students Father

Father's Occupation	Boys	Girls	Total
Government Service	6(9%)	1(1%)	7(10%)
Private Service	11(17%)	9(13%)	20(29%)
Business	14(21%)	12(18%)	26(39%)
Professional	4(6%)	1(1%)	5(7%)
Other	4(6%)	3(4%)	7(10%)
Total	39(59%)	26(37%)	65(95%)

The table 4 shows that 39 percent of fathers were involved in business and only 7 percent respondent's fathers were professionals. Among the respondent's 10 percent and 29 percent fathers were belongs to government service and private service respectively. From the samples one respondent's lost his father.

Watching Television

Distribution of respondents according to watching Television is shown in table 5:

Table 5: Watching Television

Watching TV	Boys	Girls	Total
One Hour	6(9%)	5(7%)	11(16%)
Two Hours	14(21%)	9(14%)	23(35%)
Three Hours	13(20%)	11(17%)	24(37%)
Four Hours	5(8%)	2(3%)	7(11%)
More than Four Hours	1(1%)	0(0%)	1(1%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

The table 5 depicts that mostly respondents (72%) are watching television for two to three hours and only 16 percent students are watching television for one hour. It is surprised to see that 12 percent respondents are watching television for four hours and more. The table 5 also shows that the percentage of watching television of boys is high than the girls i.e. 59 and 27 percent respectively.

Company of Respondents for Watching Television

The table 6 shows the company of respondents for watching television.

Table 6: Company for watching Television

Company for Watching TV	Boys	Girls	Total
Friends	1(1%)	0(0%)	1(1%)
Mother	8(12%)	0(0%)	8(12%)
Father	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Brother/Sister	16(25%)	20(30%)	36(55%)
Alone	14(21%)	7(11%)	21(32%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

It is shown from the table 6 that 55 percent respondent watch television with their brother or sister. They are comfortable with them. 12 percent students watch television with their mother and only 1 percent with their friends. The table also shows that 32 percent respondents watch the television without any company and it is surprised to see that no one watch television with their father. They argued that their father only watches news channel and serials. They do not watch cartoons channels.

Most Favourite Channel

The distribution of respondents according to their favourite channel is shown in the table 7:

Table 7: Favourite Channel of Respondents

Favourite Channel	Boys	Girls	Total
Cartoon Network	5(8%)	0(0%)	5(8%)
Pogo	22(33%)	17(26%)	39(59%)
Hungama	5(8%)	3(4.5%)	8(12.5%)
Nicklodean	4(6%)	3(4.5%)	7(10.5%)
Disney	3(4%)	4(6%)	7(10%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

It is shown from the table 7 that most favourite channel is Pogo among the respondents. 59 percent students like Pogo channel. The second likely channel is Hungama i.e. 12.5 percent. Nicklodean and Disney channel is favourite of 10.5 and 10 percent respectively. The Cartoon Network is not much liking of respondents. This channel is only popular among boys.

Favourite Character of Cartoon among Respondents

The favourite character of cartoon among respondents is shown in the table 8:

Table 8: Favourite Character of cartoon

Favourite Character	Boys	Girls	Total
ChotaBheem	23(35%)	20(30%)	43(65%)
Oggay	4(6%)	0(0%)	4(6%)
Doremon	7(11%)	2(3%)	9(14%)
Ninja Hatori	4(6%)	3(5%)	7(11%)
Sinchain	1(1%)	2(3%)	3(4%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

The table 8 shows that Chota Bheem is the favourite character of cartoon among respondents i.e. 65 percent students like this character. The student's wish to be powerful like this character. The second favourite character is Doremon among children i.e. 14 percent. The Sinchain character is favourite of only 3 percent respondents. It is also shown from the table that girls do not like Oggay character.

Reason of Favourite Character

The reason of favourite character is shown in the table 9:

Table 9: Reason of Favourite Character

Reason	Boys	Girls	Total
Entertainment	8(12%)	9(14%)	17(26%)
Education	7(11%)	2(3%)	9(14%)
Attitude	21(32%)	13(20%)	34(52%)
Innocent	1(1%)	2(3%)	3(4%)
None of the above	2(3%)	1(1%)	3(4%)
Total	39(59%)	27(41%)	66(100%)

The table 9 shows that children like their favourite character because of entertainment, education, attitude and innocent behavior of characters. 52 percent respondents like character because of their attitude. They wish to follow their attitude. Entertainment and education reason is also popular among children i.e. 26 and 14 percent respectively. Only 4 percent respondents like innocent behavior of their favourite character. It is also shown from the table that 4 percent like their favourite character without any reason.

Discussion

To see the relationship between cartoon channels and children, the chi square is calculated.

- It is hypothesized that cartoon character and child's study is strongly associated. The chi square value is 9.460 and it is significant at 5 percent level of significance.
- It is hypothesized that cartoon character and children behavior is positively associated but the chi square value is 54.512 and it is not significant at 5 percent level of significance. It means that only cartoon character does not effects the behavior of children.
- It is hypothesized that father's occupation and cartoon character is strongly associated. The result is 19.23 and it is significant at 5 percent level of significance.

Conclusion

In the current era of powerful media, the children also affected by their most favorite program on television i.e. cartoons. To conclude the recent study, we can say that there is a strong impact of Cartoon Network on school going kids which can be

seen on their life style, dressing, aggressive and violent behavior and their language.

We found from our study that most of the students i.e. 72 percent spend daily 2 to 3 hours in watching cartoons on television in their leisure time. So it can be said in view of above mentioned facts that cartoon watching is the most favorite hobby of the children.

In view of the above empirical evidence, we advise parents to plan for a reasonable use of television, the most readily available medium of entertainment. As regards homework, parents should take care that watching TV does not cause children adversely in terms of home work if they ensure its use in their presence or in free and limited time. It should be borne in mind that TV is not the only factor that accounts for children's failure in their studies. No doubt that television violence sows the seeds of violence in the minds of children. Particularly violence in cartoon movies attracts the attention of the child. But the choice of character in cartoon movies/films for children should be such that it should not adversely affect the subjectivity of children.

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