



Impact of Cartoon Programs on Children's Language and Behavior

Shazia Akbar Ghilzai¹, Rabia Alam, Zubair Ahmad, Amina Shaukat, Syeda Shahum Noor

Abstract

Nowadays, there are TV channels that broadcast cartoons non-stop. It has both positive and negative effects on children's behavior. Mostly children watch cartoons for fun (41 %), action (23 %) and learning (17 %). The results indicate that children who watch cartoons show high level of language acquisition and cognitive development but they also show some aggressive and violent behaviour with their siblings and friends sometimes. Some Children also exhibit anti-social behavior as they tend to stay in front of the TV for longer periods. Children imitate cartoons; they fanaticize too much in their real life (70 %). Cartoon's content affects them in acquiring other moral and social values as well. They are observed to have gender differentiation and they exhibit it with their siblings. Sometimes, they show some violent behavior with their siblings while actually; they are trying to be funny. They mostly imitate the Tom & Jerry relationship with their peers and siblings but it turns out very wrong with them and thus, loses their temper and it turns out to be very unpleasant scene. Children must not be left on their own to deal with any psychological issues. While, cartoonists must be cautious designing cartoons, parents must keep an eye on children's behavior, activities, and the cartoon content-that is

¹ Corresponding author: Shazia Akbar Ghilzai, Department of Linguistics, sghilzai@qau.edu.pk, QAU. A Doctoral student at USPC Paris13. Research Lab TTN, Paris 13.

integral part of their life-so that they may reach them for help in case if the need any help by changing the content, by creating balance in time for watching cartoons, outdoor sports, meeting people and other social activities etc.

Keywords: children behavior, cognitive development, language acquisition, aggression

Introduction

It's indeed a world of globalization and technology we are living in today. Though technology has brought us many comforts, it has completely changed our lifestyle. In Pakistan, the lifestyle has been changed drastically. Nowadays, there is a trend that both parents work in order to fulfill the needs of a family. The absence of both parents from the house is a reason for many problems, of which the bad behavior and the use of inappropriate language by children are the severe ones. A few decades back mothers used to stay at their houses and the children lived in a healthy environment under guidance of mother and grandparents. They had learned good behavior and other moral values from the elder people of family. Children were involved in many physical and outdoor activities that had many positive effects on the mind and health of children. But now children mostly stay in the house without the supervision of parents or any other guardian. The young age of the children is very critical in the sense that they have no idea what is wrong or right and whatever he/she sees or listens, is imprinted in his mind. It has a direct effect on his physical, mental and psychological capability. As they stay at the house, the only way they can entertain themselves is television. There is no one to stop them; therefore they spend most of their time in front of T.V. The most attractive thing is the cartoon series. Cartoons have affected the thinking, intellectual and communicative abilities of children. These cartoons contain several

things that promote violence and aggression. Moreover, in Pakistan, the cartoons are broadcasted either in English language or in the Hindi language. Most of the children prefer to watch Hindi dubbed cartoons. The type of language and the accent used is very inappropriate and children are acquiring it at a dangerous level. The present study examines the impact of cartoons on the behavior and language of children.

History of cartoons commences with 1300 BC. Cartoons have been an essential part of all the convivial cultures and civilizations. The earliest cartoons of Egyptian civilization which in authenticity were the other way of mass communication. The Greeks have presented the cartoons on their pottery. However, the Japanese culture has developed their own way of utilizing cartoons. They were the first to picture the cartoons on a remotely paper. They utilize them to tell the stories utilizing the cartoon pictures.

With the advancements in technology a “new language” was composed by the American society. They have amalgamated both the pictures and words thus this period has resulted in the acknowledgment of cartoons. Moreover, the Modern cartoons appeared in the early 1900’s which brought a revolution in children’s entertainment.

Variants of cartoons have emerged with the passage of time and are further relegated to five main groups; as according to Mankoff, Illustrative, comic divests, gag divest, animated and political. Cartoons are often expressive, comedic, political, cultural, religious, scientific etc. They target people of all age groups both elders and children. The present study mainly deals with the effect of intercultural cartoons on the children minds and it causing obstructions both in their

language acquisition and behavioral development. Moreover, the religious values of children have additionally been described to be affected up to a great extent.

Research Question: Impact of cartoons on children Language and Behavior.

The present research analyzes the effect of language change and behavioral development in children because of their overindulgence in cartoons. As children mind is quite receptive and they acclimate things more expeditious. At such an innocent age, child mind is unable to differentiate between the positive and negative perspectives of things. According to a Chinese proverb: "A child life is like a piece of paper on which everyone who passes by leaves an impression". Young minds are like molten iron and can be molded in any way to be whatever they are exposed to. It has been observed that children who watch pro-social and non-violent cartoons are more sociable.

Cartoons have a great influence on the children and a grasp children's attention quickly. Thus, the more children's interest would be the sharper their observations would be. As the twentieth-century children are more exposed to the electronic media especially television. Hence, it is the prerequisite of the hour that the cartoonists must be more thorough and cautious while designing the cartoons according to the psychology of the children. The children not only observe everything but they imitate whatever they see in the cartoons. Most children are highly impressed of the cartoons.

Kids have become considerably more attracted by cartoons lately and it has turned into the elementary distraction for them. Generally, kids start cartoons at the very early age and gradually

become the ecstatic viewers. Indeed, optically canvassing TV with some moderation might be a fruitful thing: children below the age of 4 years can get benefit from TV as a brilliant instructor resulting in active performers. However, regardless of its focal points, an over watching of TV might turn to be negative: kids who spend more than 4 hours a day sitting in front of the TV are observed to be excessively fat. Children who optically differentiate savage acts are more inclined to show forceful conduct and likewise may expect that the world is alarming and that something terrible may befall them. Television characters customarily show perilous conduct, for example, smoking and imbibing, and may likewise fortify sex-part and racial generalizations.

Psychologists (Mussen, P., & Rutherford, E. 1961, Berkowitz, L. 1962) examined the effects of aggressive cartoons. They argued that kids who watch high level of aggressiveness and violence in cartoons are more inclined to brutality and violence. Kids who watch violent cartoons may exhibit signs of egression early as compared to others who watch non-violent cartoons. In integration, underrating of cognitive capacities, disparity from substances, and a growth of negative conduct may engender throughout the span of time.

Children pick up the capacity to emulate behavior and occasions that they run over consistently. In this way, we can clearly state that vivid characters shown in the cartoon can simply transform one's cognitive state into a positive response.

TV or cartoon programs start playing its critical part in children healthy growth from age 3-6 years. Folks genuinely conventionally are not mindful of the dignified circumstances. Most of the parents rely on TV for their child, so that they could finish their work or relax a bit, but they are unaware of the consequences of watching TV for a longer period of time. Gradually,

watching TV becomes their primary thing to do in their past time and even during eating or while doing homework they are most likely to watch TV. For this reason, later parents and even children find themselves having trouble coping with the real chores of life.

Literature review

Yousaf Dr. Zahir, Shehzad Munham, Hassan S. Ali (2015) analyzed the impact of cartoons on school going children. They took the sample from Gujrat city of Pakistan. They applied the mass effect cultivation theory. They used survey method and questionnaire to collect data. They found that cartoon series are highly affecting the children physically and psychologically. The children that are not administrated are affected the most. Children are being violent. Children prefer to watch cartoons and hence waste their time. Cartoons have a great influence on language. They are adopting inappropriate words and imitate the style and language of cartoons.

Mahsud M. Nawaz, Rawan Bakht and Yaser Noman (2009) analyzed the presence of aggressive behavior and its reason in the school going children of Sargodha. They took 192 students (96 boys and 96 girls) whose age range was 7-10 years, from four different schools of Sargodha District. They adopted survey research method to find the impact of cartoons on their behavior. They used stratified sampling procedure while classifying their respondents. They found that male and female viewers have different preferences and even different behavior change. Both male and female children spent almost equal time watching cartoons. Boys adopted much aggressive behavior and preferred to watch cartoons that show fighting. Boys preferred to watch Hindi dubbed cartoons more than girls. They also detected many Hindi words that the children

frequently use in their conversation. Moreover, they like to adopt the dressing and accent of their favorite cartoon characters.

Dr. A.G. Sudha (2011) explored the numerous mesmerizing effects of cartoons influencing the change in the behavior of children. Salem was chosen as a study area. Multistage sampling technique was used in which field survey technique and database was applied to collect data. Children are uncontrollable and compulsive viewers of cartoons spending substantial time in front of the television. Sudha found that viewing cartoons influences the late childhood respondents more than the early or pre-adolescent childhood respondents and the factors that exert influence on the children are age, gender, siblings, standard, board, medium and time spent for watching television that affects their behavior. This change in behavior makes them violent, rough, insensitive and passive beings.

Sultana, Sharmin (2014) believed that because of the cartoons children are spending more time on TV rather than being engaged in some constructive work. She collected her data through surveying and interviewing different class of people in Bangladesh. Watching a lot of cartoons can adversely affect the learning abilities and the mind of the children. According to her, most of the parents rely on TV for their child, so that they could finish their work or relax a bit, but they are unaware of the consequences of watching TV for a longer period of time. Gradually, watching TV becomes their primary thing to do in their past time and even during eating or while doing homework they are most likely to watch TV. For this reason, later parents and even children find themselves having trouble coping with the real chores of life. She concluded that apart from being entertaining and fun to watch cartoons also have their negative side that they

are drastically damaging the mental abilities as well as the social life of a child by making him addicted to cartoons. So, the people especially the parents should be made aware of the desperate consequences of it.

Maqsood, Qurat-ul-ain and Amer, Umera (2014) studied the effect of intercultural cartoons on young children. They stated that intercultural cartoons are primarily destroying the religious and moral value of young ones and even affecting the language and social behavior. According to them, children mind is "wet clay" and they can easily be molded in any form whatever we may choose. So, their mind is easily affected by the cartoons and violence plus the moral and ethnic values the cartoon shows. Because of these reasons the children often imitate most of the words used by their favorite cartoon character and even sometimes fantasize themselves for being their favorites character in their future life. Cartoons seen in the early childhood becomes a part of the subconscious of the child and disturbs him in his later life having a problem dealing with the real face of life. This causes hindrance in the development of their social, moral, ethnic and cognitive abilities. They interviewed parents living in Islamabad for their data collection. In their research, they concluded that "The intercultural cartoons have been greatly influencing the young Pakistani children. Pakistani society mainly being a Muslim society _ the moral, social, and religious values hence greatly differs with that of Christian and Hindu religion and culture. The number of Pakistani children viewers of the intercultural cartoons has been greatly increasing. (2014)".

Daniyal, Muhammad and Hassan, Ali (2013) studied the impact of cartoon network on the behavior of school going children. As cartoon network is 24/7 cartoon channel, so children spent

most of their leisure time in front of the TV. Moreover, most of the cartoon shows violence as their vital part which has a great impact on children's psychology. Children are attracted and influenced by the violent content shown in the cartoons. This study explores the impact of cartoon network on the psychology of the school going children which results in the change not only in their behavior but they also force their parent to buy accessories which have their favorite cartoon characters poster. The research is based on the survey design and non-parametric statistics. They concluded that there is a strong impact of cartoons on children's lifestyle, language, personality, aggressive and violent behavior. Most of the children spent approximately 1-3 hour daily in front of the TV. Children like the violent content shown in the cartoon like Tom and Jerry in a comedic environment and children love to play such games with their siblings and classmates.

Gökçeşlan (2010) studied the effect of cartoon movies on the children's gender development. Many animated movies carry subtle messages with various negativities; one of this negativity is the gender discrimination. Cartoon movies consist of male, female, animal and other inanimate objects. While male and female characters show their typical stereotype behavior in the movie. Moreover, there occurs some functionality in the scenes like the female character is transformed into the male character with the help of the magical wand, which is alarming. This situation is alarming in the sense that the children will be prone to the gender differences moreover coming across with such complicated gender role models will affect the child psychology and affect them in their future lives. He concluded that female characters are shown weaker and fragile than the male character even in term of the profession. Males were prioritized which represents the unequal picture of gender at a very tender age and this discrimination is also observed in their

relationship with their siblings and parents. Children assume that Father has the main authority over us monetarily while the mother is only meant for the household.

Siripen (2009) studied the effect of positive cartoon animation to change children behavior in primary schools. Children love cartoons and they are strongly influenced by them. It affects the new generation with more truculent characters and negative minds in sociality. Moreover, it obstructed their cognition of right manners.

This is a huge dilemma in many societies. The author endeavored to moderate these quandaries by 2D cartoon animation, which is the media close and simplistic to get to children. The 2D cartoon animation is presented to a sample of 200 students from 4 primary schools in Thailand. The objective is to engender a good habit of positive cerebrating in gregarious life. After the animation presentation, the researcher observed the replication, questionnaire, interviewed and evaluated feedback in questionnaires. There is a designation or trend that children's aggressiveness in mind decremented in short term, and has the potential to be transmuted in long term.

Methodology

The interviews with open-ended questions were designed to the behavior of children. The mothers and siblings of school going children of the age group of 5-12 were selected from the city of Islamabad. The questionnaire was filled by 30 mothers and siblings of younger children in order to avoid any ambiguity and confusion. The data were analyzed by using a non-parametric test in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 15.

1. How much time your child spends on watching cartoons daily?

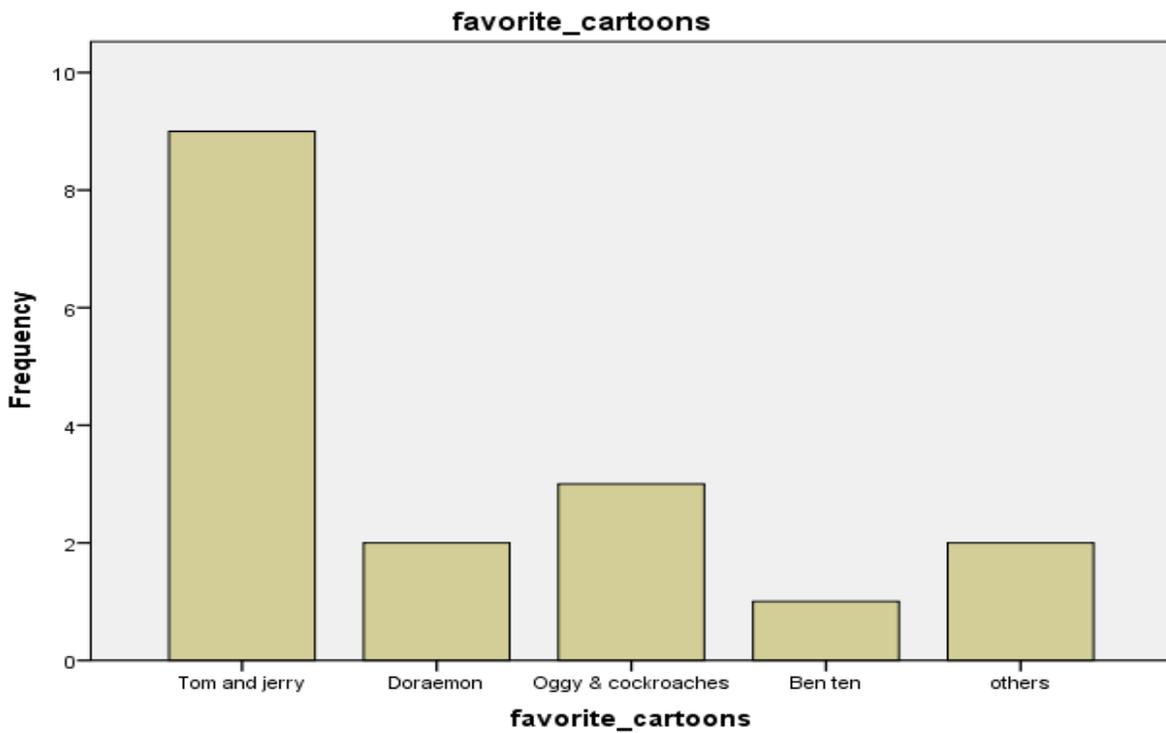
2. Which cartoon group your child prefers to watch?
3. What is the most impactful feature of a cartoon for your child?
4. What is the degree of imitation of Cartoon character's watched?
5. If yes then in what way you child imitate favorite cartoon character?
6. Does he idealize some cartoon character?
7. Does your child fantasies in the real life?
8. Does your child ask you to buy them accessories associated with their favorite cartoon character? (Bags, pencil box, journals, posters etc)
9. Have you noticed ever that your child is classifying himself with the name of his favorite cartoon character while playing with other siblings and friends?
10. Have you noticed your child acquiring the other languages?
11. Is there any gender-based difference among the children?
12. Have you noticed a change in terms of your child moral values due to cartoons?
13. Do you administrate your child while he/she watches the cartoons?
14. Is he insensitive to pain or sorrow?
15. Does your child show some antisocial behavior?
16. Do you think the cartoons now a day are mature and obscene enough to be shown to the children?
17. Does your child prefer to stay indoors or outdoors?
18. Does watching cartoons affect your child cognitive skills?
19. How much your child is prone to aggressive behavior or violent behavior?

Data Analysis

During our survey, we have found that most of the children are prone to spend their leisure time watching TV rather than other activities. However, still, a number of children prefer outdoor games, especially if they have their siblings or peers to play with. Children watch cartoons and other cartoon-related programs on TV, the overwatching of these programs are affecting the behavior and cognitive development. Children mostly love to watch Tom and Jerry, Doraemon, Oggy and the cockroaches specifically. Others also watch Ben Ten, Dragon Ball Z etc.

The data shows that mostly school going children watch Tom and Jerry, Doraemon and oggy and cockroaches frequently.

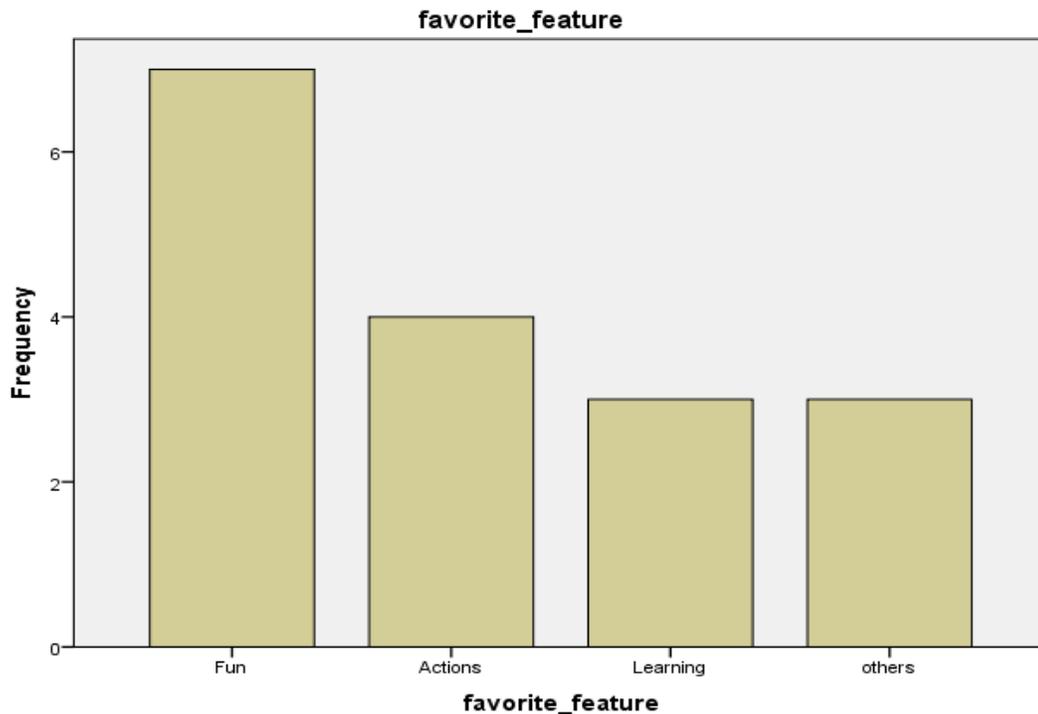
Favorite cartoons	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tom and Jerry	52.9	52.9	52.9
Doraemon	11.8	11.8	64.7
Oggy & cockroaches	17.6	17.6	82.4
Ben ten	5.9	5.9	88.2
Others	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	



Q: Why children watch these cartoons?

Children love to watch these cartoons in their leisure time mostly because of fun. Cartoons have the characteristic of playing with the young minds. That's why young ones are most addicted and attracted towards cartoons. Most of the cartoons are depicting entertainment in terms of fun & friendship. Moreover, in order to show humanity and justice mostly the cartoon programs show actions full of violence and destruction. This violence and fantasy shown in the cartoons are affecting young minds, especially when they are overwatched.

	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fun	41.2	41.2	41.2
Actions	23.5	23.5	64.7
Learning	17.6	17.6	82.4
others	17.6	17.6	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	

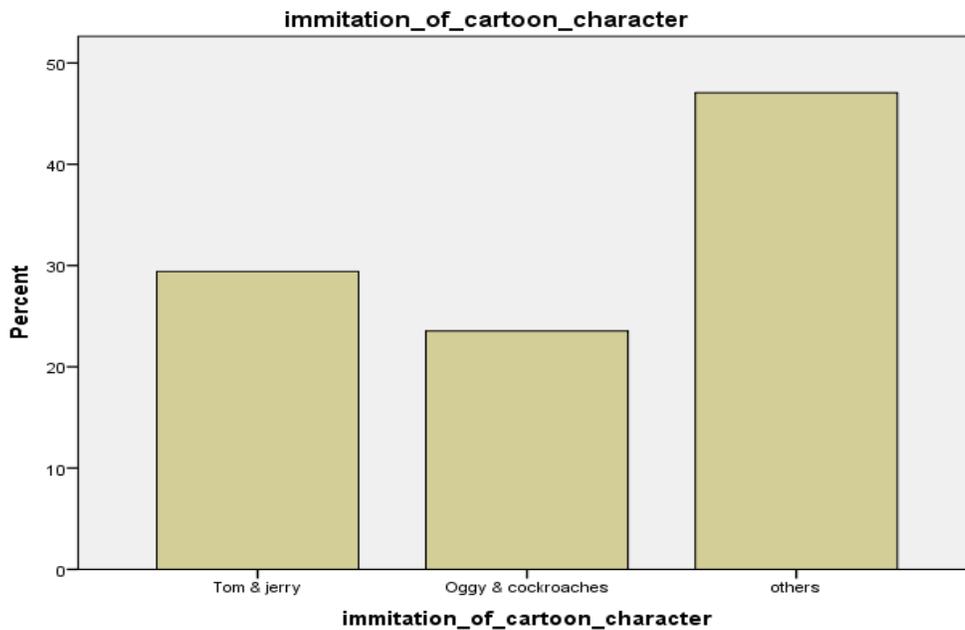


It is found that young minds are most attracted towards the fun and entertainment in the cartoons. They also learn new things and language through these cartoons. However, some dubbed cartoons airing in Pakistan specifically are having a bad effect on children’s language acquisition. Like they are using the word “bheeru” frequently used in “oggy and the cockroaches” also acquiring the slang language in their speaking style.

Children not only imitate their language but also imitate their favorite character. According to our data, we have found that children mostly imitate Tom & Jerry. They used to play like them with their siblings and peers, they actually love the fun and friendship bond between them and that attracts the most to the young minds.

After Tom & Jerry, children are most attracted towards oggy and children, they are airing on Pakistani channels in typical Hindi so-called "tapori" language and that's attracting the children. Besides this, they are also showing fun and friendship bond between three friends and the cat “oggy”.

Degree of Imitation of a cartoon character			
	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tom & Jerry	29.4	29.4	29.4
Oggy & cockroaches	23.5	23.5	52.9
Others	47.1	47.1	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	

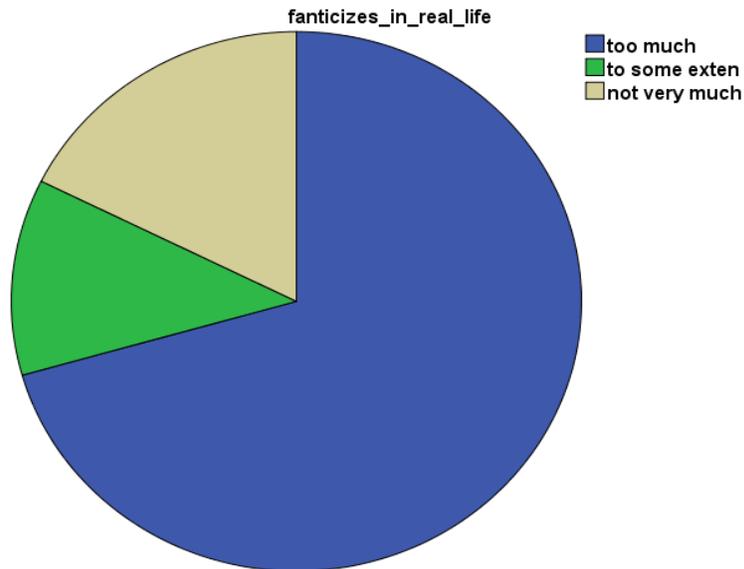


Fantasy in real life:

Children who are overindulged in cartoons and such programs usually have a high rate of fantasy. They mostly fantasize about their favorite characters living in reality with them and what they can do with them and also because of them. However, those children who are not overindulged in cartoons do not fantasize in real life.

we have found that most of the children do not believe in fantasy and they watch their cartoons having in their mind that they are just animations and idea of a human mind.

Fanticizes_in_real_life			
	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
too much	70.6	70.6	70.6
to some extent	11.8	11.8	82.4
not very much	17.6	17.6	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	

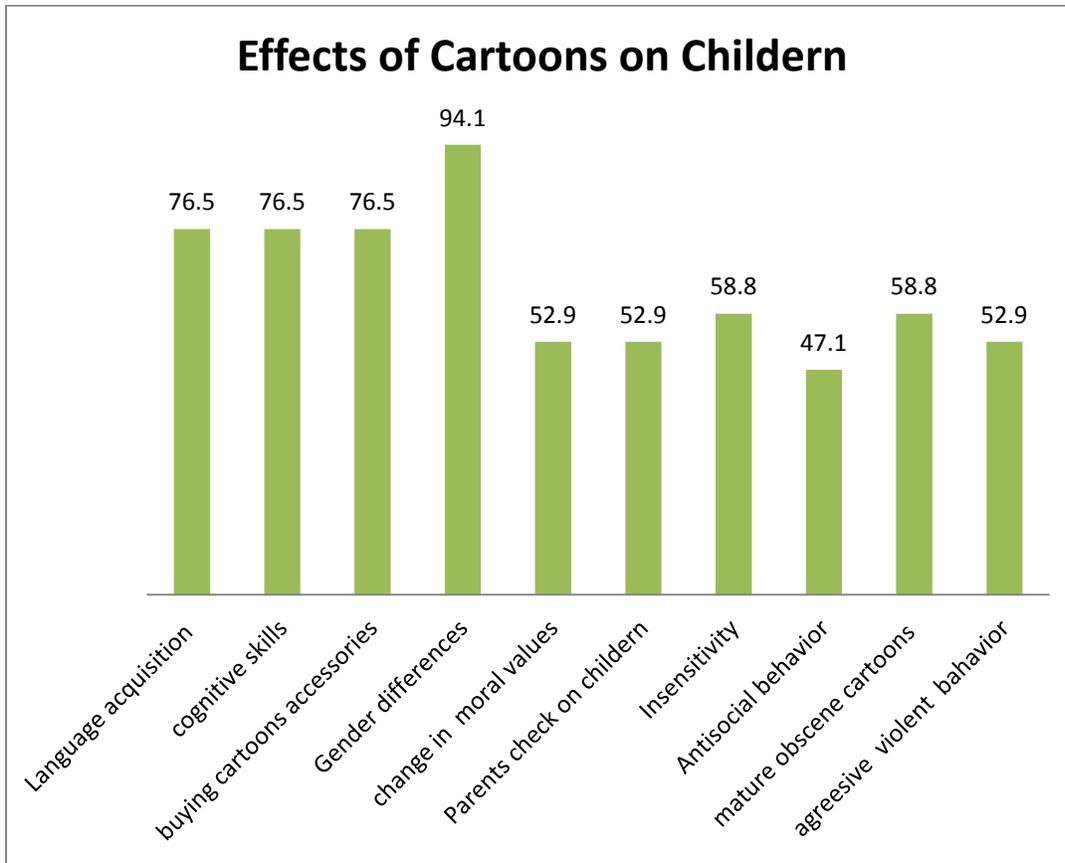


Effects of Cartoons on Children

Generally, cartoons are not only affecting the language and social behavior of the children but also affecting them in a number of ways. We have found in our data that watching cartoons are mostly affecting young minds in terms of gender differences, which is astonishing for us. Children are getting biases in terms of gender. According to the children the main authority is of Father and Mother is only meant for the household. It is imprinted in their mind that the girls are sensitive and fragile and they always need a man beside them, especially in the Pakistani context. Moreover, in contrast, the boys are strong and independent.

The next main thing we have found is that cartoons are adversely affecting their language acquisition when they are on aired in Hindi Tapani language. However, they are also helping children to learn new things and acquire a new language especially words. However, children are

not that much aggressive in their behavior as much as we expected. They show aggression (violence) with their siblings immediately after watching TV. But the impact of it decreases with time.



Interview analysis:

Sean Brotherson says: “A child’s brain is like a house that has just been built. The walls are up, the doors are hung. Then you go to the store and buy electrical wiring, switches, a fuse box and other electrical supplies, you bring these supplies to the new house and set them on the floor. Will they work? Probably not. You first must string the wiring and hook up all of the

connections. This is quite similar to the way our brains are formed.” During this cognitive development, the stimulus which is constantly perceived by the children has a great influence on their mental state. As most of the parents don't keep a bull's eye on their children, so they spend most of their leisure time in front of the television watching different cartoon and comedy programs. Watching cartoons in excess makes them obsessed and they cling in front of the TV most of the time.

We have interviewed a sample child “Yahya, of age 8 from Faisalabad”. For this interview we first exposed him to a number of various cartoons and sitcoms airing on Disney Channel and Cartoon Network broadcasted from India. Doraemon and Oggy and the cockroaches and in sitcoms Best of Luck Nikki and Shake it up Mumbai were shown to him. Through the interview, we have analyzed that shortly after the stimulus, Yahya had a great influence of cartoon and cartoon characters and even he imitated the phrases used in the programs in exactly the same tone, like the phrase ‘Ek do teen char, tu mera saga yar’ in the program Shake it up Mumbai.

The child was even, aware of the color discrimination; as white ones are good and characters in black and dark color are bad and vicious. Insensitivity is shown in superhero movies as superheroes are unable to feel pain and injuries. Like he said in his interview that the Superman was shot in the eye but he was not dead, that reflects the insensitivity about the pains and sorrows. In such a small age, he was also well aware of the sexual affections and relationships like boyfriend/girlfriend. He understands the feelings of love, hatred, jealousy as he mentioned it in Oggy and the cockroaches and Doraemon.





He is also perceiving the misuse of power shown in cartoons,, like the characters who are shown big are mostly more powerful and are most aggressive and dangerous to be a mess with because they have their wrong perception that they are strong like in Doraemon, Nobita is persistently being teased by Gian.





When he was asked whether he want such super characters in his life and if yes then what will he do. He replied innocently that he wants gadgets that will do his homework and he will also use them to help others. By watching Shake it up Mumbai, he takes dance as a fun activity and also practices it when in good mood. He was also been able to differentiate between the good and bad manners and he also knew how to remain in a safe side by defending himself.

Conclusion:

Cartoons are one of the child's daily habits which sculpture his mind and behavior. For this purpose, we have surveyed and interviewed many children and their siblings. The result of this study indicates that children who over watch the cartoons show a high rate of language acquisition moreover; they also display aggressive and violent behavior with siblings and peers. Ability to differentiate gender has also seen among the young ones. Children also exhibit some anti-social behavior as they tend to remain in front of the TV. However, they show some violent behavior with their siblings while actually, they are trying to be funny. They mostly imitate the Tom & Jerry relationship with their peers and siblings but it turns out very wrong with them and thus, loses their temper and it turns out to be very unpleasant scene. While some TV channels

broad cast non-stop cartoons. Parents must keep a check on their children what type of cartoons they are watching. Violent and aggressive cartoons can lead to aggressiveness in children's behaviour. While, it cartoons can help children in acquiring language and developing their cognitive skills, over watching them can sometimes lead to anti-social behavior. Although, they must be supervised on daily basis but it is also helpful to keep an eye often on the cartoon content and children behavior. If the child is showing any change in his/her routine life, and behavior his/her cartoon content and behavior with siblings/friends and other activities must be checked and any necessary changes needed must be carried out.

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