



Perceived Effects of Cartoons on the Behavior of Students with and without Hearing loss: Pakistani Parents' Perspective on Preference for Cartoons as a Safe Entertainment

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Abstract- This research article, by using explanatory research method explores the Pakistani parents' perception regarding preferences for cartoons as a safe entertainment and perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of the students with and without hearing loss. Total of 212 parents (81 parents of the children with hearing impairment and 131 parents of the hearing student) participated and filled the questionnaire and six mothers were interviewed out of which three had children with hearing loss. The results of the quantitative research showed that the parents of the children with hearing loss consider the cartoons more harmful for their children as compared to hearing children. Whereas the findings from the interviews revealed that there is a consensus within the both types of parents that cartoons have negative effect on their children. Parents demonstrates that the reason for preferring cartoons as a safe entertainment for kids is that comparatively they are cost effective and children stay in home in front of the elders. Keeping in view the current social events parents are not willing or comfortable in sending their child outside to play. It is suggested that parental guidance is required to avoid negative effects of the cartoons.

Keywords: Cartoons, Safe entertainment. Hearing children, Hearing impairment

I. INTRODUCTION

Cartoons are the movies or series having the animated characters intended to design for the entertainment of the children (Thompson, 2010). It is a general perception all over the world including Pakistan that cartoons are the safest and appropriate entertainment for children. Children watch cartoons so frequently during the age of eight or ten they watch these cartoons with great enthusiasm rather they turn into cartoon addicts. Moreover, most of the cartoon movies do not consist of material which is suitable for their age group. Even than parents allow their children to watch cartoon movies without any restriction. As children with hearing loss have less opportunity to engage in different kinds of entertainment, they spend more time in watching cartoons. Taking into account this scenario, the present research study is an attempt to examine why Pakistani parents consider cartoons as a safe and healthy entertainment and what is their perception towards the effects of cartoons on changing behaviors of children with and without hearing loss.

Electronic devices are the most important item in children's lives, and Cartoons are the most popular kinds of transmissions children see on gadgets (Yrkin, 2012).

The effects of gadgets last for too long on lives of children (Bagli, 2005). Kids spend far more time watching smartphone than any other task (Aral & Ceylan, 2011). It is reported in a study that young children in American, European and Asian countries watched television an average of three hours a day (Larson, 2001). On average, children in Turkey watch TV 3 to 4 hours a day (Gunter & Charlton 2000). In one year, students spent about nine hundred hours at school. The research found that, on average, electronic devices were on in family homes for four to five hours a day.

Animated movies and cartoons have been introduced to kids on several platforms, without their valuable or destructive aspects being recognized (Köşker, 2005). The time spent in front of the cartoons may have both positive and negative consequences. Good cartoons can teach a child about how to control his temper, respect parents, talk politely, help the poor, and kind to the elderly, and also how to lend hands to the young, and work in a group without becoming jealous or angry his colleagues. Speaking of the skills, healthy cartoon content could teach a kid how to be a leader, how to analyze issue scientifically, how to handle a risk, and even encourage a child to enjoy a game. Cartoons can also be helpful in warn a child about the hazards of the surroundings such as the heights, the fire, electricity, and crossing the roads. All

of these and much more are qualities that could be learned by cartoons if presented in a suitable manner (Habib & Soliman, 2015).

Because of the beautifully written scenes, bright colors and excellent audio & visual effects, it is found that kids are far more attracted to cartoon content than traditional academic learning. Such variables are sufficient to make the child absorb knowledge by thousands more than that a child absorbs in a traditional classroom (Jensen, 1998). All the key factors that make children fall in love with the hero of cartoons are a well-written story, correct audio, and visual effects and a descent-looking character, and begin to follow his direction and attempt to follow the way of speaking, language and even dressing.

Children who tend to watch educational material are more likely to read more books, get better grades, concentrate more on achievement and demonstrate more skills than children who watch television more aggressively or just "entertainment" (Diehl & Toelle, 2011). So, when kids are watching cartoons, there is an ongoing type of learning process. Whatever kids learn while watching cartoons, they continue to behave and thus affect their way of socializing with other kids (Baran & Davis 2009).

Cartoons can be labeled as a healthy entertainment when they incorporate themes such as community order, friendship, family, teamwork, that good always wins over evil, and that the sun will always come out tomorrow. They will help restore hope and confidence and will also provide someone with a break from feeling depressed or stressing, which will all boost mood. Some TV shows teach children counting or how to say the alphabet. A few shows seek to communicate abstract emotional concepts, which prepare young audiences for an adulthood. and it may be helpful to apply those lessons to social interactions and interpersonal relationships (Sherman, 2017).

Cartoons help in developing problem solving skills which in turn can help to improve life circumstances and "further reduce anxiety and depression." Most of the cartoons are in English language. If children watch these cartoon, it will be helpful to improve their English. Through conversation, they can learn to understand it. They will learn how to communicate well in English. (Sabahat, 2014).

Though cartoons are the source of healthy entertainment yet the other side of the picture is not very color full. Cartoons have negative influence also and this negative influence could not be underestimated, nor it should be overlooked by the parents.

There are several destructive elements that can be seen in these cartoon movies. These elements include fantasy, violence, subliminal messages and western orientation. According to Cambridge Learner's Dictionary fantasy is a genre of fiction that uses magic or supernatural phenomena in its plot. There is an abundant use of this element in cartoon movies.

We hardly watch any cartoon without fairies, dragons, princes, superheroes, and time machines. Moreover, cartoon characters are shown jumping, flying or falling from heights without being harmed. All this displays a false sense of reality. A child is not able to make distinction between reality and fantasy. Children only want to be like the cartoon heroes they watch, and they try to imitate whatever they have observed. So, fantasy encourages imitation and increases risks of injury in children.

Violence is shown repeatedly, realistically and often unpunished. According to American Academy of Child and Adolescence, this violence speaks to the impressionable mind of the child. As the child watches violence so often, he neither feels fear from it nor is he bothered about it in general. It becomes a quite normal thing in his life gradually. He becomes less sensitive towards the pain of others and can use harmful actions towards others (Ergün, 2012). Violence shown in the cartoons often spoils school children's minds; they often use guns, swords and rods to play games. The Cartoon programs have used violence as an integral part (Potter & Warren, 1998).

Subliminal message is another destructive element used in cartoon movies. According to the Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, a subliminal message does not provoke conscious awareness, but it evokes a response unconsciously. These subliminal messages can be auditory or visual. Basic purpose of placing subliminal messages in cartoon movies is to secretly brain wash the child. A subliminal message controls the mind and persuades the child to act in a way in which normally he would not. An obvious example of subliminal message in cartoons is use of images or language referring to sexuality or violence.

Another factor affecting a child's personality building is western orientation used in these cartoon movies. Language, costumes and food items that are shown in these cartoon movies are all western oriented. They present a culture that is largely different from ours. Moreover, notion behind creating a cartoon is not always ethical.

A bombardment of all these elements is making children unlearn the moral lesson that are presented by our own cultural and religious stories specially for the children with hearing impairment as they usually

perceive it from their vision not from their hearing so it can be more. A hearing-impaired child has restricted communication through spoken language which can create social and behavioral difficulties. The deaf children have more adjustment problems than hearing children. Language has a crucial role in learning process and deaf child lack in it and it effects on his social learning and development of values system. They face problem in learning abstract ideas and getting abstract concepts so it may affect their personal and social learning and for these kids these cartoons and animated movies can be dangerous and damaging.

Children's ability to restrain their motives is very low, and the aggressive behaviors of cartoon characters can become part of their conditioning (Írkin, 2012). If this type of message is imparted in coupled with the beauty of characters and their good nature, there is no reason for children to emulate those characters (Írkin, 2012). There is a close connection between participant's practice of mimicking cartoon characters and the children's learning difficulties (Soumya, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

An effort was made in the research to identify the perceived effect of cartoons on the behaviours of children with and without hearing loss and further explored the reasons and causes of considering the cartoons as a safe entertainment for the children with and without the hearing loss.

Significance of the Study

The study is unique kind in terms of exploring the perceived effects of cartoons on the behaviors of deaf and hearing students and causes of preferring the cartoons as a safe entertainment. It will help to realize the society to understand the responsibilities towards children in providing them a safe entertainment. The stakeholders will be able to know the effects of cartoons on the behaviors of the students with and without hearing loss.

Objectives of the Study

The study was carried out to achieve the following objectives of the study:

1. Identify the perceived effect of cartoons on the behavior of children with and without hearing loss
2. Find out the difference between the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of students with and without hearing loss
3. Find out the difference between the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of students with and without hearing loss based on the gender of the parents
4. Explore the reasons of preferring the cartoons as a safe entertainment by parents of children with and without hearing loss.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of children with and without hearing loss?
2. What are the possible differences in the perceived influence of cartoons on children with and without hearing loss based on gender?
3. What are the differences in the opinions of parents on effects of cartoons based on their gender, and qualification?
4. What are the reasons of preferring the cartoons as a safe entertainment by parents of children with and without hearing loss?

II. METHODOLOGY

A mixed method research design was used. This research study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) and it involved collecting quantitative data first. In the quantitative data collection phase of the study, the researcher collected survey data for quantitative part of the research questionnaire was used to identify the perception of the parents about the effect of cartoons on the behavior of deaf and hearing students the questionnaire instrument was comprised of 25 questions developed by researchers, following a literature review. For the qualitative part of the research interviews were conducted in order to explore the phenomena and discover the causes behind the variables. In the mixed methods analysis phase, the researcher iteratively analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data to help explain the results. 212 parents (81 parents of the students with hearing impairment and 131 parents of the hearing student) of the students with and without hearing impairment was the sample of the study.

In order to measure the perceived effect of cartoons on the behaviors of the deaf and hearing students a questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on literature

review for taking the responses of the parents. The instruments were refined after expert validation. A pilot testing was done to check the reliability of instruments. The instrument was administered to a sample of 30 parents (15 parents of the students with hearing impairment and 15 parents of hearing children). The Cronbach alpha was found 0.79.

Interviews with open ended questions were also conducted to explore deeply about the perceived effect of cartoons on the behavior of students with and without hearing loss and causes and reasons of taking the cartoons as a safe entertainment until the point of saturation was achieved. On the total, six mothers were interviewed out of which three had children with hearing loss. Four mothers had boys and two had girls within the age limit of 6-12years.

III. RESULTS

For the quantitative part, the data was analyzed in order to see the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of students with and without hearing loss. The mean scores were calculated, and independent sample t-test was employed in order to see the difference between the perceived effects of cartoons on the basis on the gender and hearing abilities of the children. The details of demographic characteristics of the selected sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Description of Demographic Variables

Variables	Group	Deaf	Hearing
		F	F
Gender of the Parents	Male	62	60
	Female	19	71
Qualification of the Parents	Matric	57	50
	FA	6	5
	BA	3	25
	MA	14	44
	MPhil	1	7
Occupation of the Parents	Housewife	45	23
	Business	4	16
	Teacher	16	42
	Any other	16	50
Gender of the Child	Boy	35	71
	Girl	46	60
Age of the Child	6-7	32	62
	8-9	24	27
	10-11	19	29
	12-13	6	30
Class of the Child	1-2	47	80
	3-4	30	26
	5-6	4	24
Watching Hours of the Cartoons	1-2	53	103
	3-4	16	22
	5-6	12	6
Cartoon Channels Preferred by the children	Disney	37	38
	Nickelodeon	10	7
	Cartoon Network	22	55
	Any other	12	31
Favorite Cartoon of the Child	Doremon	34	40
	Tom & Jerry	13	11
	Jan	4	7
	Mr. Bean	10	22
	Beam	8	0
	Barbie	6	16
	Moto patlo	1	22
	Dragon	0	1

Safe and Healthy entertainment	Any more	5	11
	Yes	43	65
	No	38	65
Selection of the Cartoon by Parents	Yes	29	53
	No	52	77
Parents Watched Cartoons in childhood	Yes	51	88
	No	30	42
Dislike cartoons	Yes	29	32
	No	52	98
Harmful effects of the Cartoons	Yes	42	57
	No	39	73
Child Watch Dubbed Cartoons	Yes	63	69
	No	18	61

In order to explore the perceived effects of the cartoons on the behavior of children with and without hearing loss the mean scores were calculated, and an observable difference was found. Parents priorities the positive effects of the cartoons on the of behavior of their children with and without hearing loss furthermore parents of the deaf children found the cartoons more negative effects of the cartoons as compared to parents of the hearing children (Table 2).

Table 2: Perceived effects of the cartoons on the behavior of the children with and without hearing loss

Hearing	Mean	Deaf	Means
Positive effects	56.8692	Positive effects	55.7778
Negative effects	21.1615	Negative effects	23.2099

To investigate hearing status as differentiating factor for the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of the children, independent sample t-test was applied and results revealed that There is a significant mean score difference between the parents of the deaf and hearing children on the perceived negative effects of cartoons on the behavior of the children with and without hearing loss. The result is $t(209) = -3.16$ $p < .05$. The mean score of the parents of the children with hearing loss (Mean= 5.67828) was found higher than the mean score of the parents of the children without hearing loss (Mean =3.73088) which indicated that the parents of the children with hearing loss consider the cartoons more harmful for their children as compared to hearing children (Table 3).

Table 3 Comparison of the positive and negative effects of the cartoons on the behavior of children with and without hearing loss perceived by their parents

Factors	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-test for Equality of Means ($\alpha = 0.05$)		
					df	t	Sig.
Positive Effects on Behavior	Parents of the Hearing Children	130	56.8692	9.73795	209	.752	.217
	Parents of the Children with Hearing Loss	81	55.7778	11.03630			

Negative Effects on behavior	Parents of the Hearing Children	130	21.1615	3.73088	209	-3.16	.000
	Parents of the Children with Hearing Loss	81	23.2099	5.67828			

There is no significant mean score difference between the parents of the deaf and hearing children on the perceived positive effects of cartoons on the behavior of the children with and without hearing loss. The result is $t(209) = .752$ $p < .05$. The mean score of the parents of the children without hearing loss (Mean=56.8692) was found higher than the mean score of the parents of the children with hearing loss (Mean =55.7778) which indicated that the parents of the children without hearing loss consider that cartoons have more positive effects on their children's' behaviors as compared to the parent of the children with hearing loss (Table 3).

Table 4 Comparison of the positive and negative effects of the cartoons on the behavior of children with and without hearing loss based on the gender of their parents

Factors	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-test for Equality of Means ($\alpha = 0.05$)		
					df	t	Sig.
Positive Effects on Behavior	Male	79	58.4810	9.42155	209	2.249	.023
	Female	132	55.2348	10.55401			
Negative Effects on behavior	Male	79	21.6203	3.22373	209	-.787	.000
	Female	132	22.1439	5.35764			

To investigate the interaction of gender and the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of the children, independent sample t-test was applied and results revealed that There is a significant mean score difference between the parents perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of the children based on their gender. The result is $t(209) = -2.249$ $p < .05$. The mean score of the fathers (Mean=58.4810) was found higher than the mean score of the mothers of the children (Mean =55.2348) which indicated that the fathers consider the more positive effects of the cartoons on the behavior of their children as compared to the mothers and mothers found cartoons more negative than fathers (Table 4).

Table 5 Comparison of the positive and negative effects of the cartoons on the behavior of children with and without hearing loss based on the qualification of the parents

Positive effects of cartoons	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	P
Between Groups	884.414	4	221.103	2.153	.076
Within groups	21151.814	206	102.679		
Total	22036.227	210			

The P value (.076) shows that there is no significant difference in the mean score of parents about the positive effects of the cartoons on the behavior of their children with and without hearing loss based on their qualification.

Negative effects of cartoons	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	P
Between Groups	471.718	4	117.929	5.907	.000
Within groups	4112.709	206	19.965		
Total	4584.427	210			

The P value (.000) shows that there is significant difference in the mean score of parents about the negative effects of the cartoons on the behavior of their children with and without hearing loss based on

their qualification. Further, Tukey HSD test was applied to see which groups are significantly different from others.

(I) Qualification of the parents	(J) Qualification of the parents	Mean Diff. (I-J)	SE	P
Matric	FA	1.73	1.41	.736
Matric	BA	4.17	.948	.000
Matric	MA	2.28	.728	.017
Matric	MPhil	1.85	1.74	.826
FA	Matric	-1.73	1.41	.736
FA	BA	2.43	1.58	.542
FA	MA	.545	1.46	.996
FA	MPhil	.116	2.16	1.00
BA	Matric	- 4.17	.948	.000
BA	FA	-2.43	1.58	.542
BA	MA	-1.89	1.02	.353
BA	MPhil	-2.32	1.88	.734
MA	Matric	-2.28	.728	.017
MA	FA	-.545	1.46	.996
MA	BA	1.89	1.02	.353
MA	MPhil	-.428	1.78	.999
MPhil	Matric	-1.85	1.74	.826
MPhil	FA	-.116	2.16	1.00
MPhil	BA	2.32	1.88	.734
MPhil	MA	.428	1.78	.999

The post hoc multiple comparison shows statistically significant difference in the perceived negative effects of cartoons based on qualification of the parents. Only two groups, that is Matric to BA and Matric to MA. Parents having higher qualification found more negative effects of cartoons on the behavior of their children.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Although parents had different views regarding the effectiveness of cartoons on their child's behavior but most of them agreed that they prefer cartoons as a safe entertainment as compared to other activities that are carried outside home.

Most of the mothers reported that their child's favorite cartoons changes from time to time. Children with age six to seven adore cartoons like care bears and tally tabbies. And as they grow up, they started loving cartoons and characters like Robin Hood, Ninja go, Lego, Doremon and Spiderman or in girls case Barbie's and Miraculous lady bug. The findings clearly indicated the child's pattern of preference with the age. At the early age they like watching cartoons which shows love, care and affection while as they grow up, they prefer cartoons demonstrating superheroes that always win against the enemies with some supernatural powers.

It was found that five out of six parents were of the view that cartoons are safe for their kids if children are watching cartoon under parental guidance. A mother reported that “it’s our duty to watch the content of the cartoons, our children are watching, if the content is good like in case of Jaan and Ninja go then it’s absolutely safe entertainment”

Parents demonstrates that the reason for preferring cartoons as a safe entertainment for kids is that comparatively they are cost effective and children stay in home in front of the elders. Keeping in view the current social events parents are not willing or comfortable in sending their child outside to play as they themselves used to enjoy when they were young. Two of the working mothers added that they do not have enough time to spend with the children, so they are comfortable with them watching cartoons.

All the parents of the children with normal hearing abilities were of the view that the cartoons had positive affect on the language learning of the kids provided they are not watching Urdu or Hindi dubbed cartoons. A mother reported “my son uses the language learned from the cartoons in his creative writing homework”. She further added that “it’s important to look at the content and language used by the cartoons, while watching cartoons I have to inform my son whether it’s an appropriate or UN appropriate language to use in our context.”

Four parents out of six reported that the cartoons have a negative impact on the moral development of the child. A mother commented that “there is no moral development in cartoons, what children learn from doremon is that it’s a mothers duty to work all the time and when she says something to his child the child consider her clumsy “ Whereas two mothers reported that they have observed positive impact of cartoons on moral development of their child. A mother of a hearing child reported that “cartoons like Jaan teach children to obey and respect the elders “she further added that “My son has learned to respect security guards by watching Jaan cartoon”

On question regarding if the cartoons inspire your child to do hard work, all mothers were of the view that cartoons make their child lazy and discourage them to do hard work. A mother commented that “there is no inspiration to do hard work in my child, in fact he wants a gadget like doremon to do all the tasks for him” another mother replied that “my child wants a magic wand or any other supernatural power to do his homework” hence concluding that hard work is discouraged in cartoons. On question regarding the mental development of the child, mothers were of the view that cartoons have a positive effect. A mother reported that “I think it’s due to the cartoons that my children are quicker and sharper in giving response plus they are more adaptive towards the changes in the society”.

All the mothers were of the view that they have faced behavioral problems at some time due to the cartoons. Children imitate what they see. Mother of a seven years daughter reported that “I have been dealing with miraculous lady bird for four months” another mother of two sons added “it is obvious that after watching cartoons my sons are more hyper and aggressive”.

All the six mothers were of the view that watching cartoons hinder the physical development of the child. They prefer to sit and watch cartoons on TV, mobile or other gadgets rather than involving in any physical activity. It makes them lazy and fat. A mother reported “my child’s favorite hobby is to sit in front of TV, watching cartoons and do nothing” Mothers reported that cartoons have a negative impact on the academic abilities. One of the mother shared that “when I teach my children, after they have watched cartoons for so long, I feel that they are slow, dumb and they have forgotten what I have taught them earlier”. Another mother responded that “after watching cartoons it’s really difficult for me to drag them back to the world of reality and make them study”.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results showed that the perceived effects of cartoons on the behavior of children with hearing loss are more as compared to the hearing children. This is because children with hearing loss are more emotionally attached to the characters of cartoons. Another reason may be that they have little opportunities to play other games both indoor and outdoor as compared to hearing children and they spend more time on screen. Studies show that more vulnerable children are more influenced by their destructive programmers (Yavuzer, 2011). Quantitative results showed that the parents of the hearing children consider that cartoons have more positive effects on their children’s’ behaviors as compared to the parent of the children with hearing loss. Whereas the qualitative results showed that the only positive aspect of watching cartoons is that children learn to be adaptive towards social change, otherwise most of the parents were of the view that cartoons have badly influence their child’s academic, behavioral and physical aspects of life. Literature proves that electronic gadgets has affected the academic achievements of children (Irkin, 2012) also The realization that an amazing 90.5 percent of the respondents admitted that cartoons have negative effects on children, as well solidifies the findings by Yousaf et al (2015) that cartoons affect children psychologically. They do not only change their behavior towards aggression but

also their language which is a crucial aspect of every culture Previous studies also show that there is a strong relationship between child's routine of imitating cartoon characters and the learning problems faced by the child (Soumya , 2014).

With respect to the perceived difference about the effects of cartoons on the bases of gender it was found that the fathers of the children perceived more positive effects of the cartoons on the behavior of their children as compared to the mothers, who thinks that cartoons have negative effect on child's behavior. The reason for this result may be because mothers are more observant then fathers and spend more time with the kids. According to Pasquier (2001) European survey discovered that children were more likely to watch television with their parents, particularly their mothers.

There was no significant difference on the perceived positive effects of cartoons however result showed that with the increase in the qualification of the parents, their perception regarding negative effects of the cartoons also increased. This is may be because education increases the exposure of the parents and they become more vigilant towards the attitude of the children. Most of the parents of both category are of the view that cartoons are safe entertainment for their kids because they are cost effective, children stay in home plus parents do not consider outdoor environment safe for their kids now a days.

V. CONCLUSION

All children deserve healthy entertainment. Providing the healthy content in cartoons can serve this need in a most effective manner. They can not only groom the child's personality but can also help him to excel academically. Parents should fix the screen time for both, hearing and deaf children to keep the balance between indoor and outdoor games. As this is the era of technological advancement, avoiding the gadgets is not possible. Parents' vigilance and guidance is continuously required to save the child from the undesired consequences of the cartoons. Nathanson (2001) contended that active mediation (instructive mediation) is the most highly recommended form of parental involvement, and it entails the conversation parents have with them regarding the content of television. Positive mediation includes pointing out positive messages, highlighting good things television characters do and agreeing with messages. A further study is needed to find out the driving motivation for cartoon producers to incorporate violence into their stories or what aspects of parental involvement can minimize the negative effects of cartoons on children.

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