

Research Article

Effects of cartoon programs on behavioural, habitual and communicative changes in children

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ABSTRACT

Background: Children have become much more interested in cartoons over many years and it has become a primary action to some lives. This has become a problem because too many children are watching too much cartoon program and they have become violent and addictive.

Methods: An observational cross sectional study was conducted on 200 children of 5 to 15 years of age watching cartoon programs using simple random sampling in indore city over the period of 4 months. Pre designed, pre tested, semi structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analysed using MS excel & SPSS version 20.

Results: 33% of children showed an increase in violent behavior. 39% of children watch both (violent & nonviolent) type of cartoon programs. 64% of children neglect things told by parents while watching cartoon programs, 45% of children throw things/becomes violent when parents either switch off T.V/ask him to do some other work, 61% of children try to copy stunts after they have started watching cartoon programs. 81% of children have shown increased interest towards creative subjects and 73% of children have become sensitive towards others since they have started watching cartoon programs.

Conclusions: Watching cartoons programs had significant effect on behaviour of children. Changes were negative and positive both. Majority of the children behave the way they watch people performing activities on the television screen and follow them in their everyday life.

Keywords: Cartoon programs, Children, Behaviour, Changes

INTRODUCTION

Children have become much more interested in cartoons over many years and it has become a primary action to some lives. This has become a problem because too many children are watching too much cartoon program and they have become violent and addictive.

An idiot box called TV greatly influences kids. Though TV programmes are entertaining they may influence kids positively and negatively. Kids are just like clay and they get molded according to the environment in which they are brought up. TV programmes automatically becomes part of this environment which influences the growth and

development of child. Therefore, it is necessary for parents to understand how TV programmes influences the child. Read on to know how TV programmes can influence children so that you can take right decision at right time.¹

Cartoons have been a part of cinema history from the time the first motion pictures were made in the late 1800s. A cartoon is a movie made by using animation instead of live actors, especially a humorous film intended for children (Thompson, 2010).² Cartoons can also be described as the making of movies by filming a sequence of slightly varying drawings or models so that they appear to move and change when the sequence is

shown. These are the elements that keep viewers, (mostly children) glued to their seats. Cartoons were initially so short because people would be watching these shorts in the movie theatres before their feature film. When cartoonists could put their shows on TV, they began to get longer, creating the half hour block shows that are on nickelodeon, cartoon network, and the disney channel today. Also, the cartoons had to become more family friendly so that more people would watch their show (Kapelian, 2009).²

In the eighties and the nineties the Walt Disney productions and a few other prominent cartoon shows like Tom & Jerry, Popeye, Bugs Bunny, etc clearly had an outstanding clout in the children’s entertainment market. However with the satellite TV revolution, the overpowering presence of Japanese cartoons in world market cannot be ignored. Today there is no denying of the fact that Japanese cartoons enjoy the highest position in our children’s list of favorites. Few popular examples are doraemon, sinchan and ninja hattori. Playgrounds look deserted and the streets without kids even after school and on holidays.

METHODS

An observational cross sectional study was conducted on 200 children of 5 to 15 years of age watching cartoon programs using simple random sampling in Indore City over the period of 4 months September- December 2014. Informed consent taken from the parents of children and pre designed, pre tested, semi structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed through percentages and frequencies in which the data were presented in table formats, pie charts and histograms which were obtained using excel and some using SPSS (statistical package for social science).

RESULTS

In the present study 200 children were surveyed out of that 63% children (among 200 children surveyed) of 5-10 years of age watch cartoon program and in which 72 were male and 54 were female.

76% of the children spend <2 hours in outdoor activities.

Table 1: Relation between children watching cartoon program (violent/nonviolent) and those who try to copy stunts.

No. of children	Type of cartoon program			%
	Violent	Nonviolent	Both	
Copy stunts	56	22	44	61
Do not copy stunts	6	38	34	39
Total	62	60	78	100

61% of children try to copy stunts after they have started watching cartoon programs. 39% of children watch both (violent/nonviolent) type of cartoon program. Probability = 0.250

Table 2: Relation between sensitivity of children towards others and change in their sharing and helping nature.

Sensitivity of children towards others	Sharing and helping nature		
	Increase	No increase	%
Increased	122	24	73
Not increased	18	36	27
Total	140	60	100

73% of children have become sensitive towards others since they have started watching cartoon programs. There is increase in sharing and helping nature of 70% of children since they have started watching cartoon programs. P value is less than 0.0001(<0.05). Chi-square = 23.7 (>3.8).

Table 3: Relation between children those who watch cartoon program in high/appropriate volume and those who neglect things told by their parents.

Neglect things told by parents	Volume while watching cartoon program High	Volume while watching cartoon program Appropriate	%
	Yes	48	
No	52	20	36
Total	100	100	100

64% of children neglect things told by parents while watching cartoon programs. 50% of children watch cartoon programs in high volume. Probability = 0.001 (<0.05). Chi square value =11.1 (>3.8).

Table 4: Relation between increased interest towards creative subjects and thus increase in grasping ability since he/she has started watching cartoon program.

Increased interest towards creative subject	Increase in grasping ability Yes	Increase in grasping ability No	%
	Yes	120	
No	32	6	19
Total	152	48	100

81% of children have shown increased interest towards creative subjects (mostly towards art and craft) since they have started watching cartoon program. In 76% of children grasping ability has increased since they have started watching cartoon program. Probability = 0.352(>0.05).

In present study following were the other important findings

64% of children neglect things told by parents while watching cartoon programs. 50% of children need to be asked by their parents to sit at a proper distance they watch cartoon programs in high volume.

31% of the children have started behaving indecently after watching cartoon programs, 34% of the children have become irritable and 45% of children throw

things/becomes violent when parents either switch off T.V. /ask him to do some other work.

61% of children try to copy stunts after they have started watching cartoon programs, 45% of children want to be called like their favourite cartoon character, 52% of children want their birthday party to be organized on the theme of their favourite cartoon character.

49% of children plan their routine according to the timing of the cartoon programs.

There are frequent complaints of violent behavior or not doing homework from school of 29% children.

62% of children have shown improvement in their vocabulary since they have started watching cartoon programs, 81% of children have shown increased interest towards creative subjects (mostly art and craft) since they have started watching cartoon programs.

53% of children have shown enhancement in their communication skills. In 76% of children grasping ability has increased since they have started watching cartoon programs. There is increase in sharing and helping nature of 70% of children since they have started watching cartoon programs. 73% of children have become sensitive towards others since they have started watching cartoon programs.

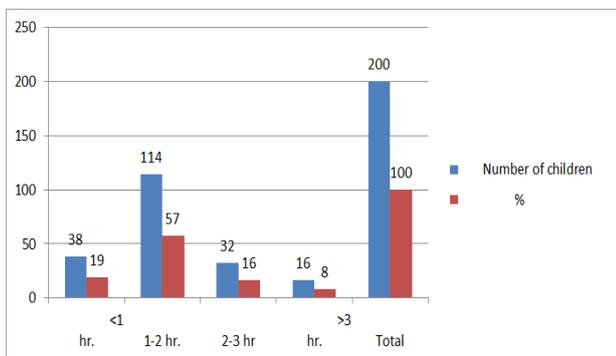


Figure 1: Children spending time (in hours) on outdoor activities.

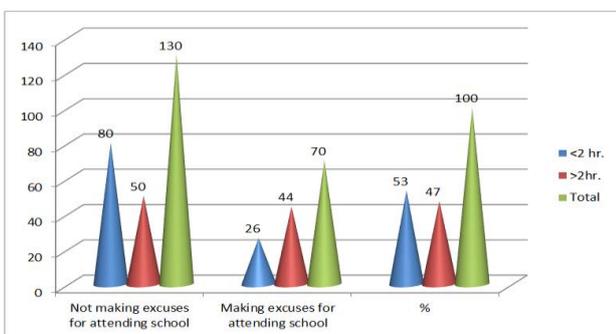


Figure 2: Relation between time spent on watching cartoon programs and no. of children making excuses for not attending school.

Table 5: Relation between children who have become inquisitive and improvement in their vocabulary since they have started watching cartoon programs.

Became inquisitive	Improvement in vocabulary		%
	Yes	No	
Yes	80	60	70
No	44	16	30
Total	124	76	100

70% of children have become inquisitive since they have started watching cartoon program. 62% of children have shown improvement in their vocabulary since they have started watching cartoon program. Probability = 0.126(>0.05). Chi-square = 2.34 (<3.8)

Table 6: Relation between children who need to be asked to sit at a proper distance and those having headache/eye related problems.

Need to be asked to sit at a proper distance	Have headache / eye related problem		%
	Yes	No	
yes	40	60	50
No	30	70	50
Total	70	130	100

35% of children have headache/eye related problem. 50% of children are needed to be asked by the parents to sit at a proper distance. Probability=0.295 (>0.05). Chi square value =1.10(<3.8).

DISCUSSION

In present study 63% children (among 200 children surveyed) of 5-10 years of age watch cartoon program. 24% of children spend >2 hours in watching cartoon programs and 76% of the children spent <2 hours in outdoor activities. In a study by Habib K, Soliman T 2 - 5 years old children watch cartoon 32 hours.² Weekly similarly a study conducted by Liebert and Sprafkin shows that T.V viewing raises from about 2 and half hour per day at the age of 5 to about 4 hours per day at the age of 12.³

A number of earlier studies Schramm et al, Scott, Bilny, Hemmelwiet, Oppenhien, Vine, Thomson, Lablonde. have revealed a positive relation between time spent on viewing and those making excuses for not attending the school. In present study it was found that 22% of children who watched cartoon programs for more than 2 hours also make excuses for not going to school.

In the study by Hassan and Daniyal showed that the violence present in the cartoons has strong association with the behavior of the children in present study 33% of children showed an increase in violent behavior.⁴ 39% of children watch both (violent and nonviolent) type of cartoon programs 34% of the children have become irritable. 45% of children throw things/becomes violent

when parents either switch off T.V/ask him to do some other work. 61% of children try to copy stunts after they have started watching cartoon programs. That is supported by the study of Anderson in which he showed that violence shown in television programs and video games is clear cut evidence that violent contents will increase aggressive and violent behavior of youngsters in both short term and long term context.⁵

Other studies showed that negative content on purpose or mismanaged could lead a child to doubt his raising, his skills, way of thinking, life style that he grown up according to or his religion. A character with negative attitude and manners that appears on the screen as a hero, could illustrate the child to vice versa his understandings of his life and surroundings and sculpture his acts in an aggressive or over acting manner to situations he formerly acted positively due to his correct understanding then.^{6,7}

The U.S. surgeon general David Satchev which report on adolescent violence in 2000 stated that more aggressive behavior in young child en life is caused by frequently watched TV that in corporate violence in it.⁸

CONCLUSION

There is a strong impact of cartoon programs network on children which can be seen on their life style, dressing, aggressive and violent behavior and their language, children today are influenced by cartoon characters in day to day life in more than one way.

Cartoon programmes have both negative and positive impact on children's moral formation.

Systematic studies on the effect of television on children in rural areas are quite few in India. There can no longer be any doubt that heavy exposure to cable television programmes is one of the causes of moral declining. Cartoon programmes affects children of all ages, of genders, at all socio-economic levels and all levels of intelligence.

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