

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF CARTOON PROGRAMS AMONG CHILDREN IN MADURAI

S. Shanmuga @ Mohana

Lecturer, Department of Visual Communication,
The American College, Madurai

Dr. V. Monica Hepzhibah Pushpabai

Head and Assistant Professor,
Department of Journalism and Mass communication,
Ranni Anna Government Arts College, Tirunelveli

Abstract: Television is one among the significant mass media in 21st century. It creates impact in various dimensions; its influence builds both positive and negative horizons among the children. Generally, the children spend more time watching cartoon programs in television and later they turn addicts. Even though, television was intended for education purpose, gradually it becomes an entertainment medium than infotainment medium, thanks to barrage of cartoon programs. In fact, the children on an average watch television for 18.5 hours per week, within which they spend a substantial part of the viewing for cartoon programs. Therefore, it takes a toll among the children as they undergo several changes like loss of weight, disturbed sleep pattern, change in eating habits and also the general physical health. The study attempts to understand the changes in perspective, attitude and behaviour among children in the age group of 4 – 12 years.

Keywords: Television, Cartoon Channels, Perspective, Attitude, Behaviour.

Introduction: Television is considered to be one of the effective mass media in the society; eventually it is an audio visual medium which attracts all walks of people, particularly the children. The three main functions of television is to inform, entertain and educate. Television is a useful medium which educates the society, and also creates awareness among the illiterates. Most of the programs designed by the Government with an intent to educate the farmers, students, teachers, and other professionals too.

In recent years, the growth of television is tremendous and it has made its presence felt invariably in most of the household. The number of television channels has mushroomed to cater to the demands of diversified audience in general and children in particular, thereby providing handful of choices.

In the digital age, the children are prone to turn addicts to electronic gadgets. The world of digitization provide them with irresistible choices which they prefer to use even in the school. As a result to this, their physical activities are minimized and they are prone to many physical and mental related ailments. According to the BBC news reports, "If a toddler watches television on regular basis, by the time he reaches 10 years old he risks his health". The research also suggested the more time the child spends before television will have a telling effect on their later childhood.

The research points that, regular cartoon program watching adversely affects the habit of reading books and turning them unaware of great epics such as Mahabharata and Ramayan. Indeed, the fictional characters become the role model of children. The fictional serials like Chhota Bheem, Ninja Hattori, Ben 10, Jackie Chan etc., have become the part of personality of the children. They also redefined the attitude, perspective and subsequently the behaviour of the children. Such modifications and fine tuning to the attitudes and the values of the children turn nemesis for their real life, problem solving skills and academic achievements. The children perceive the characters to be their role model and attempt to replicate unreasonably. The children watch their role model on the screen, imbibe their mannerism and dialogues, attempt to replicate unreasonably. The children in the age group of 4 – 12 years

understandably are more vulnerable to such characters and the messages delivered in the cartoon which in turn reflects in the formation and reformations of the child's attitude.

The Cartoon Programs in India: A beautiful song starting with "EkChidiya, AnekChidiyan" became very popular due to its absolute simplicity and innocence. This song was popular when satellite and DTH was extraterrestrial to us; it became the most evoked animation in India.

The initiation of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India was an eye opener for cartoon programs in India. With the association of American Technical Co-operation mission, they started India's first Animation Studio, Clair week of Disney Studios motivated and gave support to this project. In 1957, they directed first animation film named "**The Banyan Deer**".

In the animation field, whether it is 2D or 3D they focus on cultural depth i.e depicting the life of legends, mythology and folk lore. It also started a new innovation of serials in animation in low budgets. The aim of the animation serial is cost cutting and presenting it in episode style.

Top 10 Cartoon Channels		Top 10 Best Cartoons In India	
S.NO	CHANNEL NAME	S.NO	CHANNEL NAME
1	Cartoon Network	1	Doraemon
2	Nick	2	Pokemon
3	Disney Channel	3	Shin - Chan
4	Disney XD	4	Dragon Ball Z
5	Hungama	5	Beyblade
6	Animax	6	Ben 10
7	Nicktoons	7	Ninja Hattori
8	Pogo	8	SupaStrikas
9	Jetix	9	Tom and Jerry
10	Boomerang	10	ChottaBheem

Impact of Television on Children: Television in the West has been called the chewing gum of the eyes, elsewhere too it has become the most popular, glamorous and acclaimed medium of communication.

The impact of television among children is vulnerable; it creates changes in their attitude, perspective and behavioral. In 21st century, the child gets more exposure through mass media and spends more time before the screen and become screen addiction at the earlier stage itself. Television has its own positive and negative factors. The positive side of the television is that, the children get more information through television and it serves the purpose of education. On the negative side, the television makes the children spend more time leading to change in socio-cultural and behavioural pattern. Also, it lead to lack of physical activities which results in poorer cognitive skills.

Television is fully packed with programs, in early stage only few cartoon programs are there. Now, the number of cartoon channels is high. So, the children have options to watch more number of cartoon programs. There are Indian cartoon channels like Chutti, Chithiram and international channels dominate the cartoon channels like Pogo, Nick, Hungama, Disney, Disney XD and so on.

The Indian cartoon channels also hire international cartoon programs and dubbed in their regional languages like Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, Telugu, and Marathi. The children opt for their regional languages to watch; preferably children watch programs in their mother tongue and English. When they transform the international content into their regional languages, the content, environment in the cartoon will be related to their own nativity. The dialogue used by the characters is colloquial and they create benchmark dialogue among children. They portray their friends, relatives, neighbours and parents as cartoon characters. For ex, if a person is stout, they call as Kaliya, if there is girl, they call themselves as Chutki. So, these characters strongly get registered into the mind. The children have more

observing capacity and they replicate all the behaviors, languages and other violent behaviors as they cartoon do. Children feel that they are in real world and their super heroes are real. Many children make the superheroes as their role model.

The impact of television has also lead to many health problems among children. The primary problem is obesity, it causes of lack of physical activities. Children spend more time in front of television; kids remain inactive physically and act as an active audience.

The cartoon program serves one of the three main functions of mass media viz entertainment. Most of the content is based on entertainment in television medium rather than education. There is some educative program like Dora The explorer, Diego, Word Game. But, re telecast for the program is less, these kind of program initiate to learn many words, develop cognitive skills, and important among is interactive, the children talk along with the character, they show way to the characters and they feels happy as though they have reached the destination. Every single child appears to have model in line with their chosen character. Therefore, it is a bound duty of the policymakers and the program producers to bear in the mind their social responsibility towards the society.

Objectives of Study:

- To understand the perceptual ability of the children with reference to cartoon programs.
- To identify the changing nature of attitude among children related to cartoon programs.
- To understand the changing behaviour pattern among children's' exposure to cartoon programs.

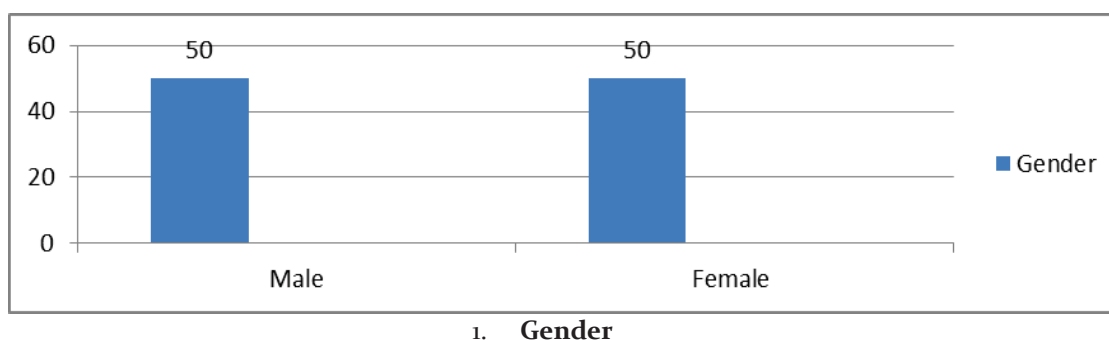
Scope of the Study: In the postmodern era, cartoon plays an inevitable part of child which understands the nature of cartoon programs and the behavioural pattern of the children will help in the creation of health society. The researcher has selected the age limit of 4 – 12 years, as per the studies, the age limit is the formation and reformation of attitudes.

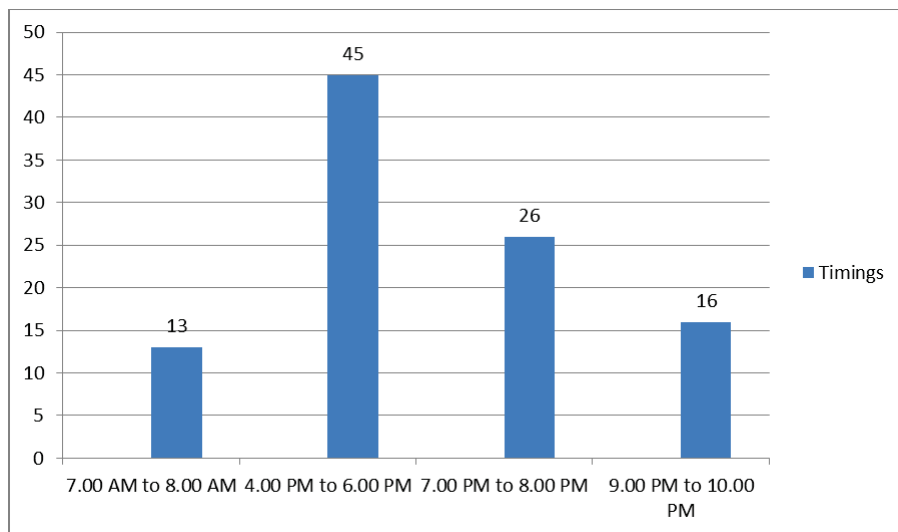
Methodology: The methodology is used for data collection and the researcher adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. The questionnaire is distributed to the school students comprising of State Board, CBSE, Matric and ICSE to get better observation. The questionnaire was distributed among the children in four schools in Madurai. The schools includes NoyceSchool, ChandlerSchool, Queen Mira and St. Assisi World School.

Theoretical Framework: Three theories were adopted based on perspective, attitude and Behaviour changes on children. Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957) states that includes beliefs and behaviours. It is one of the most influential consistency theories.

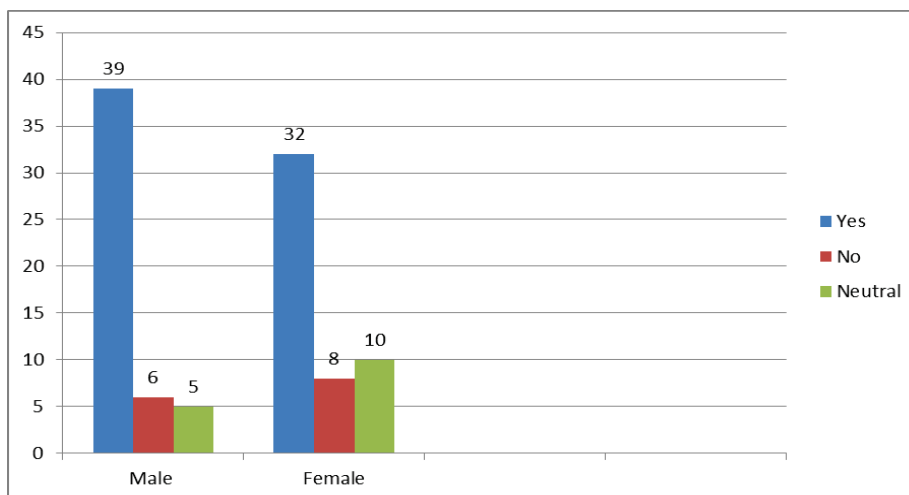
Hovland and his associates identified three classes of variables that influenced the effectiveness of the message a. source characteristic b. setting characteristic c. communication content elements.

A Skinnerian approach to the study of attitude change was employed by Bem (1967), whose major assumption reflected the viewpoint that attitudes were learned as a result of previous experience with the environment.

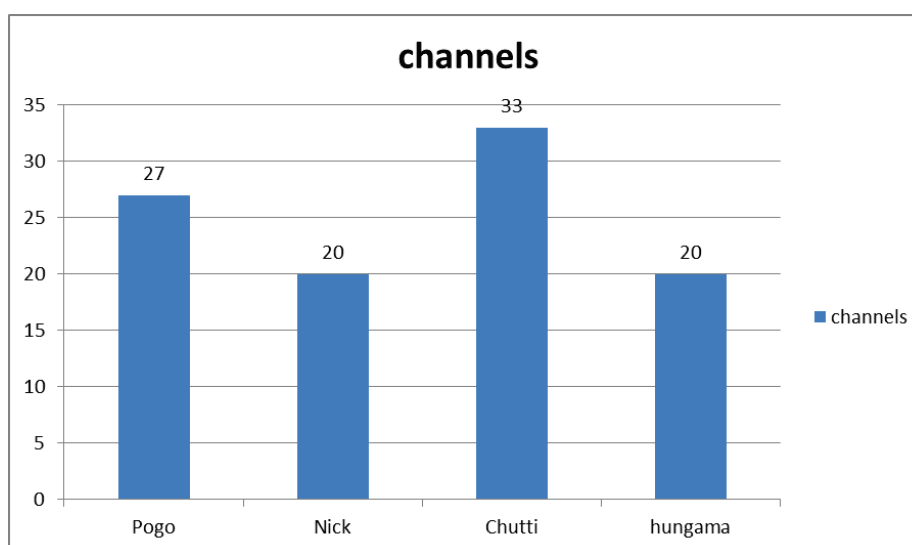




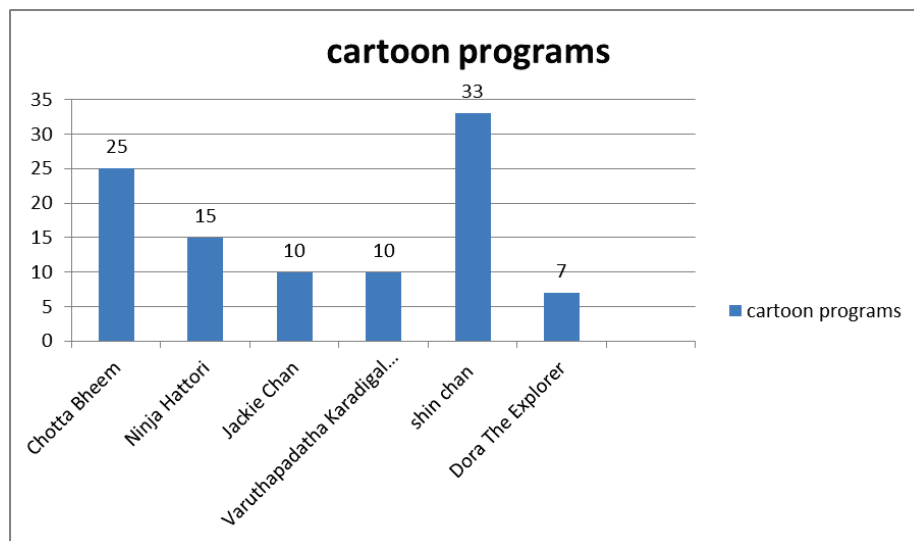
2. The Children Prefer To Watch Television Cartoon Programs



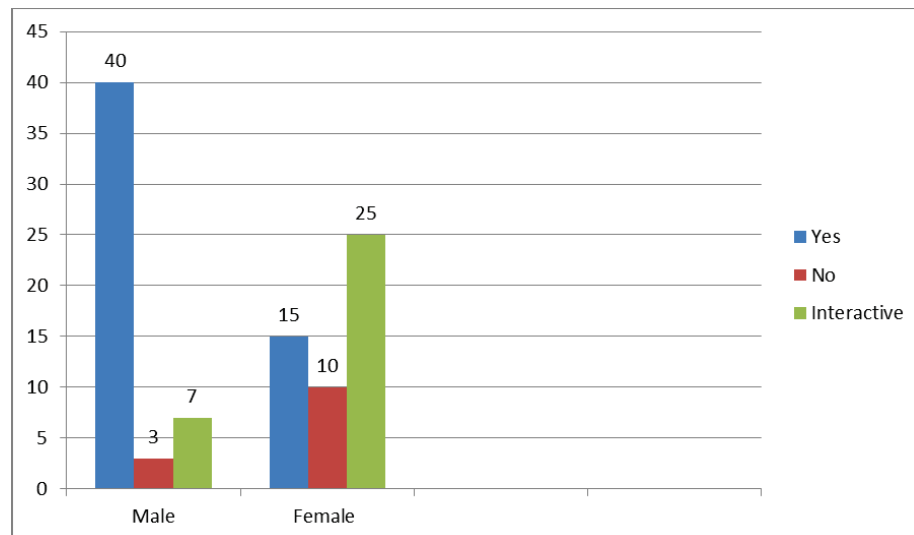
3. The Children Prefer To Imitate The Cartoon Characters



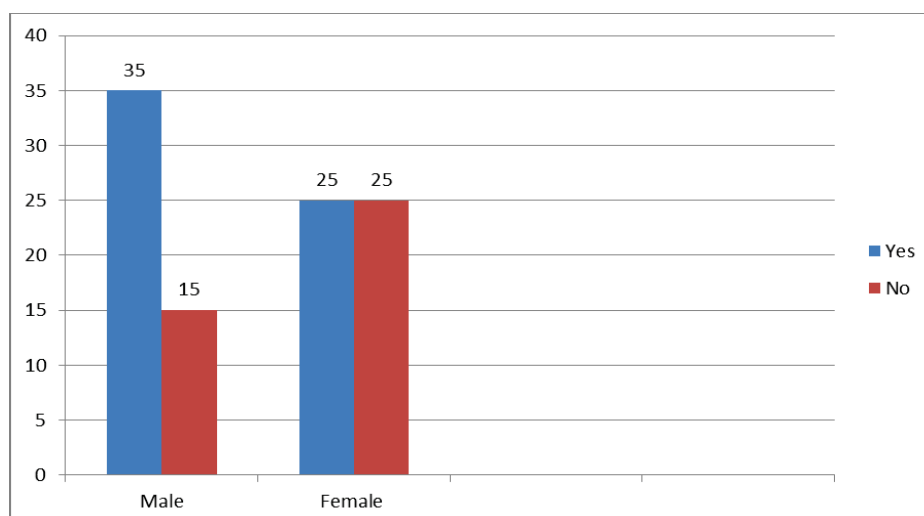
The Children's Favourite Cartoon Channels Among School Children



The Children's Favourite Cartoon Programs Among School Children



The Children Imitate The Cartoon Characters



The Children Nag The Parents To Purchase The Product In Cartoon Channels

The Findings and Suggestions are Furnished Based on the Datas:

Findings:

- 38% of boys prefer to watch male – centric and action programs like Jackie Chan and Chotta Bheem 22% of boys watch both action programs and prefer to watch education programs. 43% of girls prefer to sober and watch achievement centric program like Dora and so on and 7% of girls prefer to watch action program mainly Jackie Chan and Ben 10.
- 71% of the students tend to imitate the dialogues and mannerism of the cartoon characters. Mainly girls interact with the cartoon while they watch programs like Dora the Explorer and the word Game.
- The Study reveals that 70% of excessive TV watching during the timings 4.00 to 8.00 PM adversely affects the education of the children and they tend to skip homework to watch cartoon programs.
- Most of the children have problems with their perception and attitude due to cartoon programs.

Suggestions:

- Parental Mediation is strongly recommended.
- More realistic programs and educational programs are to be produced.
- Encouraging or Engaging children with outdoor and group activities.
- Exercising restraint with the translation into regional language, as the children tend to imbibe them.

Conclusion:

- There is a strong division among boys and girls in choosing their favourite programs.
- The boys prefer adventure program whereas girls watch achievement related programs.
- It is proved that the addiction do watching cartoon programs leads to poor performance in education.

References:

1. The writer's Handbook, The Writing Centre @The University of Wisconsin – Madison/writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Reviewofliterature.html
2. Kumar J Keval (2010) Mass Communication. Jaico publication
3. Hasan Seema (2013) Mass communication, Principles and concepts, second edition, 2013 pp 131
4. Baran J Stanely (2010) Introduction to Mass communication, Media Literacy and culture, Stanley J. Tata Graw Hill Education private ltd. pp 18.
5. Children, youth and media around the world: An overview of trends and issues, Susan Gigli, Intermedia survey institute, UNICEF, 4th world summit on Media for children and adolescents, April 2004http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/intermedia_revised.pdf
