

Assessing the Impact of Cartoon Violence on Aggressive Behavior in Children

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Abstract

This study will examine various types of cartoons (e.g. slapstick violence, superhero actions) to determine if different forms of violence have distinct effects. Investigate how factors like the frequency of exposure, duration and context influence the intensity of aggressive behavior. The main objective of this quantitative study is to assess the short-term and long-term behavioral outcomes of children routinely seeing violent cartoons. Data will be generated through survey questionnaire. These findings highlight the role of cognitive processing and social learning as children often mimic aggressive behaviors portrayed by animated characters. The study underscores the need of for parents, educators, and policymakers to critically evaluate the media content accessible to children and emphasizes the importance of promoting non-violent programming to foster healthy social and emotional development.

Keywords: Children behavior, Children aggression, Cartoon violence, Language acquisition, Cartoon media, Parental responsibility

Introduction

Children have been entertained by animated cartoon films and television shows for 19th century. In 1908 Emile Cohl created *Fantasmagorie* consider to be the first animated cartoon. *Felix the Cat* a legend from 1920s, was the first real animated cartoon star. Klien (1993) found that after the next 10 characters created by the Disney Brothers Cartoon studio including Mickey Mouse, Donald duck, and Pluto, became worldwide celebrities and their cartoon brought millions of dollars over the course of the following ten years (Box office Mojo.com, 2004). Progress in

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technology has led to an expansion of the animation industry that produces diverse content reaching audiences from different age categories starting with children. Research indicates that cartoon production aimed at entertainment has been proven to modify cognitive development alongside emotional responses and behavioral patterns in children (Habib & Soliman, 2015).

Cartoons have definitely affected on children. These effects have some positive effects on children and have some negative effects on children. Violent cartoons content and Aggressive behavior boost aggression, fantasy, inventiveness and language acquisition on the children. Language play to have an influence on the children. The language of violent cartoons is easily understood by children leading to increased violence. Their behavior also reflects their level of involvement. Cartoon violence or fantasy is the representation of violent actions involving cartoon characters and situation. According to Johnson (2014) television schedules from the mid-1950s featured a high level of violence in Popeye the sailor shows that brought substantial advertising profits. The violent behavior portrayed in the Popeye the Sailor show aired for millions of dollars in ads across television networks. Hanna-Barbera began to produce The Flintstones and other made for TV animated series Kirsh (2006).

The Boys Presents: Diabolical (2022), Robot Chicken (2005), Happy Tree Friends (1999-2016), Super jail (2014), Tom and Jerry (1940-1967), Courage the Cowardly Dog, Looney Tunes Never Shied Away from Pain, Batman, The Powerpuff Girls (1998), Doraemon (1979) Oggy and the Cockroaches slapstick would also get criticized as being too violent for children Comic Book Resources (2022). Newer studies show that exposure to virtual violence can trigger mental health struggles, depression and anxiety. Children who are repeatedly exposed to violent cartoons may display more aggressive behaviors, both verbally and physically, compared to these who are not exposed to such content Sedona Sky Academy (2024). Children who regularly view violent cartoons have shown more aggressive verbal and behavior than those who are not exposed to such materials, according to studies.

There are different types of effects Physical effects, Emotional effects, Behavioral effects. The physical consequences of TV viewing don't have a greater impact on children behavior. According to Habib & Tarek (2015), TV cartoon shows increase children's fear, although their emotional effects remain innocuous. Raza, Gondal

and Awan (2016), discovered that children who watch all of these shows from early age they begin to believe that everything is true and more effected by the content.

Kirsh (2006) found that TV cartoons programs specially action cartoons can develop violent behavior in children. The children could not know that the difference between the rules of real world and fantasy story. They may learn hostility from fantasy and use it in real life. Children want to act like a famous character of a fantasy story, disregarding the distinction between good or bad. So, according to the agreed definition, violent behavior is described as an act intended to harm or irritate another individual.

In short-term effects children Increased Aggressive Thoughts: Children may exhibit more aggressive thoughts immediately after watching violent cartoon. Imitative Aggression: In short-term children often imitate the aggressive actions or behaviors they seen in cartoons, mimicking violent acts. Emotional Desensitization: Exposure to cartoon violence can lead to a temporary reduction in emotional responsiveness to actual violence. The International Journal of Indian Psychology (2023).

In long-Term effects children can Desensitization to violence: Repeated exposure can result in children becoming less sensitive to real-world violence, perceiving it as normal or acceptable. Increased Aggressive Behavior: Over time children may develop more aggressive behavioral patterns as they internalize and normalize the violent content they regularly see. Long-term exposure can alter a child's perception of conflict resolution, making them more likely to see violence as a solution to problem. Impact on Social Relationship: Persistent aggressive behavior may harm relationship with peers, leading to social isolation or difficulties in forming friendship. We live in a technologically advanced and globalized world today. The International Journal of Indian Psychology (2023).

Akbar Ghilzai (2017) said technology has greatly improved our lives. It has also fundamentally altered how we live. The way of living in Pakistan has undergone significant transformation. These days it's common for both parents to work to support their families. Many issues arise when both parents are not present in the home, but the most serious ones are children's misbehavior and inappropriate language use. Mother used to live at their homes a few decades back and the kids were raised in a healthy setting under the supervision of their Parents and

grandparents. They had learned good behavior and other moral values from their elder people of family. But now children mostly stay in the house without parental or guardian supervision.

Children are particularly vulnerable since they lack moral awareness and everything they see or hear is imprinted in their mind. His /Her physical, mental, and psychological capacities are directly impacted. Television is their only source of entertainment while they are at home. They spend a most of their time in front of television because no one can stop them Akbar Ghilzai & Rabia Alam, (2017). The animation cartoon series are most attractive thing in TV. Children thinking intellectual, and communication skills have all been impacted by cartoons. These cartoons contain several things that promote violence and aggression. According to Ahmad & Shahum Noor (2017) In Pakistan, the cartoons are broadcast either in English language or in the Hindi language but most of the children prefer to watch Hindi dubbed cartoons. Media literacy and parental guidance are two important strategies for navigating the effect of cartoon violence. Talking openly and honestly with kids about the media they consume helps foster thinking abilities and help them to understand the distinction between reality and fiction. Parents can explain the consequences of violence talking about alternatives ways to resolve conflicts, and encourage empathy and compassion

While some studies have shown a correlation between exposure to violent cartoons and short-term aggression increases, it is not important to note that not all children respond in the same way (Kirsh, 2006). Factors such as individual temperament, family environment, and the presence of other risk factors play a significant role in determining the impact of cartoon violence on aggression.

Children are increasingly exposed to a variety of animated content in the media driven environment of today, some of which contain violent elements. While cartoons are often viewed as harmless entertainment, there is growing the concern over the potential impact violent themes on children. Rawan, Mahsud, & Normn (2009) in one study, preschool children were observed before and after watching cartoons. Some watched cartoons that had many and aggressive content, whereas many others children they watched non-violent shows.

Children who watched violent cartoons were more likely to fight, dispute, disobey authority, and less patient than those who watched non-violent programs. This

research seeks to explore whether exposure to violent cartoons influences the development of aggressive behavior in children. Understanding the relationship between cartoon violence and aggression is essential, as early childhood is a critical period for social and behavioral development. The lack of conclusive evidence on this issue poses a significant challenge for parents, educators, and policymakers in creating a media environment conducive to healthy psychological and emotional development in children.

This research is working on “Cartoon violence and Aggressive Behavior in Children”. It helps to understand how exposure to violent cartoon content can influence children’s behavior.

The connection between cartoon violence and aggression it can provide insights for parents, educational sectors and the effects of media on children development. The children act like our favourite cartoon characters since they begin to model their behavior modifies their personality. By examining the language acquisition, it can highlight whether violent cartoon effects how children communicate and interact with others.

Review of the Literature

Daven et al., (1976) had the objective of studying and he presented his findings on cartoons and their effects to the society. The goal was to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding the cartoon world and even its effects to the society, which is sensitive topic. Each topic covered both critical aspects of its robustness. Researcher indicates that cartoons have influenced children’s behavior and contributed their personal growth.

Bandura, Ross and Ross (1963) investigate and contrasted television violence with cartoon violence with actual violence in children. They perform an experiment and select 100 school children to be split into four groups. The major group came together and witnessed an irreversible cry at an inflatable while attacking it with a small wooden pond. The other group come across the same experience while watching television. The third group watched the cartoon adaptation of the same scene and fourth group gathered nothing because they saw nothing. When all of the children were subsequently supervised in baffling situation, the primary three group looked more aggressive than the control group. Seck (2007) found that Singer,

Slovak, Fireson and York surveyed in (1998). One a cross sectional survey 856 grade three students in a semi-rural community in Columbia country, New York, after the home screen exposure they noticed improved wild cartoons were more violent at school. In 1971, Eron returned to Columbia Country to track the impact of the 1960 study. He observed that boys who watched rough TV shows at the age of 8 were more likely to show violence in social places.

Greenberg & Reeves (1976) conducted an experiment in three communities to study the impact of television. Research suggests that children who watch violent TV shows are more likely to engage in violence. Lower IQ level can also contribute to violent behavior. Poor IQ level of children and from lower income homes are most likely to engage in violent behavior after viewing violent content on television. When exploring the effects of TV material on kids, its crucial to analyze the interaction between viewing habits and other factors. According to Kaye & Sapolsky (2004), children are getting harmed for recreational purposes, and this trend is expected to continue if not addressed. Animation World Network's balanced coverage is the reason that the negative impacts of cartoons on children. According to Gentile and Anderson (2006), violent video games and television programs can lead to long-term aggression and improper behavior in children.

Raza, Abu Baker, & Mohamad (2018) observed that television content is appropriate in every culture, it is important to exercise caution when exposing youngsters to it. Scharrer (2006) discovered that the analyst compared the behavior of 24 kids viewing TV at the research center. Twelve of them saw the nonviolent moment from The Little Red Hen, while half watched the rough sequence from the cartoon Woody Woodpecker. Later, as the kids were playing, the analyst observed them as they watched violent cartoons that were beating other kids and smashing toys.

Mahsud M. Nawaz, Rawan Bakht, and Yaser Noman (2009) investigated violent behavior among school-aged children in Sargodha and its underlying causes. The study included 192 pupils (96 males and 96 females) aged 7-10 years from four schools in Sargodha District. They used the survey research approach to determine the impact of cartoons on their behavior. They employed a stratified sample approach to classify their respondents. Male and female viewers exhibit distinct tastes and behaviors. Male and female children spent nearly equal time viewing cartoons. Boys exhibited violent behavior and liked to watch cartoons depicting violence. Boys preferred to watch Hindi-dubbed cartoons more than girls. Siripen

(2009) examined how positive cartoon animation affects children's behavior in primary schools. Children enjoy cartoons and are heavily impacted by them. This has a negative impact on the younger generation, leading to more aggressive and bad behavior in social situations. Furthermore, it hindered their understanding of proper manners.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory is the main guiding concept which argues that children can adopt behaviors by seeing and imitating the actions of others. Following Bandura, a majority of people learn from watching others act, seeing the outcomes and then replicating those actions when it seems the results are positive. These studies suggest that cartoons with violence alter children's understanding of appropriate actions. Many animated characters get away with throwing punches, raising their voices or wielding vulgar language despite their actions. Children often learn to see similar actions as an acceptable way to handle difficult situations. As a result, Social Learning Theory supports researchers' quest to understand how children aged 5 to 13 may incorporate cartoon violence into their behavioral routines. It reveals how children learn through observation and explores how the effects of modeling, reinforcing and observing influence their behavioral development.

Methodology

The study focuses on descriptive survey design to understand the relationship between cartoon violence and aggressive behavior in children aged 5 to 13. This design is chosen to gather quantitative research. It describes the phenomenon of aggression and explore the correlation between exposure to cartoon violence and aggressive tendencies. The research approach is survey research and I collect data directly from children.

The research design is Cross-Sectional design. The data will be collected at a single point in time to analyze the current exposure to cartoon violence and its impact on aggression in children. Variables are Independent Variables: Exposure to cartoon violence, Dependent Variables: Aggressive behavior in children and Control variables: Age, gender, school, parental supervision. The tool is for data collection is survey questionnaire. A structured of questionnaire is closed-ended questions.

Researcher has used Likert scale for measuring attitudes and behaviors (e.g. Always, Never, Sometimes, Yes, No). In Validation, researcher also conducted a pilot study to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

The target population is Children aged 5 to 13 years and their geographic location is Schools, homes or other community settings where children are accessible.

❖ Sampling Technique

Researcher has used simple random sampling because this technique will be used to ensure representation across the 5-13 age group. From each stratum participants will be randomly selected.

The data collection procedure is distribution of questionnaires through schools, homes, and community tuition centers. The questionnaire will be tested on 50 children to ensure clarity and reliability.

❖ Data Analysis

Quantitative technique has been used to determine the relationship between exposure to cartoon violence and aggression, the detail is found within survey conducted. A brief description of the set of data collected is provided in a table format. There are 15 questions in the survey questionnaire. In total 50 responses were collected.

Title: Gender and cartoon watching duration per day

	Frequency	Percentage	Cartoon watching (Duration per day)	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	24	48%	Less than 1 hour	6	12%
Girls	26	52%	1-2 hours	23	46%
			2-3 hours	15	30%
			More than 3 hours	6	12%
Total	50	100		50	100

Table 1.1: To respond this question, 50 children participated. The table indicates that 48% of respondents to this research are boys and 52% are girls. 12% children watch cartoons less than one hour per day. 46% children watch cartoons one to two hours per day. 30% children watch cartoons two to three hours per day. 12% children watch cartoons more than three hours per day.

Title: Cartoons Preference with action or fighting scenes and Cartoons being watched more frequently

	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	54%	Action/Adventure	22	44%
No	15	30%	Comedy	8	16%
Sometimes	8	16%	Educational	0	0%
			Fantasy	20	40%
Total	50	100		50	100

Table 1.2: 54% children prefer cartoons with action or fighting scenes. 30% children do not prefer cartoons with action or fighting scenes and 16% said sometimes we prefer cartoons with actions or fighting scenes. While, 44% children watch action or adventure cartoons. 10% of children watch comedy cartoons, 0% watch educational cartoons and 40% of children watch fantasy-based cartoons.

Title: imitation of any characters or actions from violent cartoons and actions of Hit, Pushed or kicked after watching violent cartoons

Imitation	Frequency	Percentage	Actions	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	48%	Yes	20	40%
No	14	28%	No	13	26%
Sometimes	12	24%	Sometimes	17	34%
Total	50	100		50	100

Table 1.3: 48% children imitate any characters or actions from violent cartoons. 28% don't imitate and 24% children sometimes imitate characters or actions from violent cartoons. 40% children pushed, hit or kicked someone after watching cartoons. 26% children answer is no and 34% children sometimes hit, kicked or pushed someone after watching violent cartoons.

Title: response after your conflicts with peers or siblings

	Frequency	Percentage
Uses physical actions	23	46%
Raises their voice or argues	11	22%
Seeks adult intervention	10	20%
Remains calm	6	12%
Total	50	100

Table 1.4: 46% responses use physical action. 22% responses raise their voice or argues with our peers or siblings. 20% responses seek adult intervention and 12% responses remains calm when their conflicts with peers or siblings.

Title: Use of violent language or gestures during playtime

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	60%
No	14	28%
Sometimes	6	12%
Total	50	100

Table 1.5: 60% children express violent language or gestures during playtime. 28% never express violent language or gestures during playtime. 12% children sometimes express violent language or gestures during playtime.

Title: Favourite cartoon

	Frequency	Percentage
<u>Doraemon</u>	21	42%
Tom and jerry	5	10%
<u>Oggy and cockroaches</u>	6	12%
Others	18	36%
Total	50	100

Table 1.6: 42% children favourite cartoon is Doraemon. 10% children favourite cartoon is Tom and jerry. 12% children favourite cartoon is Oggy and cockroaches and 36% children watch others cartoon e.g. The jungle book, Hunter x Hunter, Miniance, Barbie, Pikachu etc.

Title: Cartoon violence makes you feel angry or aggressive?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	12%
No	27	54%
Sometimes	17	34%
Total	50	100

Table 1.7: 12% children think cartoon violence makes feel angry or aggressive. 54% children never feel angry or aggressive and 34% children sometimes feel angry or aggressive.

Title: Guidance parents or guardians talk to you about what you watch on TV?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	54%
No	23	46%
Total	50	100

Table 1.8: 54% children choose option yes; their parents or guardians talk to you watch on TV. 46% parents or guardians do not talk to their children what you watch on TV.

Title: Pretend to play violent characters

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	3	6%
Never	17	34%
Sometimes	30	60%
Total	50	100

Table 1.9: 6% responses always pretend play involving violent characters. 34% responses never pretend involving characters and 60% responses sometimes pretend play involving violent characters.

Title: Use of phrases or actions from cartoons in social situation

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	5	10%
Never	24	48%
Sometimes	21	42%
Total	50	100

Table 1.10: 10% children always use phrases or actions from cartoons in social situation. 48% never use phrases or actions from cartoons in social situations and 42% children sometimes use phrases or actions from cartoons in social situations.

Title: Your thoughts about cartoon violence is funny or exciting?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	80%
No	10	20%
Total	50	100

Table 1.11: 80% responses are yes cartoon violence is funny or exciting. 20% responses are no cartoon violence is not funny or exciting.

Title: Your feeling when you watch a cartoon with violence

	Frequency	Percentage
Happy	40	80%
Sad	4	8%
Angry	6	12%
Scared	0	0%
Total	50	100

Table 1.12: 80% children feel happy when they watch a cartoon with violence. 8% children feel sad and 12% children feel angry when they watch a cartoon with violence.

Conclusion

The findings of this research highlight the significant role that cartoon violence plays in shaping the aggressive behavior and social dynamics of children aged 5 to 13. Through survey analysis, it was observed that prolonged exposure to violent cartoons correlates with an increase in aggressive tendencies, including verbal and physical expressions of aggression. Furthermore, this study underscores the influence of cartoon content on children's language acquisition, where imitative behaviors extend to speech patterns and vocabulary often reflective of the characters they engage with. While cartoons serve as an entertaining medium for children, they also act as a source of behavioral modeling.

This duality suggests that parents and educators must be vigilant in moderating the type and duration of exposure to such content. The study also advocates for creating and promoting non-violent, pro-social cartoons that foster positive values, emotional regulation, and healthy social interactions. It encourages media producers to consider the developmental needs of children and young audience in their creative processes.

Learning to use media wisely can encourage children and young people to become emotionally stable, responsible to society and mentally strong. In the end, raising emotionally intelligent, socially conscious, and mentally resilient people in a society where media is pervasive requires a balanced, deliberate, and informed approach to children's media usage. Future research should expand upon these findings by

exploring the long-term psychological and social impacts of cartoon violence and examining potential interventions to mitigate its effects. Ultimately, fostering a balanced and mindful approach to children's media consumption can help nurture well-rounded, emotionally stable individuals.

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