

Impact of Hindu Religious Animated Movie On Children

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates 'The Impact of Hindu religious animated movie on children in Lahore through surveyquestionnaire method as a tool of data collection. It targeted 230 children of 8-10 years age. The study recorded the viewership of Hindu religious animated movies, reasons of respondent's liking for Krishna character in the movie Krishna, their wish of having Krishna's power, respondent's knowledge about powers of Allah (SWT). The hypothesis studied was "Hindu religious animated movies have negative impact on children in Lahore, Pakistan". The findings revealed that majority of the children watched and liked the Hindu religious animated movie Krishna. Evaluation of the collected data concluded that majority of the children are more familiar with Hindu religion and their religious heroes rather than Allah and His powers. The study also revealed that majority of the children know about Krishna, his religion, powers of Krishna and everything about the movie which showed that animated movies very effectively impart information to its viewers. The study also identified few areas for future researchers and made recommendation for improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Television is the most effective medium for communication which not only informs but also entertains, creates awareness and mobilizes its publics. It has the ability to change the perceptions and reality of all classes in a society more significantly as compared to other means of communication. Its effects have been more prominent on uncritical receivers like children. TV has been the most cursed about mass medium because of its extra ordinary power to influence the viewers. It has been termed the 'plug-in-drug' (Marie, W), the adultifier of young children (Postman, N), the 'chewing gum' for the eyes (Johnson, N) and notorious breaker of the cultural barriers and threat to cultural identity (MacBride, S).

TELEVISED WORLD OF CHILDREN

Today children spend their maximum time in front of TV watching animated movies or cartoons.

Television can be accused for changing children's way of spending their leisure time as earlier they would sit with their parents or grandparents to listen to stories and fairytales, but now the new inventions of technology like Cable TV channels have changed these habits and have led to children's different beliefs and viewpoints about various things.

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As Marshall McLuhan (1965) said that TV generation is the first post literate generation and parents today watch their children becoming the “Third World”. It is due to TV and other new media that children don't think the way their parents did and a gap is building up between them. Usually cartoons and animated films are the primary source of entertainment for children. So it is significant to interpret the meaning of images, messages and themes used in animated movies. Children are early adopters and they adopt whatever they see without knowing its impact because they have inner adoptive behavior psychology. Many research studies have been conducted to observe the effects of violence shown in cartoons and other programs on children's behavior (Usman, Jalani and Malik). Findings of previous research concluded that cartoons and programs showing violence have some impact on children's behavior but no study has been conducted to find out the impact of religious animated movies on children. Therefore, research wants to find out whether or not and how much impact the Hindu religious animated movie (Krishna) has on children in Lahore, Pakistan so that certain suggestions and recommendations can be made.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate the impact of religious animated movies on children,
- To suggest some recommendations to media practitioners and parents about the TV watching habits of children.
- To explore the effectiveness of animated movies in imparting information to the children.

Animated movies and cartoon construct and shape the reality for children. It is an important socializing factor which not only entertains but also manipulates the truth and changes the preferences of its audience. Child of today learns almost all the things from the media especially from cartoons and animated movies because of the fun element in it. Jalani, Z.N. (2005) summarizes in “construction of reality through Walt Disney animated movies” that Disney creates images for the children regarding issues which on the face may seem something general but when seen in reality these false imagery as portrait in the Disney movies are strictly and strongly defined, and shapes the images of thing around a child.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF MEDIATED REALITY ON CHILDREN

Besides social impact the constructed reality of animated movies and cartoons has many psychological impacts on children. They view and see the world in light of what they have seen on TV, which shapes their perception of reality and directs them to think in a specific manner as George Gerbner stated in cultivation theory that more time people spend watching television, the more likely their conceptions of social reality will reflect what is seen on television. As Lawson, A. and Fouts, G. (2004) examined the prevalence of verbalizations about mental illness in the animated feature films of The Walt Disney Company (TWDC). They discussed the results within the context of children's repeated exposure to popular animated movies and their learning of labels and stereotypes

associated with mental illness. 34 animated feature films produced by TWDC for mental illness references were coded “crazy” or “nuts”.

Children when exposed to content on TV they observe and tend to imitate their ideal cartoon characters. They are submissive audience who cannot differentiate between the fantasies shown in cartoons or animated movies and the real world. As Bandura and Ross posit that learning occurs when individual observes and imitate others' behavior. He stated that children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling. Children usually idealize the characters shown in animated movies and cartoons. Psychological changes in children due to media exposure have been evaluated by many researchers. Development of aggressive behavior due to violent animated movies and cartoons has been discussed by Usman, 2005 who suggested that children start adopting aggressive behavior and think that conflict is the only key to every matter.

Cartoons and animated movies communicate in a very persuasive way and has the ability to convince its audience (children). It's like a mind setter of children which makes up their concepts of this world like death, gender transgression and older people. As Robinson, T., Callister, M., Magoffin, D. and Moore, J. (2007) in “The portrayal of older characters in Disney animated films” stated that today television and movies serve as an important socializing function supplying many children with images that can form, change, and reinforce stereotypes. Researchers have found that by the time children enter elementary school, representation of older people in Disney animated film in terms of their gender, race, appearance, role, personality, and physical characteristics of older characters hold a prominent position in children's media consumption and children today come to know Disney's characters and stories just as their parents and grandparents.

Cox, M., Garrett, E & Graham , A.J. (2005) in their study titled “Death in Disney films: Implications for children's understanding of death” examined the potential influence of Disney films on children's concepts of death. The findings indicate that some animated Disney films present scenes that eclipse the permanence and irreversibility of death and often leave deaths (especially those of villains) emotionally unacknowledged.

Vollmer, M.LaPointe, E. M.(2003) in “Gender Transgression and Villainy in Animated Film” stated the ways in which gender transgression and “queering” are used as an indicator of deviance and villainy in children's animated full-length movies. Through an analysis of male villains in 10 full-length animated movies, it examined the ways in which gender transgression creates what is termed a “villain-as-sissy” archetype that signifies villains as deviant and enhances the positive gender qualities of heroes. TV is pervasive and it stimulates the changes in viewers. It is an effective tool for bringing change in child's perception.

With the popularity of cable TV, children are exposed to variety of channels of different religions and cultures, hence now they are becoming more and more familiar with the Hindu customs and religious festivals. A child may not know in-depth about any Islamic values but he knows about the religious heroes of Hinduism. A distance is building up between Muslim children and their religion, traditions, culture and values.

HINDU RELIGIOUS ANIMATED MOVIES AND CHILDREN

Research wants to find out the impact of Hindu religious animated movie on children in Lahore, Pakistan and suggest some future recommendations for media practitioners and parents or elderly figures. Therefore research also intends to measure the respondent's level of viewing the animated movie 'Krishna' and reasons for it being popular among the children.

PARTICIPANTS

Children (118 boys, 112 girls, *Mage* = 10 years, age range: 8-10 years) were selected from two schools of Lahore i.e., *Pak Angels foundation* and *Cathedral high school* through purposive quota sampling technique as research found equal number of viewer's (children) of animated movie 'Krishna' from both schools. The respondents selected for data collection aged between 8-10 years, studying in class 4 (see Table 1, for demographics). Research preferred this age of respondents for study because at the age of 8-10, children are immature and at the stage of learning. In pre testing many schools of Lahore were analyzed by research i.e. Beacon house, Iqra schools, Johar public school, St. Anthony School, Pak angels foundation and Cathedral high school.

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

Researcher has used survey method for data collection. Questionnaire of 18 close ended questions were filled by the viewers to achieve the objectives of the study. Questionnaires were designed to evaluate children knowledge about Islam and Hinduism and how they idealize mediated reality in their personal lives. Comparative questions about Islam and Hindu religion were also designed to reveal how significantly animated movies impart information and cultivate people's perception.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Hindu religious animated movie has negative impact on children in Lahore, Pakistan.

H0: Hindu religious animated movie does not have negative impact on children in Lahore, Pakistan.

H2: Animated movie effectively convey its message.

H0: Animated movie does not effectively convey its message.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 230 respondents from both the schools of Lahore were surveyed. As illustrated through the table 5.1, majority of the respondents were of 10 years

age (84 per cent). Studying the impact of animated movie on children of this age was important as children of this age are immature and adopt whatever they see or observe on TV or their surroundings and spend most of their time in watching cartoons and animated movies shown on CTV. It is the period in their lives when they are learning about different things through interactions with others and most importantly through televisions which is now available easily- courtesy cable network technology. Table 1 shows that among respondents about 51 per cent are males and about 49 per cent are female students of fourth class.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Description of characteristics	F	%
Age (years)	8	3	1.30
	9	21	9.13
	10	193	84
	11	10	4.34
	12	3	1.30
Total		230	100.0
Class	4 th	230	100.0
Gender	Male	118	51
	Female	112	49
Total		230	100

IMPACT OF ANIMATED MOVIES ON CHILDREN

The TV and particularly animated movies have significant impact on its viewers. As according to Bush and Gresham 1986 “the strength of animation has long been underestimated as mere cartoons for children entertainment but animated films are particularly powerful medium in influencing audiences because animation has attributes that regular mainstream films do not.” Animated movies due to their colorful, attractive, influential and unique style play a significant role in creating awareness and imparting information effectively to the children. The present study has confirmed this fact as having watched the animated movie Krishna children get to know and learn about Krishna and his religion.

Table 2. Viewership of animated movies

Respondents	Viewership (f)		Total
	Yes	No	
Cathedral High School	112	3	115
Pak Angels Foundation	112	3	115
Total	224	6	230
Percentage	97%	3%	100%

Table 2 reveals the viewership of animated movies among children. Statistics show that among 230 respondents, 224 children watch animated movie and only 6 children do not watch animated movies.

Table 3. Level of Viewing animated movies

Respondents	Level of viewing (f)					Total
	Daily	Once a week	Twice a week	Rarely	Not at all	
Cathedral High school	60	25	7	21	2	115
Pak Angels Foundation	70	14	11	20	0	115
Total	130	39	18	41	2	230
Percentage	56%	17%	8%	18%	1%	100%

Table 3 explains that about 56% children watch animated movies daily, 17 % watch once a week, 18% watch rarely and there are only 1% children who do not watch animated movies.

It is evident from results that animated movies are often watched by majority of the children and 56% children watch it on daily basis. Due to excess of cable television (CTV) in most homes in Lahore, children now have easy and round the clock access to cartoon channels.

Table 4. Viewership of Indian animated movie Krishna

Respondents	Viewership of Krishna animated movie (f)		Total
	Yes	No	
Cathedral High school	110	5	115
Pak Angels Foundation	95	20	115
Total	205	25	230
Percentage	89%	11%	100%

Table 4 reveals that 205 children have watched the Indian animated movie Krishna shown on cable TV cartoon channels like Pogo and Cartoon Network.

Table 5. Children's wish of being like Krishna

Respondents	Respondents wish of being like Krishna (f)		Total
	Yes	No	
Cathedral High school	99	16	115
Pak Angels Foundation	93	22	115
Total	192	38	230
Percentage	83%	17%	100%

Table 5 reveals the fact that about 83 per cent children wish to be like Krishna and only about 17 per cent children don't want to be like Krishna which shows that the character of Krishna has remarkable impact on the minds of children.

The Hindu religious animated movie Krishna is about Krishna, his religion and gods which is a part of Indian tradition and culture. All the adventures of Krishna have been shown in the movie. The positive portrayal of Krishna character with unbelievable mystical powers, indomitable endeavors and particularly use of his powers to help people and always do good deeds has become the source of attraction for majority of the children.

Children were asked questions if they wish to be like Krishna and do they want Krishna's powers. The study explored that majority of children wish to be like him and want his powers. Therefore it can be concluded that the movie has significant impact on children as they have idealized the character of Krishna because of his superficial powers.

Table 6. Respondents' remembrance about the animated movie Krishna

Respondents	Respondents' remembrance about the animated movie Krishna (f)								
	Didn't remember	Steal butter	Jump in water	Naughty	Fly	Do magic	Run with horse	Fight with evils	Multiple Answers
Cathedral High School	9	46	23	4	8	8	0	16	4
Pak Angels Foundation	3	64	15	0	8	7	6	6	3
Total	12	110	38	4	16	15	6	22	7
Percentage	5%	48%	16.5%	2%	7%	6.5%	2.5%	9.5%	3%

Table 6 illustrates that 95% children remember about the animated movie Krishna and only 5% didn't remember it. Hence it is concluded that children remembered what they watched on TV.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ANIMATED MOVIES IN IMPARTING INFORMATION

Animated movies due to their rich, striking, influential and different approach play an important role not only in creating awareness but also in imparting information successfully to the children. The present study has confirmed this fact as having watched the animated movie Krishna children get to know about the Krishna and his religion

Table 7. Powers of Krishna

Respondents	Respondents wish of having Krishna's powers (f)		Total
	Yes	No	
Cathedral High school	108	7	115
Pak Angels Foundation	105	10	115
Total	213	17	230
Percentage	93%	7%	100%

Table 7 shows that 93% children know about the powers of Krishna and wish to have those powers which are shown in the Hindu religious animated movie Krishna.

Table 8. Knowledge about the religion of Krishna

Respondents	Respondents Knowledge about the Krishna's religion (f)				Total
	Don't know	Hinduism	Christianity	Islam	
Cathedral High school	1	102	3	9	115
Pak Angels Foundation	6	100	9	0	115
Total	7	202	12	9	230
Percentage	3%	88%	5%	4%	100%

Table 8 illustrates that majority of the children know about the religion of Krishna. Statistics show that 202 (88 percent) children know about the religion of Krishna while only 9 (4 per cent) children know about their own religion Islam.

Table 9. Powers of Allah Almighty

Respondents	Respondents knowledge about Powers of Allah Almighty (f)								
	Don't know	Day & night	Life & death	Made angels	Knowledge	Made man	Made universe	Can do every thing	Control World
Cathedral High School	59	2	19	0	1	15	2	12	2
Pak Angels Foundation	47	0	18	4	0	39	5	5	0
Total	106	2	37	4	1	54	7	17	2
Percentage	46%	1%	16%	2%	0.5%	23.5%	3%	7%	1%

Table 9 explains that 46% children don't know about the powers of Allah which shows that children are ignorant about their own religion. An open ended question was given and they were allowed to write whatever they know about the powers of Allah Almighty. 46% children don't know about the powers of Allah which shows that children are ignorant about their God and Islamic religion. Rest of the children replied that Allah made day and night, life and death, angels and gave us knowledge, He can do everything, He controls the world and He alone has made man and this universe.

On contrary when children were asked about the powers of Krishna, about 93% of the children knew about the powers of Krishna. Therefore it can be concluded that children are more familiar with the powers of Krishna than Allah Almighty because they learn and remember more from visual medium rather than just text book literature.

CONCLUSION

The study recorded respondents' level of viewing animated movies, favorite channels and viewership of animated movie and respondents' reasons of liking

Krishna. Comparative questions of the study analyzed the knowledge of respondents about Hindu religion and their own religion, Islam.

The major hypothesis studied was Hindu religious animated movies have negative impact on children in Pakistan. Having watched such animated movies children get more familiar with Hindu religion and their religious heroes. Therefore, a gap is occurring between children and their own religion. It was also hypothesized that animated movies very effectively convey its message. These factors were based on the conclusion drawn after reviewing the relevant literature as most of the studies were of the view that TV and particularly animated movies shape up the childrens' perception of real world and stimulate changes in its viewers.

The findings concluded that majority of respondents watch animated movies daily. Due to 24 hours availability of cable television, TV has become the major source of entertainment for children. Majority of the respondents favorite cartoon channel is Pogo, which is an Indian cartoon channel. Children like to watch Indian animated movies and cartoons shown on Pogo channel. Hindu religious animated movie Krishna is liked by majority of the respondents as it was repetitively telecasted on respondents' favorite cartoon channel and due to Krishna's childhood and teenage adventures. Krishna's funny and interesting acts in the movie make it fascinating for the children. And due to the use of his superficial powers for helping people in the movie children showed keen interest in watching the movie.

The study also revealed that majority of the children know about Krishna, his religion, powers of Krishna and everything about the movie which showed that animated movies very effectively impart information to its viewers. Therefore, the study disproves the null hypothesis that animated movies do not effectively convey its message.

After the interpretation and evaluation of collected data it is also concluded that majority of the children are more familiar with the Hindu religion, which has obviously a negative impact on their religion as they don't know about the powers of Allah Almighty which is the base of their religion Islam. The results of this study has disproved the null hypothesis i.e. Hindu religious animated movie do not have negative impact on children in Lahore, Pakistan.

To investigate the impact of Hindu religious animated movie Krishna on children the present study applied cultivation theory presented by George Gerbner, which states that exposures to television, over time, cultivates viewers perceptions of reality. The result of the study supports the theory as respondents were of the view that Almighty Allah did not had powers like Krishna had in the movie. The perception of children about their own religion Islam had been changed. They believed on what they watched in the movie Krishna. The cultivation theory in its basic form suggests that television is responsible for shaping or cultivating viewers' perception of reality which is being confirmed through the study.

The conclusion of the study also corresponds to the observation made by Albert Bandura while discussing social learning theory. According to social learning theorist behavior is influenced not only by personal or live models but also by those presented in the mass media. Television and film models, in particular, seem to exert a powerful impact and one major implication is that television is shaping human motivation and behavior on a daily basis. The result indicates that majority of the respondents wished to be like Krishna and want his powers which shows that they have idealized Krishna's character.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research paper proves the hypothesis "Hindu religious animated movie have negative impact on children in Lahore, Pakistan and implies an association between Hindu religious animated movie viewing and its impact on viewers. The study has claimed that this relationship would create a distance between viewers and their religion. Television is one of the biggest inventions in the field of mass media. It is just like a magic box which has brought the world at every door step. Media's impact on children will be different than elders because of their maturity level. Children are immature and at the stage of learning. They learn and adopt more readily than elders whatever they see or observe. Therefore, parents and elders are required to be alert and watchful on what their children are watching on TV. Most of the children are attracted towards the Indian TV channels because their language is almost same but there is a lot of difference in the religious and ethical values. So there is great difference in their programs as well. Children are very much attracted towards the glamorized Indian programs, cartoons and their animated movies. Animated movies due to their vibrant, eye-catching, influential and exceptional style play a vital role in creating consciousness and imparting information effectively to the children. The study also revealed that majority of the children know about Krishna, his religion, powers of Krishna and everything about the movie which showed that animated movies very effectively impart information to its viewers. Thus our media practitioners should analyze the fact and produce quality programs which would promote our religion and culture and gain audience interest in order to endorse our religion and culture in the minds of not only people of Pakistan but also in the minds of people across the world. Therefore, it is recommended that impact of animated movies must be targeted for research studies in future. Especially the impact of Hindu religious animated movies must be targeted as they have been repetitively telecasted on childrens' favorite cartoon channels. To minimize and resist the impact of Hindu religion by Hindu religious animated movies, it is suggested that local channels should be strengthened and should ensure better content.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has provided a baseline to study the impact of animated movies particularly on children. It has explored impact of the first and most popular Hindu religious animated movie, the researcher has planned to work in future on other

type of animation and evaluate impact on children of different age period. The present research didn't study the impact of other foreign animated movies. So a combination of content analysis and a survey in a study may be more valuable and interesting. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting such a study in future. Cable television provides a variety of local and foreign channels due to which majority have easy and round the clock access to all type of information and entertainment. One can find violent, aggressive, sexual and gender discrimination contents in animated movies in Pakistan. Research in this area, impact of animated movies, requires interdisciplinary approaches as impact may be social or psychological etc. No study has been conducted on animated movies in Pakistan prior to this. Viewership and popularity of animated movies among children in the present study has revealed that it has been liked by majority of the children. Since animated movies are repetitively telecasted on cartoon channels, hence repetitive exposure to animated movies can be investigated.

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