

# **INFLUENCE OF ANIMATION CARTOON ON TEENAGE LEARNING**

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## **Abstract**

Animation Cartoons are an entertainment part of life that gives lots of fun to different age groups. Animation Cartoons are the most frequent and easily accessible source of entertainment, which keeps teenagers and children occupied. With the vastness of the media and the extension of channels, it has become easier for children to watch their favorite cartoons with a single click. This paper illuminates the influence of animation cartoons on teenage learning. The paper reviewed some related literature and adopted social learning theory to explain how teenagers can learn by witnessing the behavior and activities of characters in animated cartoons; they may replicate these behaviors in their own lives, resulting in learning. It was concluded that the impact of animated cartoons on teenage learning is diverse, as watching cartoons can have both a negative and positive influence on teenagers learning. They should be exposed to educational animated cartoons rather than violent cartoons, while it was recommended that teenagers be encouraged to watch cartoons, as not all cartoons are bad; however, they should be warned about spending too much time watching cartoons.

**Keywords:** Influence, Animation, Cartoon, Teenage, Learning

## Introduction

Effective teaching requires a variety of instruments, tactics, and strategies to accomplish desired objectives. Using many teaching styles and training material has been shown to improve learning outcomes compared to relying just on one. Maintaining a light, easy, and humorous tone is crucial for effective learning (Fleischer, 2010). Cartoons can be an effective teaching tool that is often overlooked. Cartoons are easily understood by both children and adults due to their visual and cognitive appeal. It is widely known that most persons consume roughly 75-80% of information is visual. Cartoons' visual nature could facilitate information processing. Cartoons can improve learning by reducing distractions around the focal point, allowing for greater focus on the problem at hand (Fleischer, 2010). According to Parrott (1994), the benefits of using this teaching technique include enhanced knowledge, attention, motivation, attitudes, productivity, creativity, and divergent thinking. Other benefits include decreased academic stress and anxiety, boredom and disruptive behavior (Povell and Andrasea 1985). Graphical representations offer advantages over words, which only have context within the speaker's culture. Scientists are lost in their own subculture-based terminology. The idea that "a picture speaks a thousand words" has been applied to convey important educational concepts in various contexts (Srikwan & Jacobsson, 2007).

Cartoons are more effective educational tools due to their graphical nature. Visual learning outperforms oral learning. Teachers have observed slow learners and non-academic students focusing on images, filmstrips, videos, and cartoons. To be effective, cartoons need to be viewed by everyone. Eulie (1969) recommends using overhead projectors, opaque projectors, or handouts for this purpose.

Teenagers who are in a crucial stage of cognitive and social development are particularly susceptible to the impact of the media they consume (Buckingham 2013). Animation cartoons with their captivating visuals and engaging narratives have the potential to shape the way teenagers learn and perceive the world around them. One of the primary ways in which animation cartoons can influence teenage learning is through the incorporation of educational content. Many animated series and films now include elements of science history or social studies presenting complex information in a visually appealing and accessible manner (Kirkorian et al. 2008). This can help teenagers to better understand and retain the information as the combination of visual and auditory stimuli can enhance their learning experience. Animation Cartoons can also be used as a forum for discussing social and cultural issues. The stories told in animated media can offer teenagers a safe

place to explore issues related to identity, relationships, and society norms, which are subjects they frequently struggle with (Buckingham 2013). Animation cartoons can help teens think critically and gain a more complex picture of the world by presenting a variety of viewpoints and dispelling stereotypes.

In addition to the educational and social implications, animation cartoons can also have a significant impact on the cognitive development of teenagers. The fast-paced visually stimulating nature of these media can enhance attention problem-solving skills and spatial awareness (Kirkorian et al. 2008). This can have positive implications for academic performance and overall cognitive functioning. It is crucial to remember, though, that there may be some negative effects of animated cartoons on adolescent learning. Teenagers' emotional and social development may suffer from excessive media exposure, especially if the content is violent or unsuitable (Buckingham 2013). Media creators, parents, and educators must be aware of the content and how it might affect adolescent viewers.

## **Literature Review**

### **Understanding Animation Cartoon**

Animation Cartoon has various meanings, based on several and different forms of visual art and illustration. The word cartoon once meant something entirely different than it does today. According to Mahsud (2012), cartoon is any of the several forms of art, with varied meaning that evolved from one to another. A cartoon is a combination of still drawings that give illusion of movement. The artists who draw cartoons are known as cartoonists. The original meaning was in fine art, where cartoon meant a preparatory drawing for a piece of art, such as a painting. The modern meaning refers to both humorous illustrations in print and animated films. Hassan and Daniyal (2013) defined Animated cartoons as motion picture or television film consisting of photographed series of drawings, objects or computer graphics that simulates motion by recording very slight, continuous changes in the images, frame by frame. Thompson (2015) also defined cartoon as a form of two-dimensional illustrated visual art. While the specific definition has changed over time, modern usage refers to a typically non-realistic or semi-realistic drawing or painting intended for satire, caricature, or humour, or to the artistic style of such works. An artist who creates cartoons is called a cartoonist. A cartoon is a movie made by using animated instead of live actors, especially a humorous film intended for children. Cartoons are mostly used today as animations usually showing illustrated drawing images in rapid succession to give impression of

movement. For this simple reason it has become very easy for children to get attracted to animated cartoon programs and by so doing become addicted.

Cartoons that are animated are cartoons that appear to move. The first type's animated cartoons were called flipbooks. Animated cartoons were once drawn entirely by hand but today many are made on computers. They were made of pages of drawings, each drawing slightly different from one another. People flipped the pages with their thumb and characters appeared to move (Encarta kids, 2012). Animations involve more detail and precision in making the human characters, anime boasts a rather unique and rather large set of nonhuman characters, such as talking cats, aliens, high fantasy creatures such as elves and dwarves, androids and many more, all of which are unique and unusual (Donahue, 2014). Today, animated cartoons are a big part of television. Scooby Doo, The Simpsons, Sponge Bob Square Pants, Tom and Jerry, Mickey Mouse, Dora the explorer, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Superman, Batman, Ironman, Shrek, Barbie, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, The Lion King, Finding Nemo, Ninja Turtles, Ben Ten, Mighty Morphin, Spiderman, Bay blade, Dragon ball-z, Pinocchio, Gingerbread Man, Sleeping Beauty, are all animation cartoons. Walt Disney created the first sound cartoon, the first all colour cartoons and the first animated feature length motion picture (Disneydreamer.com)

### **Educational Animated Cartoons**

Educational animated cartoons focus on sharing a lesson or factual knowledge with their viewer. Eker and Karadeniz (2014) define the educational cartoons as effective tools which are used in order to teach and advise on mental development or learning certain skills, such as addition or subtraction. Educational cartoons make students think in creative and critical manner. Yilmaz (2013) opined that cartoons are improving the students critical thinking and problem-solving skills and they also allow them to express themselves, to think free and imagine to tell their taught and feelings orally and in writing. Cartoons can enable students to realize the events in different aspects while they make them smile. Educational types of animation cartoons that have in entertainment in them are also known as edutainment; it is derived from the words "education and entertainment" which define the way of teaching and learning process carried out in the enjoyable environment. Zin and Nasir (2013) have defined edutainment as a concept for fun learning and also serves as a tool for teacher or parents to educate learners as well as entertain them at the same time.

Eker and Karadeniz (2014) observed that advantages of cartoons in education is sufficient because no tool can make teaching as interesting as a cartoon. The purpose of cartoons is to get the attention and increase motivation of the learners using animated cartoons. Parents might be interested to find out if there is any way that children could actually learn from watching animated cartoons all the time. The answer depends on the amount and type of cartoon programme viewed. Cartoon educate children in the widest possible way, giving them an opportunity to learn about science and about human social life in other lands in such a fascinating way that learning would be a joy instead of a labour. Some animated cartoons have the ability to teach specific skills, this selected type of cartoons have different achievements, intellectual ability, grades, and reading. There are still many unclear aspects to all this.

Ozegec (2012) sees educational cartoons as educational tools used to create a model of correct moral behaviour for children to follow. Well-designed animation cartoons may help students learn faster and easier. They are also excellent aid to teachers when it comes to explaining difficult subjects. There is lot of different themes and ways in which the animation can be used for learning. Animation cartoons like, Dora the explorer, Amingo and friends, Go Diego Go, can help children learn about the environments such as rain forest, Savannah, waterfalls, ranch, parks, scientific exploits etc. However, they also help children to learn about animals such as Giraffes, Leopards, Lions, Crocodile and Elephant. Educational uses of cartoons are many irrespective of age, sex and culture differences.

Gokcearslan (2015) revealed that using educational cartoons as a means of learning resulted in higher students' achievement in school especially in science projects. He concluded that Animation cartoons increase the children's cognitive and affective domains. The main advantages of these cartoons according to Pathak (2011) are as follows:

- , make constructions, drawing and dances; explore colour, texture, these are very good attention capturing devices and motivate the students.
- These are useful in modifying behaviour and developing positive attitude interests and character of learners.
- These are capable of creating humour and interest among viewers and explaining various concepts.
- These are helpful for providing opportunity for self-expression and creativity among children.

According to Hassan and Daniyal (2013), parents revealed that the role of cartoons such as: Tweenies, Dora the Explorer, Scooby Doo, Bob the Builder were linked to foundation stage curriculum in:

1. Mathematical Development- willingly attempt to count, recognise numerals, recognise and recreate simple patterns and begin to use mathematical names for shapes.
2. Knowledge and understanding of the world- find out and identify some features of living things, objects and events and also some features in the place they live and in the natural world; ask why things happen and how things work; begin to operate simple equipment; begin to differentiate between the past and present; find out about events; gain awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others.
3. Physical Development- movement with control and coordination (songs and dance actions); show awareness of healthy practices (brushing teeth and washing hands); recognise the importance of keeping health (safety/ road issues).
4. Creative Development- response to sound with body movement (dance and sing); recognise how sounds can be changed, sing simple songs; match movement to musicshape and space and form in two or three dimensions (making models); and use their imagination in art, design, music, dance, imaginative role play and stories. Educational and Entertainment cartoons sometimes teach children moral values and pious stories. Pious cartoons can be defined as cartoons about a kind or religious person based on a true story. These cartoons focus mainly on Christian or Muslim pious cartoons. There many moral values that can be learned and adopted from the cartoon such as alms, helping, respect, honesty, tolerance and many more. These values are essential to children to become persons with good attitude. Teaching by example is one of the effective ways to help children developing the moral values. Pious cartoons are selected to be animated in order to promote good moral value to the children. Cartoons can influence children emotionally and help in shaping their thinking skills (Brand, 2011). Moral values from cartoons may encourage children to learn how to pray and make right decision. The character design so as the moral aspect in any cartoon is important and should be considered. Frequent exposure to these types of cartoons will active religious and moral thinking of the children by formulating the concept of right and wrong and shape up positive attitude.

## The Cartoon Watching Culture

The origin of animated cartoons is disputed. Alison Nastasi (2011) attributes the French caricature artist Emile Cohl, to be the father of the world's first animated cartoon in the year 1908. It is a black-and-white short film named *Fantasmagorie* and was made up of around 700 drawings which were illuminated on a glass plate. The animated movie was prepared by photographing black lines on white paper and then reversing the negatives of the films to make it look like white on black. We have come a long way from then to now when animated cartoons are prepared on computers with software's and are realistic as equivalent to real life.

Children are the primary targeted consumers of cartoon films. Children tend to watch cartoons at any time of the day, and even the same film is watched multiple times. (Lin, C. A. 2001) has indicated that once children are aware of the cartoon films, they repeatedly play the films with high periodicity. Although this work was based on observations using the VCR, vis-a-vis the television content the same holds true today too. As per the Kaiser Family Foundation Report (1999), children between the age group of two to pre-teens watch around 2.5 to 3 hours of cartoon films on TV every day. Older kids, those who are 8 years or older spend about 6.5 hours a day using some form of media. Only 5% of kids spend an hour a day or less with any form of media. Preschool children are noted to squander more time watching cartoon films than do kids going to high school (Bryant 2001). It is evidently clear that the exposure to media has a large influence on children developing beliefs and values. Signorielli & Bacue (1999) in their study of 30-years of television content found that female characters are underrepresented as compared to male characters. Witt (2000) in his work found a larger ratio of around two-thirds of characters on television are male, which they have observed has been the same since the 1950s. Wiersma, (2001) & Towbin et al. (2004) analyzed around sixteen animated films produced by Disney and reported that gender stereotyping has not evolved in synch with the changes that are observed in the society, but remained stereotypic and similar to the gender portrayals depicted from the first animated Disney cartoon film way back in 1937. The Majority of the protagonist characters in the animated films were Males.

Gender discrimination is usually seen to begin from inside the family and is affected by many external factors. Children's communication while in school, with peers, with their friends also leads to prejudiced attitudes being developed towards gender bias in their lives ahead. One of the key factors in children's internalization of gender stereotypes is the media (cartoon films) that they are exposed to repeatedly. Many cartoon films depict gender discrimination extensively. It is evident that the

male gender is reflected as being dominant amongst the two. As media increasingly becomes more a part of the daily life of children, children's therapists will have to play an important role in helping parents manage the effects of the media in children. Therapists will have to tutor parents to help children in understanding and interpreting the embedded messages on gender, racial, and cultural stereotypes. It is required that the therapists should tutor parents to critically analyze the type of media content regularly watched by their wards. Without the assistance of parents, the interpretation of children, of what they are exposed in the media, will lead them to become passive recipients to these repetitive stereotyped messages, which eventually may lead to become firm beliefs.

It is desired that parents may watch the cartoon films with their children and engage in asking questions before, during, and after the film to increase their children's media literacy. Parents should understand the implied power of media and the messages that it sends to children. Parents may ask questions, such as - What messages are being conveyed through the media to girls and boys? Children will have to be made critical viewers at an early age, with the hope that the influence of media can be reduced. It has been reported that under the childlike appearances of the cartoon characters, the films have been observed to be depict gender stereotyping.

Arma & Gokgearsan (2010) reports that, female characters are depicted at a status lower than males in cartoon films made before 1980. Male characters were depicted larger in number and appear more frequently. Male characters were prioritized. Children at their early ages get exposed to unequal representations of gender. It is also reported that animal and inanimate characters which are cast in many cartoons have anthropomorphic characteristics, which include walking on two feet, eating with hands (front appendages), speaking, etc. These characters are shown in these cartoon movies with human-like characteristics. Cartoon characters are even said to be designed on the basis of standard stereotypical male and female role models. The protagonists in most of the cartoon programs are males. The ratio of male protagonist's verses female protagonist's is highly skewed and include towards the male characters. Children at these ages groups usually tend to have people of similar genders in their immediate surroundings as models. Girls take their mothers and boys take their fathers as role models and they tend to imitate and follow their behaviors. If there is nobody who can be taken as a model (if parents are separated or deceased), children usually take one of their favorite cartoon characters as a model to replicate. These gender stereotypes which are evident in cartoon characters come into focus in terms of children who cannot differentiate between

reality and fiction. (Barcus 1983) reported that there were 75% of characters being male and 21% female in children's cartoon films.

Teresa L. et al. (1995) in their work have examined 175 cartoon films and reported that the number of male protagonists is more than female protagonists by a ratio of one third, while the number of other male characters in children's cartoons is nearly one fifth more than females. (Smith et al. 2014) Examined portrayals of Gender, Race, & LGBT Status in movies released during 2007 to 2014 over 700 films and have found that male characters dominate the scene over female characters. Edwin, et al. (2012) whose work is based on content analysis of movies, report that if this problem of stereotyping persists, there is an almost certain chance that children and youngsters will without doubt have a biased view on gender roles. Amna Ameer (2016), in their study of comparative analysis of Hollywood's six popular six animated movies, report a drastic change is observed in the traits of the female characters. In earlier movies, female characters were portrayed as always in need of help, but they observed that female characters were shown to be more brave, strong, independent and closer to the real world. (Gouri, et al. 2018) in their study investigated two present-day Indian cartoons from the point of view of the character's physical appearance, male or female roles in problem-solving, social roles and manners. They identified the stereotypically strong males are typically the hero and are the conflict resolvers and delimiting the females to aspect roles or supporting roles only.

## **Influence of cartoon on Teenagers' learning**

### **1. Language of Children and Animation Cartoon:**

Children who watch cartoons like Dora the Explorer, Blue's Clues and learn vocabulary, concepts (shapes, colours) and could identify letters and numbers, particularly if they were aided by parents or teachers (Linebarger & Walker, 2013). Cartoon programmes can be used to develop children's vocabularies and higher expressive language (word production) scores among primary school children. Some cartoon programmes, include on- screen characters talking to the child, encourage participation, label objects and invite children to respond, were positively related to expressive language production and vocabularies. Programmes such as Arthur and Clifford, which had a strong narrative, can be visually appealing and contained opportunities to hear words and their definitions, they also support language acquisition. Some animated cartoon programmes have expressive

language production (the frequency of the child communicative behaviours such as gestures, vocalizations, single and multiple word utterances).

## **2. Reading Abilities of Primary School Children and Animation Cartoon:**

Reading is an essential tool for lifelong learning. It is important for everyone to develop the rudiments of reading and the culture of reading always so as to survive in life. Reading according to Sharmin (2014) adds quality of life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. He pointed out that reading empowers and emancipates citizens and brings people together.

Due to technological development, reading habits are changing. In our society today, while technology is slowly taking a steady control over individual lives, the reading habit is fast vanishing into thin air (the Hindu, 2014). Students now lack the skill of reading. Instead, they spend more hours on television. Watching animation cartoons, discussing about the favourite character seems to be the order of the day, thereby making reading a book or anything piece of written material in a quite or peaceful corner of a library or home become an archaic idea for most children. Obama (2015) in his speech pinpointed that children cannot achieve unless they raise their expectations and turn off television sets. Shabi and Udofia (2012) noted that active learning from books is better than passive learning such as watching cartoons and playing games. Nowadays, primary students are rarely interested in reading for pleasure and enjoyment instead they read only to pass examination. Sharmin observed that children spend their time viewing television and playing videogames when they are not spending a great deal of time reading and writing. Many students prefer to spend most of their time watching animation cartoons.

### **Related Studies**

Cartoons, such as visual 'puns', can be used to teach definitions and symbols and promote understanding of complex subjects. Poveell and Andresea (1985) suggest that this technique may involve intentionally cultivating and sharing "in-jokes" inside a class or subject. Other benefits include reduced academic stress, anxiety, boredom, and disruptive behavior (Povell and Andresea 1985). Wright (1979) argued that cartoons could be successful in integrating cognitive processes with the psychomotor domain because of the integration of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning modalities. Philippe (1980) indicated that using cartoons is effective because they are familiar, can exaggerate events, and can reveal many facts at a glance.

Michigan State University writes on their website that humor reduces stress, increases student interest and attentiveness and does much to improve the classroom environment. They offer a list of articles on one of their resource pages that offer guidelines and examples of how to use humor in the classroom and in online courses (<http://oir.fod.msu.edu/oir/TeachingMethods/humor.asp>). Richmond (2017) investigated the effects of cartoons on the behaviour of children in Sunyani Municipality, Brong Ahafo, Ghana. It also determined which cartoons children watch the most, whether they watch these cartoons with parental supervision, and the harmful and beneficial consequences of cartoons on their development. The study population consisted of children aged 6 to 15 from the municipality, and 400 of them were selected for interviews using a simple random sampling procedure. Interestingly, among other things, the majority of respondents (100%) stated that their parents do not control the type of cartoons they watch. Moreover, it was recommended among other things that animation companies such as Disney, Pixar and DreamWorks should be provided tax exemptions in order to encourage them produce more cartoons that will influence children positively.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory emphasizes the “reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental determinants” of human behaviour (Bandura,1977). It stresses the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977,) states:

Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

Social learning occurs through four main stages of imitation, namely: close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts, and role model behaviour. As explained by Baran and Davis (2003), the component processes underlying observational learning are attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation.

## **Relevance of the theory to the study**

- **Observational Learning**

Teenagers can learn by witnessing the behavior and activities of characters in animated cartoons. They may replicate these behaviors in their own life, resulting in learning. This is a straightforward application of the observational learning component of Social Learning Theory.

- **Modeling**

Animation cartoons frequently contain characters that teenagers can relate to. These characters can serve as models for teenagers to emulate in their own behavior. This is consistent with the modeling component of Social Learning Theory.

- **Reinforcement**

The outcomes that the cartoon characters face can be used to reinforce their behavior. If a character's behaviors result in beneficial outcomes, youngsters may be encouraged to behave similarly. Conversely, if a character's activities result in negative consequences, it may deter youngsters from acting similarly. This approach is consistent with the reinforcement principle of Social Learning Theory.

- **The Mediation Process**

Bandura argues that learning is mediated by cognitive processes rather than being a direct process. Cartoon animations can alter cognitive processes and thus learning. This reflects the mediation process component of Social Learning Theory.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Teenagers who watch animation cartoons are mostly influenced by the contents they consume and they often re-enact the actions seen or heard in the animation cartoons. Most animation cartoons programmes are presented in entertainment form as a result children's social behaviour may be influenced by what they view. The impact of animated cartoons on teenage learning is diverse, as watching cartoons can have both a negative and positive influence on teenagers learning, they should be exposed to educational animated cartoons rather than violent cartoons. Understanding and utilizing the power of animated cartoons allows us to build a more enriching and supportive learning environment for the future generation.

It recommends that teenagers should be encouraged to watch cartoons, as not all cartoons are bad, however, they should be warned about spending too much time

watching cartoons. Secondly, as children spend more time at home and school, parents and school authorities should work together to limit their exposure to violent cartoons. Lastly, governments, organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should all play an important role in sponsoring and promoting young and aspiring animators in order to encourage them to create indigenous cartoons. People in this category should contribute to provide these animators with the necessary tools to execute their work.

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