

# Cartoon Viewing and Its Impact on School-Going Children: Evidence from Dhaka City, Bangladesh.

## Abstract

**Background:** The objective of this study is to examine the impact of cartoon programs on children's behavior. Cartoon programs not only attract children through their entertaining content but also instill both positive and negative habits. The factors that shape children's impressionable minds are largely found in the environment in which they grow up, including the media content to which they are exposed daily. Although cartoons are believed to influence children's behavior, the natures of this influence and the extent to which parents and children are aware of it have not been adequately explored in the context of Bangladesh.

**Methods:** Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of cartoons on the social behavior of Bangladeshi children from the perspectives of both parents and children. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected from 70 students and their parents through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. A descriptive method was used for data analysis.

**Results:** The findings show that both children and parents share a similar perception of the influence of cartoons, viewing it largely as positive. Cartoons were found to help children improve their spoken English, learn about inventions, develop moral values, and remain constructively engaged during their leisure time. However, some parents expressed concerns that certain cartoons may have negative effects on children's behavior.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, appropriate regulations and parental guidance are necessary to minimize these adverse influences. The study recommends that parents make a conscious effort to monitor the cartoons their children watch and ensure that the content is appropriate for their age and daily activities.

**Keywords:** Cartoon viewing, Children, Dhaka City, Bangladesh

## 1. Introduction

Children's understanding of what they watch on television may influence how they respond to cartoon content, particularly violent scenes. Research suggests that children are more likely to focus on observable actions rather than the underlying motives or internal causes of behavior. This raises important concerns regarding the potential impact of cartoon violence on children's social behavior. Parents and guardians also play a crucial role in

39 monitoring children's media consumption. However, questions remain regarding whether parents are fully aware  
40 of the content of the cartoons their children watch and whether cartoons serve purposes beyond entertainment. It  
41 is in light of these concerns that this study seeks to examine the perceptions of both children and parents regarding  
42 the influence of television cartoons on children's social behavior.

43 The concept of the cartoon originated in the Middle Ages and initially referred to a preparatory drawing for a  
44 work of art, such as a painting, fresco, tapestry, or stained-glass window. In the nineteenth century, the term came  
45 to describe humorous illustrations published in magazines and newspapers. By the early twentieth century, it was  
46 also used to refer to comic strips and animated films (Barker, 1959). For more than eighty years, animated films  
47 and television cartoons have entertained children around the world. Felix the Cat, the first widely recognized  
48 cartoon icon, began its journey in the 1920s. During the following decade, famous cartoon characters such as  
49 Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, and Pluto were introduced by Disney Brothers' Cartoon Studios (Box Office Mojo,  
50 2004).

51 Cartoon channels operate 24 hours a day and exclusively broadcast cartoon programs. Approximately 68 percent  
52 of cartoon network's audience consists of children aged 2 to 17 years, while the remaining 32 percent comprises  
53 adults aged 18 years and above. Children between the ages of 6 and 11 constitute the channel's primary audience  
54 (Stabile & Harrison, 2003). Violence is often an integral component of many cartoon programs. Studies have noted  
55 that cartoon content frequently contains higher levels of violence than television serials and comedy programs. As  
56 a result, children are exposed to more violent scenes through cartoons than through many other forms of  
57 television programming. This exposure may influence their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, making it an  
58 important area of research.

59 Cartoons have been a part of cinema history since the advent of motion pictures in the late nineteenth century. A  
60 cartoon is an animated film that uses drawings, illustrations, or computer-generated images instead of live actors.  
61 These films are often humorous and are primarily intended for children. Cartoons are created by displaying a  
62 sequence of slightly varying drawings or models in rapid succession, giving the illusion of movement and change.  
63 These characteristics make cartoons highly attractive and engaging for viewers, especially children.

64 Initially, cartoons were short because they were shown in movie theaters before the main feature film. However,  
65 with the rise of television, cartoons became longer and evolved into the half-hour programs commonly broadcast  
66 on channels such as Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, and Disney Channel. To appeal to a wider audience, cartoon  
67 producers also made their content more family-friendly. According to research conducted by psychologist Steve  
68 Hossler of Bowling Green State University, a child watches approximately 18,000 hours of television between  
69 kindergarten and high school graduation (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1999). This statistic demonstrates the  
70 significant role television, including cartoons, plays in children's lives. The forces that shape children's  
71 impressionable minds are largely found in their environment and in the media content to which they are exposed  
72 on a daily basis.

### 73 *Objectives of the Study*

74 The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of different cartoon channels on school-going  
75 children in Dhaka City. To accomplish this objective, the study aims to:

- 76 1. Analyze the current pattern of cartoon viewing among school going students in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- 77 2. Examine the effects of cartoon channels on children's behavior.
- 78 3. Explore the perceptions and opinions of parents/guardians regarding the influence of cartoon channels on  
79 children.

80 This study provides empirical evidence of the effect of cartoon viewing among school going children of Dhaka  
81 City, Bangladesh, which contributes to the existing body of research on children's media consumption. This study,

82 as opposed to many studies, which focus on the negative effects of cartoons, has identified that viewing cartoons  
83 leads to more positive outcomes. The results revealed the positive aspects of the role of cartoons in the  
84 improvement of children language skills, creativity, imagination, learning motivation and social awareness, as  
85 well as the negative aspects such as increasing children's screen time and reducing their outdoor play time. This  
86 study provides parents, educators and policy makers with valuable insights on responsible viewing of cartoons  
87 and choosing educational and appropriate content for children's healthy cognitive and social development.

88

## 89 **2. Literature Review**

90 Television has a variety of applications in society, business, and science. However, its most common use is as a  
91 source of information and entertainment for viewers in their homes. According to Atonoff (2007), in his book  
92 *Misery of Cartoon Channels in USA*, the United States had the highest number of television sets per person, with  
93 835 television sets per 1,000 people in 2000. Canada followed with 710 sets per 1,000 people during the same  
94 period. Japan, Germany, Denmark, and Finland also ranked highly in terms of television ownership. Television  
95 viewing among children has remained significantly high over the years. On average, children aged 2–5 years  
96 spend approximately 32 hours per week watching television, while children aged 6–11 years spend about 28 hours  
97 per week in front of the television (McDonough, 2009). The vast majority of this viewing (97%) consists of live  
98 television, and 71% of children aged 8–18 years have a television set in their bedrooms. Rideout, Foehr, and  
99 Roberts (2010, p. 2) observed that young people have increased the amount of time they spend consuming media  
100 by one hour and seventeen minutes daily, from 6 hours and 21 minutes to 7 hours and 38 minutes.

101 Furniss (2007) notes that cartoon characters gained prominence as animation developed and became a standard  
102 feature of the filmmaking industry. Iconic characters such as Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny achieved worldwide  
103 popularity alongside other well-known characters including Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Daffy Duck, Goofy,  
104 Porky Pig, and Pluto. In animated feature films, Snow White became one of the earliest and most celebrated  
105 cartoon characters, together with the Seven Dwarfs. Furthermore, renowned animators such as Walt Disney,  
106 William Hanna, and Joseph Barbera created many memorable characters, including Mickey Mouse, Tom and  
107 Jerry, Tweety and Sylvester, and Bugs Bunny.

108 Since the early 1960s, when cartoons became an established feature of television programming, they have been  
109 the subject of two major controversies: commercialization and merchandising, and the portrayal of violence.  
110 These issues have attracted considerable attention because a large proportion of cartoon viewers are  
111 impressionable children. The complex issue of television violence and its potential impact on children's behavior  
112 remains unresolved. In response to criticism regarding cartoon violence, broadcasters have censored violent  
113 scenes from many animated films shown on television. Interestingly, scenes that were considered suitable for  
114 general audiences in the 1940s are now often viewed as excessively violent for contemporary children (Butler,  
115 2014).

116 The manner in which cartoons are produced has changed significantly over time. To reduce the cost of drawing  
117 and coloring every frame of animation by hand, Disney began using computer technology in the production  
118 process. Furthermore, beginning with *Toy Story*, Disney collaborated with Pixar to create three-dimensional (3D)  
119 films using entirely computer-generated animation. Since the release of *Toy Story* in 1995, the first fully  
120 computer-animated 3D feature film, numerous 3D animated movies have been produced, including *Finding*  
121 *Nemo*, *WALL-E*, and *The Incredibles*. These films have become extremely popular among children and have  
122 received critical acclaim, with several winning Academy Awards. Due to the success and popularity of these  
123 productions, fewer hand-drawn or two-dimensional (2D) animated films are being released. According to Atonoff  
124 (2007), if 3D animated films continue to generate greater profits for Disney, they may eventually become the  
125 dominant form of animation production.

126 Cartoons and animated films were once among the most popular forms of entertainment for viewers of all age  
127 groups. They were enjoyed by people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds through television and  
128 cinema. In their early stages, animated films and cartoons contained humor and entertainment that appealed to  
129 audiences of all ages and levels of sophistication. However, over time, cartoons gradually lost their cross-  
130 generational appeal and became primarily associated with children's entertainment (Kellogg, 1992). Today, the  
131 term "cartoon" is no longer a precise concept, as it encompasses a wide range of graphic and animated forms.  
132 Nevertheless, cartoons remain one of the most attractive sources of entertainment for children, who often develop  
133 strong emotional attachments to cartoon characters and programs (Kemnitz, 1973).

134 Animated programs and cartoons also play a significant role in increasing the profits of toy manufacturers and  
135 other commercial enterprises, as they often serve as effective promotional tools for corporate products. In many  
136 cases, cartoons can be viewed as extended advertisements designed to support profit-oriented companies. The last  
137 few decades have witnessed a remarkable transformation in the genre of animated television programming,  
138 resulting in what has been described as a "toon boom" (Kellogg, 1992). Cable television networks have expanded  
139 considerably, reaching a large proportion of households. Channels such as Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon  
140 broadcast animated content throughout the day and command substantial shares of children's television  
141 viewership and advertising exposure. According to Westcott (2002), Cartoon Network generated approximately  
142 \$500 million in revenue in the year 2000. Although many classic animated programs are no longer broadcast  
143 regularly, popular shows such as Tom and Jerry and Looney Tunes continue to attract audiences because of their  
144 enduring popularity among children (Susan, 2000).

145 The content of cartoon programs should be carefully monitored to protect children from potential harmful effects.  
146 Certain cartoon programs, such as Space Ghost and Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law, have raised concerns  
147 regarding their possible negative influence on children. Cartoon-related injuries have become a serious issue that  
148 requires attention, particularly in the United States. Due to children's strong attachment to and identification with  
149 fictional and supernatural characters, some children may imitate risky behaviors portrayed in cartoons, which can  
150 result in injuries (Saturnine, 2004). Clara and Marian (1980) examined the impact of television cartoons on  
151 children's free-play behavior. The study involved 65 children and their kindergarten teachers. The children were  
152 observed by both the researchers and their teachers. The findings revealed that cartoons were the most popular  
153 television programs among the children. Most children preferred cartoons broadcast during weekday afternoons.  
154 Teachers reported that cartoon viewing had a significant impact on children's classroom behavior. Children  
155 frequently demonstrated behaviors, language, and actions inspired by television cartoons during classroom  
156 activities. Research on violence portrayed in television programs and video games has consistently shown that  
157 exposure to violent content can increase aggressive and violent behavior among children and adolescents in both  
158 the short and long term (Anderson, 2003).

159 In recent years, the study of cartoons and animation has gained increasing importance in the field of  
160 communication research. Animation is now widely used as an effective tool for conveying messages to target  
161 audiences in areas such as marketing, education, and public awareness campaigns (Ginmann, 2003). Klein and  
162 Shiffman (2006) found that children's preferences for cartoon characters are influenced by various factors,  
163 including gender, costumes and accessories, physical attractiveness, age, intelligence, pro social and antisocial  
164 behaviors, and the overall portrayal of goodness or badness. Their research highlighted how these characteristics  
165 shape children's likes and dislikes regarding cartoon characters.

### 166 *Research Gap*

167 Empirical studies on the impact of cartoons on children's behaviour, cognition and academic performance in the  
168 context of Bangladesh is scant while many studies have been conducted in other countries. Previous research  
169 tends to be more concerned with the negative side effects of cartoon viewing, such as aggression, addiction and  
170 diminished academic involvement, and comparatively less with the educational and developmental value of

171 cartoon viewing. Moreover, there are few studies focusing specifically on school going children with primary  
172 survey data collected from structured questionnaire in Dhaka City. The socio-cultural setting of Bangladesh is  
173 different from many of the developed countries and so the findings of the foreign researches cannot be  
174 generalized without supporting evidence from other countries. Furthermore, the positive and negative impacts  
175 have rarely been investigated together, with the perspectives of both children and guardians. This study aims to  
176 fill these gaps by offering context specific, descriptive evidence on media preference for viewing cartoons and  
177 their impacts on the overall media consumption pattern of the school going children with the view of providing  
178 more comprehensive understandings on media consumption pattern of children in urban Bangladesh.

179

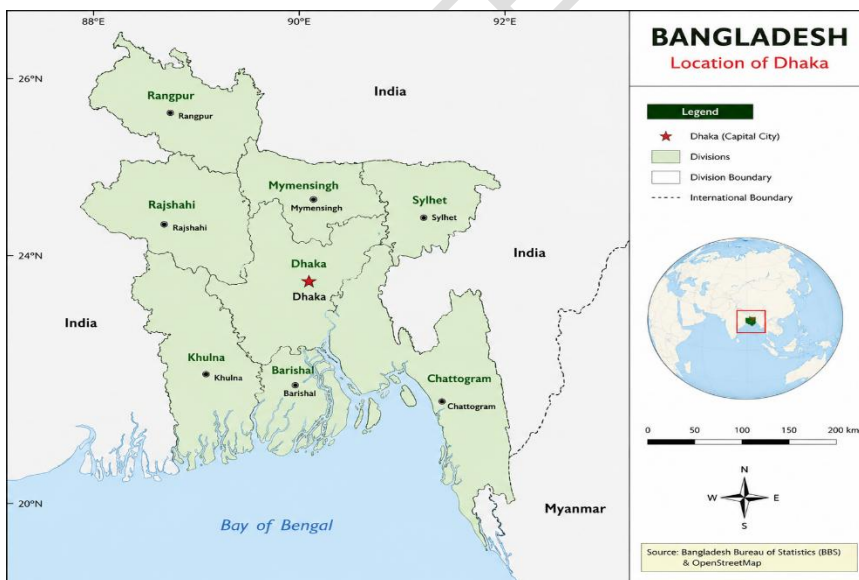
### 180 3. Research Methodology

181 This study adopted the survey method, as it is appropriate for assessing opinions, attitudes, and trends. The study  
182 aimed to investigate the influence of television cartoons on the social behavior of school-going children and to  
183 explore the perceptions of both children and their parents regarding this influence. The study population consisted  
184 of children aged 6 to 11 years enrolled in selected schools in Dhaka City. The selected schools were Udayan  
185 Higher Secondary School, University Laboratory School and College, Engineering University School and  
186 College, and Azimpur Government Girls' School and College. Students from Classes II to VI were purposively  
187 selected because they were capable of understanding and completing the questionnaire independently.

188 These schools were chosen because they represent students from diverse socio-economic and geographic  
189 backgrounds across Bangladesh. Moreover, a large proportion of the students come from middle-class families  
190 with access to cable television, enabling them to watch a variety of cartoon channels regularly. The study  
191 employed a sample of 70 respondents. In addition, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in each  
192 selected school. Each FGD consisted of 10 child participants, who shared their views and experiences regarding  
193 cartoon viewing. Their responses were recorded and analyzed as qualitative data. Data were collected directly by  
194 the researchers through a structured questionnaire and interview schedule. The collected data were carefully  
195 edited, coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The findings were then interpreted  
196 and presented systematically to address the objectives of the study.

197

198 Figure 1: Study Area



199 The study was conducted in an ethical manner. Parents/legal guardians of the participating children were  
 200 contacted to obtain informed consent prior to data collection, and verbal assent was requested from children.  
 201 There was 100% voluntary participation, and participants were advised that they had the option of stopping at any  
 202 time without repercussion. All participants were anonymous and their information was kept confidential, and only  
 203 collected for academic research purposes.

204

205 **4. Results and Findings**

206

207 The distribution of age of the 70 children for the school-going sample is presented in Table 1. The largest  
 208 proportion of respondents (27.14%) belongs to the 9–10 years age group, followed by 11–12 years (20.00%)  
 209 and 10–11 years (17.14%). 15.71% of children are aged 8–9 years and 11.43% are aged 6–7 years and 8.57%  
 210 are aged 7–8 years. The results show that the average age of the respondents was between 9 and 12 years,  
 211 which means that in the study the media habits and perception of the children is mainly from the middle  
 212 childhood (9-12 years old) period while cognitive development and media exposure are becoming  
 213 increasingly important during this period.

214 **Table 1: Age and number of participants**

Class Interval (Age)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
6-7	8	11.43
7-8	6	8.57
8-9	11	15.71
9-10	19	27.14
10-11	12	17.14
11-12	14	20.00
Total=	70	100.00

215

216 Table 2 shows the occupational distribution of the fathers of the respondents. Fathers have the most with  
 217 businesses with 35.71% of the group followed by teachers and other occupations at 30.00% each. Only a  
 218 small percentage (4.28%) are employed as bankers. Most of them (65.71%) are housewives, and 17.14% are  
 219 employed in other professions. The number of teachers working mothers in the sample includes 12.86% of  
 220 all working mothers while only 4.28% are engaged in business. Housewives are more prevalent than other  
 221 statuses, indicating that a majority of children have much time devoted to their mothers' supervision, an  
 222 aspect that might affect their television and cartoon consumption. Results showed that the respondents are  
 223 from a variety of work backgrounds with business and teaching being the most frequent occupations. This  
 224 diversity increases the representativeness of the sample and points to the fact that children's consumption of  
 225 cartoons is not restricted to families of a specific occupational status.

226 **Table 2: Occupations of Fathers & Mothers of the participants**

Father' occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teacher	21	30.00
Banker	3	4.28
Business	25	35.71
Others	21	30.00
Total=	70	100.00
Mother's occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teacher	9	12.86

Housewife	46	65.71
Business	3	4.28
Others	12	17.14
Total=	70	100.00

227

228 Table 3 indicates who is most likely to be with the children when they are viewing cartoons. The majority  
 229 (68.57%) of children do watch cartoons with their mothers, a minority (11.43%) watch with their fathers.  
 230 The 10.00% who are siblings are followed by grandparents (5.71%) and other family members (4.29%). The  
 231 results show that mothers' role is the most important one in supervising children's cartoon watching activity.  
 232 This indicates that mothers who are more likely to be able to choose the content, monitor the amount of  
 233 screen time, and encourage learning viewing practices will have the highest influence on how cartoons will  
 234 affect the development of their children.

235

236

**Table 3:** Comfortable zone (family members) of the children

Family Members	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mother	48	68.57
Father	8	11.43
Siblings	7	10.00
Grandparents	4	5.71
Others	3	4.29
Total=	70	100.00

237

238 The leisure activities preferred by the respondents are shown in Table 4. Cartoons were the children's  
 239 favourite leisure activity with a large majority of children (65.71%) saying that their favourite thing to  
 240 watch is a cartoon. Video games are the second of preference, with 24.29% of respondents, and only  
 241 5.71% like outdoor games, and 2.86% like indoor games. There is a very low percentage (1.43%)  
 242 involved in other leisure pursuits. The results suggest that screen entertainment is more popular than  
 243 other activities among children's leisure activities. The strong preference to watch cartoons indicates the  
 244 importance of cartoons in children's daily life, and also makes it clear that children need to ensure that  
 245 the content they watch is educational, suitable and good for their overall development.

246

**Table 4:** Participants desirable leisure time

Leisure Segments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Outdoor games	4	5.71
Indoor games	2	2.86
Video games	17	24.29
Watching cartoons	46	65.71
Others	1	1.43
Total=	70	100.00

247

248 The Table 5 shows the number of children watching cartoons every day. A majority of respondents (44.29%)  
 249 indicated that they watched cartoons three or more times a day, while 38.57% say that they watch cartoons twice a  
 250 day. 17.14% of the children watch cartoons once a day. The results suggest that most children in this study  
 251 regularly and frequently watch cartoons. Exposure was frequent, indicating that cartoons are a significant  
 252 component of children's daily lives and could have a significant impact on their learning, behaviour, language  
 253 development and play interests, therefore parental supervision and selection of suitable cartoon content is vital.

254 **Table5:** Frequency of watching cartoon in aday

Frequency	Number	Percentage (%)
One	12	17.14
Two	27	38.57
Three &Above	31	44.29
Total=	70	100.00

255

256 The preferred languages of cartoon channels by the respondents are given in Table 6. The largest number of  
 257 children (44.29%) watches cartoons in Hindi, followed by English (24.29%) and Bengali (17.14%). Also, 14.28%  
 258 of the respondents watch cartoons in all three languages. The results show that children in the Dhaka City prefer  
 259 reading the Hindi language cartoons. This is a common exposure to multiple languages that could benefit  
 260 children's language acquisition and communication skills. It also points to the need for parents to be aware of the  
 261 quality of the content and to foster a balanced preference for educational programs in both home and foreign  
 262 languages.

263 **Table 6:** Languages of cartoon channels they watch

Languages	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bengali	12	17.14
English	17	24.29
Hindi	31	44.29
All of above	10	14.28
Total=	70	100.00

264

265 The average time that children spend watching cartoons one day is shown in Table 7. A majority of the  
 266 respondents (51.43%) watch cartoons for approximately two hours a day, while 30.00% watch cartoons for three  
 267 hours a day. A small percentage watch cartoons for four hours or more (4.29%) and only 14.28% watch them for  
 268 one hour. The results indicate that exposure to moderate amounts of cartoons is prevalent for most children. While  
 269 it is uncommon for kids to watch cartoons for extended periods of time, children who view cartoons for three or  
 270 more hours per day may be more vulnerable to the benefits of an educational show and/or the harms of long-term  
 271 screen time exposure.

272 **Table 7:** Spending hours in watching cartoons

Hour	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 hour	10	14.28
2 hours	36	51.43
3 hours	21	30.00
4hours &above	3	4.29
Total=	70	100.00

273

274 Table 8 shows how children emotionally respond to prohibition of watching cartoons. Over half of the  
 275 respondents (54.29%) have become very angry, with 21.43% feeling angry and 14.28% becoming slightly angry.  
 276 10.00% said they felt nothing. The results indicate that cartoons have become part of children's everyday  
 277 entertainment and some children have emotional ties with watching these cartoons. The above-mentioned high  
 278 percentage of negative reactions when access is limited, could suggest a certain dependence on cartoons, which is  
 279 an issue that should be taken into account by parents in order to monitor and facilitate a balanced recreational use  
 280 of screens.

281 **Table 8:** Feeling towards someone who creates barrier in watching cartoons

Reactions of children	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Veryangry	38	54.29
Angry	15	21.43
Littleangry	10	14.28
Nothing	7	10.00
Total=	70	100.00

282  
 283 Table 9 indicates if children's behaviour changed as a result of watching cartoons. 80.00% said that they changed  
 284 their behavior while 20.00% did not notice any change. Of the 20.00% that reported behavioural changes, 20.00%  
 285 said that these changes were beneficial (e.g. better learning, creativity, communication skills) and 60.00% said  
 286 they were not (e.g. increased stubbornness, taking on quality of cartoon characters, emotional reactions). While  
 287 behavioral changes were prevalent, the results indicate that there are both positive and negative influences. Thus,  
 288 parental supervision and the choice of suitable and educational cartoon content are very important to maximize  
 289 the developmental benefits and lessen undesirable behaviors.

290 **Table 9:** Changes of behavior for watching cartoons

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	56=14 Positive =42 Negative	80.00=20.00 Positive =60.00Negative
No	14	20.00
Total=	70	100.00

291  
 292

293 **5. Discussion**

294 The data indicate that the majority of respondents watch television cartoons and have been exposed to them for a  
 295 considerable period of time. The findings reveal that children aged 8–12 years are the most affected group,  
 296 accounting for approximately 79.99% of the respondents. The results show that 82.8% of the respondents watch  
 297 cartoons through satellite channels, while only a small proportion rely on local television stations. Among the  
 298 respondents, 17.14% primarily watch Bengali-language cartoon channels, 24.29% watch English-language  
 299 channels, and 44.29% watch Hindi-language channels.

300 The source of television programs can significantly influence children's reactions and perceptions. Since most of  
 301 the cartoons watched by the respondents originate from foreign channels, it is reasonable to assume that their  
 302 content reflects foreign cultures, particularly Western culture. Consequently, children are frequently exposed to  
 303 Western values, lifestyles, language patterns, and accents.

304 One parent interviewed stated:“Cartoons have influenced my children, especially in their speech. Sometimes you  
 305 hear them speaking like the cartoon characters. I think it is better that they learn from cartoons because we prefer  
 306 them to watch cartoons rather than Bangladeshi movies and home videos. The cartoon characters speak better  
 307 English, and this helps children improve their English language skills.”

308 This statement demonstrates that parents recognize the foreign nature of cartoon content and often view exposure  
 309 to English language and accents as beneficial. Children naturally imitate what they observe on television,  
 310 particularly the behavior of cartoon characters. Continuous imitation may influence their perception of reality and,  
 311 in some cases, contribute to the adoption of foreign cultural practices and values. However, many parents do not  
 312 perceive this as problematic. Social behavior consists of several dimensions, including aggression and violence,

313 language and communication styles, consumer preferences, clothing choices, and social interactions. The findings  
314 suggest that cartoons can influence these aspects of children's behavior.

315 The focus group discussions further supported these findings. When participants were asked what they had  
316 learned from cartoons, several mentioned learning about technology from Ben 10, developing friendships, helping  
317 others, and gaining scientific knowledge. One participant stated:“Cartoons influence my behavior because they  
318 educate me about science.” A female participant, Sadia, remarked:“I learn how to dress and style my hair from  
319 cartoons like Barbie. Before, I used to wear random colors, but now I know what to wear.”

320 Another parent commented:“I think cartoons are good for children because they provide entertainment and keep  
321 them occupied. When they are watching cartoons, they become completely engaged. However, if I notice that the  
322 content is affecting them negatively, I will stop them from watching such programs.”. Similarly, another  
323 respondent noted:“Cartoons broaden children’s imagination. They make children believe that anything is possible  
324 and encourage futuristic thinking.”

325 These responses indicate that cartoons can contribute positively to children's creativity, imagination, language  
326 development, and social learning. Many parents also use cartoons as a means of keeping children occupied and  
327 entertained.The findings are consistent with Social Learning Theory, which argues that much of human behavior  
328 is acquired through observation and imitation. Children learn by observing models around them, including  
329 cartoon characters, and may imitate behaviors that they perceive as attractive or rewarding.

330 Nevertheless, some parents expressed concerns regarding the negative effects of cartoons. One parent  
331 stated:“Cartoons have influenced children negatively, especially boys. They often imitate fighting behaviors they  
332 see on television. My son frequently behaves like cartoon characters and pretends to fight.”. A child supported  
333 this observation by saying:“I learned how to fight from Ben 10. Sometimes I do what Ben 10 does. When he  
334 punches someone, I feel like punching my brother. I know it is not good, but I still do it.”

335 Another parent expressed a similar concern:“I feel that cartoons are generally bad for children. Although they  
336 keep children occupied, they often distract them from their studies. They become less interested in schoolwork  
337 and homework unless they are forced to complete it. Cartoons can be educational, but children may also learn  
338 behaviors and language that parents do not want them to adopt.”

339 These statements suggest that exposure to violent or inappropriate cartoon content may encourage aggressive  
340 behavior, reduce academic concentration, and promote undesirable language use among children.However, it is  
341 important to recognize that cartoons are not the sole influence on children's social behavior. According to the  
342 respondents, several other factors contribute significantly to children's development, including peer groups, family  
343 influences, schools, religious institutions, cultural environments, books, and community interactions. This  
344 supports the argument that television is only one of many agents of socialization, and its influence depends on the  
345 interaction of multiple social and environmental factors.

346 Overall, the findings indicate that cartoons can have both positive and negative effects on children's social  
347 behavior. While they can enhance imagination, language skills, and learning opportunities, they may also  
348 encourage aggression, distraction from academic activities, and excessive imitation of foreign cultural practices.  
349 Therefore, parental supervision and appropriate content regulation are essential to maximize the benefits of  
350 cartoons while minimizing their potential negative impacts.

351

## 352 **6. Conclusion**

353 The results of this study show that children are frequently exposed to television cartoons, and this level of  
354 exposure plays a significant role in shaping their behavior. However, it was also found that the influence of

355 cartoons can be either positive or negative, depending on the child and the particular cartoon he or she is exposed  
356 to. For instance, when respondents were asked what they learned from cartoons, some mentioned values such as  
357 love, friendship, heroism, and morality, while others reported learning aggressive behaviors such as fighting. The  
358 study also revealed that most cartoons watched by children in Bangladesh are foreign productions. This is largely  
359 due to the heavy influx of foreign programs through satellite television providers, which most respondents  
360 reported watching. It is important to note that these foreign cartoons often contain cultural elements that differ  
361 from those of Bangladesh. Their moral values, language, manner of speaking, and even styles of dress are  
362 generally different from those prevalent in Bangladeshi society. According to the study, the lack of locally  
363 produced cartoons is one of the major reasons for the dominance of foreign cartoons and the limited availability  
364 of Bangladeshi animated content. However, it is also noteworthy that many parents prefer their children to watch  
365 foreign cartoons because they believe such programs help improve their English language skills, as opposed to the  
366 Bangla language used in locally produced programs.

367

## 368 **7. Policy Recommendations**

369 Television plays an important role in shaping children's social behavior. Therefore, it is essential to regulate the  
370 content of television programs to minimize the negative influences they may have on viewers, especially children,  
371 who are generally more vulnerable to media effects. Traditionally, cartoons were primarily designed to entertain  
372 and educate children. However, cartoons have evolved over time, and many now contain mature themes and  
373 content that may not be suitable for young audiences. Such programs should not be broadcast during children's  
374 peak viewing hours, typically between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Children are young individuals between the ages of  
375 1 and 12 years. Younger children, particularly those aged 1 to 7 years, are often unable to distinguish between  
376 right and wrong or reality and fantasy. Consequently, parents and guardians have the responsibility to guide them  
377 in choosing appropriate television content.

378 During the course of this study, the researchers discovered that many parents were unaware of the specific cartoon  
379 programs their children watched. While they knew that their children watched cartoons, they were often  
380 unfamiliar with the content and messages conveyed in these programs. This lack of awareness is concerning  
381 because children, who have highly impressionable minds, may adopt various attitudes and behaviors from what  
382 they watch if their viewing habits are not properly monitored. Therefore, parents and guardians should devote time  
383 to educating their children about appropriate and inappropriate behavior, helping them understand what is suitable  
384 for their age, and supervising the television programs they watch. Furthermore, governments, organizations, and  
385 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should play a significant role in supporting and promoting young and  
386 emerging animators. Such support would encourage the development of indigenous cartoons that reflect local  
387 cultures, values, and educational objectives.

388 These stakeholders should provide animators with the necessary platforms and resources to showcase their work.  
389 Additionally, awareness and educational programs should be organized to inform parents and guardians about the  
390 importance of monitoring children's cartoon-viewing habits and ensuring that the content they consume is age-  
391 appropriate and beneficial to their development.

392

## 393 **8. Limitations and Future Research Guideline**

394 There are some limitations of this study. The first is the small number of children in the school (n=70) from  
395 selected areas of Dhaka City and this may be a limitation to the findings to be generalizable to other parts of  
396 Bangladesh. Secondly, it was descriptive research design that was used in this study relying on the self-reported  
397 information from the respondents. Third, long-term effects of cartoon viewing and differences among

398 socioeconomic groups were not studied. Larger and more diverse samples and a longitudinal or mixed methods  
399 study design are needed, as are comparisons between rural and urban children in the future. The impact of  
400 particular genres of cartoons, digital streaming services, and parental involvement on childhood cognition, social  
401 and emotional development may also be studied.

402

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