

Negative Effects of Children's Television: A Case Study of Bahawalpur

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ABSTRACT

Television is the major source of entrainment for children. TV play's significant role by providing information, entertainment through its different programs. This article is exploring the adverse effects of children TV Programs that affected the behavior of children. They have resulted in negative imitation of Children TV characters, change of behavior into a violent and aggressive behavior. Children TV negative content creates desensitization for violence victims in real life. The elements of violence and fantasy create fear in children. They prefer to eat junk food and start to live in fantasy world instead of real. The social learning theory has supported this research study. Empirical analysis reveals that violent TV programs have negative effects on children attitude and behavior. However, this research article is based on survey technique to explore and investigate the effects specifically the negative effects of TV programs on children behavior. Data was collected from 500 children including different age groups. Children who have the age between 3 to 6 were unable to fill the questionnaire. Therefore, their parents and teacher were asked to fill the questionnaire. Closed ended questionnaire was used. The empirical analysis of the data reveals that children who prefer to watch action and violent TV programs have negative effects as compare to those who watch entertainment type programs.

Keywords: Imitation, Behavioral Change, Aggression, Violence, Desensitization, Junk Food, Fear, Fantasy.

Introduction

Television has developed into a major instrument for each home. The presence and importance of TV in each individual's life has engaged researchers and institutions to measure its role in community (Butsch, 1992). The presentation style production technique and themes are providing a chance for the selection of programs. TV is providing entertainment, awareness, education, and customs. Though; it's broadcasting positive and negative contents simultaneously (Signorielli and Bacue, 1999).

Television introduces the children with real world and its incidents. Children TV programs are creating linkages between time, different age groups and locations. It permits children to know about history, occupations, glamour and criminal activities. TV has allegation of presenting sex, corruption and death

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scenes. The parents want to hide these dark realities from them. Children process these events in innocent manner. Children and youth acquire role for their gender from children TV programs (Meyrowitz, 1985). TV is providing understanding for a greater social environment, prevalent social threats and future vision. (Ball -Rokeach, 2001) .It was observed that children follow dressing , body language, and conversation style by copying their favorite TV character. They develop greater emotional attachment with their favorite TV character (Knowles, 2007).

Children Television broadcast the world and its settings in which children live and grow. Children TV networks demonstrate as the most powerful harbinger of Western culture. Children TV entertainment industry is creating a deep impression of” dominant models for youth in a globalized world (Heavens & Lotz, 2017).

A lot of destructive effects are attached with kids TV watching it encourages sluggishness, aspirants, malingerers and villains. It results in health issues such as ‘obesity’, near sightedness, hypertension and anxiety .TV is accused for destruction of morality and ethics. It intensifies “violence”, and “criminal behavior existing in society (Nwankwor, 2003).

An experimental study has reported that children watched an adult model expressing aggressive behavior with a blown clown. They adopted similar aggressive behavior with a clown in their game (Bandura et al., 1963). Children TV programs effects the behavior of the children. They imitate TV characters in their life. (Götz and Schlote).Researches has explored and reinforced that children are capable to imitate behavior from children TV program. They imitate prosocial behavior in a similar manner from their favorite character (Stein & Friederich, 1975).

A research study has revealed that children express their love for their favorite program by imitating in their play. They reflect this imitation in their ‘role taking ‘and ‘dialogue’. An additional study was conducted over three years old children explored that children TV watching practice results in imitation, awareness, and education. While the use of dialogue and role taking is associated with several factors attachment with program, duration of watching, age and individual personality traits (Brown, 1975). The imitation of character in children behavior depends upon the observation of the children. The celebrities are charged with the deterioration of the moral values of the children (Halloran and Eyre- Brook, 1970).

Children attach them with presented TV program characters .Boys create affection with boys while girls make affection with girl character. The children of lower class idealize themselves in TV models. It is called wishful identification that is established on a child’s wish to be a hero or heroine of the program (Almers, 1971).

Teen spend a large amount of their time in front of television .TV shows exhibit exaggerated adult behavior like heroic characters, drinking, gambling and sexual promiscuity(Brown and Steele, 1995).Teen age children are more harmfully effected by media contents than any other age group due to negative program contents. Additional study has supported that young child between the age of ‘14’ and ‘25’ spent little time in watching. Tween spend maximum time in watching about 15 to 25 hours weekly (Liebert *et al.*, 1973).Children imitate pro-social and aggressive behavior from TV programs. They imitate violent act more frequently than pro-social behavior. Children reflect this learning in aggression with their friends (Liebert and Baron, 1972)

Television represents filmic violence in which media presents exaggerated actions of violence against each other. This portrayal of violence is glorified and made heroic that individuals start to adopt violent behaviors in their actions to resolve disputes and every day matters. (Hussmann and Taylor, 2006)

Entertainment programs designed for children, tween, and teen contains frequent elements of violence. Gradually, they become immune to violent behavior. Finally; they exhibit violent behavior like disobeying the instructions of their instructors and parents, waste time in front of TV, ignores their

academic assignments, and start to label characters. All TV violence portrayal results in desensitization of emotions for tyranny and violent act (Thompson and Austin, 2002).

“Desensitization is the process of causing someone to experience something, usually an emotion or a pain, less strongly than before”. (Cambridge English Dictionary)

Desensitization for violence effects pro-social behavior and mental growth of the children. It reinforces violent behavior in 3-9 years old children, because this age group spends a large amount of time in watching television. This desensitized behavior destroys their will power, actions and behaviors. The desensitized behavior results in deterioration of the intellect, emotions, harmony of the whole society (Huston *et al.*, 1992).

Frequent exposure to violence results in desensitization and less sensitive behavior in heavy viewers. There is a positive effect associated with this desensitization that it creates a defense in children against anxiety (Drabman and Thomas 1984).

Children cartoon are produced in such a style in which delicate characters are confronted by the resilient and the most dishonest characters like 'Tom & Jerry' (Bettelheim, 1980). This philosophy is associated with 'fairy tales', where the weak child challenges by hostile circumstances and survives. The portrayal of contest between tiny and gigantic cultivates awareness about 'self-actualization' and optimistic approach in children (Lange *et al.*, 1969).

Many health experts and scholars are trying to establish a relationship that how TV violence exhibition results in aggressive behavior in children (Carr-Gregg, 1998). This aggressive behavior adoption is associated with several factors; i.e child's individual emotional state, exposure duration, social and financial environment etc. (Federal Communication Commission, 2007).

TV violent programing creates 'attention deficit', 'hyperactivity', 'protest' and behavioral disorder A research study has reinforced the idea that violence in TV programs results in 12 years old tween's desensitization of emotions and a reduced amount of sympathetic behavior for violence victims (Johnson *et al.*, 1999). Early childhood violence watching effects in children caused distracting behavior during class lecture and with toys (Grossman *et al.*, 1999).

It was observed that 8 years old children prefer to select violent TV programs. But; if they are co-watched with their parents and family has supportive attitude. It does not reflect in negative effects like fear and insecurity in children (Barkowitz and Rawlings, 1963).

TV violence results in lower IQ children more adversely. Firstly; they think that the violent character and story is real. Secondly; they focus that the fraudulent character being rewarded (Green & Quanty, 1977). Children violent TV programs create a myth in children that aggression is enjoyable to injure others. It creates misconception about reality & fantasy that this injury is temporary. If they will kick any character with rod hit several times over their head makes them shaky in a funny way for a limited period then becomes stable later (Gentile and Sesma, 2003). TV is charged to create fear that results in distortion of behavior (Nobel, 1970). The restless behavior in children in waiting rooms is the negative effect of TV programing watching practice (Hoffer and Zelman, 1991). The violent program affects a child's ability for logical thinking and perception to assess the consequences of each accepted behavior (Anaisha, 2018). The unnecessary presentation of violent content in children TV programs imbalances the adrenaline chemical in brain that creates fearfulness in children during their play with peers (Koojimans, 2004).

The violence portrayal in TV programs, movies or games effects power of decision, emotions and lack of cooperative behavior. The short term effects of violent programing are more powerful for adults as compared to kids (Bushman and Huesman, 2006). Generally; boys relate themselves with male heroic, powerful and aggressive character. However; girls creates association with an inspiring, attractive, modest and noble character (Hoffner & Buchnan, 2005).

A longitudinal study of media violence reported that children's violent content watching in childhood results in non-aggressive behavior in adulthood. The use of violence to resolve disputes is associated with social perception (Anderson *et al.*, 2003). Females adopt indirect expression to express their aggression by gossiping and rumor. The mischievous program selection results in interpersonal hostility in female greater as compared to male (Gentile *et al.*, 2011).

Children spent a large amount of their day in front of TV instead of any other mass media tool. Children are exposed to 11 to 13 food advertisements daily. Most of these food products contains high amount of 'sugar', fats, and sodium. Researches have held that food advertisements are effecting the behaviors of children induced them to consume junk food items, 'snacks', cold drinks, and fast food (Roseman, *et al.*, 2014).

Researchers concluded that children should be given awareness about manufacturers marketing tactics. Further; researches have revealed that 11 year old children are unconscious to give logical defense against advertising. They must be directed by their parents about the hazardous effects of advertising content. It was assumed that youth are more effected by the TV food commercials. However; the researches have proven that the children between the ages of 7 to 16 years old are inspired by TV food advertisement as compared to 2 to 6 year old children. Youth have different perceptions about these advertisements whereas the grownup and children perceive these advertisements in different manner. The children are influenced by the presentation, sound, character and graphics. They notice food advertisement in their peripheral processing part. Elder have a chance to be subjective receives advertisement message in central processing path of brain (Livingstone & Helpser, 2006).

It was supposed that skills in learning would give children reasoning defense against the plausible impact of marketing, however, it was revealed that children until 11 years old did not impulsively raise these cognitive defenses except obviously reminded to do so. The impression that youth are highly vulnerable to be affected by marketing than older one has been challenged by the latest research outcomes that children aged between seven to sixteen years old were more influenced by food commercial than younger one aged between two to six years old. Livingstone & Helpser (2006) stated that there are two possible processing route which children and youth would take in a different way, elder one have higher probability to be influenced by the massage of a product in the central processing path, whereas youth seem to be persuaded by the visuals, sounds, visuals cartoon characters, and so on in the peripheral processing path of the brain.

Researches have resulted that children are unable to process TV programs that creates fear in young minds. It reinforces the emotions of weakness and helplessness. Media contents are major cause of nightmares in children between the ages of 6 to 10 years old as compared to their personal life experiences happening in their everyday life (Child and Adolescent Psychiatry - Robert Goodman, Stephen Scott - Google Books, n.d.).

Preschool children feel scary by the presentation of anthromorphic, heroic, fantasy and supernatural characters in children TV programs. However; children by the age of 7 to years old are able to identify between fantasy and real characters.(Cantor, 2001). Children under 2 years old are badly affected by the TV contents. They are unable to perceive the TV images, plot and story. It is suggested that parent should give children counselling, if the children feel fear from TV programs that it's a fictional presentation for their entertainment not a reality. The parents should adopt kind behavior to remove fear, guide children with logic, provision of a warm milk and blanket can prove an effective remedy (Paavonen et al, 2006). The violent programing effects children sleeping pattern, harsh & out spoken and negative behavior (Rutherford *et al.*, 2010)

Children TV provide the distorted picture of the world. Children between the ages 3 to 6 years old imagine fantasy characters are real. Because cartoon's story present them in a real style (Jaglom and Gardner, 1981). The elements of fantasy in children TV programs affect the perception of the reality of

world in which children actually reside and grow (Cohen and Salmon, 1979). Gradually; Children interest level shifts from fantasy to more serious program contents gradually (Singer and Singer, 1984).

Hypotheses

H1. It is more likely that children TV watching habit results in harmful effects on behavior.

H2. It is more likely that violent and aggressive children TV programs creates negative effects on the behaviors of children.

Objectives

- To identify the undesirable behavioral changes from children TV watching habit.
- To investigate the destructive character imitation in children behavior after children TV watching.
- To explore the aggressive behavior adopted after watching violence in children TV programs.
- To confirm the aggression and violence portrayal in children TV programs results in desensitization of emotions.
- To scrutinize that the elements of fantasy in children TV programs creates fear.
- To study children TV programs induce children to eat junk food..

Theoretical Background

This research study is supported by social learning theory. In 1977, Albert Bandura has presented the social learning theory. This theory is linked with behavioral psychology theories of ‘operational and classical conditioning. He had added media between stimulus and response reaction. Behaviors are acquired from surroundings through observation. This ideology was supported in famous Bobo doll experiment. Children spend their time around TV programs, parents, siblings, teachers and peers. They are observing two categories of genders male and females. Further; they imitate their relation tags and capabilities. All these personality traits are labelled as positive and negative by them. They acquire these behaviors without consideration. Whether; Is this adaptation of behavior is positive or negative? .They imitate those behavioral traits, what they feel appealing and interesting for their gender role. SLT creates linkages between learning through imitation and thought process. It focuses on individual mental capacity, and cognitive factors are supporting in learning process.

Bandura, (1977) considers that individuals are skilled in ‘information processing’, and establishes association between their behavior and its consequences. The observation fails if cognitive process is active. Cognitive factors play a vital role in adoption of new behaviors. The learning of new behavior is not automatic. There is a step earlier to imitation and thus observation is called ‘mediation processes’. It comes about in between stimulus and response. The responses to stimulus are hold back due to mediation rejection outcome. According to Bandura there are four approaches that hinders mediation process .The attention plays a vital role that is related that any stimulus is focused for how longer duration. It is compulsory that any action should be restored into memory for the adoption of behavior in real life. A human observers numerous characters in his daily life but reproduces only those behavior are close to his personality traits. The motivation factor plays a vital role in adoption of behavior. The behaviors are adopted and rejected due to associated rewards and punishments (Bandura & Walters, 1977).

Research Methodology

To investigate the negative effects of Television programs. The researcher use the survey technique to investigate children watching habits of TV programs and its negative effects on their behavior. Population for this research study children who are studying in different educational institutions of Bahawalpur. Purposive sampling technique was used for data collections. The selected sample of children was based on different age groups i.e. 3-6, 6-12 and 13-19. A close ended questionnaire was used and based on Likert Scale. The focus of the study was on the following popular children TV programs i.e. These children were watching Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, Nick Jr, Teen Nick, and Nick Toon on their cable TV channel The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS statistical software.

Results

Table 1: *Imitation and Behavior Modification Occurred after Viewing Children TV Programs.*

Category	Response
Yes	38.2 % (191)
No	61.8% (309)
Total	100.0% (500)

Table 1 the above table is presenting answer of complete sample populace to the account that imitation and behavior alteration perceived after watching children television programs. From the total 500 sample 191 (38.2%) kids reacted yes and the other 309 (61.8%) children declined this opinion that any behavior was imitated after watching children TV programs.

Figure 1: *'Children TV Programs Imitation' in behaviour is Productive. (n=500)*

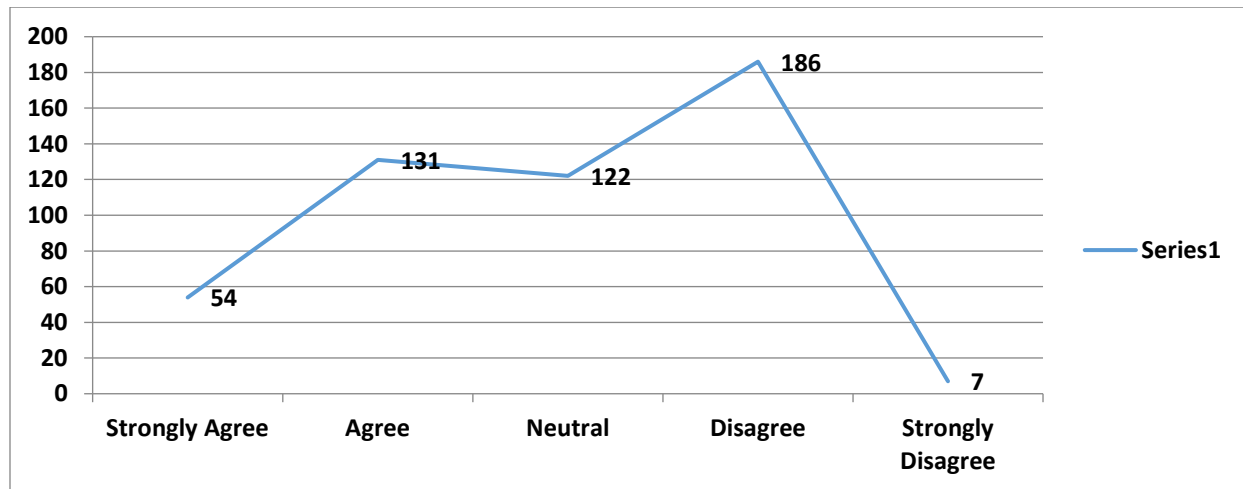


Figure 2 the overhead symbol is displaying the answer of complete sample populace to the report that children TV Programs imitation in conduct is constructive. From the total 500 sample 54 (10.8%) children strongly agree, 131 (26.2%) agree, 122 (24.4%) neutral, 186 (37.2%) disagree and 7 (1.4%) are strongly disagree with the questioned report. The children populace is imitating children TV programs in a positive manner.

Figure 2: *Children TV Violent Programs Results in Use of violent Behavior for 'Conflict Resolution'*

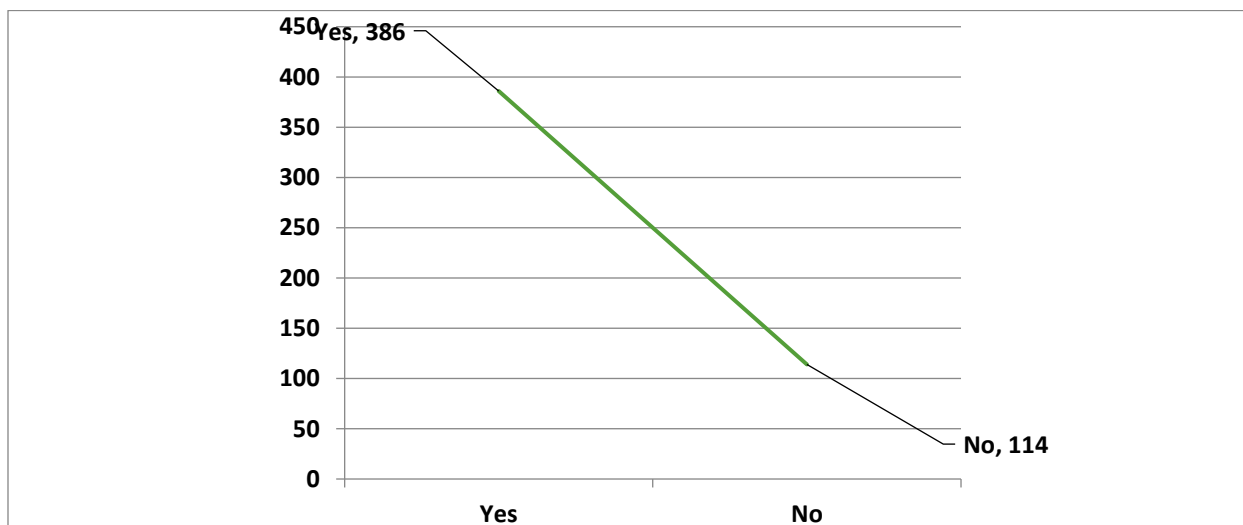


Figure 2 the overhead character presenting reaction of complete sample populace to the inquiry that children have a preference to accept violent actions to resolve issue after watching use of violence on television. From the complete 500 sample 386 (77.2%) children replied Yes and the other 114 (22.8%) indicated No to the inquired account.

Table 2: *Children TV Programs Fantasy Presentation of the 'World' and Children Consider them as Real*

Category	Response
Yes	84.6 % (423)
No	15.4%(77)
Total	100.0% (500)

Table 2 the overhead table is presenting the answer of complete sample populace to the account that children consider that fantasy representation of the worlds is real in children television Programs. From the complete 500 sample 423 (84.6%) children answered Yes and the other 77 (15.4%) believed No to the inquired statement.

Table 3: *Children TV Fantasy Programing Creates Fear in Children.*

Category	Response
Strongly Agree	53.4% (267)
Agree	36.0% (180)
Neutral	1 % (9)
Disagree	8.6% (43)
Strongly Disagree	.2% (1)

Table 3 the overhead table is presenting the reaction of total sample population towards the inquiry .From the total 500 sample 267 (53.4%) kids strongly agree, 180 (36%) agree, 9 (1.8%) neutral, 43 (8.6%) are disagree with the inquired statement.

Table 4: *Children TV Programs Cultivate Craving for Junk Food Items.*

Category	Response
Strongly Agree	32.8% (164)
Agree	28.8% (144)
Neutral	16.8% (84)
Disagree	18.4% (92)
Strongly Disagree	2 % (16)

Table 4 the overhead table is displaying reaction of total sample populace to the investigation. From the total 500 children 164 (32.8%) kids are strongly agree, 144 (28.8%) agree, 84 (16.8%) neutral, 92 (18.4%) disagree, and 16 (3.2%) are strongly disagree with the opinion that children TV programs results in junk food eating habit.

Table 5: *Representation of 'Violence' in Cartoon Programs Creates 'Desensitization' for Real Life Victims.*

Category	Response
Strongly Agree	12.0% (60)
Agree	57.6% (288)
Neutral	16.4% (82)
Disagree	11.4% (57)
Strongly Disagree	2% (13)

Table 5 the overhead table displaying answer of total sample populace to the interpretation. From the total 500 sample 60 (12%) kids are strongly agree, 288 (57.6%) agree, 82 (16.4%), neutral, 57 (11.4%) disagree, and 13 (2.6%) are strongly disagree with the inquired account.

Table 6: *Regression Model Summary for the Effect of T.V Children Programs on Eating Habit of Respondents.*

Variables	Values	95 % CI
Reg. Constant (α)	-0.260	[-0.675, 0.155]
Reg. Coefficient (β)	0.481	[0.08, 0.553]
R Square	0.255	
F-score	170.58**	
P-value	0.000	

** p <.01; * p <.05; B for Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI for Confidence interval

a. Predictors (Independent variable) : (Constant), TV Children Programs

b. Dependent Variable: Eating Habit

Note: Regression analysis is significant showing there is significant effect of T.V Children Programs on eating habits of respondents. The value of regression coefficient is 0.481 with 95% Confidence Interval [0.08, 0.553] and the value of R^2 is 0.255 showing the coefficient of determination for the target population.

Table 7: *Correlation in Overall Variables Under Study*

Variables	1	2	3	4
1...T.V Children Programs	1			
2... Violent Behavior	0.210**	1		
3... Fear	0.046	0.486**	1	
4...Junk Food	0.505**	0.265**	-0.123**	1

** p <.01; * p <.05;

The above table showing the bivariate association between the total variables contained in the research study. From the table researcher conclude that there is mix behavior of variable on correlation among each other. There is positive correlation between all the variables except eating behavior and Health that have negative correlation between them. Most of the correlations are significant at 1% level and someone correlations are significant at 5% level of significance. The values having stars (*) are significant at 5% level and the values with double stars (**) are significant at 1% level.

Discussion

According to this research study children are imitating the characters from children TV programs. They identify two categories of characters male, female, positive and negative. Girls relate themselves with girl's .Whereas; boys relate themselves with boys. The children of lower class think themselves in presented models this idealization is called wishful identification. Teen are severely affected from the portrayal of violence and negative elements of children TV programs. Most of the children TV violence is based on filmic representation. The excessive portrayal of violence is desensitizing the emotions of children in negative manner. The portrayal of TV violence is distorting the moral values of the children. The desensitization of emotions is destroying the individuals and results in disagreement in society. Mostly desensitization effects the heavy viewers, but a positive effect is associated with desensitization that it's a good shelter to protect from anxiety.

Children TV fantasy programs presents the story in which weak character confronts with resilient character. Fantasy programing promotes the optimistic behavior in difficulties. The children develop a false notion from children TV programs that this destruction is temporary. The adoption of aggressive

behavior is associated with individual child's emotional state, watching habit and family environment. Further; it results in desensitization of emotions for violence victims.

Children imagine that presented fantasy is real. The plots are designed in such a manner that fraudulent are rewarded. Children develop a myth from children TV programs that the injury is temporary. If the children are unable to process program information it creates fear in little minds. TV violence is one of the major cause of impatient and restless behavior. This fear affects the logical thinking in children. The violence and aggression resulted in imbalances of adrenaline in brain that causes fear in children during their play.

Females are affected more severely as compared to male from violent program. They reflect it in their gossip, chatter and rumors. Children are exposed to 11 to 13 food advertisements daily in front of TV that creates craving for junk food items. Youth are induced severely for junk food as compared to any other age group. Children are attracted by the production techniques and music. Children TV fantasy programs are the major cause of nightmares in children as compared to their daily life happenings.

Preschool children feel fear from anthropomorphic and fantasy characters. They can identify between fantasy and reality by the age of seven. Children should be given counseling by their parents that these fantasy characters are fabricated to entertain them. The provision of warm milk and blanket can be effective remedy to overcome fear.

According to social learning theory children are effected severely by the exposure of children TV programs. Most of the children are affected by the TV contents in negative manner, due to excessive time duration spent in front of TV and their attention towards negative personality traits. So; they start to imitate these negative behaviors in their life. The boys are inspired by the masculine traits, heroic character, and power. The girls are attracted towards beauty, admiration, attraction and honor.

This research study has revealed that 54% of Pakistani children are imitating TV characters in positive manners. Almost 77.2% children have adopted the use of power and aggression to resolve disputes in their everyday life. Only 38.2% children are imitating behavior from children TV programs. It was explored that 84.6% children consider that presented fantasy is real. However; 53.4% children feel fear from fantasy programs. Only 32% children realize that children TV food advertisement induce them to eat junk food items. It was accepted by 57% children that TV program violence is creating desensitization for real life victims. It's concluded that Pakistani children are mentally mature. They are least effected by TV violence, fantasy and junk food advertisement. However; they are imitating they TV characters positively. But; influenced by the TV violence and aggression in a negative manner.

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Conflict of Interest


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