

Case Study

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From Playgrounds to Screens: A Case Study on the Socio - Cultural and Environmental Factors Behind Children's Cartoon Preferences in Northern Bangladesh

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Abstract: The growing interest in watching cartoons among children worldwide has raised concerns about its impact on their development, particularly in language, behavior, and physical activity. While extensive research has explored the influence of cartoons on children's behavior, there is a noticeable gap in understanding the socio - cultural and environmental factors contributing to children's preference for watching cartoons in Bangladesh. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the socio - cultural and ecological reasons behind children's increasing screen time. This reasons supported by Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory. Using a qualitative research approach, data were collected through in - depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), casual observation, and storytelling. The findings reveal a complex interplay of socio - cultural and environmental factors, including the lack of outdoor play spaces, safety concerns, urbanization, and parental focus on career commitments. These all contribute to children's preference for watching cartoons over engaging in physical outdoor activities. Urban congestion and academic pressures further exacerbate this trend, with children spending more time indoors, often in front of screens. This research highlights the significant role of these socio - cultural and environmental influences in shaping children's media consumption patterns and calls for strategies to promote a balanced lifestyle, including screen time and physical activity. The study's insights have important implications for future policies and interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of excessive screen time and encourage healthier media consumption habits among children.

Keywords: Children's screen time; Sociocultural factors; Outdoor play; Urbanization; Parental influence; Cartoon consumption

1. Introduction

Children's growing interest in watching cartoons has become a global concern, with significant increases in screen time observed

across various socio - economic backgrounds. Studies from diverse countries highlight the widespread popularity of cartoon programs, such as Cartoon Network, the preferred channel for 84% of children in



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Pakistan. Among them, 65.2% dedicate 1 to 3 hours daily to watching cartoons during their leisure time (Ali & Daniyal, 2013). This trend is not limited to South Asia—Cartoon Network reaches over 80 million homes in the United States and 145 countries globally, with 68% of its audience being children between 2 and 17 years old (Stabile & Harrison, 2003). Similarly, other studies from Sri Lanka and Turkey show high levels of cartoon viewership, with 65.6% of children in Sri Lanka categorized as TV - addicted (Denipitiyage et al., 2020) and 77% of children in Turkey watching TV, with cartoons being the most preferred content (RTUK, 2006; Ceylan & Bicakci, 2011).

In the current media - driven world, children are exposed to screens early, with many becoming familiar with digital content like YouTube videos before even reaching school. Cartoons, as a dominant media content, significantly shape children's daily experiences. Research by Sevim Cesur and Oya Paker (2007) and surveys conducted by RTUK (2013) demonstrate that cartoons are the most watched programs among primary school children, mainly due to the availability of specialized children's channels that provide continuous programming. As the availability of these channels has skyrocketed, so has the time children spend watching cartoons, making it crucial to understand the factors driving this preference.

Despite the extensive body of literature on the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional impacts of cartoon viewing, the sociocultural and environmental influences that shape children's preferences for cartoons rather than physical outdoor activities remain underexplored. While studies from Asian countries reveal high rates of cartoon viewership, there is a noticeable gap in research within the Bangladeshi context. This gap calls for a deeper investigation into how much time children in Bangladesh spend watching cartoons and the socio - cultural reasons behind this preference.

This research addresses this gap by examining the socio - cultural and environmental factors influencing children's interest in cartoons. Using Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which posits that children's behaviors are shaped by multiple environmental layers—such as the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem—this study will focus on the Exosystem, which includes broader societal and cultural influences.

Key factors, such as limited outdoor play spaces, the busy schedules of parents, and concerns about child safety, will be explored to understand how these environmental elements contribute to children's media consumption patterns.

Furthermore, while it is widely recognized that children are drawn to cartoons for their entertainment and educational content, social influences also play a significant role. Many parents prefer to keep their children indoors, opting for cartoons as a safer, more convenient alternative to outdoor play. This shift in how leisure time is spent—fueled by urbanization and safety concerns—has further intensified children's screen time, creating a shift in their activity choices.

By exploring these socio - cultural and environmental factors, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of why children in Northern Bangladesh, specifically those from Class One to Class Five, are increasingly turning to cartoons. The findings will contribute to the ongoing conversation about children's media consumption and help inform future strategies to promote a healthier balance between screen time and physical and outdoor activities.

2. Literature Review

When reviewing the literature, various studies explore the relationship between a child's observed abilities and environment. In their research, Aditya & Chanchal (2020) concluded that children exist in a world where they are captivated by numerous things. For instance, if a child sees a bird flying in a cartoon, they will likely be inspired and want to replicate the action. Their imaginations often transcend the boundaries of the physical world. Cartoons deeply engage their minds, compelling them to re - watch them repeatedly. Additionally, the study revealed that children are significantly influenced by cartoons, noting that parents often prefer to keep them indoors to watch cartoons rather than encourage outdoor play with friends or siblings. As a result, children tend to spend their entire leisure time watching cartoons on TV.

Kakon et al. (2024) conducted a cross - sectional study in Bangladesh revealing that 56% of children had unsupervised access to screens, which was associated with increased risks of emotional difficulties, behavioral issues, and sleep problems. The study attributed this trend to busy parental work

schedules that limit supervision, thereby fostering screen dependency. Building on these findings, Kakon et al. (2025) reported that children with supervised screen use demonstrated better physical, mental, and social well-being, emphasizing the role of parental attitudes and the absence of structured media guidance in shaping children's digital habits. Similarly, a thesis by Sattar and Zarin (2021) from BRAC University explored parental perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that many considered cartoon viewing a harmless way to occupy children during work hours. This perception, coupled with limited awareness of behavioral risks and the normalization of digital media use at home, contributed to lax screen-time regulation. Supporting these insights, Niiranen et al. (2024) in a BMC (BioMed Central) Pediatrics study identified parental mental health, education level, and engagement style as key predictors of children's screen habits, with responsive and informed parents more likely to promote healthy media use.

A recent field study explored how the growing attachment to cartoons has led to a decline in children's participation in physical activities, causing various issues. Unlike previous generations, who engaged in sports and physical activities as a primary source of entertainment, today's children tend to stay indoors, watching television and spending most of their free time in front of the screen. Moreover, these cartoon characters impact children's social lives and mental well-being (Farah, 2020).

Another study investigated how children learn by observing not just specific behaviors but also their outcomes. According to Konstantina (2020), cartoon characters often portray real-world events within a believable storyline. These animated stories can help children form vivid mental images of the plot, its values, and morals, making them easier to remember. Children can revisit the story, discuss it with others, and remain engaged with it over time.

When examining studies on cartoons, it is evident that children often imitate their favorite cartoon characters and frequently ask their parents to buy cartoon-themed snacks, clothing, toys, and other items. Parents have confirmed that their children tend to favor snacks with cartoon branding. In her study, Martha (2019) highlighted that children not only

imitate the speech and actions of their favorite cartoon characters but also dress like them and adopt their names as nicknames. Additionally, they memorize theme songs and repeatedly watch episodes, able to recite them effortlessly.

In examining the impact of cartoon series on school-aged children, Vinod (2018) observes that children spend a significant amount of time watching cartoons, leaving little time for other activities such as outdoor play with peers. As a result, their language and behavior are changing. Cartoons are influencing children both physically and mentally.

Another study exploring why children enjoy watching cartoons highlighted that children are drawn to cartoons during their leisure time primarily because of the fun and entertainment they offer. Shazia, Rabia, & Zubair (2017) emphasize that cartoons can engage young minds, making them highly addictive and appealing to children. Many cartoons focus on themes of fun and friendship, which resonate with young audiences. Brotherson also compares a child's brain to a newly built house, stating, "A child's brain is like a house that has just been built. The walls are up, the doors are hung. Then you go to the store and buy electrical wiring, switches, a fuse box, and other electrical supplies. You bring these supplies to the new house and set them on the floor. This is quite like the way our brains are formed." Since many parents don't closely monitor their children's activities, children often spend most of their free time watching cartoons on TV.

According to Mehmet & Erhan (2016), in today's world, nearly every household has at least one television, and the improper use of this device can negatively impact a child's development. In many families, the television has become a substitute for babysitters, with parents seeing no harm in leaving their children in front of the screen. As a result, this "electronic caregiver" shapes the child's worldview by introducing them to its own codes and consumption culture. Yagh (2013) further observes that children's television programs, cartoons, animations, and advertisements contribute to children's addiction to screens and turn them into participants in a consumer-driven society.

In addition, Tasmia (2014) highlighted that various

TV shows and cartoons are broadcasted across multiple satellite channels. One of the most popular characters is the Japanese manga cartoon, *Doraemon*. Due to a lack of alternative entertainment options, this cartoon gained widespread popularity, especially in Bangladesh. Parents, driven to fulfill their children's wishes, often avoid disappointing them. Despite their love and care, many parents do not restrict their children from watching cartoons indiscriminately.

In his study, Ergun (2012) noted that male children were more influenced by cartoon characters' actions and extraordinary behaviors, while female children were more captivated by the characters' dialogues and the music featured in the cartoons. Additionally, it was found that female children tend to watch cartoons for extended periods than male children. This may be due to the cartoon industry's expertise in capturing the attention of young viewers, particularly girls. Imitation, a key process in shaping a child's behavior, plays a significant role in their attraction to cartoons. The desire to imitate what they see on screen is a substantial factor behind children's interest in watching these animated shows.

Studies on cartoons reveal that children between the ages of 3 and 8 are particularly adept at learning new things, especially language. They can easily acquire languages, such as Hindi, at this early age, if exposed to them. Many parents have observed that their children prefer watching *Doraemon* over playing outside, with the cartoon influencing them to learn Hindi. Parents have noted significant changes in their children's language skills and expressions. Additionally, children often seek out *Doraemon*-themed items, such as dolls, stationery, and other merchandise (Nujhat & Tuhin, 2012).

Indeed, studies in the literature highlight how children prefer to spend their leisure time watching cartoons. Cartoon series significantly impact children, as the characters are designed to captivate and engage their minds. This often leads to children imitating the characters they see. Furthermore, many parents encourage their children to stay indoors and watch cartoons rather than go outside to play with their friends.

In this context, our research offers a unique perspective compared to previous studies by highlighting the socio-cultural and environmental

factors that influence children to stay indoors and watch cartoons instead of playing outside with their friends—an aspect that has not been thoroughly explored in prior research. Additionally, a key contribution of this study is its comprehensive approach in understanding the reasons behind children's attraction to cartoon characters.

3. Research Methods and Techniques

The study aimed to explore children's engagement with cartoons, making it a case study focused on a specific phenomenon within a defined context—children from Class One to Class Five and their parents. This targeted group allowed the researchers to closely examine how children interacted with cartoons, how they perceived them, and the influence of their parents' perspectives. By focusing on this specific group, the study sought to provide an in-depth understanding of this subject matter.

3.1 Data Collection Methods

The case study approach was rooted in gathering rich, qualitative data from multiple sources, and this study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data came from direct interactions with the study participants, 60 children, and their parents—allowing for an authentic and context-specific understanding of the case. 4 children of class one, 4 children of class two, 4 children of class three, 4 children of class four, 4 children of class five and their parents were taken as informants. The secondary data came from existing literature or other relevant studies that provided background information to help interpret the primary data.

A range of qualitative techniques was used to gather data, which was typical in case studies as it allowed for a multi-faceted exploration of the issue:

- Casual observation helped the researchers see children's natural behavior, providing a baseline for understanding their everyday interactions.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) brought together children and parents to discuss their views in a group setting, providing insight into group dynamics and collective perspectives.
- In-depth interviews allowed the researchers to ask specific, open-ended questions, providing detailed individual insights from both children and their parents.

- Storytelling allowed children to express their thoughts and feelings about cartoons in their own words, enriching the data with personal stories that revealed deeper emotions and engagement.

3.2 Key Informants and Data Gathering

In this study, both the children and their parents were considered key informants, providing essential first-hand information. A key informant was chosen to help facilitate the data collection process, ensuring that the researchers gathered information from those most knowledgeable or directly involved in the subject under study.

3.3 Data Analysis Methodology

The data was analyzed using Thematic Content Analysis (TCA), which is used every day in case study research. TCA involved organizing and interpreting the data to identify recurring themes or patterns, helping to make sense of the large amount of qualitative information collected. By transcribing interviews and categorizing the content into themes, the researchers could systematically explore the data and draw meaningful conclusions. Additionally, direct quotes from the informants were used to support and illustrate each theme, strengthening the findings' credibility.

3.4 Comprehensive Approach

Overall, this study exemplified a comprehensive case study approach by combining different qualitative data collection techniques, analyzing the data systematically, and ensuring that direct quotations from informants supported findings. The use of varied methods (observations, interviews, FGDs, and storytelling) allowed the researchers to gather rich, multi-dimensional data, while the thematic analysis provided a structured way to identify key patterns and insights.

4. Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner, an American developmental psychologist, is most famous for his Ecological Systems Theory, which later evolved into the Bioecological Systems Theory, a framework for understanding human development. In this theory, Bronfenbrenner outlined four interconnected systems: the Microsystem, the Mesosystem, the Exosystem, and the Chronosystem.

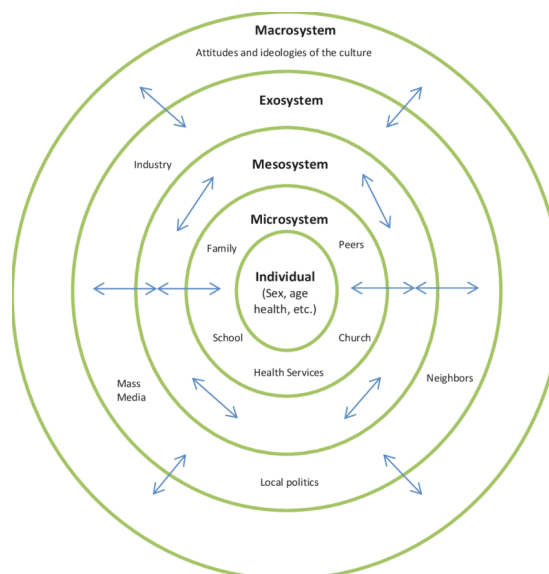


Figure: Illustration of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework for human development

This study explores how children develop a dependence on cartoons, focusing on the socio-cultural and environmental factors, using Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory. It explains the connection between the research and Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework by examining the five systems, which are discussed in detail below.

The **Microsystem** in Bronfenbrenner's theory plays a significant role. The Microsystem consists of the immediate surroundings and relationships that directly impact a child's behavior and development, including family, peers, school, and local community.

The **Mesosystem** in Bronfenbrenner's theory refers to the interactions between different parts of a child's immediate environment—such as the relationships between family, school, peers, and community. The Mesosystem highlights how these interconnected systems influence a child's development. When examining the socio-cultural and environmental influences on children's preference for watching cartoons, the Mesosystem connects the child's experiences across different contexts, demonstrating how factors like lack of space, educational pressure, safety concerns, and parental busyness shape behavior.

The **Exosystem** in Bronfenbrenner's theory refers to the broader social systems that indirectly influence a child's development. These systems include aspects of society that may not directly involve the child but still affect their immediate environment, such

as parents' workplaces, community resources, local policies, media, and societal norms. In the context of the socio - cultural and environmental influences on children watching cartoons, the **Exosystem** connects these external factors to the child's home, school, and community experiences, shaping their behavior in ways that might not always be immediately obvious.

The **Chronosystem** in Bronfenbrenner's theory refers to the dimension of time, which includes the patterns of environmental events and transitions throughout a child's life. It focuses on how changes in the child's environment (individual, family, or societal) and the passage of time influence development. This can include historical changes, life transitions, and the timing of events. When considering socio - cultural and environmental influences on children watching cartoons, the **Chronosystem** highlights how factors like changes in family life, technology, societal shifts, or life transitions can shape children's behavior and media consumption over time

5. Result

5.1 Socio - economic Distribution of the Study Participants

The study involved diverse participants, including children and their parents. A total of 20 children, comprising both male and female participants, were selected for the study. These children were enrolled in various grades, ranging from Class One to Class Five, with four children chosen from each class. Specifically, four children from Class One, four from Class Two, four from Class Three, four from Class Four, and four from Class Five were included in the sample.

In addition to the children, data was also collected from their fathers and mothers, with 20 fathers and 20 mothers participating. The fathers represented a range of occupations, showcasing significant diversity in their professional backgrounds. These occupations included business (10 fathers), service - related jobs (4 fathers), teaching (2 fathers), engineering (2 fathers), and other roles such as an Imam of a mosque (1 father) and factory workers (2 fathers). In contrast, the mothers' professional diversity was more limited. Among the mothers, 15 were housewives, while 5 were employed in various professional capacities.

This composition highlighted the participants' varied socio - economic backgrounds, reflecting a broad

spectrum of professions and roles within the family structure. This provided a rich context for examining the study's focus.

5.2 Socio - cultural and Environmental Influences for Watching Cartoons

5.2.1 Case study of lack of space

In an in - depth interview, a child, Shaon (class five), narrated his experience in the following way,

"When we go out to play, there are some obstacles. In the past, when I used to go to Dr. uncle house to play cricket, everyone around me would say why do you play so much, the ball comes home. Again, we were playing badminton, but people were shouting. They said that when we talk during the game, it goes to their ears, and it causes sleep problems."

According to the case study, Children living in urban areas face considerable challenges due to the limited availability of outdoor play spaces caused by rapid urbanization and increasing population density.

Urban Migration and Population Expansion:

Many people are relocating to cities for better job opportunities and enhanced living conditions. The need for economic stability primarily drives this migration, as urban areas generally offer more diverse employment options and greater access to essential services than rural regions. As a result, cities are witnessing substantial population increases. The rapid influx of residents often leads to overcrowding, and many urban centers find it challenging to meet the rising demand for housing, infrastructure, and public services.

Challenges in Finding Places to Play: Children frequently find appropriate places to play in urban areas with limited open spaces. Public parks are often overcrowded, poorly maintained, or far from residential areas, making regular access challenging. Furthermore, in neighborhoods, children may play in the streets or nearby open areas, but these spaces are usually unsuitable for active play. Roads and parking lots, not intended for recreational use, pose safety risks, making them hazardous environments for children to engage in outdoor activities.

Neighborhood Complaints and Social Tensions:

Even when children find places to play, they may encounter complaints from neighbors or residents. In crowded urban neighborhoods, the noise generated

by children playing—whether from games, talking, or laughter—can be disruptive to others, particularly in areas with close living quarters, such as apartment complexes. For example, residents may complain that the noise interferes with their daily activities or disturbs their peace, especially in the evening when people are trying to rest. Such complaints often create tension between children who want to play and residents who wish to avoid disruption.

5.2.2 Case study of the pressure of the child's education

In an in - depth interview, a child Shaon (class five) also narrated his experience in the following way:

“Due to our PSC exams, there is a lot of study pressure in private and coaching. We need at least a day to rest, spend time with family, and play outside. But it turns out that the opposite happens on holidays. On Friday, the exams are held more privately and in coaching. So, there is no time to go out and play sports.”

These case studies help identify the factors and provide explanations for the pressure children face in their education.

Intense Study Pressure Due to PSC Exams: Shaon mentions significant study pressure due to the PSC (Primary School Certificate) exams. This pressure directly results from the high academic expectations placed on children to perform well in these exams. The pressure often extends beyond regular school hours, contributing to stress and anxiety and limiting the child's ability to relax or engage in leisure activities.

Additional Pressure from Private Tuition and Coaching: The child highlights the additional burden of attending private tuition and coaching classes, commonly used to prepare for exams. This extra academic work significantly increases the study load, leaving little time for rest, family bonding, or recreational activities. The reliance on private tuition and coaching often intensifies the pressure, with children having to study even harder outside of school hours.

Lack of Rest and Family Time: Shaon expresses the need for at least one day of rest, family time, and outdoor play. However, these essential activities are sacrificed due to the demanding study schedule, including coaching sessions. The child's comment reflects the negative impact of the constant academic

pressure, which not only affects their ability to relax but also hinders their ability to spend quality time with family. This lack of balance can contribute to emotional and physical exhaustion for children.

No Time for Recreation or Outdoor Play: Despite holidays, Shaon describes how these days become more exam preparation rather than an opportunity to rest. The mention of exams being held more privately on Fridays further demonstrates that even on days typically expected to be a break, children are forced to continue studying. This lack of time for recreation or outdoor play deprives children of a healthy and well - rounded childhood, which is crucial for their physical and mental well - being.

Negative Impact on Physical and Mental Health: The overwhelming pressure from exams, tuition, and coaching, along with the lack of breaks, can lead to both physical and mental health issues in children. The absence of playtime and physical activity, combined with constant studying, can lead to stress, anxiety, fatigue, and even burnout. Additionally, the lack of family time may affect emotional health, as children miss crucial bonding experiences.

5.2.3 Case study of lack of child safety

In interviewing with a child, Srabonty (class five), she narrated her experience in the following way:

“On the road, I took from school and coaching, a boy who works as a cleaning boy at a food hotel was walking down the street smoking a cigarette. As I was leaving, the cigarette smoke came out of my mouth, and laughing. The boys were sitting in the shop in front of our house. So, my father forbade me to play outside.”

Through these case study, identifying the causes and explanations related to the lack of child safety.

Presence of Unsafe Individuals in Public Spaces: Srabonty describes an encounter with a boy who works as a cleaning boy at a food hotel. The boy is publicly walking down the street smoking a cigarette. This is an example of unsafe individuals present in public spaces where children are expected to walk or play. These individuals can expose children to harmful behaviors, such as smoking, which may also negatively influence children by normalizing harmful activities.

Exposure to Inappropriate Behavior: The boy's smoking and laughing as Srabonty passes by contribute to an uncomfortable or unsafe situation for the child. The smoking may have made Srabonty feel uneasy or

unsafe, creating an environment where children feel vulnerable and threatened. Such behaviors can also set a negative example for children.

Lack of Protection for Children in Public Spaces:

The boys sitting in the shop in front of Srabonty's house can be seen as an additional layer of public exposure that potentially makes children feel unsafe. The fact that the boys are gathered in the shop and that Srabonty's father is concerned about her playing outside suggests a lack of effective child protection in public spaces. The child's father becomes concerned about her safety, indicating that unsafe conditions are prevalent in the neighborhood.

Parental Response to Safety Concerns: Due to the unsafe environment Srabonty encountered, her father forbids her from playing outside. This decision highlights the direct impact that the lack of child safety in public spaces has on children's freedom and development. Instead of allowing the child to play and explore, her father's response is to restrict her movements, demonstrating how fear and concerns for safety can limit a child's normal activities and social growth.

5.2.4 Case study of lack of suitable recreation place

In interviewing a child Sruty (class four), it was stated:

"Once I went to visit the zoo with my father and mother. A few trees on the side have become like bushes together. Some people were doing something by lighting a fire and seemed to be eating something. As soon as I saw them, my mother said that there was no need to stay there anymore. They took me from there."

These case studies highlight the factors and explain the absence of appropriate recreational spaces.

Lack of Proper Maintenance of Public Spaces (e.g., Zoo): Sruty describes visiting a zoo, but the experience was marred by poorly maintained areas, such as trees and bushes that were overgrown or not well - kept. This indicates that public recreation spaces like zoos are not adequately maintained, which makes them less inviting and enjoyable for families and children. When recreational areas are not well - cared for, it limits their use and creates an unwelcoming atmosphere.

Unregulated and Inappropriate Activities in Public Spaces: Sruty mentions that some people were lighting a fire and seemed to be eating something in an area that was supposed to be a family - friendly recreation space. This suggests that public spaces

like zoos are not adequately regulated, leading to inappropriate behaviors or activities. These activities, such as lighting fires in public spaces, may make children and families feel unsafe or uncomfortable, discouraging them from using them.

Parental Concern for Child Safety: Sruty's mother decided to leave the area after noticing the inappropriate behavior. This reflects a parental instinct to protect children from potentially unsafe or uncomfortable environments. The fact that Sruty's mother felt the need to remove her from the zoo due to the behavior of others highlights how the lack of proper management and safety in recreation spaces can drive families away, depriving children of safe and enjoyable places for leisure.

Unsafe or Unwelcoming Environment: The overall experience suggests that the zoo, a place that should be a safe and enjoyable environment for children, became an unwelcoming and unsafe space due to the combination of poorly maintained facilities and inappropriate behaviors by other visitors. When a recreational area becomes perceived as hazardous or unsuitable for children, families may avoid visiting, thus limiting children's opportunities for healthy outdoor activities.

5.2.5 Case study of parental busyness

In interviewing a child Fahim (class three), it was stated:

"Father and mother go to the office every morning and come in the evening. When I went to play, my grandmother got angry, and when I watched TV, she told my mother that I watched TV all day and didn't study. My mother got angry when she heard this. On Friday, my mother did much housework. It was taken out last week, but I didn't do any sports in the park. I only ate at the restaurant and came back home. There was no fun."

These case studies investigate the factors contributing to parental busyness and offer detailed explanations for its impact on children's lives.

Lack of Parental Availability and Supervision: Fahim mentions that his father and mother go to the office every morning and return only in the evening. This indicates that Fahim doesn't have much time to engage in recreational activities with his parents due to their work schedules. The absence of available parents may limit the opportunities for the child to enjoy

activities, such as sports or play, that require adult supervision.

Overbearing Expectations from Family Members (Grandmother): Fahim's grandmother gets angry when he plays and accuses him of watching TV all day instead of studying. This shows a lack of understanding or support for Fahim's need for leisure and relaxation. The pressure to constantly study and refrain from playing or watching TV can create a stressful home environment where recreational activities are seen negatively, impacting Fahim's well-being.

Parental Disciplinary Actions and Conflicting Messages: Fahim's mother becomes angry after hearing his grandmother's complaints, indicating that the child faces disciplinary actions for engaging in leisure activities. This creates conflicting messages for Fahim, where playing or watching TV is discouraged, yet he is still expected to study, leading to confusion about balancing recreation and responsibilities.

Lack of Meaningful Recreation or Physical Activity: Fahim states that when he went out on Friday, his family only went to a restaurant and didn't participate in any sports or physical activities. This suggests that the child is not being encouraged to engage in recreational activities such as sports or play, which are essential for physical and emotional development. The lack of engaging or fun activities makes the outing feel unfulfilling.

Lack of Suitable or Accessible Recreational Spaces: Fahim's mention of not doing sports in the park indicates a possible lack of suitable or accessible recreational spaces in his environment. Even if he could go out, the absence of proper recreational facilities, such as sports fields or play areas, may limit his ability to enjoy physical activity and socialize with peers.

6. Discussion

This research, alongside the literature reviewed, sheds light on the complex relationship between children's socio-cultural and environmental factors and their preference for watching cartoons rather than engaging in outdoor play. Various studies confirm that children absorb and learn quickly, especially in the critical developmental window of 3 to 8 years. As noted by Aditya & Chanchal (2020), children are highly impressionable and captivated by what they see, including the actions of cartoon characters, which can

inspire imitation. This heightened engagement, often leading to repetitive viewing, is compounded by a broader trend of children spending less time outdoors. This aligns with the findings of Farah (2020), who observed that today's children prefer staying indoors to watch cartoons instead of playing outside, which has both physical and mental implications.

Our findings suggest that multiple socio-cultural and environmental factors influence this shift in behavior. For instance, urbanization has led to limited play spaces, making outdoor activities increasingly difficult, particularly in densely populated areas (Shaon's case study). Rapid urban migration has resulted in overcrowded neighborhoods where public spaces are scarce or unsuitable for children's play. Moreover, complaints from neighbors about noise further discourage outdoor activities, as seen in Shaon's experience. This growing urban congestion forces children to seek entertainment indoors, often in front of screens, a trend supported by Tasmia (2014), who highlighted how TV shows like Doraemon gained popularity in areas with fewer alternatives for recreation.

Another key finding is the role of academic pressure. Shaon's (class five) case study underscores how education, particularly the pressure to prepare for exams like the PSC, limits children's opportunities to engage in leisure activities. The constant study routine, compounded by private tuition, leaves children little time for play or rest. This intense academic focus contrasts with earlier generations who balanced physical activity and recreation with their academic responsibilities, suggesting a shift in priorities that may contribute to children's decline in physical activity.

Furthermore, children's interactions with cartoon characters go beyond mere entertainment. Studies such as those by Martha (2019) and Konstantina (2020) show that children not only imitate the actions of their favorite characters but also internalize their behaviors, language, and values. The widespread appeal of Doraemon and other cartoon characters leads children to seek related products, such as toys and snacks, further reinforcing their connection to the characters and their world. This mirrors the findings of Mehmet & Erhan (2016), who argued that excessive screen time and the consumer-driven culture promoted by children's cartoons shape how children perceive the world around them.

The case studies presented in this research also revealed deeper socio - cultural concerns such as child safety and the lack of suitable recreation spaces. Srabonty's experience with encountering unsafe individuals in public spaces highlights how the fear of harm and lack of supervision discourage outdoor play. Similarly, Sruty's experience at the zoo underscores how poorly maintained public spaces can make them unsuitable for families and children, further pushing them towards indoor, screen - based entertainment.

Conclusion

This research highlights the significant role of socio - cultural and environmental factors in shaping children's preferences for watching cartoons instead of participating in outdoor physical activities. Our findings, supported by existing literature, indicate that urbanization, academic pressures, limited access to recreational spaces, and safety concerns drive children toward screen - based entertainment. Cartoons, as discussed in the studies reviewed, provide entertainment and opportunities for imitation, socialization, and learning. However, the growing screen time and decreased physical activity raise concerns about the potential long - term impacts on children's physical and mental health.

This research offers a unique perspective by examining the socio - cultural and environmental influences that affect children's media habits, particularly the role of cartoons in their daily routines. Given that children's behaviors and interests are influenced by their surroundings, it is clear that interventions are necessary to promote a balanced lifestyle that includes both screen time and physical activity, social interactions, and creative play. Moreover, creating safe and accessible public spaces for physical activity and encouraging greater parental involvement in media consumption could help mitigate the adverse effects of excessive screen time. Future research could explore effective strategies to promote outdoor play while preserving the benefits of children's engagement with cartoons.

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