

## Effect of Animated Films on Ethical Standards and Social Behavior of Pakistani youth

Nasim Ishaq<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

\*Corresponding author, e-mail: nasimishaq.dcmr.scs@pu.edu.pk

### Abstract

Animated films are very impactful tool to attract viewers and delivers message more creatively. The genre has changed from imagery to moving movie due to computer aids. During the last few years, Pakistani film industry got another boost in the form of animated movies. As a modern genre, the world of animation movies offers unique aspect of high level of creativity and conceptualization to viewers. Drawing upon the theory of “cultivation” the study tends to measure the effect of the animated movies on the “ethical standards” and “social behavior” of the viewers. The objective of the current study is to examine how animated films have been used effectively to spread ethical norms and change the social attitude of viewers. For the purpose, a sample of 300 respondents, selected by purposive sampling was surveyed through a questionnaire developed on a five-point Likert scale. The study explored that it does not wholly replace other learning mediums but it can explicitly work in the field of educating about ethics, science as well as science to viewers of all age groups. The study concludes that few Pakistani movies which are released under this genre have proven to be highly ethical and influencing behavior of viewers very positively regarding animal rights.

**Keywords:** Animation Movies, Ethical Standards, Social Behaviors, Pakistani viewers

### Introduction

With the advent to technology in the means of mass media, the processes of animation have been changed, offering a lot of venues to the audience and extending its boundaries to social and ethical concerns. There are social interactions which are shown to people in the form of animation as health sector in modern societies has tremendously taken help of animation documentaries to make their point clear to people (Preda, & Prêteux, 2000).

As per history, a strong tradition of linking animated documentaries with political and social purposes exists. Latvian media is very famous all around the world for producing animated documentaries. Since Soviet occupation, many animated documentaries have been made to teach history to the students, (Dūdiņa & Matīsa et al. 2010). The animation is not based on real facts, whereas emotions like terror, fascism and savage are well shown in the animated films, (Giddings, 2008). Bombing of Hiroshima is a fact based animation; the unfortunate event has shown well in the animation form.

Producers of animated movies have understood that depicting social changes are a form of opportunity in the field. There are various ugly truths of society such as gender biases, sexual diseases, poverty etc. All these issues which cannot be addressed in commercial movies can be explained well in animated movies.

As many as five animations, released in the last few years have opened a new venue of animated movies in Pakistan, the release of the much anticipated *The Glassworker* (Sheeshahgar) by Mano Animation Studios will be Pakistan’s first fully hand-drawn animated film. As, a popular medium of visual story-telling, animated movies have been popular in the developed countries.

Pakistan’s first ever 3D animated film, *3 Bahadur* was released in 2015. Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, the two-time Oscar winner from Pakistan helmed this project and the plot revolved around three extraordinary children named Kamil, Amna and Saadi. They rise from the most unlikely of places and fight an evil to save their town. They so have the super powers to do it and these three children, against all odds are able to restore peace and harmony. There was a second installment of this franchise titled *3 Bahadur: Revenge of Baba Balaam* which was released in 2017. The first installment garnered around PKR 6.63 crores while *3 Bahadur: Revenge of Baba Balaam* collected around PKR 6.75 crores.

Recently, a trailer of the third installment of the franchise was released and the chronicles of the journey of the superheroes continue. The movie, helmed by Uzair Zaheer Khan was released in theatres on February 2, 2018 and many agree that it was visual treat for animation fans. The landscapes of Pakistan’s northern areas were hard to miss for the audiences and the plot revolved around a topic that is deemed sensitive by many wild life enthusiasts. It was about conserving the wildlife and challenged the practice of hunting. A young, mischievous boy named *Allahyar saves Mehru, a Markhor*, multiple times from hunters and is able to speak to the animals as a reward.

Aziz Jindani-led project titled “*The Donkey King*” also released in 2018 on October 13<sup>th</sup>. The film revolves around a donkey who becomes a king by luck and the plot had enough substance to woo the audiences in Pakistan. Tick Tock, another Pakistani animated movie talked about two teens who time-travel and the mission is to stop an evil genius from distorting the facts of Pakistani history. This movie got a release in Pakistan on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018 and the audiences were fascinated by the two leading characters namely Dania and Hassan meeting heroes of Pakistan including Muhammad Ali Jinnah through the course of their mission.

Ethics give us a sense of right and wrong in a society and hence draw lines within the society and at individual level about what is appropriate and what isn’t. These sets of principles, since evolutionary in nature, can be passed onto others and are

dynamic in nature, which means can continue to evolve with the passage of time. Another important aspect is that these play a role as a mediator during intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions.

Social behavior of a person comes from two ends; nurture and nature. Proponents of this debate attach a lot of importance to both, the nurture and the nature regarding a person's behavior in different situations thrown at him at any time. How a person acts or reacts in a situation comes from the brought up he has underwent in his life and also from what his genetic pool has made him accustomed to do.

The proposed study is quantitative in its nature. Questionnaire circulated among university students of Lahore to collect primary data that if animation is affected their lives in some way or another or do they find animation as a strong medium of conveying information. The usefulness of information provided in animations is also asked from general audience. Names of different Pakistani works have also been added to analyze which animation people find most lessoning and ethical.

This study is going to help out the creators of digital content as well as theatrical content to analyze and understand the impact of the content produced earlier so that they make an informed decision henceforth in choosing the type of content they want to put out there the viewers to hopefully lap up in today's day and age.

Also, this study is hopefully is going to be helpful for researchers who wish to continue the process or want to study a phenomenon related to this.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore changes in ethical standards in viewers brought through animation.
2. Study the effect of animated movies on the social behavior and interactions of the audience.
3. Analyze role of animated contents in addressing the social issues of society.

### **Research Questions**

1. How well Pakistani animation industry is affecting social, educational and ethical standards of viewers?
2. How much animation is successful in presetting social issues of society in opinion of viewers?
3. How social issues can be discussed more on animated documentations as compare to other media?

### **Hypotheses**

H1- There is a correlation between the exposure to Pakistani animated movies and adherence or reinforcement of ethical standards in Pakistani viewers.

H1- Due to the exposure to animated contents viewers are having insensitivity towards social problems.

### **Positive and Negative Impact of Animation on Children**

Violence cannot be funny. There can be no justification for it. Such cartoons like Simpsons where the violence is portrayed through comedy are more dangerous than others likewise. Ledingham and Richard (1993) and Rtuk, (2005) believed that such cartoons remove the fear of violence in the viewers and people are more prone to violent activities. As a result, children watching such cartoon practice whatever shown in the cartoons on their sibling and their classmates because they find it funny and cannot see any evidence of violence in it (Koetzle and Brunell, 1996; Ashfaq, 2012; Hossler, 2004).

However, there is some positive impact of these animated movies too. Wright et al (2001) believed that watching Sesame Street helped kids increase their vocabulary knowledge and building mathematical skills. Further Pott and Swisher (1998) found out that the ratio of taking risks in kids reduced as they started to identify between injury risks.

Locroix (2004) explained that animated world of television also has great importance in the life of viewers and they can be interpreted in a positive manner. He believed that small children recognize the characters in animated films even before watching them. The researchers explored that there is a connection between motivation of learning and animated movies (Siripen, 2009; Barak and Dori, 2010). Gökçearsan (2010) investigated the effect of these animated movies on the viewer's gender development. Animals and lifeless characters are mostly depicted in male and female versions.

Hassan and Daniyal (2013) carried out a study design questionnaire and it's used for data analysis purpose. The result of the data analysis is revolutionizing. The effect of these animated movies is not limited to imitation but also forcing the parents to buy them accessories depicting their favorite character.

Maqsood, Qurat-ul-ain, Amer and Umera (2014) carried out another research concluding that animated movies of Pakistan are one of the causes of our religious failure. Animated movies seen at early age becomes a segment of their sub conscious. When the parents of these children were interviewed, they commented that The Christian and Hindu culture is sub rising in Pakistan and destroying the moral and cultural values. Zahir, Munham, and Ali (2015) carried out an effective survey over the impact of Pakistani animated movies. The result of the survey carried out in the city of Gurjrat showed that if left unmonitored, the cartoons affect the kids both psychologically and socially. The effect is in the long run, damaging the cultural values, initializing the violent character in children and harming the national language.

The researchers believed that people around the age group of 17-35 watch 2.5 hours of animated movies and television every day. The impact of animated movies is not limited to children anymore. Rather it has focused on a larger group including the society and ethics (Larson (2001; Gokulsing ,2009; Kuisma, et al., 2010).

Mahsud, Bakht and Noman (2009) carried out another survey in the city of Sargodha. The research took place under the survey research methodology and stratified sampling. They concluded from their research that boys are more prone to aggressive behavior adaptation rather than girls of the same age group.

Mills (2009) investigated that animation is a communications medium which has a lot of expressive and influential abilities. It can present the real expressions, fiction and nonfiction. Jin, (2011) has explored that animation has a relationship with cognitive processes and emotional responses of humans. The two types of products are selected for this experiment i.e. low involvement type product and high involvement type product. The study checked the human respondents on tripartite attitudinal model i.e. cognition, affection and conation and the impact on animation are very high under low involvement product type.

Aliyeva (2013) mentioned that watching animated movies let the viewers show risky behavior including smoking, drug abuse and drinking. Animated movies such as *Oggy and the Cockroaches* have played a major role in destroying the society and its norms. Habib and Soliman (2015) conducted a survey according to which they generalized the fact that animated cartoons are exposing the society to violence and sexual content that can leave a long-lasting effect. Yousaf et al (2015) suggested that animated cartoons affect the society psychologically where the effect is not limited to aggression. Viewers (not limited to children) are affected by the language suppression, which can bring an imperative change toward the culture. These movies attack the physical and mental levels of the individual. Mahesar, Qazi and Jamali, (2018) have explored the role of media in portraying things as good or bad. This is always a choice present with media members to convey information to masses but the direction of the information is totally under control of media persons i.e. either they depict its positive sides or they depict its negative sides. Clark, (2020) investigated in an article published in the *Daily Mail* debated that animated movies like *The lion King* and *Mickey Mouse* put a bad effect on the social values on the society. In these movies, the animals' talk and work like human which is against the nature. Further, these movies show a friendly nature of the animals, which is the opposite of the reality. Such movies are sending a wrong message across the society and damaging the ethical values.

Concluding the discussion, it can be summarized that it's not okay to mix violence and comedy. Violence can change its shape. It cannot however disappear from the society. It may exist in the shape of an animated movie, comic or a radio program. Farnsworth, S. (2008) investigated the role of animation if learning's. No doubt these have learning outcomes. This is an innovation in multimedia technology. Firstly the animation was welcome with great enthusiasm; the enthusiasm was far away than realism. The research has inspected the field work. The results are mixed now, there as some fiction animations as well as documentary animations in current animation library. The paper explored that there are new ways of learning's now, there are new thinks which are influencing learning habits, and animation is one of the new things.

Mills, (2009) investigated that animation is a communicatory medium which has lot of expressive and influential abilities. It can present the real expressions, fiction and nonfiction. It is an expressive medium because it can express every story genre very effectively. There are novel and documentary ways in which animations can be presented. There are many profound outcomes of the communication medium thus it must be used carefully.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The cultivation theory by George Gerbner is applied to help this study proceed because the problem that this paper is trying to solve is whether ethical standards and social behavior of individuals are changed/affected/influenced by media messages, subtle or "loud".

### **Method**

#### ***Measure and procedure***

This research is quantitative in nature thus the best suited methods are adopted to collect the data. The primary data has collected in form of questionnaires. The unit of analysis is the entity that frames what is under analysis so in this study, a single viewer of animated movie is the unit of analysis.

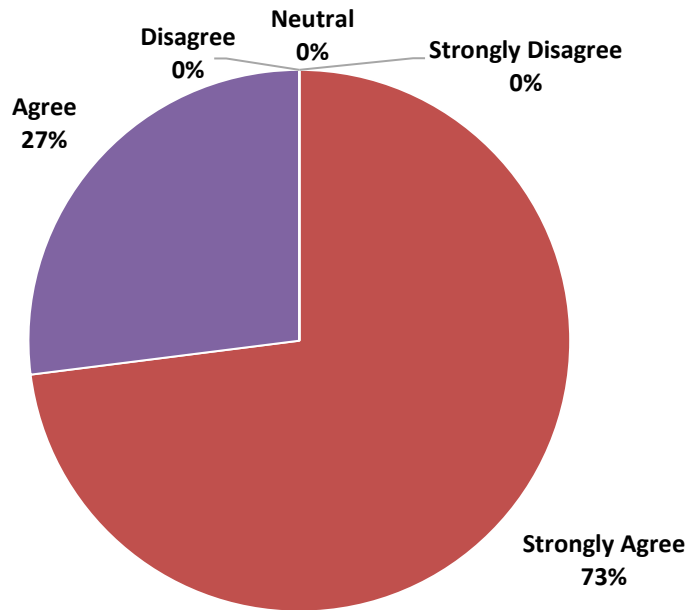
Services of two independent coders were utilized to put in the data and to rule out possible chances of any human error. Same results were achieved using the separate coders for the study. All the viewers of Pakistani animated movies residing in the urban areas of Lahore within the age group of (18-24) years were taken as the universe for this study.

By following the researcher's convenience sampling technique, a total number of 300 viewers were surveyed through a questionnaire developed on 5 point likert scale. The questionnaire was comprised on close-ended questions. The age of respondents was the control variable. Only viewers belonging to the age group of (18-24) selected for this study. There is no limitation of socioeconomic status as well, however people who use social media were be there as questionnaire was sent through online sources. The only concern was exploring effects of the animated contents on viewers as being prepared in Pakistan.

**Data Analysis**

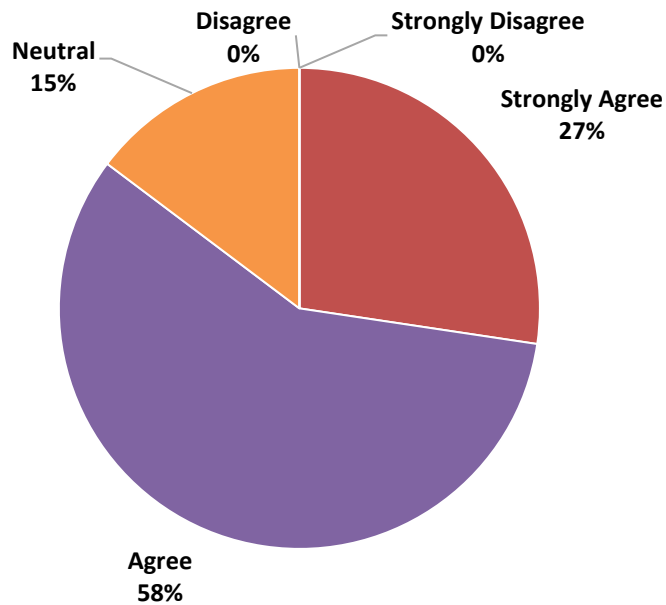
You are a habitual follower of animated content that is put out on digital as well as theatrical platforms

*Fig 1. Viewer or not*



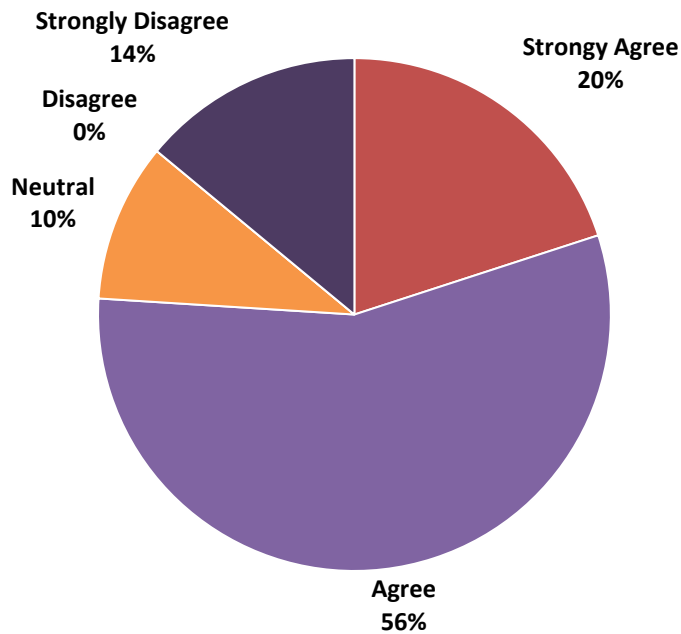
2. The viewers of animated films are an ethically aware and socially informed person.

*Fig-2. The viewers of animated films are ethically aware*



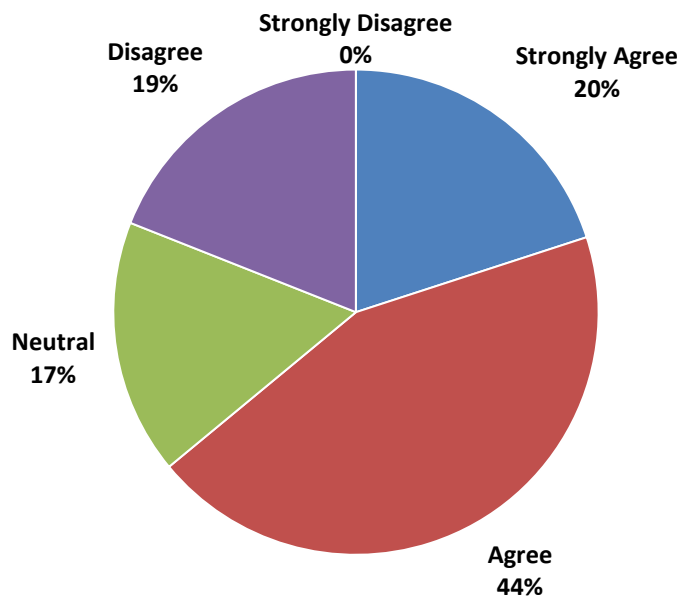
3. Pakistan's animated movies in the past years have had lessons to give to the viewers.

*Fig 3. Lesson-oriented animated films*



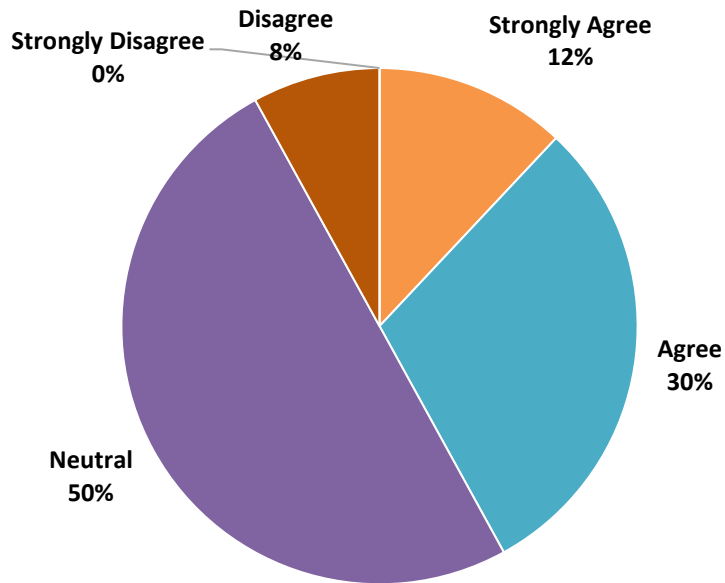
4. You look forward to watching Pakistani animated movies like Allahyar and The Legend of Markhor because you learnt a lesson from the movie.

Fig.4. Learned a lesson from Pakistani animated film

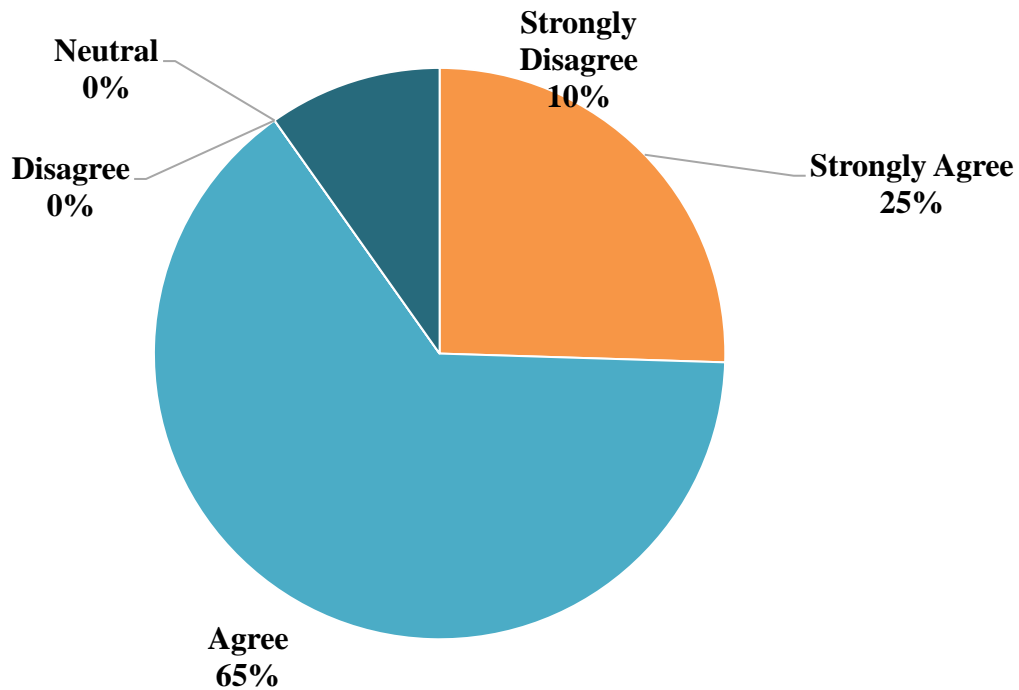


5. You think you've watched a Pakistani animated movie more than 5 times because you really liked it and it talked to you.

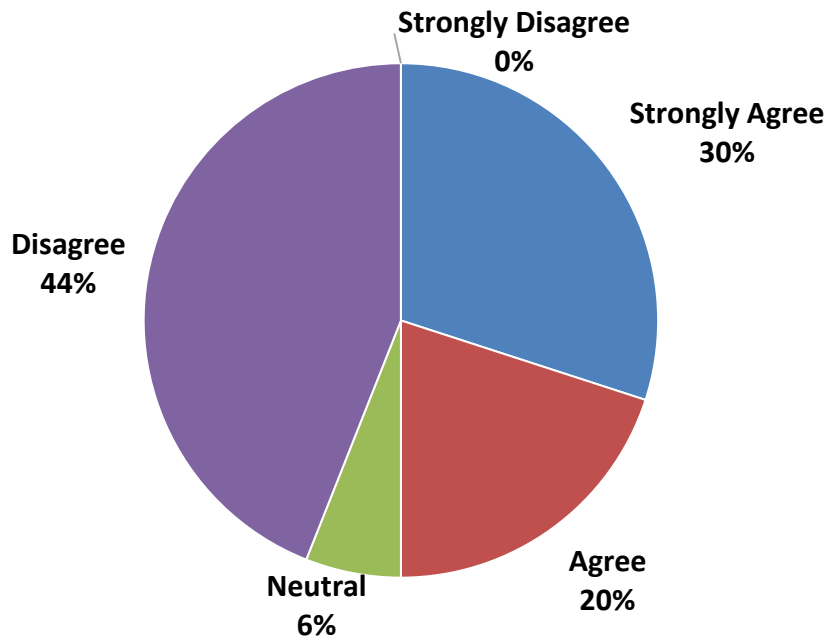
Fig.5. watched animated Pakistani movie more than 5 times



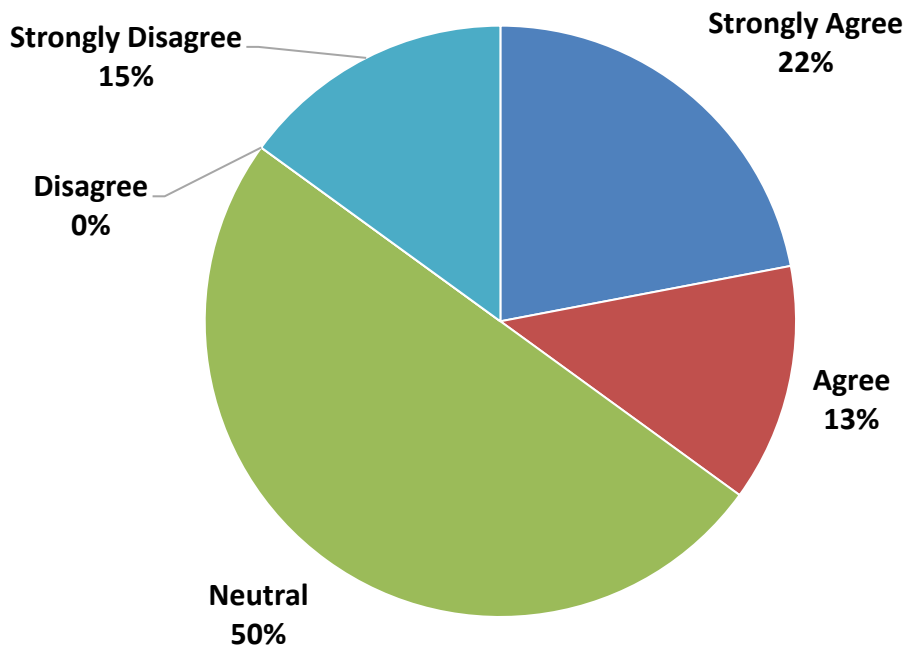
6. You believe that you were able to get some ethical learning from that movie.  
*Fig.6. Ethical learning through animated films*



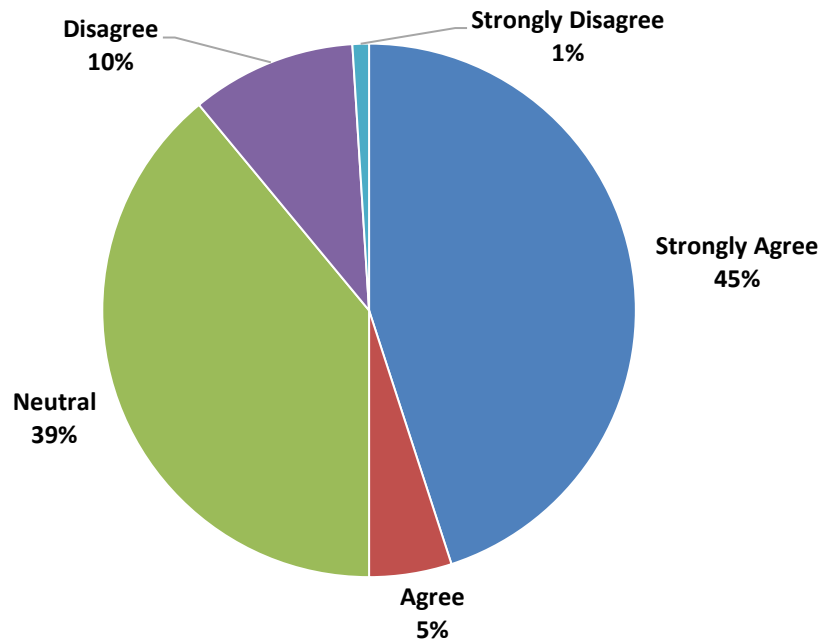
7. You believe that you are a kind of person who implements in his/her life whatever good you get to learn.  
*Fig.7. prone to learn*



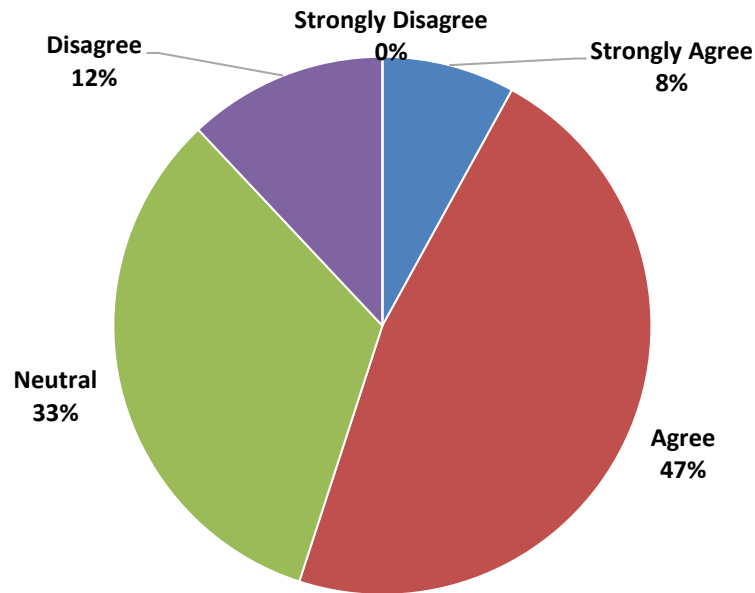
8. You believe that Pakistani animated movies have the capability and momentum to leave societal impact?  
*Fig.8. Do you think animated content has the capability/momentum to leave a societal impact?*



9. I think animated movies provide a medium for 18-24 aged persons to shape up their ethical standards  
*Fig.9. Animated films provides medium to shape up ethical standards*



10. Pakistani animated movies have what it takes to impact people's lives, behaviors and routines.  
*Fig.10. Pakistani animated movies can impact behavior of viewers*





**Hypotheses Testing**

H1- There is a correlation between the exposure to Pakistani animated movies and adherence or reinforcement of ethical standards in Pakistani viewers.

*Correlations*

|                       |            |                                | <i>SIB</i> | <i>CMG</i> |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Spearman's rho</i> | <i>PAM</i> | <i>Correlation Coefficient</i> | 1.000      | .337**     |
|                       |            | <i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>         | .          | .000       |
|                       |            | <i>N</i>                       | 525        | 525        |
|                       | <i>RES</i> | <i>Correlation Coefficient</i> | .337**     | 1.000      |
|                       |            | <i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>         | .000       | .          |
|                       |            | <i>N</i>                       | 525        | 525        |

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The study, upon its conclusion, can state that is a correlation between the exposure to Pakistani animated movies and either adherence or reinforcement of the ethical standards in Pakistani viewers between the age group of 18 to 24.

H1- Due to the exposure to animated contents viewers are having insensitivity towards social problems.

*Correlations*

|                       |            |                                | <i>CMG</i> | <i>DIP</i> |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Spearman's rho</i> | <i>ACV</i> | <i>Correlation Coefficient</i> | 1.000      | -.338**    |
|                       |            | <i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>         | .          | .000       |
|                       |            | <i>N</i>                       | 525        | 525        |
|                       | <i>ISP</i> | <i>Correlation Coefficient</i> | -.338**    | 1.000      |
|                       |            | <i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>         | .000       | .          |
|                       |            | <i>N</i>                       | 525        | 525        |

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The study concludes that the viewers are not being rendered insensitive towards social problems by the animation movies in Pakistan.

**Results**

As results of the first question, show that at least 73% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, “You are a habitual follower of animated content that is put out on digital as well as theatrical platforms”, it is safe to conclude that the respondent data is reliable and would definitely help the study progress. Around 58% of the respondents agreed that they were aware of the ethics, importance of ethics, contributions of ethics and what is meant by being informed by the aforementioned also. However, the second highest figure that the researcher received for this question was 27% which is that of strongly agreed. So 58% and 27% of agreed and strongly agreed statements make this study and its findings reliable.

Another question that made its way to researcher’s questionnaire for this study was whether the respondents thought of Pakistani animated movies to have some form or lessons in their plots or storylines because if the respondents don’t believe there is anything worth taking away with them after the movie over, it means nothing is going influence their behavior of attitude patterns. So for this query, the researcher received an overwhelming 56% of positive response under “Agreed”

while the second highest percentage was that of 20% for strongly agreed. These two percentages also make this study a valid one along with trustworthy subsequent conclusion.

So to the question about whether they thought two of the movies had lessons to give to the viewers, 44% of the respondents agreed while 20% strongly agreed, with these two being the highest percentages amongst the five options on the Likert scale questionnaire.

The next question that was carefully crafted and put on the questionnaire for this study asked the respondents whether they had watched a particular animated movie more than once, over five times to be exact, because they thought it was either really good or they felt a connection with it in a way that it made them feel it was a talking to them in some way. The responses that the researcher received for this question were 50% neutral while 30% of the respondents agreed that they had watched the movie over 5 times.

If a respondent has watched an animated movie more than once, that means it did speak to them in one way or the other and it did communicate to them and they thought there was something worth seeing or watching for again. So whether it was some ethical learning that made them watch it again and again was the right question to be asked next to say the least. The results that the researcher got for this included a staggering 65% of "agreed" which shouldn't be thought of as anything less than exhilarating for this study as this many number of respondents saying that they felt ethically informed through the movie was a great progress for this study.

The next question for the respondents attempted to draw a link between whatever they had watched more than once and its influence on their behaviors or learning. As the question made them think whether they started practicing anything or may be cultivated a habit after watching that particular movie repeatedly. The responses to this question were underwhelming to the notion that Pakistani animated movies did in fact play a role in shaping up people's behaviors and cultivating new attitudes in them. Around 44% of the respondents believed that they did not implement anything that probably they had learnt through a movie. However, to keep the notion alive and not let it rule out completely, another 33% of the people made a starkly different claim and strongly agreed to endorsing and implementing in their personal lives whatever they thought the movie had offered to them to learn and take away from it as a new learning.

The study didn't find much agreement to this statement as at least 50% of respondents observed neutrality over the matter while the second highest percentage that the researcher received pertaining to this question was that of 'strongly agreed' that stood at 22%. Which means that, there are more people who do agree with the statement than the number that doesn't deem animation industry or films to be of use for societal impact.

It explored whether they thought Pakistani animated movies had the content, the drive and the substance to influence the viewers in a way that they shape up their behaviors at some time after watching the content. To researcher's excitement and this study's bright results, a staggering 45% was recorded in support of "strongly agreed". However, the other responses that were recorded to this very query were 1% in strong disagreement, 39% posing neutral, 5 percent in agreement while 10% in disagreement.

The final question on the form which was offered to 300 respondents attempted to learn people's belief in whether Pakistani animated movies had the force and authority to impact individuals' behavior. The respondents were quite clearly asked whether they thought that the animated movies could impact their behavior in any way or not. To which a huge chunk of 47% people disagreed, however not one respondent strongly disagreed to the assumption. At least 33% of the respondents maintained neutrality in the matter, 12% disagreed and only 8% strongly believed that Pakistani animated movies could in fact influence or shape up viewer's behavior.

## **Discussion**

Animation is present in the world since decades but it is not very old in Pakistan. The genre has changed from imagery to moving movie due to computer aids. The objective of animation varies from marketing, displaying information and educating people regarding social issues. There is a lot of capacity of creative work in this genre. Different theories disclose the relation between memory and animation, learning and animation and cognitive understanding of concepts and animation. Literature review as well as research is done to collect qualitative data. The developed part of the world is successfully using this genre in field of academics to clear chemistry concepts; this helps to increase creative skills of viewers as it has powers to display both fiction and nonfiction. The bitter realities like Hiroshima are also displayed in form of animated documentary on various notable channels. In Pakistan there is less awareness present that how this genre contributes to educating viewer's regarding social aspects. The ethical representation of this genre may eradicate evils of society and reduces dilemmas of society as this genre is accepted as the comic and people take the message on this genre on easy note. The study concludes that it does not wholly replace other learning mediums but it can explicitly work in the field of educating about ethics, science as well as science to viewers of all age groups. the study concludes that few Pakistani movies which are released under this genre has proven to be highly ethical and influencing behavior of viewers very positively regarding animal rights.

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