

CARTOON VIOLENCE ATTITUDE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN: A DESCRIPTIVE CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

Background: Primary school age is a dynamic phase of rapid growth and development; children experience advancements and are easily influenced. **Aim:** this study aimed to assess the correlation between Cartoon violence and psychological well-being among primary school children. **Design:** A descriptive correlative research design was used. **Setting:** The study was conducted at Pyramids I national School. **Subjects:** A purposive sampling of 190 students. **Data collection Tools:** Three tools were used for data collection. Tool I: structured interviewing questionnaire, was used to assess sociodemographic characteristics of both students and parents. Tool II Attitude Scale for children towards cartoon violence, was used to assess children's attitude towards cartoon violence. Tool III Stirling well-being scale, was used to assess children's level of psychological wellbeing. **Results:** The study shows that more than two third of first graders and, more than half of six graders have positive level of attitude about cartoon violence, two fifth of studied children had good psychological wellbeing. **Conclusion:** There is a highly negative correlation between total attitude toward cartoon violence and psychological wellbeing. **Recommendation:** Design an educational program aimed at teachers in schools and conduct interactive, well-structured sessions by school nurses or psychiatric nursing experts.

Keywords: Cartoon Violence Attitude, Primary School, Psychological Wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

Cartoons serve as a major entertainment source for school-aged children, who often turn to television to fill the void created by their parents' busy schedules (Arshad et al., 2026). As a result, repeated viewing of certain scenes may affect their psychological development, attitudes, and decision-making patterns (Bhattacharya et al., 2025). Cartoons are full of humor, fantasy, and adventure ideal for the creative minds of children and remain one of those media forms that keeps children attached to it, and comes back by choice (Hinten et al., 2025).

Prior the technology advancements of today's world, children spent more of their time playing outdoors and engaging in physical activities. Today, however, many prefer watching their favorite characters on television and often remain seated in front of screens at home isolated for long periods without complaining, thus affecting psychological wellbeing (Iqbal & Faizal, 2025).

Media content impacts children's psychological wellbeing, repeated exposure to violent content desensitizes children to violent actions, eliciting a decrease in emotions such as empathy and moral concern in real-world situations. Consequently, children develop greater social tolerance of violence, exhibit weaker reactions to actual aggression, and experience a decline in moral sensitivity (**Abbas et al., 2025**). Cartoons can have a harmful impact on children's behavior, family life, and health. It is commonly recognized that excessive cartoon viewing can be detrimental. (**Sheikh et al., 2023**).

It is important to maintain a balance between screen time and other activities that promote growth. Moreover, parents should ensure that the children have access to information that is both healthy and of high quality. (**Ijaz et al., 2025**). Additionally, studies show that children's psychological health is seriously threatened by cartoon violence, which can lead to social isolation, anxiety, and hostility. To combat these negative consequences, nurses are urged to create psycho-educational programs for parents and guardians, engage in community education initiatives, and promote ethical entertainment sector practices (**Mittal et al., 2025**).

Significance

Global burden of disease data shows that between 1990 and 2019, the age-standardized rates of disability-adjusted life years for mental disorders in children and adolescents increased significantly, and by 2019 approximately 8.8% of young people globally had been diagnosed with some form of mental illness (**Piao et al., 2022**).

Jonathan Haidt (2024) argues that the play-based childhood was ultimately "wiped out" by the arrival of the phone-based childhood in the early 2010s, resulting in four foundational harms: social deprivation, sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation, and addiction

Nationally, recent data indicates that access to digital screens among Egyptian children is both widespread and begins at a very young age. A 2025 survey revealed that 88% of parents use smart devices to occupy their children, with over half (55%) receiving their first personal smartphone or tablet between the ages of 3 and 7 years.

Furthermore, 85 % of elementary school children use cell phones for learning activities. However, this high level of access is often coupled with a lack of safety measures (**Kaspersky, 2025**).

This unrestricted access has significantly contributed to the rising rates of mental illness among younger age groups, as well as the emergence of violent crimes within societies. Consequently, these developments highlight the critical role of the nursing profession in raising awareness and attempting to control the situation.

SUBJECT AND METHODS

Aim of the study

The current study was aimed to assess the correlation between cartoon violence attitude, aggressive behavior and psychological wellbeing among primary school children through

the following:

- 1) Assess cartoon violence attitude among primary school children
- 2) Assess types of psychological wellbeing among primary school children
- 3) Assess correlation between Cartoon violence and psychological well-being among primary school children.

Research design:

A descriptive correlational research design was used to conduct this study

Research Settings:

The study was carried at a private national School, Pyramids I national School, in Giza. Pyramids I national school has all educational levels, starting from kindergarten to high school, and there is an average of 600 students in the primary school.

Subjects:

A purposive sample is used to conduct the study according to the following inclusion criteria:

- 1) Primary School stage
- 2) Both genders
- 3) Children free from chronic and mental illness

Data Collection Tools:

Tool (I): Structed interviewing questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed by the investigator and included two sections:

Section I: Children's sociodemographic characteristics including; age, sex, primary educational level, previous year grades, child's ranking, who do you live with, family size and type, number of hours spent watching TV, favorite cartoon and favorite cartoon character.

Section II: Parent's sociodemographic data including; marital status, place of residence, occupation, level of education and family's income.

Tool (II): Attitude Scale for children towards carton violence (*Odukamaiya, 2014*).

The Attitude Scale for children towards carton violence was adapted from (*Odukamaiya, 2014*). This scale was used to assess the attitude of children toward cartoon violence. It consists of 10 items. The degrees were distributed as (0) for No, (1) for sometimes & (2) for yes, the total scoring system of children attitude scale toward cartoon violence will be calculated and classified in two levels as following:

Level of attitude	Total score levels	%
negative attitude	(0 - 11) degree	<60 %
Positive attitude	from (12- 20) degree	≥ 60 %

Tool (III): Stirling well-being scale (SCWBS), (Liddle & Carter, 2015).

The 15-item Stirling Children's Well-being Scale (SCWBS) designed by **(Liddle and Carter, 2015)** was used to assess emotional and psychological subjective well-being for children. The scale consists of 15 items that are divided into two dimensions; positive emotional state and positive outlook both consisting of six items each. While the remaining three items indicate the existence of social desirability. Each item has five possible answers; never= 1, rare= 2, sometimes= 3, often=4 and always= 5.

Interpretation	Total Score levels	%
Poor psychological wellbeing	Below 30	48%
Moderate psychological wellbeing	30 - 45	50-75%
Good psychological wellbeing	Above 45	75%

Ethical Considerations:

An official permission to conduct the proposed study was obtained from the faculty of Nursing and Ethics Committee at Capital university at 18/12/2024, (reference no. 45). Participation in the study is voluntary and subjects were given complete full information about the study and their role before signing the informed consent. The ethical considerations were included explaining the purpose and nature of the study, stating the possibility to withdraw at any time, confidentiality of the information where it was not be accessed by any other party without taking permission of the participants. Ethics, values, culture and beliefs were respected

Pilot Study:

The pilot study was done on 10% of the sample to examine the clarity of questions and time needed to complete the study tools. Subjects included in the pilot study were included in the study sample as minor modifications were done.

Phases of the study:

1- Assessment phase:

The investigator identified multiple schools with adequate student number and principals who expressed willingness to participate. After reviewing these options, the selection was made on the school where the investigator had previously studied. This school choice facilitated easier access, minimized potential disruptions, and made obtaining the necessary permissions and cooperation simpler.

Ethical and official approvals for the study were made, beginning with approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Faculty of Nursing, Capital University. Following this, official administrative permission was obtained from the Dean the Faculty of Nursing to approach the study setting, and written approval from the private school principal was received after explaining the study's aim. Regarding the study tools, they were translated into Arabic and then tested for content validity by three field experts, after which minor modifications were made. Finally, the reliability of the study tools was established, and appropriate statistical tests were used to measure the internal consistency of the items.

2- Planning phase:

It was planned to recruit participants from the selected school, with the investigator visiting the school twice per week (every Monday and Wednesday). Data collection was arranged to be conducted by interviewing each student individually during break time or free tuition hours, allocating a total of 20-25 minutes to complete all three tools. Parental consent was taken prior to the study, by the school's social worker, who contacted the students' parents via a WhatsApp group, explaining the purpose of the research and seeking their initial approval. Oral consent was planned to be obtained from each study subject prior to data collection. Regarding behavioral assessment, direct behavioral observation was planned to monitor children's conduct during class sessions and break periods. Additionally, collaboration was arranged with school social workers to identify and evaluate students exhibiting frequent violent behaviors or a persistent pattern of disciplinary infractions.

3- Implementing phase

During the implementation phase, the investigator visited the selected school two days per week (every Monday and Wednesday). The investigator interviewed the participants, introduced herself, and explained the purpose of the study. The investigator collected data by herself through interviewing each student and completing each questionnaire during break time and/or free tuition hours, with each session requiring 20-25 minutes to finish all three tools. A child-friendly approach was employed, as the investigator gathered data through a fun, non-intrusive method that respected and integrated children's typical play routines, recreational activities, and basic needs. Additionally, the investigator used direct behavioral observation to monitor children's conduct during class sessions and throughout break periods

4- Evaluation phase

Data quality was assured by ensuring that data were collected accurately and consistently through direct interviewing and observation by the investigator.

Reliability:

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the adapted tools. Reliability of the tools was tested to determine the extent to which the questionnaire items are related to each other. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1 with higher values (more than 0.7) denote acceptable reliability. It was a valid and reliable questionnaire with psychometric properties (Mahdy et al., 2021; Al-Sayaghi et al., 2022). The internal consistency reliability of the tool was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures how well a set of items measures a single unidimensional latent construct. The study tools were tested for its internal consistency by Cronbach's Alpha.

Tools	Cronbach's Alpha	Grade
Attitude toward cartoon violence	0.880	Excellent
Overt aggression scale	0.912	Excellent
Psychological wellbeing scale	0.848	Very good

Statistical Analysis

Upon completion of data collection, the collected data were organized, tabulated; statistically analyzed by using an IBM personal computer with Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 24. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in form of number and percentage, mean, standard division, and Qualitative variables were comparing using the chi- square test. Correlation between the study variable were tested by using Pearson correlation. Also, data presented in form bar chart and pie chart. A statistically significant difference was considered if p-value was ≤ 0.05 . A highly statistically significant difference was considered if p-value was ≤ 0.001 .

RESULTS

Table (1): Distribution of the studied children regarding their socio-demographic characteristics (n=190):

Demographic data		Total students N=190	
		No.	%
Age (years)	6≤8	89	46.8
	9≤11	53	27.9
	12-13	48	25.3
	Mean ± SD	7.32±2.45	
Sex	Boy	104	54.7
	Girl	86	45.3
Child ranking	First	102	53.7
	Second	42	22.1
	Last	40	21.1
	Others (third)	6	3.2
Previous years grade	90-100	12	6.3
	Less than 90-80	117	61.6
	Less than 80 -70	58	30.5
	Less than 70 -60	3	1.6
Family size	3 members	38	20.0
	4 members	90	47.4
	5 members	45	23.7
	Others (more 5)	17	8.9
Family type	Nuclear	171	90.0
	Single parent	2	1.1
	Extended	17	8.9
Who do you live with	Both parents	171	90.0
	Mother only	2	1.1
	Grandparents	17	8.9
Number of hours spent watching TV	Less than 1 hour	54	28.4
	2-3 hours	106	55.8
	3-6 hours	25	13.2
	More than 6 hours	5	2.6

Table 1 Illustrates that 46.8% of the studied children have $6 \leq 8$ years old with mean $\pm$ S D (7.32 ± 2.45), 54.7% are boys. Also, 53.7% of the studied children are in the first rank and 61.6% have less than 90-80 in previous years grade. Regarding family size, type, 47% of their family have 5 members and 90% considered a nuclear family type. In addition, 55.8% of the studied children spend 2-3 hours watching T.V.

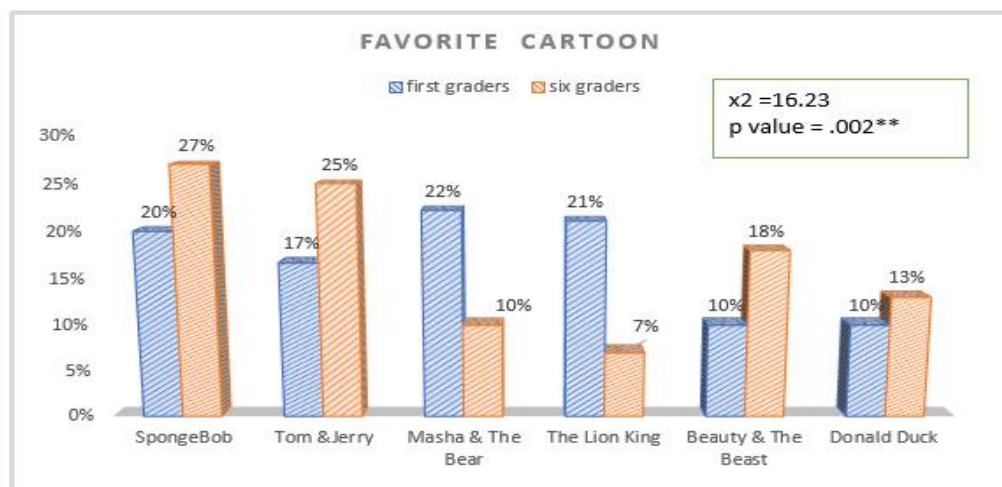


Figure (1): Percentage distribution of the studied primary school regarding their favorite cartoon (n=190)

Figure 1 Shows that the most favorite cartoon among first graders are Masha and the bear (22.2%), the lion king (21.1%) and the SpongeBob (20%), while the most favorite cartoon among six graders are SpongeBob (27%), Tom and Jerry (25%) and the Beauty and the Beast (18%).

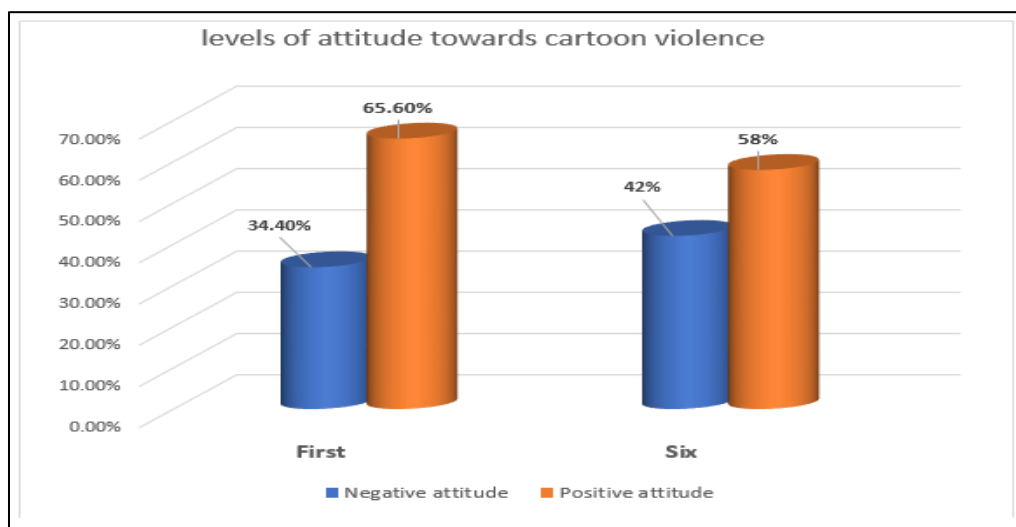


Figure (2): Percentage Distribution of the Studied first and six primary school children according to their levels of attitude toward cartoon violence (N=190)

Figure 2 Shows that 65.6% of the studied first graders children have positive attitude level toward cartoon violence compared to 58% of six graders. while 34.4% of the studied first graders children have negative attitude level toward cartoon violence compared to 42% of six graders.

Psychological wellbeing levels among the studied primary school children

Table (2): Comparison between 1st and 6th primary school children regarding their psychological wellbeing (n=190):

Psychological wellbeing items	First year students (n=90)										Six-year students (n=100)										X2	p-value
	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always		Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
I think good things will happen in my life	1	1.1	1	1.1	14	15.6	19	21.1	55	61.1	2	2	5	5	8	8	28	28	57	57	1.29	.15
I have always told the truth	0	0	6	6.7	29	32.2	11	12.2	44	48.9	3	3	6	6	18	18	51	51	22	22	18.91	.000**
I've been able to make choices easily	1	1.1	7	7.8	24	26.7	16	17.8	42	46.7	4	4	11	11	23	23	18	18	44	44	.13	.909
I can find lots of fun things to do	2	2.2	4	4.4	13	14.4	17	18.9	54	60.0	2	2	9	9	16	16	47	47	28	28	1.23	.098
I feel that I am good at some things	2	2.2	6	6.7	11	12.2	23	25.6	48	53.3	0	0	1	1	12	12	23	23	64	64	3.2	.983
I think lots of people care about me	0	0	4	4.4	12	13.3	19	21.1	55	61.1	1	1	3	3	5	5	34	34	57	57	.24	.172
I like everyone I have met	2	2.2	2	2.2	11	12.2	18	20.0	57	63.3	22	22	17	17	27	27	13	13	21	21	22.4	.001**
I think there are many things I can be proud of	0	0	9	10.0	11	12.2	13	14.4	57	63.3	1	1	3	3	6	6	14	14	76	76	1.34	.067
I've been feeling calm	3	3.3	2	2.2	15	16.7	16	17.8	54	60.0	16	16	8	8	27	27	26	26	23	23	5.01	.0514
I've been in a good mood	1	1.1	0	0	12	13.3	21	23.3	56	62.2	4	4	6	6	36	36	35	35	19	19	4.12	.0599
I enjoy what each new day brings	0	0	0	0	10	11.1	17	18.9	63	70.0	5	5	2	2	32	32	36	36	35	35	14.11	.000**
I've been getting on well with people	1	1.1	5	5.6	9	10.0	22	24.4	53	58.9	5	5	15	15	41	41	20	20	19	19	4.56	.053
I always share my sweets	1	1.1	7	7.8	13	14.4	18	20.0	51	56.7	5	5	5	5	16	16	16	16	58	58	2.32	.532
I've been cheerful about things	0	0	2	2.2	9	10.0	17	18.9	62	68.9	1	1	10	10	19	19	39	39	31	31	19.23	.005**
I've been feeling relaxed	0	0	3	3.3	10	11.1	17	18.9	60	66.7	0	0	0	0	39	39	20	20	41	41	.12	.821

Table 2 Illustrates that (48.9%) of the studied subjects in first graders always " told the truth "Compared to six graders are (22%) and the difference is high significant at (p=.000**). Also, (63.3%) of studied subjects first graders always " like everyone hey have met " compared to six graders are (21%) and the difference is high significant at (p=.001**). Furthermore, (70%) of studied subjects in first graders always " enjoy what each new day brings " compared to six graders are (35%) and the difference is high significant at (p=.000**).

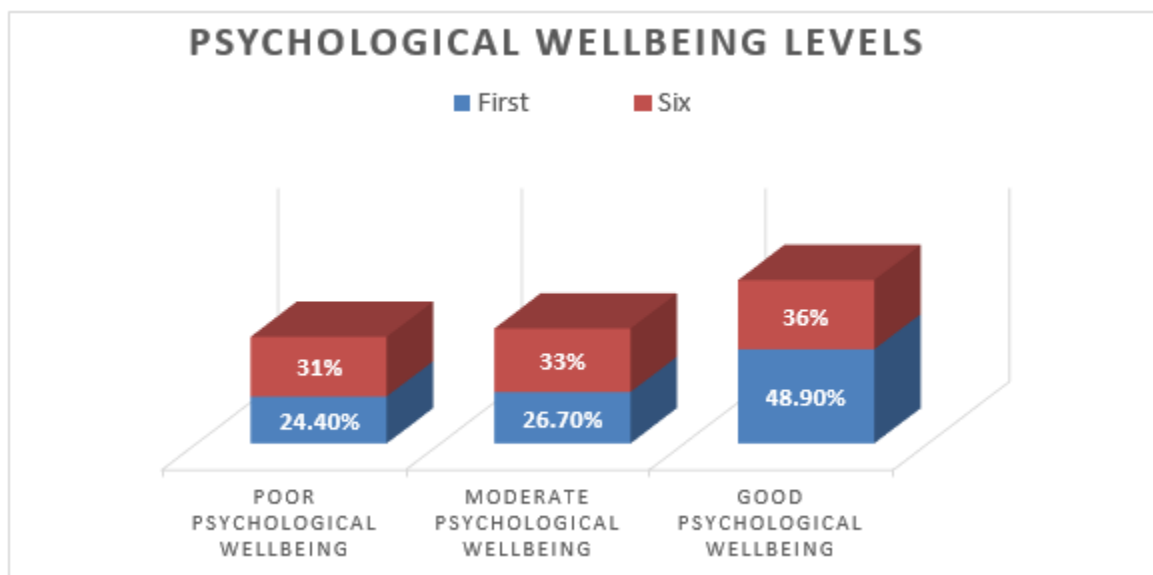


Figure (3): Levels of total psychological wellbeing among 1st and 6th primary school children

Figure 3 Illustrates that 48.9% of the studied first graders children have good psychological wellbeing level, compared to 36% of six graders children. And 26.7% the studied first graders have moderate psychological wellbeing level compared to 33% of six graders children. While, 24.4% the studied first graders have poor psychological wellbeing level compared to 31% of six graders children

Table (3): Correlation between studied children' Attitude toward cartoon violence, aggression and psychological wellbeing (n=190)

Study variables		Total Attitude
Total psychological wellbeing	R	-.314** .000
	p-value	
	p-value	

r= Pearson correlation coefficient.

Table 3: Clarifies that, there was a highly negative correlation between total attitude toward cartoon violence and psychological wellbeing

DISCUSSION

Primary school children, typically aged between six and twelve years, undergo rapid development. During this critical developmental stage, children's minds possess a substantial capacity for imitating observed behaviors. Cartoon violence, defined as the portrayal of aggressive, violent, and hostile acts through media sources, has been shown to produce several behavioral and psychological effects among young viewers (Mahmoud et al., 2022).

Regarding sociodemographic characteristics of children, the current study results revealed that, nearly half of the studied children had 6 to less than 9 years old, and slightly more than half were boys, just over half of the children hold the first rank in sibling order, and nearly three-fifths had previous year grades between 80–90.

Regarding family size and type, almost half of the children came from families with five members, and the vast majority live in a nuclear family. Furthermore, more than half of the children spent 2–3 hours daily watching television.

Regarding favorite cartoon, among first graders, Masha and the Bear was the most preferred accounting for more than one-fifth of responses, followed closely by The Lion King slightly and SpongeBob SquarePants one-fifth as well.

In contrast, among sixth graders, SpongeBob SquarePants emerged as the most endorsed cartoon more than one-quarter, followed by Tom and Jerry one-quarter, while Beauty and the Beast was the least preferred among this age group by less than one-fifth.

From the researcher's point of view, Age was viewed as a potential influence on cartoon preferences, as cognitive, social, and interest-based development progressed with maturity.

In contrast, a study titled "Dubbed Cartoons and Their Impact on the Personality of Egyptian Children," by **Al-Sayed et al., (2025)** which was carried out in Egypt, that revealed no significant difference in cartoon viewing based on children's age, suggesting that favorite cartoons did not change substantially with age.

Regarding total attitudes toward cartoon violence among the sampled primary school children, almost two thirds of first graders and more than half of six graders had positive attitude towards cartoon violence. In the investigator's point of view, those findings demonstrated significant age-related differences in attitudes toward cartoon violence among primary school children.

similar findings were reported by **Pavlova et al. (2022)** in a study titled " Portrayals of pain in children's popular media: mothers' and fathers' beliefs and attitudes," stated that presence of violence in children's media is seen by many parents as "comedic or slapstick – exaggerated and entertaining," and the entertainment value has been identified as an important feature of such content perception and consumption

As regards **total psychological wellbeing** among 1st and 6th graders' children, the present study results clarified that less than half of 1st graders children had good psychological wellbeing compared to one third of 6th graders' children. Also, less than one quarter of 1st graders children had poor psychological wellbeing compared to nearly than one third of 6th graders' children.

According to the investigator's point of view, younger children report higher psychological wellbeing due to simpler social expectations and enjoyment of daily school life, while older children face more complex academic and social demands that may impact psychological well-being.

This result is in agreement with study "Changes in children's well-being and mental health across the early school years" by **Devine et al. (2025)**, that was conducted in the United Kingdom, showed that evidence showing changes in children's psychological wellbeing across early primary school years, with some aspects of wellbeing such as; life satisfaction and positive affect, declining as children progress to higher grades.

Regarding **correlation between studied children' attitude toward cartoon violence and psychological wellbeing**, present findings clarify that, there is a highly negative correlation between total attitude toward cartoon violence and psychological wellbeing, These findings may be attributed to the likelihood that children internalize violent content acquired from aggressive cartoon films and perceive such content as real, leading them to inhabit a fantasy-oriented rather than reality-based framework, and consequently experience adverse psychological states including anxiety, depression, negativism, and diminished psychological well-being.

While there was a highly negative correlation between total attitude toward cartoon violence and psychological wellbeing, also, total aggression and total psychological wellbeing with a high negative correlation. Similarly, in a study titled "Examining correlates of aggression and mediating effect of psychological distress between exposure to media violence and aggression in lebanese adults" conducted by **Chabbouh et al. (2023)** revealed that media violence exposure was associated with both higher aggression and psychological distress.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that more than two third of first graders children had positive level of attitude about cartoon violence. also, more than half of six graders had positive level of attitude about cartoon violence. Also, more than two third of the studied children had positive attitude level toward carton violence, while less than two fifth of them had negative attitude level. The study revealed that, two fifth of the studied primary school children had good psychological wellbeing, while nearly one third of them had moderate psychological wellbeing and slightly more than one quarter had poor psychological wellbeing. Meanwhile, there was a highly negative correlation between total attitude toward carton violence and psychological wellbeing

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are suggested, at nursing personnel level, The school nurses should incorporate regular assessment of children's exposure to all entertainment shows including television shows or other online content during school health visits and routine psychosocial screening. At the school organizational level, awareness programs should be organized for teachers, parents, and school health personnel to highlight the potential negative effects of cartoon violence on children's aggressive behavior and psychological wellbeing. At the further research level, Further research should explore other variables affecting children's aggressive behavior and wellbeing including; parental supervision/ support, different parenting styles, parental habits of television and

device usage, as well as other types of electronics used such as social media platforms, online games, and YouTube content

Limitations of the study

During data collection from the students several challenges were encountered. Many Students were disruptive, requiring the researcher to engage them in games in order to collect the required information. Moreover, on many days, data collection was only possible during break times when no free class periods were available. The children were also difficult to manage, which prolonged the data collection process. As a result, some questionnaires could not be completed within the allotted time, and those participants were excluded from the sample.

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