The Influence of Animation on the Social Development of Preschool Children

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Abstract

With the rapid development of new media production techniques as well as the popularity of animations, we have entered a "animation era", and animations have fully gotten into the world of preschool children. Preschool children are at a critical stage of social development, and a good education is important and essential to them. From this perspective, this paper investigates the educational impact of animations on the social development of preschool children, and proposes suggestions and countermeasures to promote the benign social development of preschool children in the process of growth.

Keywords: Animation, Animation education, Children's social development

Introduction

With the rapid development of new media production techniques and the popularity of animations, we have entered a "animation era", the domestic and international animation market is also growing prosperity, and animation has become a "necessity" for preschool children's lives. The animations such as "Chicken Rainbow","Qiaohu" and "PinkFong",convey the thought of works through vivid and interesting art forms, moreover, the protagonist's language, behavior, etc., in the film can subtly promote the preschool children's development of cognition, understanding the world, cultivating the personality, and furthering their formation of correct values and behaviors. However, the violent elements in many popular animations can also enhance children's aggressive behavior, which is harmful to their behavioral development and character formation. In addition, the long-term immersion of preschool children in animations will lead to the problems such as being unsociable, self-centered, and weak interpersonal relationships. Therefore, animations have a great educational impact on the preschool children's social development. This paper will investigate the influence of animations on the social development of preschool children from four aspects: cognition, behavior, interpersonal relationship as well as moral development, and aim to put forward some suggestions and countermeasures that can exert the positive influence of animations on their education to facilitate the positive development of socialization of preschool children.

1 .The relationship between animations and the social development of preschool children

In 1927, Disney produced the first sound animation "Steamboat Willie", and since then animations had become popular around the world. In the "Case Study of the Influence of Animations on Children's Socialization", Luo Yuan indicated that "in the late 1920s, as scientific research methods had been established as studies in sociology, psychology and education, besides, people's attention to the impact of the emerging film industry had increased."[1]As early as 1929-1931, the Payne Fund Studies conducted a large-scale investigation on the issue of "the impact of movies on children,"[2]it mainly discussed the aspects of the film to information acquisition, attitude change, emotional stimulation, degree of health damage, erosion of moral level and influence on behavior, which laid the foundation for theoretical research. China's research on the influence of mass media on children originated in the 1990s. Ma Hemin pointed out in the "New Education Sociology" that "the mass media had become the 'fourth education power' besides the family, school and peer groups. Television and the Internet were the most important mass media currently affecting socialization."[3]In the social environment of highly developed new media, carton communication has become a very common form of mass media. Sociologist Richard Schaefer elaborated the different perceptions of the mass media from different perspectives in "Society and Life".[4]Among them, the functional theory considers that mass media has such functions as entertainment, socialization, strengthening social morality, granting status, and stimulating consumption. The interaction theory examines the way that the media shapes everyday social behaviors from the microscopic view, and believes the common TV perception and the public image implicitly convey the self-definition in reality. The mass media (animation) has the socialization function, which can influence the viewer's behavior and moral development through the emotional interaction between the viewer and the image. From a psychological point of view, Jean Piaget, Switzerland's greatest child psychologist, divided the cognitive development of children aged 0-15 into four stages: the sensory stage (0-2 years old), pre-operational stage (2-6,7 years old), specific operation stage (6, 7-11, 12 years old) and formal computing stage (11, 12-14, 15 years old).[5]The preschool children referred to in this literature are children between the ages of 2 and 6 who have not officially entered the primary school stage, they are in the pre-operational stage of cognitive development. This stage is a crucial period for children's physical and psychological development, they are full of curiosity about new things, have their own consciousness and emotions, in addition, a preliminary analysis and imagination. They will describe the

world through some symbols. Furthermore, children at this stage are self-centered and lack the ability to judge and control themselves. They don't think about the environment in which others live, instead, they look at the world from their own point of view, and are easily influenced by the things they touch, thus blindly trusting and imitating. Albert Bandura, a famous American psychologist, put forward the social learning theory in the 1960s, [6] which emphasizes observational learning and believes that children's social behavior is the result of direct learning, imitation, and reinforcement. Bandura believed that television was the source of behavior establishment, whether the role behavior was attractive, the complexity of role model behavior, the behavioral outcome of role models and so on all affected the behavior of learning observers.

2 .The impact of animations on the social development of preschool children

From the perspectives of sociology, psychology, communication and education, animations play an important and positive role in the process of cognitive development, behavioral development, interpersonal relationship development and moral development of preschool children, however, the negative effects of animations at the same time cannot be ignored.

A.The impact of animation on the cognitive development of preschool children

Preschool children are at the most critical stage of cognitive development. "They will complete their self-awareness and social understanding in the process of watching animations."[7]Children's cognitive development mainly includes understanding, memory, observation, thinking and imagination. In the early days of preschool children, audio-visual will gradually develop, due to the features of animations such as the bright colors, strong dubbing effect and exaggerated character shape, it will effectively promote children's ability to perceive shape and color visually and audibly. The memories of preschool children develop from the process of storage to retrieval, characterized by strong intuitive features, which encourages children to recall often in a repeating way, so that they can form memories.In addition, attention is also one of the important factors for children's psychological development. The animation image is vivid, colorful, and the rhythm of various music sounds is compact, which "can greatly mobilize children's attention in a limited time, raise their attention, and resonate and concentrate on the animation, providing them full imagination."[8]The main feature of children's thinking development is the specific image, animations are very rich in content, and they can enable children to grasp the information without knowing it, broaden their horizons, and accumulate a lot of emotional materials for the development of children's thinking, which greatly promotes the development of children's thinking. The unintentional imagination predominates in the process of imagination development. The story in the animation itself is full of whimsy, which can develop the imagination of preschool children in a very natural and acceptable way.

Because of the fragility and sensitivity of the psychological development for preschool children, they are highly susceptible to external forces and are shaped in the direction of external forces, therefore, many countries have broadcasted hierarchically and sold animations. For instance, "The Japan Film Ethics Committee established the animation classification system in 1998 and it is still used today" [9]The "all-age" animation film belongs to the G or PG rating, that is, the animation basically does not include swearing, violence, nudity, drug abuse, and sex scenes, the value scale and the narrative of the film are accepted by the audience of all ages. However, the quality of many domestic animations is currently patchy, many adult factors will cause the negative impact on the cognitive development of preschool children. Additionally, the obsession with animations can also lead children to indulge in the virtual world, lacking the feeling of the real world, which is not conducive to their physical and mental health and the positive development of cognition.

B.The impact of animations on the behavioral development of preschool children

The theory of social learning believes that when children observe the contents of the animation, they will recognize the characters or behavior of the characters in the animation, and thus imitate the behavior of the characters. In the process of imitating the behavior of others, children have acquired new behaviors, which have gradually affected the development of children's social behaviors at the same time."Children's behaviors such as helping, sharing, and cooperating are prosocial behaviors, and often accompanied by emotions, e.g. generosity, sacrifice, compassion, and fearlessness, while the opposite behaviors are antisocial behaviors."[10]Animations create the excitement center by audiovisual stimulation to excite children's emotions. When children watch some relaxing and soothing animations, they can get emotional relaxation and get a happy joy, which helps them maintain an optimistic and positive attitude.School-age children are at a critical time of observational learning and language acquisition, they can't judge the real life and virtual scenes, once they encounter similar scenes in their lives, they will imitate the behaviors in their memories, causing adverse consequences.

C.The impact of animations on the development of interpersonal relationships among preschool children

The development of interpersonal relationships among preschool children is often susceptible to the role of animations, because the characters in the animations are designed and behaved in a way that makes them feel like they are getting along with their peers, giving them a feeling of peer relationship, very close and interesting. Children's peer relationship is a relationship established by children with similar levels of psychological development in the process of communication. The cultivation of this relationship can promote children's social value, cultivate social ability, develop correct cognition and good personality. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, intimate peer relationships can enable children to acquire the needs of belonging and love, the need for respect, and strengthen children's behavior, promote their role model learning, and support their emotional development.

D.The impact of animations on the moral development of preschool children

"The development of ethical behavior of preschool children is the process of their psychological quality formation. One of the most important results of children's social development is that they can act according to certain ethical standards finally "[11]. The performance of the emotional core of excellent animation performance is often the most beautiful aspect of human nature, such as family, friendship and honesty, courage, self-confidence and hard work, which play a very important role in the development of children's morality and values. The characters in animations also provide an example for children. Children can experience various behavioral norms in the process of imitating various social roles which can help children cultivate the moral qualities of helping children, cooperation, friendship and self-control.

It can be seen that animations play an important role in the process of social development of preschool children. It not only provides children with a lot of useful social information, but also has many negative effects inevitably. Therefore, for animations, in order to play their due educational value in the process of children's growth, and ensure the correct direction of children's social development, it is necessary for animators, parents, schools and the whole society to work together.

3 .Suggestions and countermeasures for the positive influence of animations on preschool children's education

A.Animators

(1)Pay attention to the characteristics of preschool children's psychological development and Improve their comprehensive literacy: At present, most of the animators in our country lack the guidance of children's psychology and pedagogy. In the creation, it is inevitable to grasp the law of children's social development, which leads to some creation tending to adulthood. Therefore, the majority of professionals engaged in animation creation should continue to learn relevant theoretical knowledge and have insight into children's psychology, to observe life from the perspective of children in the true sense. While doing animated audio-visual effects, we will maximize the satisfaction of children's social development and create children's favorite animations. (2) Pay attention to the selection of animation themes and expressions: animations suitable for preschool children should have the following characteristics: the theme is clear; the plot is simple and compact; the characters are cute, the character is clear, the action is exaggerated, the range is large; the picture is colorful; the soundtrack is beautiful; the length is short and so on. The main purpose of his creation should be healthy and positive, reflecting the "truth, goodness and beauty" in social life, and sending a positive energy to preschool children so that children can grow up in happiness. (3)Combine with the spirit of the times and Close to children's lives: Compared with some excellent animations introduced by Western countries in recent years, domestic animations have shown a strong commercial atmosphere. Although the concept of "protecting the environment" has been introduced, it is too tedious. In the process of animations creating, creators should dare to break through, combine the spirit of the times, and display a positive and upward cultural concept, and infiltrate some beautiful behavioral standards and ethics into the cognitive development process of children naturally. The creation of animations should also enhance its practical connection with children's real life. In the animation, it can teach children some life skills, prepare them for the world and enter the society.

B.Educator affect

(1)Aspect of Family: Family education as the first class for a child to learn is crucial to the child's educational growth. The psychological development of preschool children is sensitive, fragile and highly vulnerable to external environmental interference. The judgment of good and evil comes from the parents' reaction. Therefore, in the process of children watching animations, parental guidance and companionship are very important, and the interaction between parents and children is also conducive to the development of parent-child relationship. When there is a picture similar to sharing, tolerance or conflict in the animation, parents can give them correct guidance and correction, and let the child form a character that is good for people. Parents can also guide children to understand the difference between animations and real life, and promote children to form a correct understanding of the world and play the positive significance of animations.(2) Aspect of School: Kindergarten is another important place in the process of children's growth. The kindergarten environment and the educational guidance of teachers are particularly important. Kindergartens should use the special functions of their "wall culture" to paste or draw pictures or scenes with educational value in the animation on the wall of the kindergarten effectively, so that children can observe and think about the wall contents in a subtle way. In addition, after organizing children to watch animations, teachers can let children play role-playing in the performance-friendly plots and promote the social development of children in the game.(3) Aspect of society: The mass media is the second class for all members of society, including preschool children. Television and internet are the most popular mass media for preschool children. The mass media plays an important role in the social development of preschool children, but it is not right or wrong as a product of social development. This requires the relevant authorities of the mass media to take appropriate measures to establish a barrier between animations and preschool children. Although there is no clear classification standard for government agencies in China, the voice of the society for animation grading has become more and more louder. As a representative of the mass media Tencent video, Youku video, IQIYIvideo, and other online video platforms, have divided animations by different age forwardly. However, the classification and hierarchy are not well divided due to the lack of uniform standards and professional judgment.Therefore, the relevant agencies of the our government should learn from the grading system of the countries in the East and West, and set standards to protect preschool children from violence and language attacks fully.

4 .Conclusion

In the "animation era", animations accompany the whole process of preschool children's growth. People who participate in the communication of animation at all levels should bear certain social responsibilities. They should guide the correct development of preschool children's cognition, behavior, interpersonal relationship, morality and other aspects properly, promote their personality cultivation, and help them set up a correct outlook on life and values. Although there are still many unsatisfactory aspects in the development of the animation industry at present, we believe that we can create a better watching atmosphere for preschool children with the joint efforts of the whole society.

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