CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study is both descriptive as well as analytical. It adopts the deductive approach of confirming theories leading to hypotheses, data and findings. A descriptive study design is one in which the primary goal is to assess a sample at one specific point in time. The study has used survey to investigate the viewer’s perception of culture portrayed in two popular television cartoon programs on one side and content analysis of the same to examine the television text on the other hand. This investigation was embarked upon to contribute to an understanding of how culture is portrayed in cartoon television programs aimed at children and whether children comprehend and follow those factors in their real life.
Construction of culture in cartoon television programs targeted at children and their perception by children could be studied in three ways: perception of culture by children from the two popular cartoon programs through survey. Secondly, studying parents’ understanding about culture and how far children practice those values in their day to day life. Thirdly, through content analysis the researcher has identified the cultural values depicted in those two popular cartoon programs aimed at children.

At the basic level, this investigation can be reduced to two major elements of text and audience. These two components being the center of focus, the selection of research methodology should be appropriate for them. Therefore, survey was selected to identify how culture is perceived by children and their parents which will constitute the first two dimensions of the study. Data obtained through content analysis would give the third dimension. The quantitative methodology of content analysis was selected to explore the cultural values embedded in the two popular cartoon television programs. Content analysis is used to systematically describe a phenomenon and to disclose patterns and connections that might otherwise go unnoticed. This method proved to be a valuable technique for the understanding of children's television programs in past studies (Alexander et al. 1998, Atkin and Heals 1977, Barcus 1975, Condry, Bence and Scheibe 1988, Doolittle and Pepper 1975, Kunkel and Gantz 1992, Stern and Harmon 1984, Winick et al. 1973).
OBJECTIVES

1) To examine popular animated cartoon programs to find out how culture is portrayed in them and what kind of cultural values are embedded in these programs.
   - What kind of concepts/values/beliefs are conveyed through the cartoon programs?

2) To find out if children in the age group of 11-13 could comprehend the concept of culture.
   - How many of the children knew the meaning of culture?
   - Are they able to differentiate Indian culture from the others?
   - Are they able to identify Indian cultural values in particular?
   - Do they follow our cultural practices in their day to day life?

3) To analyze whether cartoon characters have taken the role of human beings.
   - Have cartoon programs replaced parents/grandparents for story telling?
   - Who teaches the moral values to children?

4) To examine whether cartoon programs influenced children's behavior.
   - Do children of 6th standard imitate the cartoon characters?
   - Do cartoon characters influence their purchase behavior?
5) To find out if gender difference influenced children’s preference, perception and behavior in terms of culture and cartoon programs.

6) To identify the perception of parents regarding culture and popular cartoon programs.
   - Parent’s intervention in television watching.
   - Parent’s perception about cartoon programs.
   - Parent's perception about the influence of cartoon programs on children.

Hypotheses

1. Cartoon programs are embedded with cultural components.
   a) Cultural values are communicated through cartoon programs.
   b) Cultural values are conveyed through the properties, settings, and characters.

2. Children aged between 11-13 understand the concept of culture.
   a) Children of 11-13 years can differentiate Indian culture from foreign culture.
   b) There is difference between boys and girls in terms of comprehension of culture.
3. Children of age group 11-13 follow cultural values in their day-to-day life.
   
a) Following Indian cultural values in children’s day to day life differs between boys and girls.

4. Cartoon programs have an influence on children of the age group 11-13.
   
a) Children of age group 11-13 imitate the cartoon characters.
   
b) Cartoon programs influence children in terms of their purchase behavior.

5. Parents accept the influence of cartoon programs on children.
   
a) Parents accept that cartoon programs disturb their children’s studies.

Survey

Survey was conducted among the sixth standard students – boys and girls of government, aided and private, English and Tamil medium students of Salem city. Two sets of separate questionnaires were used to collect data, one from children and the other from the parents. However the total number of questionnaires for children was 1015 and that of parents was only 605 because the response from the parents of students staying in the hostels could not be obtained. Parents’ questionnaires were also given to children and they were asked to get it filled from their parents. Both open-ended and closed-
ended questions were included to make the study more qualitative. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the quantitative data.

Content Analysis

On the other hand, content analysis was used to examine the depiction of culture in the two popular cartoon programs. According to the pretest conducted among 200 students from various schools, more than 95% of the children chose Chhota Bheem and Ben 10 as their most favorite cartoon programs. Hence the present study had taken Chhota Bheem program from POGO channel and Ben 10 from Cartoon Network. Since only 52 episodes are available in Ben 10 series, equal number of episodes of Chhota Bheem was taken for the study.

List of Ben 10 cartoon programs were collected from Cartoon Network India official website which consists of four seasons such as Ben 10, Ben 10 Ultimate Alien, Ben 10 Alien Force, Ben 10 secret of the Omnitrix. For the present study Ben 10 series was taken for analysis. Repetitions were not taken in to account. Ben 10 is telecast on all days from 5AM to 5.30AM in Cartoon Network channel. The duration of each episode in Ben 10 is about 24 minutes excluding advertisements. Similarly Chhota Bheem is telecast in Pogo channel everyday at 9 AM and 6.30 PM. The list of Chhota Bheem cartoon series was collected from the official website of Pogo channel. Each episode
consists of five to six stories of five to eight minutes excluding advertisements.

Five categories of cultural values were identified by the researcher from each of the cartoon programs - Ben 10 & Chhota Bheem. Next the programs were coded for the categories of values being portrayed through background scenery, props, dress, artifacts etc.

Coding data using Nvivo 8.0

Both programs were recorded for a period of six months. QSR International Nvivo 8.0 software was used to code the entire content of Chhota Bheem and Ben 10 series. If there were non-humans such as animals, aliens in the programs, and if those aliens were animated, those characters were also taken into consideration. Nodes (container to put up the ideas) were created for each variable in Nvivo. There are five basic types of nodes available in Nvivo software such as Free Nodes, Tree Nodes, Cases, Matrices, and Relationships. Since the variables had several sub categories, the present study used Tree Nodes for coding data.

All the recorded content of both Ben 10 and Chhota Bheem programs were imported in to Internals folder. Each episode was named by its title and grouped as separate folders. Each clip in the episodes contains audio visual information and it was displayed in the timeline window. The necessary
portion of the clip was selected using F11 and F12 functional keys. This was assigned to already existing nodes. The method and the findings of the content analysis are discussed in detail in chapter V (Page 147).

Data Collection

Triangulation is a combination of multiple methodologies, viewpoints, and participants in a study that ensures accuracy, scope, deep knowledge towards any investigation (as cited in Flick, 2002). It is also considered as a process of applying different perceptions to explain meanings, validating the repeatability of thoughts or understandings (Denzin, 2005). According to Denzin (1970), the method of triangulation can be further classified into five types such as by Data source, Investigator, Methodology, Theory and Data analysis. The present study adopts quantitative methodology and particularly uses data sources triangulation to integrate the responses obtained. In particular, data triangulation is further divided into three types such as by time, space and person. Fielding & Fielding (1986), stated that variance in persons add to the study the potential of identifying related patterns and thus improving quality in the findings (A.Thurmond, 2001). In the current study, data were collected from students and from their parents in addition to the data obtained from the media text through content analysis.
Sample

Pretest was conducted among 200 children in the age group of 11-13 years, using a structured questionnaire. Based on the results, changes were made in the questionnaire. All the school students in the age group of 10 to 13 within Salem city formed the population. Salem city was divided into three zones – inner, middle and the outer zones. Four schools (one from each direction) from each zone were selected for data collection. Among them were four Government schools, five Government - Aided schools, one Matriculation School and two Central board schools. Questionnaire was administered to all the students of sixth standard except those who were absent on that particular day. The sample constituted 1015 students - 494 boys and 521 girls. Orientation was given to the students before filling up the questionnaires.

Questionnaires for the parents were also given to all students except boarders, with clear instructions for the parents to fill up. They were collected the next day. Because of more number of hostlers in some schools and due to the absence of students the next day, the total number of questionnaires received from parents was less than that of children and it was 605.
Variables

1) Individualism
   • Individual decision making
   • Individual actions
   • Victory by an individual

2) Gender Equality
   • Accepting the ideas of the opposite gender
   • Equal roles for both genders
   • Equal visual representation for both genders

3) Materialism
   • Desire to acquire new technologies
   • Desire to acquire new things

4) Modernity
   • Present day issues
   • Using trendy gadgets
   • Application of new technologies

5) Communication pattern (Chhota Bheem)
   • Verbal communication – Language, words used
   • Non-verbal communication – Kinesics, haptics & Artifacts

6) Collectivism
   • Completing tasks through unity
   • Fighting as a team
• Eating and sharing things with others
• Playing in a group

7) Tolerance
• Accepting and treating other nationalities equally
• Accepting others ideas, views and opinions
• Adjusting when others make mistakes

8) Hospitality
• Greeting and welcoming guests
• Eating with guests
• Engaging guests
• Helping guests

9) Veneration to Elders
• Not calling elders by name
• Obeying elders
• Helping elders
• Seeking elders’ blessings

10) Communication pattern(Ben 10)
• Verbal communication – Language, words used
• Non-verbal communication – Kinesics, haptics & Artifacts
Theoretical Perspective

Albert Bandura’s theory of Social Learning establishes the relationship between observation and observer’s action and it is used as a reason for research in the area of television studies and behaviorism. This theory is concerned with children’s imitation behavior that is directly experienced from the television. According to Hoffner (1996) children learn many things from televised content such as “standards for conduct and acquire norms” (W. Anderson, 2001).

This theory forms the foundation for this study which states that children learn behavior patterns by observing and imitating their parents, neighbors, and friends. They also tend to look up to attractive models and imitate their behavior, which could be a famous personality or a popular cartoon character; this behavior is continued when it is rewarded (Klinger, 2006).

Bandura also stated that children learn a mixture of behaviors from television and it act as a “superb tutor” for them. Basically children search for role models to direct their personal behaviors and television permits children’s social learning to extend beyond human models to virtual models (symbolic models) on television. According to IEC (International Encyclopedia of Communication), worldwide, in 56 % of the families both parents are working; this leads to a situation where children are getting socialized more by the television than by their parents.
An extension of the Social Learning theory is the Labeling theory otherwise known as Social Reaction theory (Howard Becker, 1963). It explains how learning can occur by attaching or imposing labels, titles and attributes either real or unreal, to others. As the audience becomes saturated with labels falsely representing their behaviors, they may learn through observation how to respond in a specific situation to the fiction being propagated, and thus the label becomes reality. Thus it could conceivably be the result of watching cartoon programs over a long period of time repeatedly. Also, children correctly label characters according to their behavior portrayed in the program. If the life of people saved by a character or group of characters in cartoon programs are labeled as hero(es) and here the concept of labeling not based on whether he used technology or not. This theory emphasizes the character who fight against villains or any evil power are labeled as heroes (Heather L. Kirkorian, 2008).

Cultivation hypothesis propounded by George Gerbner suggests that heavy television viewing is seen as cultivating attitudes, which are more consistent with the world of television programs than with everyday world. The more time people actively engaged in the television world, the more likely they are to accept social reality as depicted on television. Television cultivates from infancy, the very predispositions and preferences that used to be acquired from other primary sources. Though cultivation theory is not a central part of this study, some elements are added in to it. This suggests children who are
more exposed to television programs start to believe constantly the dominant ideologies and portrayal of the television world. Today television dominates the traditional story tellers such as parents, grandparents, friends and it has become the universal storyteller.

According to Gerbner and his Colleagues, the repetition of programs cultivates the shared concept of reality. Traditional story telling allowed sharing many things such as how things are done, and what to do; but television teaches the same through cartoon programs (as cited in Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, p.178). Gerbner’s research mentioned that continuous watching of television leads our children to accept beliefs about the social world. The process of cultivation gives priority to learning and it deals with the construction of reality. It happens between audience and the messages.

Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values, which are already present in culture: the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together. The repetitive pattern of television's mass-produced messages and images create the mainstream of a common symbolic environment. Since due to its convenience and ease of use to the masses, television has become the "central cultural arm of our society" (Gerbner, 1979).
According to Blumler & Katz (1974) uses and gratification theory represents that children’s needs are associated with social and psychological beginning that creates some expectations about television. This also explains why children choose particular medium and for what purpose. The approach of this theory is obviously audience centric. It lies on what children do with the particular media. Denis McQuail (1987) suggests few reasons for children’s media use:

1. Information
2. Personal Identity
3. Integration and Social Interaction
4. Entertainment

Many reasons support the connection between children and uses and gratification theory. With respect to this theory, overwhelming cartoon programs watched by children are needed to be studied. Because the psychological benefits from cartoon programs acquired by children gives satisfaction (Agyekwena, 2006).