



LOOKING FOR THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF CARTOONS ON CHILDREN'S INTENTIONAL PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR. STILL NO EVIDENCE

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Abstract

In this experimental study, we investigated the intentional prosocial behavior of children following exposure to different types of cartoons. Subjects (N=246, mean age=7.50 years) were assigned to one of the three groups (neutral vs. prosocial vs. antisocial), and we performed pre- and post-measurements. We used an interactive audio story to facilitate the measurement of children's intentional prosocial behavior. Children provided their answers in a special notebook, in real-time during the story. Pre- and post-exposure to a short cartoon (5 min and 22 sec), subjects offered their answers in 10 instances in which they could decide between prosocial or antisocial behavioral alternatives. We found a decrease in prosocial behavior in all groups after exposure to cartoons, regardless of their type. However, no significant differences were observed between groups that were exposed to different types of cartoons. Therefore, we did not find support for the hypothesis that assumed prosocial cartoons would increase intentional prosocial behavior, respectively, the number of prosocial decisions. Thus, we could not establish a cause and effect relationship between prosocial cartoons and prosocial behavior.

Keywords: cartoons; children; intentional behavior; prosocial; antisocial; media

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