Bahria Journal of Professional Psychology, January 2013, Vol-12, 1, 34 -55

Walt Disney and Emotional Intelligence

***Sonia Mairaj Malik, Amna Shahid, and Fariha A. Khan**

Institute of Professional Psychology,
Bahria University, Karachi Campus

Purpose of this study is to determine the longitudinal effect of Walt Disney animated cartoons on the emotional intelligence of the youth. Study examined the difference of Emotional Intelligence in Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers among the university students of Karachi and the study also determine the gender differences in Emotional Intelligence scores of the young adults (only Disney Watchers) of Karachi. Data collection was done using a consent form, demographic information, Walt Disney checklist and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSREIT). The data was statistically analyzed by using the SPSS software package and t-test was used to calculate the results. Results reveal that Most Regular Disney Watchers (N=34) of Karachi scored higher on Emotional Intelligence than the Non-Disney Watchers (N=33) (Significance level 0.05). Gender comparison was done within the Disney Watchers (N=179). No significant difference was noted in total Emotional Intelligence scores of Male Disney Watchers (n=87) and Female Disney Watchers (n=92). Same was the result for all subcomponents except for the scale of Managing Others Emotions, in which a significant difference was noted between the scores of Male Disney Watchers and Female Disney Watchers (Significance level 0.05).

In the past few years, researchers have instituted the use of moving pictures and cartoons in many facets of human interfaces. In 1984, for the opening and closing of icons, Apple Macintosh used simple, uncomplicated animation, which displays an uninterrupted transformation from one demeanor to a different one. Progressively, animations have developed to be more prevalent in studies and researches as well as in commercial user interfaces. Some informal studies have substantiated that animations can help in developing a customer's level of satisfaction and the ease of usage of products. Yet there are not many researches that explore the overt mechanism by which animations have such palpable impact on the consumer's performance (Bederson & Boltman, 1999).

Many studies argue that media has a negative impact on the lives of children and adults alike. It is widely believed that electronic media paints undesirable and adverse picture of the society, which, the children begin to believe and follow, and are therefore surrounded by all the negative consequences. Most of the people living in Faisalabad, Pakistan, find electronic media to be negatively influencing the personalities, beliefs and activities of children because of the easy admittance to vulgar, aggressive and sexual content (Malik, Hassan & Sultana, 2004).

The purpose of the present study was to explore the positive aspects of media which determines the media's affirmative effects on the youth that can be beneficial for them and the society and identify Walt Disney's positive influence on the minds of viewers. Most people seek 'pleasure' and ways to 'escape' their distressing routine of life, and they find watching quality cartoons or movies a good way to enjoy.

"While the inclination to seek pleasure and escape, and to look for a utopian experience is natural, the Disney brand of fantasy is a ready-made, highly promoted and powerfully seductive option, often assumed to be one of the few 'acceptable' options available." – Janet Wasko (2001).

According to Erikson's psychosocial stages of development, the major conflict that an individual goes through in young adulthood (age: 19-30 years) is intimacy vs. isolation. Erikson states that at this phase of life, an individual's need is to establish intimate, affectionate and caring associations

with other people. If they succeed, they are able to form durable relationships, but if they fail, they retreat toward solitude and loneliness. (Allen, 1997).

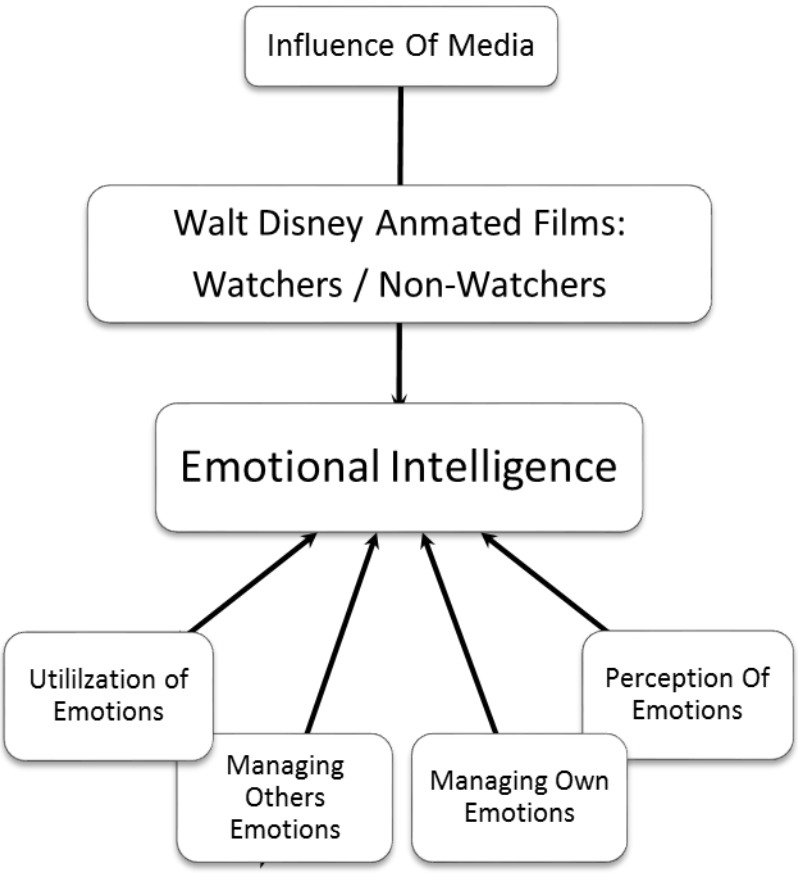
Mirror neurons, which are present in our brain, function spontaneously and copy others' emotions, especially empathy, and aid in understanding other person's state of mind. Empathy is developed by imitating the other person's emotional state, for which mirror neuron system, the insula and the limbic system are very significant (Iacoboni, 2009).

Many researches have also been conducted to find out the gender differences in Emotional Intelligence Scores. An Australian study on the Emotional Intelligence of adolescents suggests that females have higher Emotional Intelligence than males (Ciarrochi, Chan & Bajgar, 2001). A cross-cultural study conducted on the management sciences students of Aix-en-Provence, France, and Balochistan, Pakistan, who had a good command in English, revealed that females from both the cultures had higher EQ than their male counterparts (Karim & Weisz, 2010a). A research conducted on athletes of Hyderabad city also confirms these findings (Parveen & Iqbal, 2007). Other studies carried out on the students and employees of Punjab also support the findings that females have higher Emotional Intelligence than males (Abbas & Haq, 2011; Malik, Khatoon & Khursheed, 2011; Rahim & Malik, 2010). Same goes for the Greek population (mental health professionals), and the university students and adult population of southern US (Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2005; Schutte et al., 1998).

In contrast, a research, which was conducted on MS students of Iran, suggests that there is no significant difference of gender in their overall EQ scores or on any of the sub-scales of Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Scale (Lotfi, Ayazi & Agheli-Nejad, 2011). A study was carried out on Pakistani students of Master's Degree level. Its findings suggest that male students have higher Emotional Intelligence than Female students (Gujjar, Naoreen, Aslam & Khattak, 2010). Furthermore, recently a study was conducted to measure the Emotional Intelligence scores of Iranian students with different fields of studies, which included Humanities, Basic Science, Engineering, and Medical Science, and no significant difference of Emotional Intelligence was recorded between them (Hasanzadeh & Shahmohamadi, 2011).

Similarly, a research conducted on the organizational sector of Karachi, Pakistan, also showed no noteworthy difference in EQ scores of males and females working at the advanced and medium ranks of management (Zadeh & Saleh, 2008).

In the light of above literature and researches, the following hypotheses are proposed.



Theoretical Framework

Hypothesis 1:

There would be a significant difference in the EQ scores of Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers.

Hypothesis 2:

There would be a difference in the EQ scores of Male Disney Watchers and Female Disney Watchers.

Method

Participants

For the research data, a sample of total 212 university students (107 males and 105 females) was taken. Students from different universities and institutions of Karachi were included in the sample. Subjects were of different fields which included MBBS, BCS, BS, BA, BFA and BBA. Their ages ranged from 18-23 years with the mean age of 20.5 years.

Measures

1. ***Consent form***

It informed the participant about the research and required their acknowledgement that the information taken from them would be used anonymously in a research and they are voluntarily filling the set of forms. Their signatures were taken on it.

2. ***Demographic form***

It gathers the demographic information (Name, Age, Gender, Degree, Semester, CGPA, Marital Status, Socioeconomic Status and Family Pattern) as well as some information on the extent of viewing Walt Disney animated films, including how often they watch Walt Disney animated films and which Disney character they like the most.

3. ***Walt Disney Checklist***

It consists of a checklist of 65 Walt Disney animated films (taken from http://www.disneymovieslist.com) from which the participant was required to tick those they had already watched.

4. The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSREIT)

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSREIT) was used to measure the emotional intelligence of students who watch Disney animated films/movies regularly and those who do not. The scale is a 33 item self-report measure of emotional intelligence developed by Schutte et al. (1998). Items of the test relate to the three aspects of EI; appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion in self and others, and utilization of emotion. The items and their responses are based on 5-point Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The internal consistency of SSREIT, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, is .87 on diverse populations and the test also has test-retest reliability of up to two weeks. It has a good predictive validity of the end-of-year GPA. The discriminative validity of SSREIT is -.54 for the 'openness to experience' trait of personality (Schutte et al., 1998)

Procedure

The demographic form including the Walt Disney Checklist, Consent Form and SSREIT were administered on second year university students of different fields. SSREIT of all students were scored. Among all Disney Watchers, participants who had marked more than 20 animated films on the Walt Disney Checklist were considered Regular Disney Watchers. Those who had not marked any movies in the Walt Disney Checklist and had responded with a "No" to the question, "Do you watch animated movies of Walt Disney?" were the Non-Disney Watchers.

At first the Walt Disney Watchers (N=179) were much more in numbers than the Non-Disney Watchers (N=33) among the data collected. So, to shortlist the Regular Watchers for a balanced comparison, those participants were selected who had responded with "often" or "most regularly" to the question, "How often do you watch Walt Disney animated movies?" along with 30 or more than 30 animated films marked in the Walt Disney Checklist. This resulted in a sample of 34 Most Regular Walt Disney Watchers against 33 Non-Watchers of Walt Disney animated films (extreme division based on choice of viewing).

For gender comparison of EQ scores among all Disney Watchers, separate groups of Male Disney Watchers and Female Disney Watchers were formed and compared. Data was entered in Excel and transferred to SPSS and Minitab software.

Statistical Analysis

Independent sample T-test was applied through SPSS and boxplots were generated by Minitab.

Operational Definitions

- ***Emotional Intelligence/EQ*** is the ability to effectively perceive, manage and utilize own and others' emotions. It can be measured by SSREIT.
- ***High Emotional Intelligence*** is indicated by total EQ score of more than 130.

- ***Low Emotional Intelligence*** is indicated by total EQ score of less than 120.
- ***Non-Disney Watchers*** had not watched any Walt Disney animated film and had answered on the question "Do you watch animated movies of Walt Disney?" with a "NO" on Demographic Form.
- ***Disney Watchers*** had watched Walt Disney animated movie at any point in their life and marked the question "Do you watch animated movies of Walt Disney?" with a "YES"
- ***Most Regular Disney Watchers*** had marked 30 or more than 30 animated movies in the Walt Disney Checklist and answered to the question "How often do you watch Walt Disney animated movies?" with "often" or "most regularly".

Results

Table 1.1

Showing Mean Scores and S.D of Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers

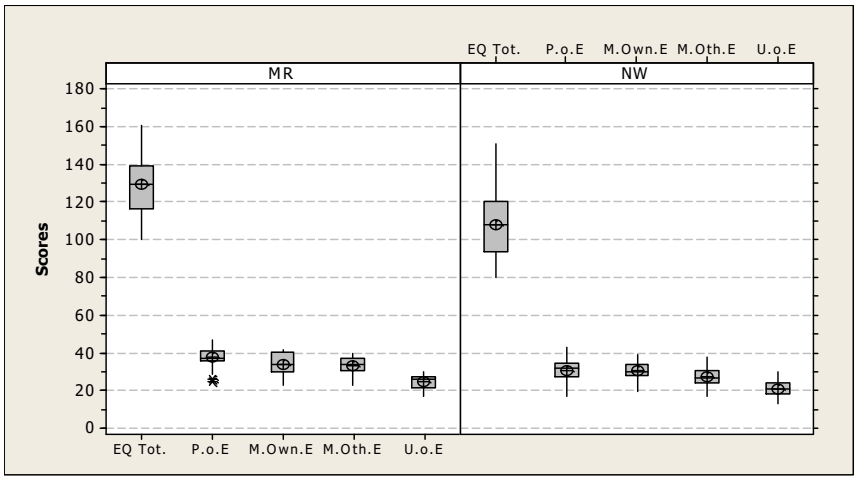
Scales	Viewership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total EQ	Non-Watchers	33	108.06	17.995
	Most Regular Watchers	34	129.29	15.276
Perception of Emotions	Non-Watchers	33	30.97	6.147
	Most Regular Watchers	34	37.82	5.184
Managing Own Emotions	Non-Watchers	33	30.79	5.158
	Most Regular Watchers	34	34.32	5.296
Managing Others Emotions	Non-Watchers	33	27.42	5.256
	Most Regular Watchers	34	33.56	4.724
Utilization of Emotions	Non-Watchers	33	21.33	3.813
	Most Regular Watchers	34	25.06	3.592

Figure 1.1

Boxplot showing the difference in mean scores and ranges of scores of Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers

Table 1.2

Independent Samples Analysis of EQ Scores of Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers



Scale	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Total EQ	.392	-5.212	65	.001
Perception of Emotions	.201	-4.939	65	.001
Managing Own Emotions	.670	-2.767	65	.01
Managing Others Emotions	.853	-5.028	65	.001
Utilization of Emotions	.796	-4.117	65	.001

Note: Equal variances assumed for scores on all scales.

Table 2.1

Scales	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Female	92	119.95	17.461

Scales	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Perception of Emotions	Female	92	35.07	5.578
	Male	87	35.82	6.799
Managing Own Emotions	Female	92	33.24	5.448
	Male	87	33.72	6.263
Managing Others Emotions	Female	92	30.18	5.423
	Male	87	32.15	5.442
Utilization of Emotions	Female	92	23.79	3.910
	Male	87	24.32	4.153

Figure 2.1

Boxplot showing the difference in mean scores and ranges of scores of Male Disney Watchers and Female Disney Watchers

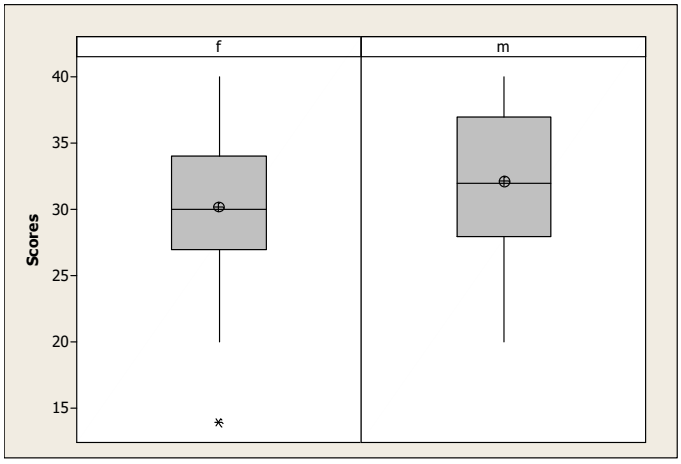


Table 2.2

Independent Samples Analysis of EQ Scores of Male Disney Watchers and Female Disney Watchers

Total EQ	.319	-1.250	177	.213
Perception of Emotions	.049*	-.805	166.558	.422
Managing Own Emotions	.100	-.554	177	.581
Managing Others Emotions	.608	-2.418	177	.017**
Utilization of Emotions	.445	-.877	177	.382

*Note: Equal variances assumed for scores on Total EQ, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others Emotions and Utilization of Emotions. *Equal variances NOT assumed for scores on Perception on Emotions. **P-value less than 0.05.*

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the positive influence of Walt Disney animated cartoons on the Emotional Intelligence of young adults of Karachi. Walt Disney is acknowledged for its pervasive and widely spread animated films. It has been entertaining children and families since 1928, starting with black and white cartoon of the naughty *Mickey Mouse*, struggling to stay alive with the innocent *Snow White*, wishing for a prince with the beautiful *Cinderella*, seeking treasures in *The Treasure Island* and taking its journey all the way to the skies in *Up* and adventuring in the depths of the oceans with *Finding Nemo*. As discussed in the literature review, many researches and studies have proved that children learn from the animated films of Walt Disney. And since literature review also provides the evidence that Emotional Intelligence can be learned and enhanced, this research was aimed at investigating the relationship of Walt Disney animated cartoons and Emotional Intelligence.

The results of this research support the hypothesis that Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers differ on their Emotional Intelligent scores. In Table 1.2, results indicate that there is a significant difference in the mean EQ scores of Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers ($p < .05$). The mean scores also specify that Most Regular Disney Watchers had a higher score on Emotional Intelligence than the Non-Disney Watchers (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1).

Significant difference was also noted on all the Subscales of EQ ($p < .05$). The mean scores identify that Most Regular Disney Watchers had

scored higher on all subscales of EQ, i.e., Perception of Emotions, Managing Own Emotions, Managing Others Emotions and Utilization of Emotions, than the Non-Disney Watchers. On all subscales, Most Regular Disney Watchers had significantly higher scores than those of Non-Disney Watchers. These results suggest that Walt Disney can be inspiring its watchers' skills of distinguishing, comprehending, consuming and dealing with emotions.

Results reject the second hypothesis of this research that the EQ scores of Male Watchers would differ from the EQ scores of Female Watchers. Results indicate that there was no significant difference in the Total EQ scores of Male Disney Watchers and Female Disney Watchers ($p > .05$)

This outcome is consistent to the findings of Lotfi, Ayazi & Agheli-Nejad (2011) who studied the gender dissimilarities in Emotional Intelligence of Master students of Iran, Hasanzadeh & Shahmohamadi (2011) who studied gender difference in the Emotional Intelligence scores of university students of Iran, ages ranging from 20 years to 30 years, and Zadeh & Saleh (2008) who compared the Emotional Intelligence scores of working males and females employed at multinational firms in Karachi. No difference on the overall Emotional Intelligence scores was noted between the genders in any of these researches.

Among the subscales of Emotional Intelligence, gender difference was projected on Managing Others Emotions. As shown in Table 2.1, the mean score of Male Disney Watchers was found to be 32.15, whereas the mean score of Female Disney Watchers was 30.18. Figure 2.1 displays the gender difference in mean scores which highlights the fact that Male Disney Watchers scored higher than the Female Disney Watchers. Table 2.2 shows that the p-value was less than .05 which signifies the gender difference on the subscale of Managing Others Emotions. Male Disney Watchers had scored significantly higher than the Female Disney Watchers. Additionally, it was observed in Figure 2.1 that Male Disney Watchers had more variety in their coping styles and emotion related behaviors than the Female Disney Watchers. Female Disney Watchers had more consistency in their responses to the questions of SSREIT.

This outcome confirms the finding of Gujjar, Naoreen, Aslam & Khattak (2010) who conducted a research to compare the Emotional Intelligence scores of male and female students of Islamia University, Bahawalpur. In their findings, the males had scored higher on the subscale of 'Relationship Management' than females.

This finding proposes that the Disney may be influencing its male viewers more than the female viewers and that Male Disney Watchers are better at socializing and handling relations as compared to Female Disney Watchers. Another possible explanation can be that in our society, males socialize more than the females and this fact might have influenced the results.

Conclusion

The present study was aimed at identifying the influence of Walt Disney animated films on the Emotional Intelligence of its viewers. The results specify that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of Most Regular Disney Watchers and Non-Disney Watchers in total EQ as well as in all the subscales. It proposes that Walt Disney may have an influence on its viewers' abilities of perceiving, understanding, managing and utilizing emotions. Results reveal that there was no significant gender difference in the scores on total EQ, but a significant gender difference was found in the Managing Others Emotions subscale which suggests that the Male Disney Watchers may be better at socializing and managing relationships as compared to Female Disney Watchers.

Based on the results of this study, it can be said that Walt Disney may have a positive and significant influence on its viewers.

"Movies can and do have tremendous influence in shaping young lives in the realm of entertainment towards the ideals and objectives of normal adulthood."

– Walter Elias Disney

References

Abbas, I., & Haq, J. (2011). A Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self Esteem: study in universities of Pakistan. *Arts and Design Studies*, 1, 10-15.

Allen, B. P. (1997). *Personality Theories: Development, Growth and Diversity* (2nd Edition). USA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bederson, B. B., & Boltman, A. (1999). Does Animation Help Users Build Mental Maps of Spatial Information? *Airforce Research Laboratory*, 102, 1-8.

Ciarrochi, J., Chan, A. Y. C., & Bajgar, J. (2001). Measuring emotional intelligence in adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 31, 1105-1119.

Gujjar, A. A., Naoreen, B., Aslam, S., & Khattak, Z. I. (2010). Comparison of emotional intelligence of the university students of Punjab province. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 847–853.

Hasanzadeh, R., & Shahmohamadi, F. (2011). Study of emotional intelligence and learning strategies. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 29, 1824-1829.

Iacoboni, M. (2009). Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 653-70. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163604

Karim, J., & Weisz, R. (2010a). Cross-Cultural Research on the Reliability and Validity of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT). *Cross-Cultural Research*, 44(4), 374-404. DOI: 10.1177/1069397110377603

Lotfi, S., Ayazi, M., & Agheli-Nejad, M. A. (2011). Emotional intelligence survey in master students of Shahid Beheshti University who attained the grades one to nine (1-9) in entrance exam. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 826-829.

Malik, A. B., Khatoon, S., & Khursheed, F. (2011). Perceived learning environment and emotional intelligence among prospective teachers. *British Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 1-9.

Malik, N. H., Hassan, M. Z. Y., & Sultana, R. (2004). An Impact of Electronic Media on the Development of Children's Personality. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 124-126.

Parveen, N., & Iqbal, Y. (2007). Gender differences in emotional intelligence among professional athletes of Hyderabad city. *The Shield*, 2, 30-46.

Rahim, S. H., & Malik, M. I. (2010). Emotional intelligence & organizational performance: (A case study of banking sector in Pakistan). *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(10), 191-197.

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, (25), 167-177.

Tsaousis, I., & Nikolaou, I. (2005). Exploring the relationship of emotional intelligence with physical and psychological health functioning. *Stress and Health*, (21), 77-86.

Wasko, J. (2001). Challenging Disney Myths. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 2*5(3), 237-257.

Zadeh, Z. F., & Saleh, S. A. (2008). Gender comparative study of emotional intelligence in employees of multinational companies of Karachi. *Bahria Journal of Professional Psychology*, 4(July), 69-80.

Appendix

Consent Form

Title of Research: Walt Disney and Emotional Intelligence

This is to certify that I am well aware of the fact that any and all information shared for the above study will be used only for the specific purpose of the study and I have the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the research. I understand that my participation is voluntary.
I agree to take part in the above study and that my data gathered in this study may be utilized (after it has been anonymized).
Please sign below as your consent.

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant Date Signature

Researchers:

_____
Research Supervisor: Sonia Mairaj Malik, Senior Lecturer (IPPBU)

_____

All complaints and comments please be addressed to the course instructor or can be emailed at soniamairaj@gmail.com.

Demographic Information Form

Please take a few minutes to fill out this form. Institute of Professional Psychology welcomes your feedback and your information will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Name: _____	**Age: _____**
Gender: _____	**Degree:**
	_____
Specify Semester: _____	**CGPA: _____**
Marital Status:	**Family: (Nuclear / Joint)**
_____	
Socioeconomic Status:_____	

Q.1 – Do you watch animated movies of Walt Disney?

YES NO

Q.2 – Have you watched Walt Disney in any other language than English?

YES NO

Q.3 – Do you listen to Disney Tracks? YES NO

Q.4 – Do you memorize their lyrics? YES NO

Q.5 – How often do you watch Walt Disney animated movies?
i) Most Regularly ii) Often iii) Sometimes
iv) Rarely v) Never

Q.6 – When was the last time you watched a Disney animated movie/cartoon?
i) Within the last year ii) before you started attending university

Q.7 – Which last Disney animated movie/cartoon have u watched recently?
_____

Q.8 – From what age did you start watching Disney animated films/cartoons?
i) 6years - 9 years ii) 10 years – 12 years i

Q.9 – Who is your favorite Disney Character?

____

____

Walt Disney Checklist

Q.10 – How many of the following have you watched? (Tick the boxes) (http://www.disneymovieslist.com)

- 101 Dalmatians
- A Bug's Life
- A Christmas Carol
- A Goofy Movie
- Aladdin
- Alice In Wonderland
- An Extremely Goofy Movie
- Atlantis: Milo's Return
- Atlantis: The Lost Empire
- Bambi (Original, II Special Edition)
- Beauty And The Beast
- Bolt
- Cars Toon: Mater's Tall Tales
- Chicken Little
- Cinderella
- Dinosaur
- Disney - Have A Laugh!
- Disney Princess Sing Along Songs
- Disney Princess Stories
- Donald Duck
- Duck Tales The Movie: Treasure Of The Lost Lamp
- Dumbo
- Finding Nemo
- Goldie Locks And The Three Bears
- Hercules
- Hunchback of Notre Dame (I, II)
- Jack And The Beanstalk
- Kim Possible
- Little Red Riding Hood
- Many Adventures of Winnie The Pooh
- Mickey Mouse
- Mickey, Donald, Goofy: The Three Musketeers
- Mickey's Christmas Carol
- Monsters, Inc.
- Mulan
- Peter Pan
- Pinocchio
- Pocahontas
- Princess And The Frog
- Puss In Boots
- Ratatouille
- Robin Hood
- Sleeping Beauty
- Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs
- Spider-Man(TM): The Venom Saga(TM)

- Spider-Man: The Ultimate Villain Showdown
- Tangled (Rapunzel)
- Tarzan (Special Edition, II)
- Teacher's Pet
- The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes!
- The Great Mouse Detective: Mystery In The Mist Edition
- The Incredible – Widescreen
- The Jungle Book
- The Lion King (1, 2, 3)
- The Little Mermaid
- The Prince And The Pauper
- The Rescuers
- The Sword In The Stone Special Edition
- The Tortoise And The Hare
- Three Little Pigs
- Tinker Bell
- Toy Story (1, 2, 3, Special Edition)
- Up
- Wind In The Willows
- X-Men