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SUPERHEROES: IMPACT OF DC AND MARVEL FILMS ON PAKISTANI YOUTH

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Abstract

The study focuses on understanding cross-cultural communication through DC and Marvel's superhero films and the influence of pop culture in Pakistan, with the intention of social development. The study aims to understand superhero films' psychological and cultural impact on Pakistani youth. This research adopts a qualitative approach; data is collected through in-depth interviews with semi-structured questionnaires. It's finding out that most youngsters are aware and familiar with the propaganda used in superhero films to have a large psychological and cultural impact. They accepted that the adaptation and influence of superhero films in Pakistan is not limited to watching the films only but also promoting the superhero culture. The gender difference and violence in superhero films are also noticed by the audience with their perspectives. In addition, results demonstrate that superhero films also have a consumerism effect on Pakistani youth, shaping the consumer behavior that they love to buy superhero clothing, products, toys, stationary, etc.

Keywords: Superhero, Hollywood, Cinema, Propaganda, Western Culture

Introduction

Since the past decade, cinema worldwide has changed. It keeps on going towards the new formation of content and introducing new genres while including science and technology in real-life issues and shaping cultures all around the globe. Film is an art and an instrument of social change, and it can entertain, educate, and focus on critical social issues; filmmakers have used this effective medium for social development and promoting certain political ideologies through propaganda cinema.

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Most superhero films nowadays are based on storylines from recent comics that were the main source of the popularity of superheroes worldwide (Davies, 2016). Superhero films have become a popular culture worldwide, connecting audiences from around the globe. The shift from comics was not only limited to the production of films; it further continued towards animation series, video games, toys, and much more. All this was to hype the superhero culture worldwide, fit those superhero characters among the audiences, and make maximum profit (MacLeod, 2015).

The superhero characters from comic books known to be part of pop culture have been in publications for more than half a century. They are the most popular superhero film characters in the present film industry, becoming the highest-grossing blockbuster film in a passing year. (Russell, 2013). "People will always need heroes, and by acting like classical heroes, teaching and inspiring their readers to be something more than themselves." (Russell, 2013). The Marvel Cinematic Universe changed story-telling and its participation with its fans. It changed the frame of reference we looked at such films in a franchise and the way these superhero films can be built up around each other in one interlinked universe. Moreover, it changed the position of the fan. (Roederer, 2019).

This study examines how much superhero films are having a global impact and how this can affect the youth. Also, what aspects are such films bringing to society, and are these films doing cultural invasion or just removing cultural differences? The impact of these films on Pakistani youth will be focused, but we will also look at how all such content becomes globally important and what changes such films bring to society.

Historical Background

Superhero culture's popularity was initially adopted with the production and launch of superhero comic books in the 1960s (Nangimah, 2021). Superman was the first superhero to be launched in the film in 1978 and is considered the universal symbol of popular American culture. (Jr., 2017). The DC media franchise launched Superman, a successful film of that time.

With time, DC continued producing further parts of Superman and introduced many interesting films, including superheroes like Batman. The first Marvel superhero film was produced in 2008. It was known as Iron Man, a blockbuster film. With the success of Iron Man, Marvel Studios continued launching superheroes in solo films, further building the storyline. Avengers was launched in 2012, consisting of a superhero team that fights together. (Bredvig, 2019).

Marvel Studios focuses on showing realistic elements using fantasy superhero characters. Still, the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) never loses its grip on sticking more to the real part and giving reasons from science in its films so that its audience doesn't lose interest in accepting that this is just a fantasy world. (Ottinger, 2015).

Each superhero film allows the audience to perceive or experience the superhero journey conjointly and individually understand the narratives while exploring

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it on a larger scale. The audience should come up with their understandings and ideas of what they got after experiencing the superhero genre (Brown, 2017).

Rationale of Study

In the existing studies on the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and other superheroes from the Detective Comic Extended Universe (DCEU), researchers mainly focused on gender differences, appearances of male and female characters, racial differences, and the promotion of American culture. Very few of them are based on the impact of such superhero films on youth and other audiences.

Even though Marvel and DC superheroes have great popularity among the Pakistani audience, especially Pakistani teenagers, who are more likely to prefer to watch such films in the cinema and give a handsome amount of profit to such media franchises through their views, individuals can observe the impact of superheroes in their daily lives. Teenagers and young children prefer to buy toys made by their favorite superhero characters.

Whenever these children go stationary shopping with their parents, their priority is to buy schoolbags, pencils, geometry boxes, and water bottles printed with their favorite superheroes that they love to see in films on the big screen in the cinema or rather at the television or mobile phone at their homes. Almost every person is a teenager, an adult, or a young child; everyone can easily recognize the real name of that superhero advertised on that specific product. They can call out those superhero names and differentiate their superpowers and storyline from each character in animation series, video games, and films. This study shows the influence and popularity of such superhero films and their impact on audiences.

Moreover, suppose an individual is watching a Marvel superhero film. In that case, there is a possibility that the individual has already watched the previous superhero films that are further linked to the new one. To understand the storyline, an individual should watch the previously launched films that consist of the storyline of each superhero and then link to the significant film in which all the superheroes are fighting together. That is why it is known as the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Theoretical Framework

This study applied two theories of media and communication studies: Agenda Setting Theory and Cultivation Theory. The research focused on the frame of agenda-setting theory, what changes and impacts such superhero films have on the youth, and what changes they bring to society. It further contains the messages given to the audience through such content and how they influence it. This theory also helped the researcher study the propaganda that these superhero franchises are connecting the whole world through cross-cultural communication and influencing the youth with the pop culture in Pakistan.

The cultivation theory helped the researcher study the behaviors of the audience indulged in such superhero culture and how their identities and thoughts shape the real world around them. The cultivation theory is also crucial because one of the objectives of this study is to measure consumerism and the psychological impact of superhero franchises on Pakistani youth and how individuals are obsessed with the pop-culture.

Problem Statement

The increasing global popularity of superhero films, particularly those produced by Marvel and DC, raises questions about their cultural influence, gender representation, and the impact of consumerism. As these films continue to dominate the entertainment industry, it is important to understand the extent to which they propagate Western culture, how they represent gender, and the consumer behaviors they stimulate. Addressing these aspects will shed light on the broader societal effects of superhero films and inform discussions on their role in contemporary culture and media.

Research Questions

- To what extent are Marvel and DC films propagating Western culture via superhero films?
- How and in what sense do Marvel and DC represent gender in movies?
- What is the consumerism effect of superhero films?

Research Objectives

- To assess the extent to which Marvel and DC films contribute to the propagation of Western culture through superhero films.
- To examine how Marvel and DC represent gender in their movies and analyze the portrayal of male and female characters.
- To investigate the consumerism effect of superhero films, specifically analyzing how these movies influence consumer behavior, merchandise sales, and the commodification of superhero characters.

Significance of research

This study is very important because it explores how superhero movies—especially Marvel and DC—affect modern entertainment, society, and social dynamics. First, it provides a rare chance to better understand how these movies spread and influence Western culture worldwide. Analyzing the cultural allusions discovered in these films offers important new perspectives on their enormous cultural impact.

The research study delves into the characterization of gender in these films, focusing light on the roles and stereotypes associated with male and female characters. This study is essential to discourses about gender equality and how the media either

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challenges or perpetuates cultural biases, and it contributes something valuable to the current discourse on gender portrayal.

Moreover, the study's exploration of the consumerism effect of superhero films is vital for both the entertainment and business industries. It unveils how these films influence consumer behaviors, drive merchandise sales, and significantly impact the broader economy. This knowledge can be a cornerstone for crafting effective marketing and business strategies in these sectors.

Furthermore, this research provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between media, particularly blockbuster films, and society. It facilitates an in-depth analysis of how these films influence cultural norms, shape consumer choices, and contribute to the broader dynamics of contemporary society.

Finally, the findings of this investigation can have implications beyond academia. They could inform media and entertainment industry policies, particularly content creation, representation, and marketing practices. Additionally, the research may guide businesses producing and promoting superhero films, offering practical insights for their strategies and decision-making. In sum, this research is poised to contribute substantially to media studies, cultural analysis, and the entertainment industry by unraveling the multifaceted impact of superhero films on our culture, gender norms, and the economy.

Literature Review

Gender Roles in Superhero Films

Since the beginning of the superhero era, which includes superhero comics, animations, and films, the debate and criticism of gender roles and their differences have always been popular topics. Many researchers have studied different parameters and content analysis through films and comics that show how male and female superheroes are shown to the audience. The criticism was always mainly about how females are shown as sex symbols, products, or supporting characters. In contrast, the male is shown as a muscular warrior, superior icon, or lead character.

"It is important to recognize and understand the content of media, as media can encourage stereotypes that communicate what gender roles, appearances, and acts of violence are acceptable in society." (Monica Miller, 2016).

According to Jess Ameter's study, the most arguable debate between male and female fans over the decades is that female fans of the superhero genre claim that the main superhero franchises, like Marvel Studios, do not show male and female equality in their content. In contrast, most male fans rejected such statements and were always asked to justify them. (Ameter, 2019). The study claims that females were slowly wiped out from the comics as the male comic writers and producers didn't want them to be a part of the superhero genre.

From the beginning, female representation in superhero comics has been very stereotypical due to their desiring and appealing costumes, less power than their male counterparts, and domestic roles like girlfriend, co-worker, wife, etc. (Sinuyul, 2021). As the fan base and audience female gender has been expanding, the representation of female superheroes in these films has not gone completely unrecognized. Still, it has gone without recognizing or substituting the film businesses, authorization, and franchises. (Foster, 2016).

Masculinity, as demonstrated in pop culture of the 2010s, remains significant for its resumed dependence on technology as a main defining or representing aspect of that idealized recognition. Specifically, using social media to promote male superheroes relies on such characters' proficiency in and merging with technology and advancements. (Cummings, 2018). Women are represented as mere bodies, and the media focuses on their physical traits compared to the other human elements. Media created an illusion of the physical ideal image of women (Ali and Hassan, 2016).

In such superhero films, although the male superhero may have visible physical power and those hard muscles that he often shows on the screen, his most successful quality is his potential to create that technology that contains his super-outfit and its artillery, such as shown in the *Batman*, the *Iron Man*, and *Ant-Man*, etc (Cummings, 2018) .

Female Representation in Marvel

Olufidipe and Echezabal, in their research' ' Superheroines and Sexism, studied some of the main female characters of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. How such a big film franchise like Marvel managed to show the female characters supports the patriarchal society and stereotypical mindsets that need to be revised. The study continued that one of the most powerful female superhero characters the MCU has shown in their recent films is Wanda Maximoff, the Scarlet Witch, who first appeared in the Avengers: Age of Ultron in 2015. Scarlet Witch is powerful enough to manipulate the whole Avengers team but is still weakened and emotionally dependent on Hawkeye. She does not have any superpowers, but her only skill is to use the arrows and bow, which shows that, despite being such a powerful female superhero, she is still dependent on a male superhero even if he is not even powerful but leading her. (Folukemi & Echezabal, 2021).

The study of JessJoho's CaptainMarvel's shallow take on feminism does not land" claims the Marvel Studios failed to show the independent female-based storyline to stand female on her own. In contrast, it presents them weaker, which should be changed. In contrast, Captain Marvel could not be categorized, so this character is also shown as a sex symbol because the costume is not appealing or hyper-sexualized (Joho, 2019).

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Wonder Woman & Feminism

According to the researcher Adriana N. Fehrs, in his research "Wonder Woman: A Case Study for Critical Media Literacy" claims that Wonder Woman was considered to be the first individual female superhero film as a protagonist as compared to the other superhero films that were launched before it; in which female shown as a supportive character showing love or feelings for the male superhero and Wonder Woman (2017) has much sole praise its success as a feminist film. (Fehrs, 2018).

Besides all this, Wonder Woman is also white. She has fair skin tones and almost the stereotypical concept of the ideal female figure or body, as shown in other superhero films. In contrast, sexually appealing body parts like breasts in tight costumes are not prominent, which can set a new posture in female superhero figures. However, the costume can still be considered sexier to show the beauty of Wonder Woman. (Setyanto, 2019). It is not only the worldwide feminism icon but also the physical and sexual identity for females worldwide. (Setyanto, 2019).

Researcher Jordan Gablask, in the study ' Super or Sexist? The Evolution of Female Superheroes in Comics & Films" stated that Wonder Woman is also considered to be the most popular female superhero of the golden age of comics (1938-1956) during World War II as she played her role with the main superheroes of DC known as the Superman and the Batman. These three superheroes, including Wonder Woman, are known to be the main icons of the Justice League and DC, showing female superheroes active and independent to make decisions on their own but still get criticism because of their costume in the comics and the shape of the bodies to seduce men in different ways which shows her as a sex symbol. (Gablaski, 2020).

Rebecca Katherine Carifio also stated that Wonder Woman has also been a leading character to encourage the females of America to support their men in War by doing physical jobs and filling empty workspaces, which were represented through the comics to show women independent, powerful and equal to the men. (Carifio, 2015).

In the research ' Superhero Comics & Third Wave Feminism" the researcher Valentina Cardo and Neal Curtis claim that in the past five years, an observable change has been seen in the superhero genre where we have a black Captain America, a Chinese Superman, the first Pakistani-Muslim superhero known as Ms. Marvel, and another black hero Cyborg to be a part of the Justice League after almost 20 years of its establishment. (Cardo, 2018).

The increase in the number of female comic writers and producers made advancements in introducing independent female superheroes in the patriarchal society to represent equality in society through such superhero comics and films and to change the stereotypical mindsets and superhero trends that continue for ages.

Ms. Marvel is one of the latest examples of the modern superhero genre in how a Pakistani Muslim who is also an American citizen follows her tradition and culture. Her costume is also different from that of other female superheroes, which is a main lead

for the young female audience that, despite culture, a female can be independent at any age. The connection is built within the society by introducing Ms Marvel, showing her daily life problems and criticism in the society that almost every girl of her age can follow. However, she is still struggling to control her own life through her strong identity and free will to do everything she wants, which supports the feminist perspective (Cardo, 2018).

Racism in Superhero Films

The researcher Monika Swami Persad, in the study "The Contribution of Marvel Studios" Black Panther to the Changing Portrayal of African Americans in Hollywood" studied that in the past few decades, we have seen the racial difference in Hollywood as black males or females were not allowed to play leading roles in the films and always shown to be evil or villain characters in the comic books and as well as in the films. (Swamipersad, 2018). The color representation of good and bad was also stereotypically fit in people's minds, and everyone believed that a superhero must be a tall, muscular white guy with an ideal physique. However, we have seen a change in the superhero genre, and Captain America is now a Black guy in the MCU.

Cyborg is also a black superhero of the DCEU, and the upcoming newly introduced Spiderman is also black. There is a new era of black superhero world in Marvel known as the Black Panther where every person is black, including the female, and are shown as the most advanced people comprising of the latest technologies and unique metal substances known as "vibration" which is one of the most demanding and worthy metals in the superhero genre. Superheroes are larger than real-life characters and are known to requite injustice in a world based on imagination. (Swamipersad, 2018).

Spiderman is known to be the most popular superhero, and he is recognized all around the world. Stan Lee made this character connect with society as a superhero who saves the world but who also has his daily problems. Who manages to deal with both problems and being a teenage character, which represents most of the youth's daily life problems. The concept of wearing a full-body costume with a mask was to hide the racial and cultural differences so that no one knew who was behind that mask, and every origin could compare that character to their superhero. Still, there was a fear of a black Spiderman from the beginning. (Fu, 2016). There are different Spiderman from different origins, and we have a younger version of Spiderman, Miles Moraleswho's black and wears a black suit. This study shows a positive shift, but many audience groups criticized it, questioning why the costume is black and not the same as the other Spiderman costumes.

The American Dream

According to the study by Marie Gould, the Evolution of Superman as a Reflection of American Society," the Superman whom people are used to seeing today is not the Superman from the past as it has changed from the beginning till the present both politically and personalities vice (Gould, 2020). However, from the very start, Superman

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played his role in influencing and teaching the audience through his actions and decision-making how an individual should deal with the situation and never leave morals as their favorite superhero to perceive the American teachings and hidden narratives through its comics and other content like films and animations, etc.

In many comics and animations, when Superman seems to be making his own decisions and enforcing his concept, it feels wrong in the perception of some audiences. As he declares war and peace, his understanding shows American propaganda's political influence and power in shaping minds and getting over anything they want. This study shows that the American people are under some leadership of the fictional character with some superpowers and also target historical events. In her research, she also explains how superheroes like Superman represent themselves as social mirrors and are always there to help whenever the American people are in trouble or need some help as their guardian. (Gould, 2020)

Brandi Montana Hodo, in his research' ' Patriotism to Skepticism: Captain America & The Changing Cultural Landscape" claims that comic books have been considered as the anti-educational form of print media by many scholars throughout the past and remain the most unrewarded in the social change throughout the world, whereas the many of the fashion, costumes, films, animations, music, and styles were born from the comic books and become the trends of the society. (Hodo, 2011).

Propaganda & Hypernationalism

Propaganda is the dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumors, half-truths, or lies—to influence public opinion. (Smith, 2023). Soon after the independence of the United States, the country found itself in the world war, and the famous superheroes of all time shifted from children's entertainment purpose to propaganda for the World War nearly overnight. (Allison, 2012).

During World War II, Captain America symbolized the great American Super Soldier, who wore a costume representing the American flag and showed true patriotic means and love for his country. Captain America became the most-selling comic superhero during World War II, also known as the Golden Age of Comics (1938-1956).

He became the true image of American culture, encouraging young men and the public to stay patriotic and strong against the enemy; even American soldiers were inspired by the Captain America comics, which represented the true patriotism, justice, and ideal of the nation in that wartime while setting the moral and values for the Americans. (Hodo, 2011).

At that time of World War II, there was much need to encourage the people of the That is when the government planned to play the propaganda card through the comics and launched superhero characters like Captain America and increased the popularity of Superman and other superhero characters that targets the political aspects through their storyline showing Great America and giving the message to its audience that America is ready to defend its territories. (Hodo, 2011).

While explaining more about the propaganda through superhero comics in his research, Brandi Montana Hodotates that the propaganda through the comic books was so successful that people throughout the American people brought millions of copies every week and waited to buy the new upcoming comic books (Hodo, 2011). Most of the comics of Superman were based on some outer evil force that's going to attack America, and superheroes like Superman are fighting them back. However, it still represented war propaganda to show the power to the Germans. (Hodo, 2011)

The only comic book directly launched against the German Nazis was the Captain America series. In one of them, Captain America punches Hitler, the most famous comic series to present. America's country was at peace but still promoted propaganda to show the Germans were weak and supported Europe to stand against such evil force. (Hodo, 2011, p. 8). Because most of the European migrants, who were mostly Jews and living in America, were supporting their brothers through such forms of superhero characters and propaganda (Fingeroth, 2007). Also, the comic book industry was more likely to be introduced by Jewish authors and producers. Hence, Captain America was secretly a more Jewish superhero that supported them against the Nazis and Hitler. (Fingeroth, 2007).

The researcher Simcha Weinstein claims that Captain America's resemblance to any citizen of the country was more relatable to the American people, as any citizen can be a soldier, and anyone can compare himself with Captain America because the comics clearly show him as the guy from the local streets and buildings of Manhattan. (Weinstein, 2006).

Research Methodology

The researcher used the qualitative method to study the impact of superhero films on Pakistani youth. Due to an explorative study, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the youth and asked questions about the impact that they feel around them in society and how they are influenced by such superhero film franchises like Marvel and DC as it is not just about the films and their storyline, but also the adaptation of such pop-culture in the daily life.

Data collection is done through in-depth interviews, and a semi-structured questionnaire is used in the interviews to get the answers. The in-depth interviews were based on ten individuals living in Lahore, Pakistan, including males and females ages 15 to 24 years, as per the definition of the United Nations. A thematic analysis with the help of descriptive coding was performed.

The verbatim transcription helped the researcher to quote the answers word by word as each individual answered them. In order to ensure the word-by-word interpretation of answers, the interviews were recorded by the researcher with the consent of each individual. Research ethics were also observed during the interviews so that meaningful and informative data regarding which the research is focused.

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Findings & Analysis

Propaganda of Western Culture

Most respondents accepted through their answers that superhero films propagate Western culture in our society. This study shows that the Pakistani youth notices the popularity and hype of superhero films and are also inspired by these films. One of the respondents stated:

> *"The West simply invades our culture as our young generation does not even know its own culture or heroes."*

They believe that superhero films propagate Western culture in our society and worldwide. Most of Pakistan's children and young generation are also obsessed with different superheroes, whether DC or Marvel. The obsession of young children and youth is as crazy with the superheroes as they consume so much content from superhero film franchises like Marvel that they are unaware of their superheroes and culture.

Violence in Superhero Films

The majority of the respondents agreed that the superhero genre promotes violence, and not a single superhero film has not shown violence. All the interviews accepted that violence is one of the main elements in superhero films, whether Marvel or DC produces it.

> *"Technically, yes, superhero films promote violence, and some of the DC films are so dark and deep with so many cruel scenes."*

They believe that violence is a part of superhero films, but obviously, when you show the two sides, good or evil, fighting each other in the film, that fight can resemble violence; no superhero films are produced without such actions or conflict.

> *"Showing violence is good sometimes to show the crime rate and the situation of a city or area just like Gotham, which is filled with crime and corruption, cannot be explained without violence."*

The interviews also considered it a fact that to show the two different sides, some violence is a must in superhero films to differentiate between good and evil and which character is going to be a villain and which character is going to be the hero throughout the film.

Consumerism Impact on Youth

Most respondents are interested in shopping for products customized with famous superhero logos and feel that using such stuff in public and private is trendy.

> *"I have got the Marvel notebook, Superman notebook, and Spiderman notebook. I love buying such stuff."*

Most of them like to buy various items and demand a wide range. They also believed it was hard to find, but now it has become easy as many online brands produce such superhero clothing. They love buying collections of different Captain Marvel products, but not much is available in Pakistan, so they keep waiting somewhere to get such things. The youngsters also love buying and collecting superhero key rings, including the Thor's Hammer and Captain America shield customized in metal. According to them, these products look cool, and they love to wear them in public.

Gender Representation

Most interviewees respond that men are shown to be stronger as they are bulky with huge muscles and different powers, which shows the signs of masculinity in superhero films.

"Men are shown more power in superhero films than female superheroes."

The majority responded that being fans of such films, they felt that females were getting more leading roles than males. According to the respondents, the equality between male and female superheroes is also noticeable by the audience now as they believe that the female costumes are not very revealing now as they were shown sex appealing before. Most respondents claim that the producers or directors also choose the character's appearance and how the character must be shown. However, this sets the societal trend of how a strong man should look and how women should look beautiful while maintaining their physiques.

Objectification of Women

Most respondents agreed that they find female superheroes attractive based on their costumes and physical appearance and are also using them as an objective in such big film franchises. Some disagreed that no such objectivity is shown in superhero films, and female characters are shown as equal to men. The youth also focus on the costumes of male and female superheroes, which are designed and shown on the bigger screen, differentiating gender roles through appearances.

Most people respond to the equal distribution of powers between male and female superheroes. Even if they are shown equally powered, the women are shown as hyper-sexualized characters so that the audience can focus on their physical appearance instead of real powers and skills. Some of them also find it interesting that it is getting better with time, and franchises like DC and Marvel are overcoming the lack of content, showing both genders equally in powers and other skills. Some respondents also believe that the feminist approach and advancement can be seen now in superhero films as the leading male superhero roles are now played by female actresses in many major films, showing them as powerful and muscular.

Conclusion

The study concluded that superhero films have a significant impact on Pakistani youth. The results all count, and the findings show that the young generation is adapting

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to pop culture while consuming the information from watching superhero films produced mainly by Marvel and DC. Superman films shape the youth's mindset and impact them psychologically and culturally. This study also finds out that superhero films appeal to the masses, shaping their mindsets and behavior in different ways as they shape their identities, how to face real-life challenges, and how to sacrifice and have the courage to stand against the wrong. Moreover, the psychological impact includes the consumerism effect of youth and how the youth is obsessed with buying customized superhero things like clothes, gadgets, stationery, other products, etc. According to different references, as mentioned in this study, superhero film franchises like Marvel and DC have a huge market for superhero toys, action figures, and other businesses.

This research points out Pakistani youth's cognitive process, which is influenced by DC and Marvel films. With the intention of sustainable social development, this study highlights Hollywood's significant impact, encouraging youth to rethink their impulsive behavior toward their favorite superhero.

The psychological impact not only sticks to the business point of view but also creates different narratives about major issues like gender difference and feminism. This study proves that in a country like Pakistan, the audience observes and notices the gender differences because of the character settings in the superhero films. Both the male and female have shared their perspectives on what they feel about the male and female superheroes in the films and their thoughts on the superhero's appearances. Most female believes that they are objectified and used as a product in superhero films, as they are not treated equally compared to male superheroes.

Most men and some females defend the other group's opinions as they believe that the upcoming or present superhero films have now changed, and there are many leading roles that female superheroes play in superhero films. They also defend their statement by including that the costumes are not mostly liked to be sex appealing or hyper-sexualized. Still, it is just a matter of thinking about how someone will perceive it because there are many superhero films present now in which most of the famous female superheroes are completely dressed, and no cleavage or such things are shown.

The important thing is whether the audience agrees or disagrees with each other on different opinions, like gender differences in superhero films. Still, it is fascinating that the youth is following and noticing such major issues in superhero films, which are also a part of society. Besides masculinity and femininity, the young audience notices another major element: there are now black superheroes with such great powers and abilities.

This study shows that superhero films promote Western culture worldwide, specifically in Pakistan, because this study was conducted in Pakistan and gathered information from Pakistani youth. Based on the interviews and responses of the youth, the study proves that superhero films promote Western culture in such a way that the number of films that the superhero franchise like Marvel is producing is such a large number that the youth prefer to watch continuously.

The study demonstrates that the young generation relates them with the superhero characters because a superhero taught them to deal with different situations related to real-life problem-solving. After all, superhero films allow their viewers to perceive the message or content in the film based on their understanding. The superhero films also spread the notion of maintaining peace and making decisions like a leader modeling society equal rights and serving justice for any cause. In short, the superhero taught a person to stand out from others and lead. Furthermore, the psychological and cultural impact is not only limited to here; there is a lot more to explore and analyze about the superhero culture and how they are going to keep influencing the upcoming generation with its newest technology, advancements, and ideas all around the world shaping identities and promoting the superhero culture in every way whether it is in the form of films, comics, toys, and fashion.

Limitations of the Study

No research has been done before in Pakistan regarding the impact of superhero films on Pakistani youth or other audiences. Also, the researcher has found a lack of information, as there is no research on Pakistani superheroes. Maybe there are no popular superheroes in Pakistan who can relate to real-life issues or influence the audience through their content.

There were animated characters like Commander Safeguard in the past, but now the Pakistani media industry is not even working on such content anymore. Also, where there is a lot of hype and popularity of superheroes like Ms. Marvel and the recently launched superhero Kingo all around the world, these are Pakistani Muslim characters that will lead as one of the most famous Marvel superheroes in the future. However, none of the Pakistani researchers are working on it and discussing such major details that how companies like Marvel are launching superheroes from all around the world, promoting the superhero culture globally and learning from its lacks and flaws, which various researchers criticized in the past.

Recommendations

This study provides enough information for an individual to analyze the impact of superhero films. Most of the new findings and information gathered through this study, which was never studied before in Pakistan, concern how superhero films impact the young generation psychologically and culturally.

This study opens a new door to the superhero genre that should be studied. It is important to understand what the Western culture is doing with other cultures worldwide and how they treat every region. The West produces different categories of superheroes from different countries, which is not good as it can influence young minds to forget their culture. Superhero culture is influencing a huge market that holds high-grossing film records, millions of comics sales, and a billion-dollar toy market, which the superhero industry owners also capture. Capturing a huge business market all around the world is not just a joke; it is all connected and interlinked with each other.

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This study is just a start, and there is a lot to explore within the superhero culture in the future as well because the industry and technology are growing day by day, which will open more doors like studying the behaviors of young teenagers, researching the hidden meanings present in the superhero films which directly targets in shaping perspectives and future policies that will be implemented in coming years. Also, the evolution of female superheroes taking over the male dominancy can be studied on which the superhero films stand.

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