

Received: 15 January 2024, Accepted: 27 February 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9il.168>

## Fairy Tales and Barbie Dolls: Conceptualizing Beauty and its Consequences on Pakistani Kinder-culture

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### Abstract

The present research was conducted to study the impact of fairy tales and Barbie dolls and its consequences on Pakistani kinder-culture. It explored how girls conceptualize ‘beauty’ because of the exposure to fairy tales and Barbie dolls. The data was taken from 120 primary school girls and 20 teachers. Questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The theoretical framework was based on a combination of three theories; Schema Development Theory by Piaget (1983), Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977) and Cultivation Theory by Gerbner (1989). An analysis of the data revealed that young girls develop schemas of beauty in their minds by listening to fairy tales and playing with Barbie dolls. As they grow up, these schemas morph into their minds and force them to conceptualize beauty in a programmed manner. The social learning goes hand-in-hand when they observe and model the image, behavior and lifestyle displayed by fairy tale princesses and Barbie dolls. The media here acts as a cultivator, aiding the process of conceptualizing beauty through cartoons and films. Hence, the girls face its impact and consequences.

**Keywords:** Kinder-culture, Fairy Tales, Barbie, Barbie Doll Phenomenon, Ideal Beauty, Schema Development, Cultivation through Media, Social Learning.

### Introduction

There are so many forms of information and entertainment available to children that raising them in today’s world is a challenge. One has to sort out which type of environment should the children be exposed to and which not. For this reason, it is very important for adults to keep their eyes and ears open. However, many people are so busy in their day-to-day chores like earning bread, doing grocery, paying bills, cooking and so on that they hardly find time for their own selves, let alone for the young ones. Adults think that by providing food, clothing and birthday gifts, they have fulfilled their role as parents, elder siblings or guardians but in reality, their role is much more than that.

In childhood, young girls are usually given Barbie dolls to play with. “The Barbie doll has not stayed in one clothing or role throughout the decades” (Gomez, 2024). These dolls are the

favorite of almost all the girls in their childhood years. Though, young girls love to play with them by dressing them up as a fashion model or as a bride and so on, however they also despise them at times because they cannot be like them. They cannot be as freakishly slim as a Barbie doll, they cannot have extra-large blue eyes like her, nor can they compete with her in terms of a pimple free, hair free and flaw fair skin. This hinders their productivity as a child; as they are constantly reminded by Barbie dolls that they are not beautiful.

The pursuit of beauty makes people do all sorts of good and bad things. In the fairy tale, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (the Brothers Grimm, 1973), the evil queen poisons Snow White to become the fairest of them all. Similarly, in the fairy tale Rapunzel (Grimm et al., 1997), mother Gothel kidnaps baby Rapunzel to gain benefit from the magic in her hair. This magic allows her to remain young and beautiful forever. When stories like these are read to children, they get attracted to the ideas projected in them. Due to the popularity of fairy tales among children, toy companies focus on producing their models for children, also known as merchandizing. Along with the fairy tale models, the fashion doll Barbie is also produced by one such company, Mattel. Barbie constitutes of all those beauty elements, which can also be found in fairy tale princesses (Van Der Hoort et al. 2011). Together these products, when exposed to children, generate deep impacts and consequences.

### **Research Questions**

1. What role fairy tales and Barbie dolls play in conceptualizing beauty among young girls?
2. What are the impacts and consequences of the role played by fairy tales and Barbie dolls in conceptualizing beauty among young girls in Pakistani kinder-culture?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To explore the concept of beauty and fairness, starting from fairy tales to modern age Barbie dolls in Pakistani kinder-culture.
2. To investigate the phenomenon of conceptualizing beauty due to figurines of fairy tale princesses and Barbie dolls
3. To analyze the psychological impact of beauty on the mind of a Pakistani girl child.
4. To evaluate the standard of ideal beauty with reference to fairy tales and Barbie dolls in Pakistani context.

### **Literature view**

This section reviews discussions on fairy tales, Barbie dolls and Pakistani kinder-culture and its related literature.

### **The Concept of Beauty**

Beauty is a concept very much talked about since antiquity. It is the characteristics of a living or a non-living object, which provide a perceptual experience of pleasure or satisfaction (Mobius and Rosenblat, 2006). The question arise here as to who is beautiful in the true sense and who is not. For that matter, it is important to find out what actually is ideal beauty. Ideal beauty is a beauty existing as a mental image or in fancy or imagination only, something that lacks practicality (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d). But still the standards of ideal beauty are created, maintained and then recreated all around the world. Usually, a person or thing is considered as a representative of ideal beauty and then everybody considers it as perfect and follow it. Same happens in the case of the construction of ideal beauty in young girls. Since they are born and they gain conscience about their surroundings, they are showered with dolls

on their birthdays. These dolls, mainly Barbie dolls act as the first companions of these young girls. It is these “dolls that remain on their sides from dawn to dusk and it sketches specific concepts of beauty in their minds” (Dittmar et al., 2006).

### **Fairy Tales and Barbie Dolls**

The origin of fairy tales go back to thousands of years as these stories were passed from generation to generation, even before the recorded history. Thus, it is impossible to determine the actual origin of fairy tales. But, since they have originated, they have attracted their readers and listeners. Unlike fairy tales, Barbie’s history does not go back far in time. It is a fashion doll, which was developed first by Mattel Company in the year 1951. The designer Ruth Handler, was inspired by a German doll Lily and introduced a similar doll in America. She named her Barbie after her only daughter Barbara. However, before Barbie, there were other dolls as well. The first ever dolls were the rag dolls. They had simple features and bodies made up of soft cloth. After rag dolls, plastic baby dolls became popular. They had features of a baby, round eyes, curly hair, cuddly arms and legs and chubby cheeks. However, all these rag dolls and baby dolls lost their value when their competitor Barbie arrived on the scene with her plastic body of an adult woman.

According to Schema Theory as developed by Anderson and Pichert (1978), “information processing is based on existing schemas in a person’s mind which are developed in early childhood.” The schemas of beauty are created in a girl’s mind by these two major contributors; fairy tales and Barbie dolls. Fairy tales are the stories, which every girl adores during her childhood. However, nowadays the aura of fairy tales is not limited only to reading or listening fairy tales, but it has extended to cartoon and animated versions of these tales. Disney Studio took this initiative and introduced the video version of these fairy tales, which are gaining more popularity among children day by day. Apart from fairy tales, the Barbie dolls that are given to girls to play with also aid in their schema development. Barbie’s large blue eyes, long golden hair, flawless white skin and a size zero body with voluptuous curves are the features that every girl wishes to have.

Therefore, conceptualizing beauty by girls is a result of the schema of beauty that is formed in their minds when they play with Barbie dolls and watch princesses of fairy tales in books and television. For them the concept of ideal beauty lies in the flawless, dimpled and creamy white cheeks of a Snow White, without a single acne on her face. They consider a perfect figure to be that of a Barbie doll, having perfect curves and an almost invisible belly, which hint towards anorexia. Also, they believe a perfect get-together to be similar to the ball arranged by the handsome prince in the fairy tale of Cinderella, where Cinderella enters in a ravishing silk gown and dances with him.

### **Pakistani Kinder-culture**

All these Fairy tales and toys like Barbie dolls are products created by the West, having a deep impact on Pakistani Kinder-culture. Pakistan has lost its own kinder-culture, where grandmothers used to sew rag dolls for their grandchildren or the children in villages used to make clay toys by themselves. Instead, Pakistan has imported foreign kinder-culture that has caused our own traditions to die, thus creating issues like identity crisis in our young ones. “Pakistani children are considering the Western products as their own” (Shah and Pathan, 2016) which is corrupting their schemas, and as a result, it can affect the decisions that they will take in their future life.

The term kinder-culture is a well thought term in the Western culture and various researches are based on it. However, as far as Pakistan is concerned, this subject is still untouched. Though studying kinder-culture and trying to solve its problems is what can save us from all future problems, as it is the baseline of a child's life. However, "in a country like Pakistan where there are many other problems are in line, e.g., poverty, unemployment, terrorism and so on" (Bagchi and Paul, 2018), this sensitive issue is ignored. The researcher's first step might initiate this aim.

## Methodology

The following section will highlight the methodology related to the present study.

## Research Design

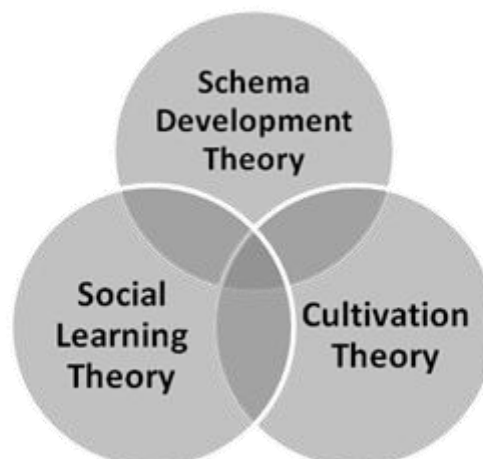
The present research is mixed method in design. This research study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature as it deals with giving a detailed picture with complete analysis through words as well as through quantifiable figures. The researcher used tables to convert the data into percentages and also analyzed them qualitatively by applying the theoretical framework on it.

## Sample

Availability sampling was used by the researcher as it was easy to find the research participants in schools and they were available at the time of data collection. Two samples were taken. Sample 1 included 120 school girls (age 12-14). While Sample 2 was composed of 20 teachers (age 25-30). This makes the total sample size of 140 research participants.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this research study utilized a combination of three theories to conduct the analysis. These theories are Schema Development Theory by Piaget (1983), Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977) and Cultivation Theory by Gerbner (1989). These theories are such that they can be studied simultaneously as their effect or influence on kinder-culture is simultaneous. When children are growing up, they develop schemas in their mind to understand their surroundings, which is coupled with the experience of social learning. The cultivation theory also works side by side when the agendas of media influence a child's upbringing. Figure 1 presents a three-dimensional model, which describes the simultaneous relationship of these three theories.



## Figure 1. The three-dimensional model of the present study

### Data Collection

Two questionnaires were designed by the researcher, one for primary level school girls containing both open ended and close ended questions and the other for teachers containing only open-ended questions. The questionnaires then followed a questionnaire refinement protocol method as given by Castillo-Montoya (2016). Questionnaire protocol method is a researcher's tool of inquiry through which the researcher validates their research instrument. The questionnaire protocol refinement method used by the researcher in this study was developed by Castillo-Montoya (2016). It is a four-step procedure used to check whether the research instruments used by the researcher aligns with the overall research objectives or not.

*Interview protocol refinement method*

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Serial#	Step
Phase 1	Ensuring questionnaire items align with the research questions
Phase 2	Constructing an inquiry-based conversation
Phase 3	Receiving feedback on questionnaire protocol
Phase 4	Piloting the questionnaire protocol

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Source: Adopted from *Castillo-Montoya (2016)*

After developing the research question, the first step for the researchers was to ensure that the items in the questionnaires align with the research questions. For this the researchers conducted planned discussions with their academic colleagues. Secondly, the researchers looked at the interview questions from the point of view of inquiry-based conversations. According to Castillo-Montoya (2016), there should be a balance between inquiry and conversation in the items of the questionnaire. The third step included receiving feedback on the protocol method. The researchers gave the composed interview questions to two Associate professors of Applied Linguistics at a reputable university in Pakistan. They thoroughly reviewed them word by word, made them error free and ensured that they cover all the points being raised in the problem statement of the research. Once the questionnaires passed the procedure of check and recheck, they were piloted by the researchers in May' 2013. The main data collection was conducted three months later, i.e., August' 2013.

The schools from where the questionnaires were distributed for data collection were present in the vicinity of Rawalpindi, a city in Pakistan. Four schools were selected which were Roots School System, Asif Public School, Grammar School Rawalpindi and Silver Oaks High School. The girls were of primary level, having the age of 12 to 14 years. By collecting the data from the girls of four different schools and then gathering, the viewpoint of teachers allowed the researcher to gain a holistic picture of the issue at hand. The participants were informed about the intention of the study prior to data collection and were assured that the data will purely be used for research purpose.

### Analysis of Data

The data collected was presented in tabulated form. Analysis by hand was conducted by dealing with the results of the questionnaires one by one, in full detail. The results were then analyzed by applying the theoretical framework on it. In the end the results of both the types of data were discussed by the researcher.

## Research Findings

The topic of the present research revolved around two major contributors i.e., Fairy tales and Barbie dolls, which are a constant source of attraction for young girls. Though it has influenced girls all around the world but the researcher will be focusing its impact and consequences on Pakistani kinder-culture. Research findings will be divided according to the two research questions.

### Research findings of RQ1: Role of fairy tales and Barbie dolls in conceptualizing beauty among young girls

The first questionnaire was given to 120 primary level schools girls. The results will be discussed below, analyzing the results of each questionnaire item one by one.

#### 1. Were you fond of listening to fairy tales in your childhood?

	(a) Yes	(b) No	(c) Sometimes
<b>Options:</b>	(a) Yes	(b) No	(c) Sometimes
<b>Out of 120:</b>	85	13	22
<b>Percentage:</b>	70.83 %	10.83 %	18.34 %

The questionnaire was roughly divided into two halves. The first half revolved around questions related to fairy tales while the second half centered on Barbie. Thus, the start of the questionnaire was from the above question where girls were to answer whether they were fond of listening to fairy tales in their childhood or not. The response showed that 70.83 percent said ‘Yes’ while 18.34 percent answered ‘Sometimes’. The remaining 10.83 percent were the ones who went for option (b) i.e. ‘No’. This shows that a large majority of school girls like to read and listen to fairy tales. Though it helps them to enhance their imagination but the constant portrayal of beauty in fairy tales hinder the brains of children to grasp other lessons given in them.

According to Piaget’s concepts about schema, children are self-centric; they develop their own theories and worldviews in their minds about a certain thing. They only absorb information that sounds easy and interesting to them or the ones that fit into their schematic framework. This high percentage of girls saying that they are fond of listening to fairy tales reaffirms that they are the ones who might conceptualize beauty shown in the fairy tales. These (70.83+18.34%) are the ones who idealize fairy tale princesses and want to be like them. They will be the ones who will be most likely getting conscious about their self-schema as given by Piaget and would like to change it according to the person schema they have about fairy tale princesses in their minds. Blakeslee (1996) studied the concept of self-schema formation in childhood. According to him, “a child learns the idea of self through the things that are exposed to him”. This includes his parents, his peers and in modern times the characters that he watches on television. Children develop a schema of their self on their own and then try to create their own logic out of it. For example, in the fairy tale of Snow White, the famous question of the evil queen, “Who is the fairest of them all?” is what dominates the tale. The entire tale is about how the queen cherishes her beauty. But when the magic mirror tells her that now Snow White is fairest of them all, she tries to kill her through her huntsman. Luckily, the huntsman does not kill her as he feels she is beautiful and innocent. This gives children the underlying message that you can escape everything even death if you look like

Snow White. When children are exposed to the portrayal of beauty in the books they read or the cartoons, they watch on television then they themselves make it a necessity of their self-schema. In simple words, they want to be as beautiful as Snow White, or Cinderella.

The Schema Development Theory by Piaget alone cannot explain the development of human psychology and human behavior. That is why the researcher has coupled it with two other theories; Social Learning Theory by Bandura and Cultivation Theory by Gerbner. According to Bandura, in the social learning system, “new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others (1971, p.3).” Direct experience is gained through one’s parents, teachers and peers. The focus of this research is more on the second aspect that is observation. In terms of this theory, observation is termed as modeling by Bandura. Bandura focused his research regarding social learning on children, and according to him, children learn best through modeling. There are various models to which children are exposed to during their childhood. These are the things around them e.g., cartoon characters, the accessories present on shelves in their room (even the color on the walls of their rooms, like pink in the case of girls), the clothes they wear, the books they read and the toys they play with.

Sherman and Zurbriggen (2014) examined how a child learns what is expected of them through the toys they are exposed to, which means children acquire social learning through the modeling of toys given to them. Ross (2014) in her article conveys her point by saying that it’s not about devaluing the traditional feminine roles. They have their separate respect and are necessary for the building of a balanced community. “... this is about recognizing the limiting effect that playing with heavily gendered toys can have on children's ultimate ambitions”.

Gerbner in his Cultivation Theory believes, “television is the source of the most broadly-shared images and messages in history (1989, p.1).” Through the constant viewing of television, the viewers unconsciously absorb all the underlying messages that the media industry wants to convey to its audience. “It’s drama, commercials, news and other programs bring a relatively coherent world of common images and messages into every home (1989, pp. 2-3).” There was a time when religion, culture or education was considered as the common source of influence on people. But with the advent of the television, it has become the most significant contributor in shaping images and messages across the community. The researcher’s concern in this thesis is to focus on the second and third part of research in Cultivation Analysis given by Gerbner, i.e., message system analysis and cultivation analysis. The researcher has linked Cultivation Theory to this research because apart from developing worldviews through toys, children also get to absorb the same messages more concretely in the form of cartoons and movies of their favorite fairy tale or toys like Barbie shown on television.

Greenhill (2010) has explained how fairy tale films have emerged as a proper genre in today’s world. Children learn more than movies than books as movies attract them more. Greenhill in his article says “the mirror of fairy-tales film reflects not so much what its audience members actually are but how they see themselves and their potential to develop (or, likewise, to regress) (p. 10).” This “how they see themselves” or “want to see themselves” is what television takes benefit of. According to Gerbner (1989), “the longer we live with television, the more invisible it becomes (p.1).” This could be taken in relation with the impact of fairy tales as: the longer children view fairy tale films and cartoons on television, the more they absorb the ideal beauty syndrome and the need to be like them.

Gerbner has pointed out invisibility in the sense that when an idea or thought is presented in front of you repeatedly, the brain accepts it as normal, no matter how abnormal it may sound in the start. This blurs, blends and bends the messages as make them sound sane and this is termed as mainstreaming by Gerbner. The ideas of beauty, femininity, happily ever after, prince charming and perfect fairy tale princess, which are shown in fairy tales, tend to morph in the minds of young girls through the process of mainstreaming. Girls then try to inculcate it in their lives as other girls around them are also doing so, due to its cultivation through television.

**2. Choose two of your favorite fairy tales among the following:**

- (a) Cinderella      (b) Mulan      (c) Snow White      (d) Jasmine

<b>Paired Answers:</b>	<b>Out of 120:</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Cinderella and Mulan	7	5.84 %
Cinderella and Snow White	85	70.83 %
Cinderella and Jasmine	5	4.16 %
Snow White and Mulan	10	8.33 %
Mulan and Jasmine	13	10.84 %

The percentages of this question show that a huge 70.83 percent of the girls opted for Cinderella and Snow White. The second highest response went in favor of ‘Mulan and Jasmine’; 10.84 percent. ‘Cinderella and Mulan’ got 5.84 percent votes while ‘Cinderella and Jasmine’ and ‘Snow White and Mulan’ deserved 4.16 percent each. As every participant was to select two fairy tale characters so the responses are given in Table 4.2.1 as coupled answers. The reason the researcher jotted down these four options was due to their popularity among children so that the participants already knew about these characters. Also, the researchers included two fairy tale characters who are very beautiful and their related fairy tales revolve around beauty which are Cinderella and Snow White. Whereas Mulan and Jasmine were included because their beauty is not all what is being talked about in their tales. It is rather their bravery and intelligence that is being promoted. The results reaffirmed the fact that girls go for beauty. A huge 70.83 percent girls opted for Cinderella and Snow White indeed. While only 10.84 percent went for Mulan and Jasmine. The remaining of the 18.33 percent respondents opted for other coupled answers. Hence, Cinderella and Snow White are the two fairy tale characters very much popular among young girls. Their initial schema of beauty is formed due to their liking of these fairy tale characters.

It seems as if young girls conceptualize the beauty of Cinderella; they want a fairy godmother who will transform them into a princess wearing a pink silk gown who meets her prince in the ball. They also envision themselves as Snow White, who has a fair and flawless white skin and is awakened by a true love’s kiss by her prince Charming followed by a happy ending to their story. The response showed that girls cannot much relate to Mulan or Jasmine. The reason to this is that these stories do not portray beauty the way it is being portrayed in Cinderella and Snow White. Even the Cultivation theory when applied on this question tells



us that the movies of Cinderella and Snow White are more watched by young girls as compared to Mulan and Jasmine. Statistics show that from 1899 to present year 2014, 30 films have been made which either are direct adaptations of Cinderella or are loosely based on the plot of Cinderella. Even Pakistan did not stand back in making an adaptation of Cinderella. Geo TV aired *Aik Nayee Cinderella*, which was a modern-day adaptation of Cinderella and covered a good response from audience. Starting from 1992 to 2012, 27 film adaptations have been made of Snow White. A popular English drama *Once Upon a Time*, which airs on CBS, also follows the plot of Snow White, having Snow White, Prince Charming and Evil Queen Regina as its main characters. As far as Mulan is concerned, there is only one film adaptation, made by Disney. The character of princess Jasmine in *Aladdin* was used only in four films produced in 1992, 1994, 1996 and 2007. About the character of Jasmine, Kempley (1992) of *The Washington Post* newspaper said “Her (Jasmine’s) dream isn’t so different from Snow White’s or Cinderella’s: she is waiting for her prince to come, but he must be a man with both looks and character (Para. 6).” Hence, from the statistics of the films based on these four characters it is evident that young girls have been kept inspiring from the characters of Cinderella and Snow White for over a century. The recurrent themes and underlying messages given in these movies being produced repeatedly have made young girls to take on social learning through them.

### 3. Can you relate to any fairy tale character?

(a) Yes                      (b) No                      (c) No Idea

If yes, which and how?

<b>Options:</b>	(a) Yes	(b) No	(c) No Idea
<b>Out of 120:</b>	55	34	31
<b>Percentage:</b>	45.83%	28.33%	25.84%

In the above question, 45.83 percent girls said that they can relate to a fairy tale character. 28.33 percent answered in negative while 25.84 percent have never thought about such a thing before and they had no idea about it. This question also required the ones who opted for the first option to write down in a few lines as to which character they can relate themselves and how. Before solving of the questionnaire, the researcher gave the girls instructions in which it was clarified that the relation to a fairy tale character could be either at physical or psychological level. It could even be a memory through which they can associate themselves to a fairy tale character. An interesting fact observed over here was that all the girls wrote about a female fairy tale character though it was not asked of them necessarily. They were just asked about a fairy tale character, assuming it could be male or female. However, all the girls automatically talked about female fairy tale characters. The responses of girls in this question were categorized into relation to beauty, relation to self, relation to play, relation to memories and other.

55 out of 120 girls confirming that they can relate to any fairy tale character reaffirms that girls take fairy tales as models of observation to learn from. The media presents information and messages to young girls largely through fairy tales. 45.83 percent girls said that they can relate to a fairy tale character and this relation is not possible without the popularity of fairy

tales on television. Nowadays there are not just fairy tale films that inspire young girls; it is much more. Whenever a film is released the cast and crew of the film conducts a proper promotion campaign for it. Stien (2011) in his book talks about the variety of merchandizes by Disney. "Since the early days of the company, Disney has long specialized in product merchandising, beginning with the sales of Mickey Mouse tablets and watches in 1930s (p.78)." Apart from merchandising, Disney also produces a wide range of home entertainment products like DVDs, video games, blogs and social networking sites that continue to hold the interest of the audience even when they have finished watching the movie.

#### 4. Do Fairy Tales portray truthfully about how a girl should be?

- (a) Yes                      (b) No

Give Reasons for your answer.

<b>Options:</b>	(a) Yes	(b) No
<b>Out of 120:</b>	65	55
<b>Percentage:</b>	54.16%	45.43%

According to the results of this question, 54.16 percent participants responded in yes while 45.43 percent believed that fairy tales do not portray truthfully about how a girl should be. This question was also an open-ended question like the previous one and the participants were asked to justify their answers. The researcher also outlined the data into two separate tables. Table given below shows the categorization of responses given in 'yes' and was divided into two categories: Relation to Beauty and Other.

#### Answers supporting option (a) i.e. Yes

##### Relation to Beauty

They portray the delicacy in characters which is the real spirit of femininity

Yes because they teach girls how to look good and take care of yourself

Girls should be stylish, by wearing colorful clothes, if not having golden hair than wear a wig

Fairy tales tell us how a girl should be such as honest, beautiful and well knowing

Yes as a girl should work hard to be beautiful and be successful

##### Other

They teach us to be kind to humans, be polite to and to believe in yourself

Yes to some extent, they teach us how to handle difficult situations without having any moral support

Yes because Barbie and princesses are well behaved, polite and innocent

Because they are always hardworking, helpful and they have patience in them

Fairy tales tell a girl that she should be happy with what she has

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I like that they are living in Paris, they are pretty and fantastic	Because we are just like them
Yes because they are an idea for girls how to be beautiful and smart	A girl should try to learn the manners and good things of a fairy tale
They teach girls to be smart	Yes they are good to watch. We learn how to dress up
Fairy tales tell us to be soft and kind	Yes they tell us to be strong and make right decisions
They teach us to be beautiful and give us ideas how to design pretty dresses	Every girl should be like Cinderella
They teach us to take care of our beauty	Fairy tales tell us to be a good girl and be kind to everybody
We learn to carry ourselves properly	A girl should be like Snow White
Yes they definitely portray the emotional, soft and idealistic nature of girls	We learn to be honest through fairy tales
They depict characters as the most friendly and charming creatures and little girls learn a lot by watching it	They tell us how to behave with bad people in bad circumstances

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On the other hand, the 45.43 percent girls who answered in negation believed that fairy tales are mere stories to read. Table 7 also has two categories based on the type of responses. The categories were Relation to Fantasy and Other. The responses showed that girls believed fairy tales to be a fantasy and having wings and doing magic is not possible in real life. One of the research participants went further down to say that fairy tales are imaginary stories and they only give us false hopes.

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#### **Answers supporting option (b) i.e. No**

##### **Relation to Fantasy**

They are imaginary characters and the world they show is not like real world

It is only fantasy

They are in a way away from reality

Characters are fictitious and they do not belong to the real world

In reality such things do not happen

##### **Other**

They only show the soft side of girls and how they are perfect and pretty

No because they are just cartoons

They are fake. Be yourself!

That's why because they cannot fly and do magic really

As they are very perfect and girls get into complex

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Reality is just opposite. We have to live according to the rules of society	In fairy tales, girls should not be like just seeing and falling in love and all that stuff
Real life is nothing like a fairy tale.	Fairy tales are just books to read to pass time

This question is very important as far as the theory of Schema Development is concerned. It directly relates the insights of a girl's mind that how she can relate to a fairy tale character. As seen in the related tables above, majority of the respondents answered 'yes'. The 54.16 percent girls who said they could relate to a fairy tale character have self-schemas parallel to person schemas in their mind. Many of them justified by relating themselves to the beauty aspect of fairy tales, while some girls gave some other reasons as well. 'Girls should be stylish, by wearing colorful clothes, if not having golden hair than wear a wig' was a participant's response. This response indicates how strong schemas of beauty are developed in their minds. 45.43 percent girls answered in no saying that they cannot relate to a fairy tale character. These girls have strong schemas of 'reality vs. fantasy' in their minds. A girl said 'In fairy tales girls should not be like just seeing and falling in love and all that stuff'.

Media here again acts as a cultivator which has blurred the line between reality and fiction, in the minds of young girls. When these girls enter their teens, they become fully obsessed in being their favorite fairy tale character; be it Cinderella, Snow White, Rapunzel and so on. Bandura (1979) in his Social Learning Theory says "...when a name is consistently associated with a given person, it is virtually impossible to hear the name without experiencing imagery of the person's physical characters (p.7)." And when it becomes impossible to hear the name without recalling its imagery than girls start to mimic them as well.

##### 5. Which version of Fairy Tales is better according to you?

	(a) Audio	(b) Video	(c) Written
<b>Options:</b>	(a) Audio	(b) Video	(c) Written
<b>Out of 120:</b>	0	91	29
<b>Percentage:</b>	0%	75.84%	24.16%

This question required the research participants to tell which version of fairy tales is better according to them. Not even a single one out of the 50 participants answered option A, which is audio. 75.84 percent of them voted for option B, which is video and a mere 24.16 percent answered option C, which is written version. The majority of girls voted for the video version of fairy tales and it a well-known fact that children are more attracted to visuals rather than anything else. In an essay *Reading Book vs. Watching Movies*, Nguyen (2009) favors watching movies rather than reading books. He remarks, "It [movies] present series of action, emotion, and brings audience into the story in a much livelier way than reading books can produce (Para 2).

Therefore, images carry a great significance in encouraging young girls to conceptualize beauty shown in fairy tales. Gerbner (1989), in his Cultivation Theory also supports this impact of visuals/images. He asserts, "People are born into a symbolic environment with

television as its mainstream. Children begin viewing several years before they begin reading, and well before they can even talk” (p.14).

### 6. Are you fond of playing with Barbie?

(a) Yes                      (b) No                      (c) Sometimes

<b>Options:</b>	(a) Yes	(b) No	(c) Sometimes
<b>Out of 120:</b>	59	17	44
<b>Percentage:</b>	49.16%	14.17%	36.67%

The figures show 49.16 percent girls said that they like to play with Barbie dolls, 36.67 percent answered sometimes. While 14.17 percent answered in negative. As it was discussed earlier, schemas are more concretely formed if they are presented to children in a visual form. Same happens with tangible objects. Children get to touch them and are able to get more out of them than intangible objects. By touching Barbie, making its hair, dressing it up and then playing with it, children tend to grasp a lot. Firstly, they get to observe its adult body with a big bust, narrow hips and slender legs. They view its silky golden hair, big blue eyes, sleek nose, rosy pink lips and a creamy fair complexion. When combined together, these features influence a lot on the little minds of young girls. According to Piaget, “The cumulative nature of development ensures that to cope with more complex environmental stimuli, a child must first deal with simpler events” (Piaget, 1976). The schemas start as simple networks and with time, they develop into complex structures. Therefore, when a young girl has not even built a schematic network of a young human body or done any comparison with an adult body, she is being given a Barbie doll to play with. She is in a state of curiosity at this time and she tries to explore it on her own. Such a thing later proves harmful for her when her mind gets mature before time. The response of the question above shows that 59 out of 120 i.e. almost half of the girls are fond of playing with Barbie. The solution of the problem does not lie in getting rid of it, as it is not possible in today’ world. Rather the parents should let their children know everything that is good or bad for them. In this way, the children get to know how to differentiate between right and wrong.

Young girls learn how to move in their circle of friends and peers through Barbie. By playing with Barbie, girls create their own social reality of how a girl should live. They learn to dress up and accessorize. Constructing a social reality based only on fashion and dressing up should not be their aim but it is. Barbie becomes a symbolic model for them. It unconsciously makes girls to worry about their body image all the time. They want to look slim like her but they forget that this is not possible in real life. If a Barbie doll is made into a life-sized doll, it will have a 39-inch bust, 18-inch waist and 33-inch hips. “When these measurements are applied to a life-sized figure, the results are unnerving and freakish. Even the thinnest of women can't compete with the proportions of Barbie in her real-life form (Fahey, 2011).” According to doctors, a woman having body dimensions similar to Barbie is strikingly unhealthy because a woman needs a specific amount of body fat around her belly to carry out processes like menstruation and pregnancy.

The obsession with a slim body and not eating enough is not just related to Barbie but has been caused by media as well. Daily on television, women are shown as dressed up dolls. Hendriks (2010) discusses the implication of watching television and the way females are presented on it. He observed, “95 % of the main characters on sitcoms were of thin or

average weight, whereas only 5 % were of above-average weight”. It has also been observed that women with heavy bodies are shown as having no value at all.

### 7. Which thing about Barbie strikes you the most?

	(a) Fair Skin	(b) Golden Hair	(c)Big Blue Eyes	(c) Slim Figure
<b>Options:</b>	(a) Fair Skin	(b)Golden Hair	(c)Big Blue Eyes	(d)Slim Figure
<b>Out of 120:</b>	29	33	20	38
<b>Percentage:</b>	24.16%	27.5%	16.67%	31.67%

This question was again related to Barbie. It required the research participants to select their favorite feature of Barbie; the part, which strikes them the most. In the response of this question, the maximum votes '31.67 %' went in favor of option (d) which was 'Slim Figure'. The golden hair of Barbie was liked by 27.5 percent girls and her fair skin looked striking to 24.16 percent girls. The option (c) Big Blue Eyes got 16.67 % votes. In a country like Pakistan, only two physical features are considered as the sole contributors of beauty and those are a slim figure and a fair skin. In an article titled *The Obsession with Fair Skin and Pakistani Media* (2014), Awan comments, “every fairness cream advertisement gives the message of how a girl uses a particular fairness cream, gets fair and then she finds a rich husband for her”. One of the beauty products companies in Pakistan is using the tag line *Dark Out, White in*, in their ad campaigns. There is a wide business of fairness creams in Pakistan, where one can buy a fairness cream at a price as low as 150 rupees and as high as 1500 rupees. Thus, fairness cream companies are making the most out of it due to such media campaigns.

### 8. You like Barbie in which role?

- (a) Fashion Designer      (b) Nurse      (c) Ken's Girlfriend      (d) Housewife

Any other role? (Please Specify)

	(a)Fashion Designer	(b)Nurse	(c)Ken's Girlfriend	(d) Housewife
<b>Options:</b>	(a)Fashion Designer	(b)Nurse	(c)Ken's Girlfriend	(d) Housewife
<b>Out of 120:</b>	79	8	23	10
<b>Percentages:</b>	65.83%	6.66%	19.16%	8.35%

65.83 percent said they like Barbie as a Fashion Designer, 19.16 percent preferred her to the girlfriend of Ken, 8.35 percent went for her as a housewife, while only 6.66 percent voted for the second option i.e., Nurse. Some of the research participants wrote down other roles, which they like their Barbie to be. Those roles are categorized in Table 12 below.

Relation to Beauty	Other
Fashion model	School girl
Princess with colorful wings and maximum	Big caring sister who is perfect

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magic	
Beautiful dancing star	Descent girl
Stylish Pop star	Student
Ballerina Dancer	All roles
Barbie Fairy	Best friend
A perfect bride	Teacher

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Majority of these roles were related to beauty, which can be viewed as a direct result of the cognitive feminine schemas created in their minds. In addition, the high figures of 65.83 percent girls who like to have their Barbie as a fashion designer exemplify this notion. In Table 4.8.2, the responses that lie under the category of ‘Other’ were not that significant. The only significant responses were school girl and teacher, other more or less they were same as the responses given in the category of Relation to Beauty.

Though there is no harm in dressing Barbie as a fashion designer, but making her a fashion designer every time children play with it is an alarming factor. Paul (2011) of *The New York Times*, in her article, *Is pink Necessary?* said “there are more than 26,000 Disney princess items in the market in 2009, which generated sales of \$ 4 billion”. Orenstein (2011) believes, “child beauty pageants are very much responsible in making girls fashion conscious”. The point of making such shows is useless, as they are only building the situation worse. They are igniting the issues of body image dissatisfaction, self-image, and eating disorders in young girls. Sadly, the matter has worsened from being the fairest of them all to being the hottest of them all. Cohen and DeBenedet (2012) believe that in order to make daughters stand and face this world with courage, mothers and fathers both have to play their part. Parents have to break some stereotypes, e.g., men are logical and strong while women are emotional and sensitive, also that women cannot be as intelligent and have leadership qualities like men. What fathers can do for their daughters is to treat them as if they want their future life partners to deal with them.

In the above question, only 8 out of 120 girls opted for option (b) i.e., they want their Barbie as a nurse. This again indicates that as a nurse has nothing to do with being beautiful so only a minimum of girls opted for her. The other two roles as given in this question were ‘Ken’s Girlfriend’ and ‘Housewife’. There were more votes in favor of the former than the latter. This could be the case because by watching Barbie movies, a girl could think that being a girl friend of a handsome lad like Ken can someday make her his wife as well.

**9. Can you relate to Barbie by any means?**

- (a) Yes      (b) No      (c) No Idea

If yes, how?

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<b>Options:</b>	(a) Yes	(b) No	(c) No Idea
<b>Out of 120:</b>	31	65	24
<b>Percentage:</b>	25.83%	54.17%	20%

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This question was similar to the question that was given in the first half of fairy tales of the questionnaire, where the participants were asked whether they could relate to a fairy tale character or not. Similarly, in this question they were asked whether they can relate to Barbie or not. Though the question was similar but its response was quite opposite. 54.17 percent girls ticked option (b) i.e. No, 25.83 percent said yes while 20 percent had no idea about it. Table below gives the open-ended responses in detail.

<b>Relation to Beauty</b>	<b>Relation to Self</b>	<b>Relation to a memory</b>	<b>Other</b>
Barbie is friendly like me and also very cute	I relate to Barbie life in stories as I love reading	My teacher used to call me a Barbie as I am kind and gentle like her	Somehow yes in the sense that I have desires that I want to fulfill, nothing more
Barbie has gorgeous hair and I want them	She is pretty like me	I used to love having Barbie doll on my birthday as a gift	By helping others and performing good roles
Brown hair and fair skin	She likes pink color like I do	I love dressing up as a bride and marrying them as I like weddings	
Barbie wears a beautiful diamond necklace	She is friendly in movies like me	I like playing with it and decorate her house	

In this question, the researcher made similar categories where girls were asked how they could relate themselves to a fairy tale character. The categories were made with respect to the schemas of beauty and memory. In addition, a separate category was created to jot down the responses, which do not fall into any of the first three categories. By looking at the above table one can identify the various schemas active in a girl's mind while the solving of this questionnaire. An interesting fact that came out over here is that girls can relate themselves more to fairy tales than Barbie dolls. One of the reasons of this could be that fairy tales are read to children since they are babies, so they have more developed schemas of them in their minds. Whereas Barbie dolls are given to them at an age of minimum 3 years so, in this way they can relate themselves more to the fairy tale princesses than Barbie dolls.

#### 10. Do you have a secret wish to look like Barbie?

(a) Yes      (b) No      (c) Never thought about it

<b>Options:</b>	(a) Yes	(b) No	(c) Never thought about it
<b>Out of 120:</b>	68	22	30
<b>Percentage:</b>	56.66%	18.31%	25%



This was a very interesting question as it asked the research participants whether they have a deep-down secret wish to look like Barbie. A big proportion of 56.66 percent ticked option (a) accepting that they have a secret wish to look like a Barbie. Twenty-five percent never thought about it, though they must have started thinking about it while filling out this questionnaire. 18.31 percent participants went for option (b) i.e., no.

Brown (2007) said “When one thing is so dominant, then it’s no longer a choice: it’s mandate, cannibalizing all other forms of play. There’s the illusion of more choices out there for girls, but if you look around, you’ll see their choices are steadily narrowing.” Hence, as a result girls tend to develop a secret wish to look like Barbie. Their wish does not only remain a wish but they try to fulfill it throughout their lives. They struggle to attain that Barbie like figure, pluck eyebrows, apply makeup, wear pink, overall maintain that so called perfect princess image.

According to the concepts of Social Learning Theory by Bandura, a person identifies with a model and learns through it when he sees others getting reward for it. It is not necessary for him to get the reward himself but it could be somebody else as well, which could inspire him. In terms of young girls getting obsessed with Barbie, one could say that girls make it their ideal when they see it being publicized in toy shops, stationary shops, magazines, movies, advertisements and so on. They see their friends and peers exchanging it on birthdays, playing with it by getting dressed like her and in this way they get motivated. It is not that all children will react due to motivation at the very instant. Some may while some will show reaction after a certain period. As Bandura said “Children do not always immediately show the learned behavior (1971, p.20).” The 68 out of 120 girls who answered that they have a secret wish to look like Barbie may reproduce the learned behavior in their current age or it may get settled in their minds and will force them to reproduce it when they enter their teens.

Gerbner termed television as the common storyteller of our time. Be it Christmas, Easter or even Mother’s Day, Cartoon Network shows Barbie movies from morning to evening. The content of all the Barbie movies revolves around how Barbie instantly becomes the favorite of her friends due to her exquisite looks, then there is some adventure and finally she meets and marry a handsome lad. Barbie released its first film in 1987, which was titled as, *Barbie and the Rockers: Out of this World*. Since its first release, the Mattel Company stated how their sales have doubled due to Barbie craze transmitted in girls through the movie. They not only watch it but internalize it as well, both in their childhood and in adulthood. “Research findings...disclose that modeling influences can serve as teachers, as inhibitors, as response elicitors, as stimulus enhancers, and as emotion arousers (Bandura, 1971, p.11).”

### 11. Which gift will you prefer buying for your sister/cousin?

- (a) Fairy tale book      (b) Barbie doll      (c) Sports Item

Any other gift? (Please Specify)

<b>Options:</b>	(a)Fairy tale book	(b)Barbie doll	(c)Sports item
<b>Out of 120:</b>	60	44	16
<b>Percentage:</b>	50%	36.66%	13.34%

This is the last question of this questionnaire where the research participants were asked to select which gift they would prefer buying as a gift for their sister or cousin. Fifty percent

said they would prefer buying a fairy tale book as a gift while 36.66 percent said they would prefer buying a Barbie doll. A third option was also there which was 'sports item'. Only 13.34 percent encircled this option. The researcher also provided a space where the research participants could write down any other gift name that they have in mind. The names that they gave were of two natures; firstly, relating to beauty and secondly other type of gifts. One of the participants wrote something very interesting. She said she would like to gift a pretty headband and then in brackets she emphasized: (because a girl should look perfect). Table below presents the two types of responses.

<b>Relation to Beauty</b>	<b>Other</b>
Beauty box	Puzzles
Makeup box	White board and marker
Cute hairclips	Barbie pencils
Beautiful dress	Chocolates
A pink frock	Castle cake
Glittery fairy shoes	Books about Islamic history
Barbie dress	Stuff toys
Jewelry	Barbie shoes
A headband (a girl should look perfect)	Some creative toy

As discussed earlier, girls have more strong cognitive schemas related to fairy tales as compared to Barbie doll. That is why in the response of this question, fifty percent girls said that they want to present a fairy tale book to their loved ones as a gift. In a way, this is good to know that girls prefer buying a book for their friends or cousins. However, books should not only be related to fairy tales. However, we only introduce our children to fairy tale books apart from their course books. Thus, overemphasizing the fairy tale image in the minds of our young ones.

In the article, *What's Wrong With Cinderella?* Orenstein (2006) relates how everybody calls her daughter a princess whenever she takes her out with her. She says that even the woman selling balloons at the end of the street hands her daughter a pink colored balloon saying 'I bet I know your favorite color is pink'. When she takes her to the dentist, the doctor says, "Would you like to sit in my special princess throne so I can sparkle your teeth?" She argues that when the same ideas are flashed in front of a girl repeatedly, they get to imprint in her mind sketching strong cognitive schemas; person schema and role schema. She states a very interesting fact that even Dora in, *Dora the Explorer*, a strong headed, dirty kneed adventurer was not able to avoid the magic of fairy tale princesses. In 2004, a two-part episode was telecasted on television where Dora turns into a 'true princess'. As the ratings of that episode went very high, the Nickelodeon consumer-product division released a *Magic Hair Fairytale Dora*, which became an instant hit among young girls. Whenever her hair is touched, she says 'Let's go to fairy land!' and 'Will you brush my hair'. So, even a character like Dora, whose personality speaks of independence, freedom, adventure, knowledge and fun in life, was shaded in the colors of princess-ness. This can also be supported by the quote

of Gerbner (1989) as he said "...everyday reality and television provide a "double dose" of messages which "resonate" and amplify cultivation (p.27)." Here one can see how princessness is being cultivated in the minds of young girls and this also affects their choice of giving gifts to their loved ones, as seen in the response of this last question.

### **Research Findings of RQ2: Impact and consequences of the role played by fairy tales and Barbie dolls**

Apart from the data collected from school girls, the researchers also approached 20 teachers from the same schools. They were given an open-ended questionnaire to fill in order to answer the second research question which was to explore the impact of the role played by fairy tales and Barbie dolls. The questionnaire had six questions. The responses that the teachers gave to the first question were very interesting. The question required them to tell which fairy tale they would like to read to their children or siblings and why. As far as the topic of this research is concerned, the teachers gave mature responses about conceptualizing beauty as compared to the children. Then there were also some teachers who were still seen captured by the trance of fairy tales and Barbie dolls and were very much in favor of them. This second type of teachers proves the fact how the effect of conceptualizing beauty in females seep from childhood to all the way to adulthood. As in the above table, a teacher wrote 'I would read Cinderella to my children as it involves a beautiful girl and a fairy godmother with magic'. This teacher wants to read Cinderella to her children just because it has a beautiful girl as its protagonist and there is also magic involved which transformed the life of Cinderella.

They were then asked if they had to design a fairy tale character for children in Pakistan then what will be the strengths of that character. Only one participant out of 20 wrote that she wants the character to be charming and beautiful, but she also added that with beauty she should also have good moral and ethical values. Almost all of the participants talked about strength of character. One of them wrote 'It would possess all the qualities which are lacked by women of our country i.e. self-confidence, self-reliance and boldness'. It is indeed true that children of Pakistan need a character that is confident and can fight any type of circumstances whatsoever. S/he must be represented as a character, which is realistic enough. As a participant said, "A character just like a normal human being. He or she will not be able to possess any magic, it will be close to reality'.

In order for imitative learning to occur, observers must be motivated to act, they must be provided with an example of the desired behavior, they must perform responses that match the example, and their imitative behavior must be positively reinforced.

The above quote is from Social Learning and Imitation by Dollard and Millar (1941). This quote shows that if elders want their children to learn a desired behavior they should take measures to make them motivated. In this way, they model the desired behavior very quickly and with interest. Also, parents should reward their children when they imitate their desired behavior. It further increases the interest of the children. The next question required the research participants to answer whether fairy tales impact young girls or not. Eighteen out of twenty participants agreed that yes fairy tales do impact young girls and that too to a large extent. Two of them talked about the beauty aspect of fairy tales that fairy tales make girls to think about beauty all the time. As Gerbner (1989) in his Cultivation Theory said "The heart of the analogy of television and religion, and the similarity of their social functions, lie in the continual repetition of patterns (p.3)." This constant repetition of showing beauty impact

young girls to a very large extent. One should think that why being beautiful is all what a woman thinks of, or that why “the pursuit of beauty is occupying a central role in many women’s life? (Gender and Society, p. 712).” The sole purpose of fairy tales is to train or tame young girls and even boys about which attitudes and behaviors are appropriate according to the societal ideals and which are not. The next question asked how fairy tales and Barbie dolls are creating a farce image of ideal beauty in young girls. All participants agreed with this question. One of the teachers said ‘As a teacher I have seen girls in my class always trying so hard to look perfect all day long. Almost all of them carry a pocket mirror and a lip-gloss in their bags. And this is because of the things they play with; fairies and Barbie dolls. Apart from toys, media is playing a major role of inculcating ideal beauty syndrome in young girls. “75 % of women’s magazines contain at least one ad or article about how to alter one’s appearance through cosmetic surgery, diet, or exercise (Chrisler, 1999, p.40)”. The last question asked the participants how much they think fair skin and a slim body contributes to being beautiful. Roughly speaking six out of twenty participants agreed with the statement, two of them said it does but partially and the remaining twelve stated that fair skin and a slim body are mere attractions related to superficiality.

Research titled, *Can Beauty Ever Be More Than Skin Deep?* by Brooks (2013) talks about the relation people create between ideal beauty and body image. The study argued “...body image can increase by reinforcing life values, a clear sign that while changing our appearance or losing weight may appear simpler, may not be the solution to positive self-esteem (p. 61).” One of the participants made a very good point. She said, ‘Our inferiority complex has sprouted through our history with dominant British Raj’. It is true that people in Pakistan are obsessed with fair skin. It dominates the checklist of a mother who goes out hunting a suitable match’ for her son for marriage. There has been a famous Urdu idiom which reads *goray rung k so number* which means fair skin has 100/100 number. It means no matter if a girl is fat, has pimples on face, or is short heighted and so on, if she is fair then her fairness will cover all her flaws, and she will still look beautiful. Conducting interviews with school teachers allowed the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the issue at hand. It was reaffirmed that this stigma of beauty conceptualization due to Fairy tales and Barbie dolls is real and has deep impact on Pakistani kinder-culture.

## Conclusion

By conducting a thorough analysis of the data collected from the school girls it was seen that young girls of Pakistan are very much inspired with the messages conveyed through fairy tales and Barbie dolls. It looks like the producers and creators of these two means of entertainment for girls are achieving their target of attacking their young audience and will continue to do so. Young girls have developed strong schemas of beauty in their mind, which they have learned by modeling the characteristic traits of their favorite fairy tale characters and Barbie dolls. In order to make young girls productive they need to focus their attention on things other than the portrayal of beauty, they need new role models. Pakistani singer and social activist Haroon played his part by producing a Pakistani cartoon series solely made for Pakistani children. It is *Burka Avenger*, which was released in 2013, by Geo Entertainment. It is about a girl Jiya, who is a teacher by profession. She fights the bad men of the society who are against the education of girls through her art of a special kind of fighting (through pens and books). While she does this, she disguises herself in a black Burka. It was refreshing to see a story where for once the protagonist is not a princess who in the end marries a handsome prince. Her purpose in life is much more important than love and marriage, as it is education. *Burka Avenger*, gathered appreciation from critics all around the world and have

so far received two international awards as well. Times magazine even included it in the list of “the most influential fictional characters of 2013 (Alter & Dockerman, 2013)”. Sample 2 i.e. the teachers’ opinion was taken as to gain a holistic picture of the issue at hand. The teachers gave their valued views as to how a change can be brought in the way girls conceptualize beauty. They suggested portrayal of such fairy tale characters will at the end of the day inspire young girls in a positive manner. Still there were some teachers who were seen entrapped in the aura of fairy tales and Barbie dolls. Therefore, by conducting this research it has been observed that there is no denying in the fact that fairy tales and Barbie dolls do impact young girls and that too in a negative way.

All in all, we can say that when girls are in their childhood years, they are given Barbie dolls to play with and their parents/teachers read them fairy tales or they watch their movies on television. The immature minds of young girls develop the schemas of beauty by playing with Barbie dolls and they consider the ultimate beautiful girl to be fair, tall, with golden hair, and blue eyes. According to Piaget (1976), “Schema is a mental framework onto which incoming data has to fit.” This mental framework enables children to comprehend life around them. But if they develop wrong schemas in their mind, it could produce harmful effects. “People are more likely to notice things that fit into their schema, while reinterpreting contradictions to the schema as exceptions or distorting them to fit (Piaget, 1976, p.61).” Therefore, when they develop a whole schematic network related to beauty, they view everything in terms of what is beautiful and what is not. This makes them take decisions mainly on superficial level. Most people argue that children get to learn and change their schemas once they grow up but according to Piaget “schema has a tendency to remain unchanged even in the face of contradictory information (p.6).”

The second theory used by the researcher was that of Social Learning. Bandura (1971) in his theory says, “In the social learning system, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others (p. 3).” This observing the behavior of others is what the researcher took into account in this research. Bandura defined three models, which act as tools of learning for children to learn from the social environment around them. These models are live model, verbal instruction model and symbolic model. The researcher took the third model, i.e., the symbolic model to inculcate in her research study, where fairy tale princesses and Barbie dolls act as symbols for children to learn from.

The third theory used by the researcher was that of the Cultivation theory, which works when the media cultivates certain ideas and stereotypes in its viewers. Gerbner (1989) says “...television has become the primary common source of socialization and every day information (mostly in the form of entertainment) of an otherwise heterogeneous population (p.3).” Certain ideas and stereotypes due to constant viewing and with the passage of time, begins to sound normal to its audience. There are three parts of research involved in Cultivation Theory; institutional process analysis, message system analysis and cultivation analysis. The researcher’s concern was to focus on the second and third part of research. The second part i.e., message system analysis investigates the messages shown on television and as to why such messages are shown. The researcher focused on the messages of superficial beauty exposed to children due to the media. The third part focused its concern on the effects of heavy viewership of television and how children internalize everything they see on television. These aspects altogether act as a means to conceptualize beauty in a programmed manner by young girls. It affects their behavioral patterns and later on influences their empowerment while living in this society.

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