

Primary School Children's Practices of Watching Cartoons and Their Perceptions about Cartoon Characters

İlkokul Öğrencilerinin Çizgi Film İzleme Pratikleri ve Çizgi Film Karakterlerine İlişkin Algıları

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Abstract

The relation between television and children is, to a large extent, associated through cartoons. Cartoons are in the leading preferential position of children audience from pre-school period to adolescence. Having been accessible all through 24 hours after the appearance of thematic children channels, cartoons have been opening doors of hundreds of various worlds. Stories, designed within the framework of global or domestic codes, are transmitting their messages through characters at first place. This research on audience was performed in Kayseri and is aimed to define the children's habits of watching TV and cartoon and their perceptions about cartoon characters. A survey has been applied to 420 student from various age groups in 3 different schools ensampling three different socio-economic levels. According to the results gained, the most watched cartoon TV by primary school children is TRT Çocuk, most watched cartoon is Rafadan Tayfa and Keloğlan is the most loved character among 96 different cartoon characters. It was determined that national productions are in the forefront but generally the international productions dominate. It was also determined that children define the behaviors of cartoon characters with adjectives such as good, nice...etc. Otherwise the characters have extraordinary features appears to be a factor which causes increase in the ratings. Moreover, it is suggested in the research that gender is an important determinant within the context of cartoon selection and adoption of cartoon characters.

Keywords: Television, Cartoon, Cartoon Character, Child, Thematic Children's Channels.

Öz

Televizyon ve çocuk ilişkisi büyük oranda çizgi filmler üzerinden kurulmaktadır. Çizgi filmler, okul öncesi dönemden ergenliğe kadarki süreçte çocuk izleyicinin öncelikli tercihi konumundadır. Tematik çocuk

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kanallarının ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte 24 dört saat ulaşılabilir hale gelen çizgi filmler, yüzlerce farklı dünyanın kapısını aralamaktadır. Küresel veya yerel kodlar çerçevesinde tasarlanan öyküler, mesajlarını öncelikle çizgi film karakterleri üzerinden aktarmaktadır. Bu noktadan hareketle Kayseri'de 2016 yılında gerçekleştirilen araştırma, ilkokul dönemindeki öğrencilerin çizgi film ve televizyon izleme alışkanlıkları ile çizgi film karakterlerine ilişkin algılarının tespit edilmesine yöneliktir. 3 farklı sosyoekonomik düzeyi örnekleyen 3 ayrı ilkokulda, farklı yaş grubundan toplam 420 kişiye anket uygulanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, ilkokul öğrencileri tarafından en çok izlenen çizgi film kanalı 'TRT Çocuk', en çok izlenen çizgi film 'Rafadan Tayfa' ve 96 farklı çizgi film karakterinin arasında en çok sevilen Keloğlan karakteridir. Çizgi filmlerde ön plana ulusal yapımların çıktığı ama genele uluslararası yapımların hakim olduğu belirlenmiştir. Genellikle çocukların benimsediği çizgi film karakterlerinin davranışlarını iyi-güzel gibi sıfatlarla tanımladığı ancak bu benimseme sürecinin en önemli olgusunun olağandışı özellikler olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Sonuçta karakterlerin özel güçlerinin olması izlenme oranını artıran bir faktör olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Ayrıca çizgi film seçimi ve çizgi film karakterlerinin benimsenmesi bağlamında cinsiyet faktörünün önemli bir belirleyici olduğu ortaya konulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Televizyon, Çizgi Film, Çizgi Film Karakteri, Çocuk, Tematik Çocuk Kanalı

Introduction

In today's world, media, as an extensive and effective tool over the children as well as adults in daily life, practices its new channels so much that the kids familiarize with the screens by Youtube videos in infancy period despite the advices of the experts. Cartoons are primary media contents for the kids. Sevim Cesur and Oya Paker's (2007) study entitled "Television and Kid: The Preferences of the Kids Regarding TV Programs" (p. 116) and the results of RTUK's (Radio and Television Supreme Council) survey on the children's media consumption habits show that, the TV broadcast content that is mostly watched by the students in primary school is the cartoons (2013, p. 240).

In this context, determining the dynamics related to children's television and cartoon viewing habits in this variety of options is one of the main problems of the study. At the same time, the most popular cartoon characters liked by primary school students were identified and a general picture of the main characteristics of these characters was presented in the study, as the narratives designed in the framework of global or local codes primarily convey their messages through cartoon characters.

As in the rest of the world, the children also have access to cartoons on TV through thematic children's channels in Turkey. Thematic channels providing content for children 24 hours a day shapes the relationship between children and television. At this point, it should be remembered that before the emergence of thematic children's channels, programs for children were offered only on certain days and hours by both the public broadcaster TRT and private channels. As shown by Vahit İlhan and Burak Ünlü (2017) in their studies, the broadcasts of national channels, along with the thematic broadcasting channels, have experienced a significant change and the content for children has been almost completely excluded from the stream (p. 120). Today, there are 17 thematic children's channels broadcasting in our country. The possibility of reaching hundreds of different cartoons at the desired time increased the television viewing times and revealed control problems for the parents in terms of both the content and the time.

Literature Review

When the literature is examined, we are faced with studies in different contexts on the relation of child audience watching TV and cartoons in Turkey. In their study developed with 40 primary school students, Vahit İlhan and F. Çetin Çetinkaya (2013) concluded that thematic children's channels increase the television addiction and emphasized the importance of controlling daily life practices causing this addiction. In social activities to be performed as family, television being at the center of in-house activities should be prevented (p. 324).

In another field study that examined the thematic television and children relationship and conducted with 480 students, it is seen that students want to study, read books or chat with their families instead of watching television. The existence of these requests once more emphasizes the role of parent in the children and television relationship (Doğan and Göker, 2012, p. 21).

Another study conducted with 454 primary school students, which examined the preferences of children regarding TV programs, showed that children and adults watched the same content. According to Cesur and Paker (2007), television removes the boundary between the worlds of children and adult (p.125).

When the studies on cartoons are examined, it is seen that mainly broadcasts on the culture and ideology-oriented publications are available as well as field researches on determining viewing preferences. Other than the changes happened in Turkey for the last 10 years, cartoon broadcasting supplying completely from foreign productions was effective at this point.

In his study where he addressed cartoons broadcast on the television in the context of mass culture, Suat Sungur (2007) pointed out to the ideological function of cartoons and that the cartoons imported from abroad contain consumption culture of American capitalism. According to Sungur (2007), the capitalist elements available in these cartoons affect the development of children negatively. In the mentioned study, it was emphasized that problems such as lack of self-confidence, unrest, not sharing in children who care about material values (p.138-139).

Examining the role of cartoons in transfer of culture, Nilgün Türkmen (2012) has made an evaluation through the cartoon Pepee in his study. Türkmen (2012) points out that foreign productions facilitate transfer of codes of Western culture to children and child viewers in Turkey are affected by cultural degeneration. In this context, the cartoon Pepee is considered important in terms of being a project deliberately realized for the purpose of transferring Turkish culture (p.143-152).

In another study conducted on thematic children's channels, it is pointed out that it is clearly seen that American made cartoons serve the dissemination of globalization. Tebrike Kaya (2014), states that with these cartoons, children are encouraged to consumption in order to stand out in society and individualization (p.74-75).

As for Şakir Eşitti (2016), who evaluates cartoons in the context of cultural imperialism, addresses the cartoons as a cultural arena between local and global culture. According to Eşitti, Western values and lifestyles found in cartoons with global distribution causes new generations to get alienated from their own cultures and experience cultural identity crisis. In this context, local cultures should utilize

the influence of cartoons. Cartoons such as Pepee and Keloğlan are considered important in terms of children adopting local culture (p.125,141-142).

In addition to the studies emphasizing the negativities of the cartoons produced abroad and having the means of global scale circulation processing western values, the importance of the productions to be supplied from the local culture are also mentioned in the literature. In a study conducted in this context, for the purpose of preserving intangible cultural heritage, the benefits of mentioning values that are started to disappear in the cartoon scenarios were emphasized (Alicenap, 2015, p.19).

Of course, there are also studies in the literature that address different subjects such as the content of violence and causing aggression, the effects of television on children and social gender in cartoons. However, as given examples above, the fact that a significant portion of the cartoons broadcast in our country are produced by foreign companies is one of the main issues of studies on the relationship between cartoons and children.

In this context, our research, different from previous publications, reveals the change in children's tastes and preferences with the increase of domestic productions. Another aspect of the study that determines its position is to present a holistic picture of children's perceptions of cartoon characters.

Characters in Cartoons

The issue of cartoon characters which are designed to be broadcasted by either cinema or television, generally can be handled through the conditions of fictive movie structure. Character is defined as "the playing person who is profoundly covered in personalization process; the playing person who has spiritual development in its own sui generis qualifications" in the Turkish Language Society's Dictionary of Terms of Performance Arts.

In movies or television shows, the dramatic truth which is intended to be told or implied, is mostly transferred over the character (Foss, 2012, p. 135). The character who mainly steps forward with its deed, gains an effective position in proportion to the power of its goal. The character who is known by its doings, has always a goal such as catching up a criminal or finding money (Aslan, 2007, p. 43). The characters who have specific behaviors, change or transform the meaning and the concepts by interpreting them according to their own perspectives. Through the character, the personality is displayed deeply or inner world of the person is understood clearly (Yeşilot, 2013, p.18).

When the titles of many cartoons are reviewed, they have the same title as the main character of the cartoon (Ben 10, Gumball, Keloğlan, Pepee etc.). These findings give the idea how the character factor is important in a cartoon. The fact that both imaginative characters and various animal characters are used in the cartoons is considered one of the reasons why children are interested in the cartoons (Pembecioğlu, 2006, p.246).

Suggesting that the efficacy of cartoons stem from characters and characters are the main reason why cartoons are liked. Deniz Aynur Güler (1989) states that the cartoon characters cause a feeling

of identification and fondness because of their human like attributes and defines the character as follows: “A cartoon character is such a figure which shows the qualities of human being, identifies with human being and share human being’s emotions” (p. 173).

Character types in the cartoons are diverse. In the study conducted by Özlem Malatyaloğlu (2014), they are classified into four groups; namely, human, animal, unreal and object characters (p. 29). As for Güler (1989), cartoon characters are classified into three groups: animals, human and imaginative persons (p. 173).

The human characters in cartoons behave according to the psychological, physiological and sociological structures in which they are formed as real human beings. The surprising or ordinary reactions which the human characters give, when they encounter a situation form, a perception of reality causing the audience finding same elements with the characters. The human characters which are frequently preferred in the didactical and instructive cartoons such as parents, siblings, friends, teachers, help solving the daily life problems with the advices taken from family, school or friend circles by showing exemplary behaviors (Malatyaloğlu, 2014, p. 30). Güler (1989) also states that the child figures or human figures in cartoons are self-symbols of an adult (p. 175).

The animal characters are used as symbols in painting, literature and theatre for symbolizing the weaknesses of human and quite often show themselves in the cartoonssince they are sympathetic by humans and their close relationships (Malatyaloğlu, 2014, p. 31). According to Güler (1991), the animal characters are used in cartoons as protagonists or with emphasis on attributes of helping people (p. 176).

As in other character types, the object characters also exhibit human-like behaviors and feel, humane emotions. In a cartoon series known as “Super Wings” broadcasted on TRT Kids, the life of the airplanes working in a global airport is told. In that production, where the protagonist “Jett” is the fastest cargo airplane in the world, the airplane-robot characters talk like humans, eat food and exhibit other humane emotions and behaviors.

Characters are quite important and worth examiningas they are the main carriers of messages that are intended to be given in the cartoons and designed within the frame of local and global codes. Cesur and Paker (2007) state that the media protagonists are in such a position which parents are occupying in the eyes of the children and evenmore effective models than parents (p. 107). In line with this understanding, it is suggested declared that presenting positive values of “the protagonists in the contents intended for the children” will contribute for the child to embrace positive values (Işık, 2007, p. 8). Although studies are conducted regarding cartoons in our country, the studies that focuson cartoon characters are quantitatively limited. One of the studies conducted regardingthe cartoon characters which need to be mentioned here is Pınar Özgökbil Bilis’ PhD dissertation written in 2011 with the title of “The Social Values Systemss Represented in Cartoons”. Bilis deals with many values transmitted through the characters and found that most of have traditionalist, hedonist and realist values. According to Bilis, the characters which are covered in the study can handle the problems by virtue of their such features and exhibit the value orientation models which the audience needs for solving the problems that may be encountered in the daily life (p. 273-281).

Another study based on the cartoon characters was conducted by Vildan Güneş in 2010. In the master thesis in which the effects of cartoon characters on the buying behavior of children, the children were found to be intensely influenced by the cartoon characters (p. 101-104).

In the master thesis written in 2009 by Şule Ergen Kılçı, which dealt with the gender in cartoons, characters in the cartoons such as Barbie, Bratz and Winx Club were examined. The study underlines that the cartoons which back up the dominant ideology reproduce the female and male gender roles and play a role in forming of the gender value judgments (p. 98-110).

The Relationship of Children with Cartoon Characters

This section of the study focuses on children's relationship with the cartoon characters. With the increase in the number of thematic channels, children audiences child viewers have the opportunity of watching cartoon at any time of the day. Media producers who are aware of the child audience potential present a wide range of cartoon contents intended for children of all ages. We can suggest that the character is more important in cartoons compared to other media narratives. The titles of cartoons also indicate that solid relationship between the cartoon and the character. Bugs Bunny, Heidi, Caillou, Pepe, Ben 10, Maya the Bee and Laura's Star might be given as examples.

Explaining the reasons why children show interest in the cartoons, Nilüfer Pembecioğlu (2006) considers that presence of imaginative or animal characters in the cartoons is one of these reasons (p. 246).

Cesur and Paker (2007) state that the protagonists in the media today have a place in the children's world as their parents and in fact it is not exaggerating to assert that they are more influential role models than the parents (p. 107).

Even though the cartoon characters are today perceived within the limits of television or cinema mediums, they originally reached children and adult readers via comics. In their article titled "Why they read comics?", Katherine M. Wolfe and Marjorie Fiske (1964) associated the children's interest in the cartoon characters with psychological basics. Comics, which serve as a means of boosting the ego for normal children, have different meanings for problematic children. For them, the comic characters are the things which they cannot find in their lives. For instance, Superman is a father figure for some. Cartoon characters which provide solutions for more difficult and decisive problems and satisfy for the authority and power, enable the problematic children to fulfill the daily tasks without creating any concern. The frightened children who are not capable of showing a solid stance unlikely the normal children do not forsake their belief in the comics (p. 40).

A study which investigates the effects of cartoons on the child viewer shows that the pre-school children prefer the cartoons with human characters instead of imaginative protagonists, puppets or animal characters. In the same study, according to the statements of mothers, it was concluded that the children in the primary education period rather believe that the imaginative protagonists, places or events in the cartoons are real. The researchers evaluated this finding as interesting albeit younger kids cannot distinguish what is real or not (Özdemir and Ramazan, 2012, p. 157-168).

In another study which investigates the effects of the cartoon and animation characters on the consumption behaviors of the children, it was found that children listed their reasons for loving their favorite cartoon characters as being fun, beautiful, powerful, smart, exciting, hardworking, handsome, informative and helpful. In the same study, it was found that the children's reasons for loving the cartoon or animation characters in general (in descending order of reasons) were being fun, beautiful, developing the imagination, being in action, being strong, giving new information and being cute (Aşçı, 2006, p. 60-69).

Method

A questionnaire study was conducted to identify the perceptions on the cartoon characters and television and cartoon watching habits of primary school children at middle childhood. Questionnaire study is a data collection technique which is highly preferred in social sciences. Yahşi Yazıcıoğlu and Samiye Erdoğan (2004) has explained the reasons for this as being economical, allows gathering much data for the purpose of research, increase in reliability and validity of data due to access to wider audience allowing a larger sample population, providing behavioral, intellectual, belief-related, motivational and perceptual characteristics of individuals and obtaining feedback by accessing sample group through various channels in a very short time (p.51). Similar studies were examined while preparing the Questionnaire form. In terms of validity and reliability of the study, firstly the questionnaire form prepared was reviewed by experts in the field of education for it will be conducted with primary school students and revised in accordance with their opinions. Then, a pilot study was conducted with students from all grades in a primary school in Kayseri and the questionnaire form is given its final form. Questionnaire form consists of open and closed ended 17 questions.

The study was conducted in 3 primary schools sampling 3 different socio-economic levels in the province of Kayseri. It was aimed to determine the decisiveness of living conditions in television and cartoon viewing habits, as well as variables such as gender and class, with the participation of students from different socio-economic levels. In line with this objective, the schools to conduct the study were determined as a result of a two-stage process. In the first stage, "street-avenue-boulevard-neighborhood" based development levels were requested from Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) for the province of Kayseri. Because there are no socio-economical classification data directly for schools available. TÜİK defines the development level in 3 different codes (developed, medium-developed and undeveloped). These definitions were created according to the characteristics such as transportation and infrastructure services, quality of building and housing and rentals. In the second stage, 3 different schools were identified in the hinterland of developed, medium-developed and undeveloped regions from the map in the light of available data.

The population of the research consists of students in grades 1 to 4 in primary schools of the Kayseri province. According to the statistical report by Kayseri Provincial Directorate of National Education for 2014-2015 school year, there are 98.983 students studying in official and private primary schools in Kayseri. A 420 person sample was identified for this population consisting of about 100 thousand people. In preferring this many samples, the table suggested by Robert V. Krejcie and Daryle W. Morgan (1970) about the sample size to be used in the research where the evaluations

are to be made according to the ratios. According to this table, a 384-person sample size is suitable for a population of 100 thousand people (p.608).

The questionnaire study was conducted with 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students in 3 different primary schools in the regions which differ according to the level of development. To reach the targeted sampling and ensure equal distribution of all classes, 35 students were included from all grades in each school. Researchers have applied the questionnaire form themselves, accompanied by teachers in the determined schools.

All questions were analyzed by SPSS program according to gender, class and socioeconomic level differences. Pearson χ^2 analysis was used for the comparison of categorical data. Significance level was accepted as $p < 0.05$. Because there are students of different age groups at same grades, the variable is reduced to one and the evaluations are made on the class category.

Of the participants who filled the gender information, 195 were male and 213 were female students. 37.4% of male students continue to schools in regions with upper socioeconomic level, 33.8% in middle socioeconomic level and 28.7% in lower socioeconomic level. 30% of the female students continue to schools in regions with upper socioeconomic level, 33.8% in middle socioeconomic level, and 36.2% in lower socioeconomic level. Of the male students, 23.6% continue to 1st grade; 27.7% to 2nd grade; 21.5% to 3rd grade; 27.2% to 4th grade. Of the female students, 26.3% continue to 1st grade; 21.6% to 2nd grade; 27.7% to 3rd grade; 24.4% to 4th grade.

Findings

Television and Cartoon Watching Habits

1. Television watching status

	Total
Yes	420 (100.0)

In the study, the question “do you watch TV?” was directed to the primary school students firstly. The answers given show that all of the participant students (100%) watch television.

2. Number of televisions at home

According to the answers given to the question on the number of TVs in their houses, 58.5% of the participant students have 1 TV in their home. 32.6% of them have 2, and 6.9% of them have 3. 2% have more than 3 TV's in their home.

Number of TV	Total
1	237(58.5)
2	132(32.6)
3	28(6.9)
3+	8(2.0)

This means that 42.1% of the students have more than one, that is at least two TVs at home. It is understood that predictions that there will not be a need for TV's in the homes as a result of the

diversity resulting from the effect of the rapidly developing technological activities reflected in the means of communication. The rate of having more than one television in our homes is a considerable amount. This data, which we encountered in our child-focused study, requires thinking about the role of adults in the relationship between the child and the TV.

3. Status of Television Being Present in Child's Room

	Gender		Total	<i>p</i>
	Male	Female		
Do you have a TV in your own room?				
Yes	32(16.8)	26(12.4)	58(14.5)	0.213
No	158(83.2)	183(87.6)	341(85.5)	

According to research findings, 69.1% of participant students have their own rooms and 14.6% of them have their own televisions. The finding to be noted here is that 69.1% of the participant students have their own rooms, while 14.6% of those who have a TV in their own rooms. It is understood that families do not prefer to keep their television in their children's room despite the fact that the rate of having more than one television in houses is quite high (42.1%).

4. Daily Television Watching Time

	Gender		Total	<i>p</i>
	Male	Female		
Up to 1 hour	93(48.9)	130(63.1)	223(56.3)	0.017
1-2 hours	45(23.7)	41(19.9)	86(21.7)	
2-3 hours	28(14.7)	22(10.7)	50(12.6)	
3-4 hours	10(5.3)	9(4.4)	19(4.8)	
More than 4 hours	14(7.4)	4(1.9)	18(4.5)	

56.3% of the participant students watch TV for 1 hour per day, 21.7% for 1-2 hours, 12.6% for 2-3 hours, 4.8% for 3-4 hours and 4.5% for more than 4 hours. There is a statistically significant difference between the duration of watching TV during the day and the gender. ($p < 0.05$) This difference is due to the fact that female students who watch TV for up to 1 hour a day are more than male students. 63.1% of female students watch television for 1 hour per day while 48.9% of male students watch television for 1 hour per day. This means that male students are watching the TV for more than 1 hour during the day, and are in front of the screen longer than female students. The surveillance rates over 4 hours also coincide with this situation. In relation to the findings of daily television watching times, the relationship between television watching more than four hours a day and gender is also significant in this regard. According to this relationship which creates a significant difference ($p < 0.05$), 7.4% of males watch more than 4 hours of television a day, while only 1.9% of females watch television more than 4 hours a day.

Primary school students' television watching duration during the day do not exceed 2 hours for a total of 78%. That the children are going to school during the day and spending some of the time at

home on school oriented activities such as homework, preparation to exams, etc. prevents them from spending longer hours in front of the television.

Is the daily television watching times affected by the presence of television in the students' own rooms? The comparison of these two cases resulted in the following table.

Relationship of the presence of the television in the student's own room and the daily television watching time

	Daily television watching time					Total	<i>p</i>
	Up to 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours		
Do you have a TV in your own room?							
No	187(83.9)	74(88.1)	46(88.5)	17(89.5)	17(81.0)	341(85.5)	0.755
Yes	36(16.1)	10(11.9)	6(11.5)	2(10.5)	4(19.0)	58(14.5)	

It was found that 16.1% of those who watch TV for 1 hour during the day, 11.9% of those watch TV for 1-2 hours, 11.5% of those who watch TV 2-3 hours a day and 10.5% of those who watch TV for 3-4 hours and 19% of those who watch TV more than 4 hours have their own television in their own rooms. Although these results are not statistically significant, it is a very important finding that the highest percentage (19%) is those who watch TV more than 4 hours a day to have a television in their own room. 85.5% of primary school students do not have television in their own room. However, the presence of television in the rooms of students who watch 4 hours or more during the day can be interpreted in a way that an environment which is unchecked and isolated from the family members can seriously affect the television watching times.

5. Timeframes of watching television¹

	Total
09.00-12.00	
No	213(52.2)
Yes	195(47.8)
12.00-15.00	
No	309(75.7)
Yes	99(24.3)
15.00-18.00	
No	349(85.5)
Yes	59(14.5)
18.00-21.00	
No	287(70.3)
Yes	121(29.7)
21.00-00.00	
No	362(88.7)
Yes	46(11.3)

¹ It is stated that students can mark more than one option when they answer this question. Therefore, the obtained rates exceed 100%.

The time frame during which the TV is watched during the day is of importance in terms of indicating preferred programs. It was found that primary school students watch television at the rate of 47.8% during the day, mostly at 09.00-12.00 in the morning. Morning students are in the school between 09.00-12.00. Therefore, it is understood that the students who are going to school in the afternoon are spending their time to watch television before they go to school. The second time frame when the television is most frequently watched during the day is the 18.00-21.00 period with 29.7%. Students prefer to be in front of the television in this time frame which covers some of the prime-time (20.00-22.00) period. According to the results of a similar research, prime-time is the timeframe when the most television is watched. (Doğan □ Göker, 2012, p.13) According to another research, it is seen that children intensely watch television between 21:00-23:00. (İlhan □ Çetinkaya, 2013, p.322) As İlhan and Çetinkaya stated, this situation can be interpreted as Radio and Television Supreme Board's (RTÜK) good night children project not achieving its objective. (İlhan □ Çetinkaya, 2013, p.322) As a result, students who watch television in this time frame are increasingly likely to watch other channels and programs as well as thematic children's channels that broadcast cartoons for 24 hours.

6. Most watched cartoon channel

	Total
TRT Çocuk	120(31.4)
Kidz TV	4(1.0)
Nickelodeon	2(0.5)
Planet Çocuk	23(6.0)
Minika Çocuk	16(4.2)
Minika Go	20(5.2)
Disney XD	7(1.8)
Disney Junior	6(1.6)
Cartoon Network	88(23.0)
Disney Channel	95(24.9)
Others	1(0.3)

The possibility of watching cartoons or children's programs for 24 hours thanks to the thematic children's channels has emerged, while previously only a certain part of day or week was devoted to children's programs in TV channels.

According to the results of our research, it is very interesting that the preferences of approximately 80% of the students are concentrated in the first three cartoon channels. The cartoon channel, which the primary school students prefer to watch the most is TRT Kid with 31.4%. Disney Channel is second with 24.9% and Cartoon Network is third with 23%. Planet Kid channel in the fourth rank has a significant gap in proportional distribution with the channel in the third rank. The rating of Planet Çocuk is only 6% as the most watched cartoon channel by the primary school students. The fact that the students can watch domestic productions through TRT Çocuk can be considered as a positive situation considering the foreign cartoon films which contain many negative elements.

When the types of broadcasting transmissions of channels are examined, it was found that the most watched children channel TRT Çocuk has the widest broadcasting network which also, including terrestrial broadcasting. Disney Channel, Cartoon Network, Planet Kids, Minika Go and Minika Kids are also accessible via satellite channels as well as other digital platforms.

7. Daily cartoon watching duration

	Total
Up to 1 hour	226(57.2)
1-2 hours	98(24.8)
2-3 hours	37(9.4)
3-4 hours	20(5.1)
More than 4 hours	14(3.5)

When the answers of the participant students were evaluated, it was found that 57.2% of the participant students watched cartoons up to 1 hour per day. The findings show that 43.342.8% of the students in the primary school period spend 2 hours or more a day watching cartoons. When television and cartoon watching durations in the day are compared, it was found that the students are spending a very important part of the time they are watching television to watching cartoons.

Here the question of how much time is spent watching cartoons during the time of daily television watching becomes the main topic of conversation.

Comparison of daily television and cartoon watching times

How many hours a day do you watch cartoons?	Daily television watching time					Total	<i>p</i>
	Up to 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	More than 4 hours		
Up to 1 hour	194(87.4)	21(24.7)	7(13.2)	3(16.7)	2(10.0)	227(57.0)	<0.001
1-2 hours	21(9.5)	52(61.2)	17(32.1)	4(27.8)	2(10.0)	97(24.4)	
2-3 hours	2(0.9)	8(9.4)	24(45.3)	1(5.6)	2(10.0)	37(9.3)	
3-4 hours	2(0.9)	2(2.4)	5(9.4)	9(50.0)	2(10.0)	20(5.0)	
More than 4 hours	3(1.4)	2(2.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	12(60.0)	17(4.3)	

It is observed that students spend most of their time watching cartoons during the day when daily television watching times and daily cartoon watching times are compared. It was found that 87.4% of those who watch TV for 1 hour during the day, 61.2% of those watch TV for 1-2 hours, 45.3% of those who watch TV 2-3 hours a day and 50% of those who watch TV for 3-4 hours and 60% of those who watch TV more than 4 hours spend all of their TV watching times for watching cartoons. This indicates that there are strong links between primary school students and cartoons.

8. Most watched cartoon

The research findings show that 72 different answers are given to the question ‘which cartoon do you watch the most’. In the list of cartoons most watched by primary school students, Rafadan Tayfa ranks first with 12.8% followed by Winx Club (8%), Gumball (6.6%), Sürekli Dizi (5.4%), Esrarengiz Kasaba and Keloğlan (4.3%), Phineas and Ferb (4%), Prenses Sofia (3.4%), Doraemon, Mucize: Uğur Böceği ile Kara Kedi and İbi (2.8%), Aslan Koruyucular (2.3%) and Adventure Time (2%). The rate of other answers given afterwards is below 2%.

	Male	Female	Total
Rafadan Tayfa	24(14.5)	21(11.8)	45(12.8)
Winx Club	1(0.6)	27(15.2)	28(8.0)
Gumball	16(9.6)	7(3.9)	23(6.6)
Sürekli Dizi	15(9.0)	4(2.2)	19(5.4)
Esrarengiz Kasaba	8(4.8)	7(3.9)	15(4.3)
Keloğlan	9(5.4)	6(3.4)	15(4.3)
Fineas ve Förb	5(3.0)	9(5.1)	14(4.0)
Prenses Sofia	0(0.0)	12(6.7)	12(3.4)
Doraemon	4(2.4)	6(3.4)	10(2.8)
Mucize: Uğur Böceği ve Kara Kedi	3(1.8)	7(3.9)	10(2.8)
İbi	0(0.0)	10(5.6)	10(2.8)
Aslan Kral	4(2.4)	4(2.2)	8(2.3)
Adventure Time	6(3.6)	1(0.6)	7(2.0)

When we looked at the cartoon preferences of male and female students, it was found that the ranking of the most watched cartoons is changed.

9. TV programs watched other than cartoon

One of the questions asked to participant students in the survey is “what programs do you watch other than cartoons”. In response to this question, students were asked to mark multiple options if they wanted. According to the findings obtained, primary school students watch TV series (51.2%), gameshows (48%), movies (47.5%), music and entertainment programs (36%), sports programs (33.8%), news programs (31.6%), cultural programs (10.8%) and advertising (9.6%) the most other than cartoons.

	Total		Total
<i>Tv Series</i>		<i>Ads</i>	
No	199(48.8)	No	396(90.4)
Yes	209(51.2)	Yes	39(9.6)
<i>Gameshows</i>		<i>Movies</i>	
No	212(52.0)	No	214(52.5)
Yes	196(48.0)	Yes	194(47.5)
<i>News Programs</i>		<i>Sports Prg.</i>	
No	279(68.4)	No	270(66.2)
Yes	129(31.6)	Yes	138(33.8)
<i>Music and Entertainment Prg.</i>		<i>Cultural Prg.</i>	
No	261(64.0)	No	364(89.2)
Yes	147(36.0)	Yes	44(10.8)

There are many significant differences when the television programs watched other than cartoons are compared at the grade level ($p < 0.05$). TV series watching ratings increase significantly as the grade levels increase. TV series watching rating of 1st grade students is 27.6%, which increases to 61% in 4th grade. The rate of watching gameshows also increases with the increase of grade level. The rate of watching gameshows is 34.3% in the 1st grade and 55.2% in the 4th grade.

10. Who the television is watched with

	Gender		Total	p
	Male	Female		
With adult	121(62.4)	156(74.6)	277(68.7)	<0.004
Without adult	67(34.5)	42(20.1)	109(27.0)	
Sometimes with adult sometimes without adult	6(3.1)	11(5.3)	17(4.2)	

The results of our study reveal that 68.7% of the primary school students watch TV in company with their parents. 27% watch the television alone without a parent or with a sibling or a friend. Sometimes the percentage of those watching television in company with adults and sometimes without adult is 4.2%.

When the Gender-based analysis for watching television with whom is made, results with significant difference were reached. ($p < 0.05$) 62.4% of male students watched television in company with adults while 74.6% of female students watched television with adults. 34.5% of male students watched television without any adults, while this ratio is 20.1% for female students.

However, it should not be forgotten that being in company while watching television may mean that parents' preferences for adult oriented programs are watched by all family members, regardless of the above considerations. According to Timisi (2011) children are exposed to negative messages for the sake of enjoyment of watching television with their family members. (p. 49) This points to the existence of a problematic situation in child-television relationship when it is considered that the TV series and gameshows are followed at a very high rate. When the answers to the question of

whether the children in the primary school period perform the act of television watching with or without their parents were examined at the socioeconomic group level, the higher the socioeconomic level of the family, the higher the rates of watching the television with the children.

11. Parents limiting the television watching time

	Total
No	170(50.9)
Up to 1 hour	101(30.2)
1-2 hours	41(12.3)
2-3 hours	15(4.5)
3-4 hours	3(0.6)
More than 4 hours	5(1.5)

While 49.1% of the primary school students who participated in the survey stated that their parents were limiting the watching television time, 50.9% stated that there is no such limitation. Due to the fact that a significant portion of the day is spent at school, there was no case of excess in daily television viewing. However, a serious number of parents not limiting the time for watching television, an act that is even hard for adults to quit, is a situation that requires thinking over. In scientific studies conducted on the television, television is described as an electronic caretaker.² This description refers to the fact that the child stops becoming a 'problem' for the family when watching the TV. This result we reached in the study can be interpreted that a considerable part of the parents prefers this so-called problem-free option.

12. Communication tools where cartoons are watched

	Total
Where do you watch cartoons the most?	
Television	330(83.8)
Computer	23(5.8)
Tablet	22(5.6)
Smartphone	19(4.8)

We encounter the reflections of technological developments in every aspect of our life. The new generation smartphones and tablets also change and shape our media consumption habits. Even in infancy, tablets are in our children's lives. Starting from this current situation, we tried to determine the primary school students' preference to use communication tools other than television to watch cartoons and which of these platforms they prefer the most to watch cartoons. When the answers given are evaluated, the most preferred tool for watching cartoons is still the television with a very high rate of 83.8%. The order after television is computer with 5.8%, tablet with 5.6% and smart phone with 4.8%.

2 The article of Mesude Atay and Elif Çelebi Öncü, titled Electronic Caregiver, is included in the book "Children and Media" compiled by Selda İçin Akçalı. Nilüfer Timisi have named her book as, Electronic Caregiver: General View on Television Child Relationship.

2. Perceptions About Cartoon Characters

1. Most liked cartoon character

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Kelođlan	13(8.0)	11(6.3)	24(7.0)
Gumball	16(9.8)	4(2.3)	20(5.8)
Hayri	8(4.9)	9(5.1)	17(4.9)
Akın	11(6.7)	4(2.3)	15(4.4)
Bloom	0(0.0)	14(8.0)	14(4.1)
Princess Sofia	1(0.6)	12(6.9)	13(3.8)
Doru	3(1.8)	8(4.6)	11(3.2)
Uđur B6ceđi	1(0.6)	9(5.1)	10(2.9)
Stella	0(0.0)	10(5.7)	10(2.9)
Phineas	5(3.1)	5(2.9)	10(2.9)
Ben 10	9(5.5)	0(0.0)	9(2.6)
Doraemon	3(1.8)	6(3.4)	9(2.6)
İbi	0(0.0)	8(4.6)	8(2.3)
Pepee	3(1.8)	5(2.9)	8(2.3)

According to the results obtained from the research, among the 96 different cartoon characters given as answers to this question, the most favorite cartoon characters were ranked as follows: Kelođlan (7%), Gumball (5.8%), Hayri (4.9%), Akın (4.4%), Bloom (4.1%), Prenses Sofia (3.8%), Doru (3.2%), Uđur B6ceđi, Stella, Phineas (2.9%), Ben 10, Doraemon (2.6%), İbi and Pepee (2.3%). Stella and Bloom, the characters of İbi and Winx Club cartoons, are not among the favorites of male students. Ben 10 and Spider-Man are not among the cartoon characters that students like.

The fact that two very different characters such as Kelođlan and Gumball are in the first two ranks is due to the sampling group consisting of students belonging to three different socioeconomic levels. It is noteworthy that there are six locally created characters among of these fourteen characters. This gains a stronger meaning when it is considered that in a survey conducted in 2012, third and sixth grade students have specified 16 different cartoon characters, all from foreign productions. (Dođan and G6ker, 2012, p.5-30) Violence and other negative content in foreign cartoons have been the cause of complaints for both educators and families for many years. However, it is evident that the elaborate and high quality local productions created are also appreciated by children. TRT ocuk's efforts in this field can be considered as a cultural investment when considered together with the complete elimination of advertising broadcasts.

2. Reasons for liking the character

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Having special powers	40(23.0)	41(21.1)	81(21.7)
Being funny and enjoyable	36(20.7)	21(10.8)	57(15.2)
Other features	22(12.6)	22(11.3)	44(11.7)
Presenting exemplary behaviors or features	12(6.9)	27(13.9)	39(10.5)
Like and love the character	12(6.9)	25(12.9)	37(9.9)
Being intelligent	22(12.6)	15(7.7)	37(9.9)
Aesthetic and visual characteristics	5(2.9)	24(12.4)	29(7.8)
Speed	5(2.9)	5(2.6)	10(2.6)
Sport	7(4.0)	0(0.0)	7(1.9)
Rescue	4(2.3)	3(1.5)	7(1.9)
Adventure	3(1.7)	3(1.5)	6(1.6)
Courage	4(2.3)	1(0.5)	5(1.3)
Being a girl	0(0.0)	4(2.1)	4(1.1)
Heroism	2(1.1)	1(0.5)	3(0.8)
Helping	0(0.0)	2(1.0)	2(0.5)

Primary school students have specified about hundred different names for their favorite cartoon characters. A total of 15 categories were revealed when the answers given for the most liked features of such varied and many characters were examined. In the determination of the categories, themes put to forefront by the primary school students when expressing the most favorite features of the most liked characters have been taken into consideration.

It seems that the most effective factor for primary school students to enjoy a cartoon character is the special powers that the character possesses. In a similar study, it was found that superhero cartoons were regularly followed by 64% of primary school students. (İlhan et al. 2016, p. 231)

Characters with superhuman features such as flying, doing magic, changing form, talking with animals, are winning the children's liking. The students who participated in the survey stated that they liked the funniest and enjoyable characters after those with special powers. They expressed this directly with words such as funny, witty, humorous, joking and joker. In the third place, the factor of the character having an exemplary behavior or feature was expressed in many ways such as 'do good to everyone, be honest, be hardworking, read a lot of books, be a lady, work in a planned way, be polite, make nice friendships and listen to your mother'. The 'love-appreciation category', which is in the fourth place for the reasons of students' liking cartoon characters, defines expressions such as 'very cute, very sweet, love it much, I like it, I enjoy a lot'. According to the results of the research, being intelligent is also a reason for the popularity of a cartoon character.

3. Characters unliked due to their characteristics

In this study in order to understand the dynamics of the relationship between cartoon characters and children, mostly questions regarding the characters most liked by children were prepared. However, they were also asked to specify a cartoon character they do not like in order to provide

a broader perspective and opportunity for evaluation. It was found that primary school students had difficulties in answering this question and 98 students replied to this question as 'no', and 24 students did not answer at all. The answers of the students to this question also show a considerable diversity. According to findings, the most disliked character of primary school students is Kara Vezir in Keloğlan cartoons with 10.6% followed, by Keloğlan with 6.2%, Pepee and Hayri with 5.3%, Basri Amca with 4.3%, Cadı with 3.8%, Spiderman and Gumball with 2.9%, Candace and Sinek with 1.9%. Other responses have percentages of 1.4% and below.

4. Characters that children want to be in the shoes of

According to the findings of the research primary school students want to be in the shoes of Bloom (7.9%), Keloğlan (4.9%), Akın (4.4%), Prenses Sofia (4.1%), Gumball (3.5%) and İbi, Benten and Spider-Man (2.7%) most. In a previous study conducted, it is seen that all of the cartoon characters the students want to be in the shoes of are foreign. (Doğan&Göker, 2012 p.17) But in our study, characters of domestic productions such as Keloğlan, Akın and İbi is notable as a positive difference.

The first character that students want to be in the shoes of is Bloom, a fairy in the Winx Club cartoon. Students want to be in the shoes of Bloom because of her ability to fire from her hands, being very beautiful, helping people, being a fairy, flying and saving the world. Having special powers seems to be influential in this preference. Keloğlan is the second character that students want to be in its shoes the most with his good behavior, being funny, enjoyable, knowledgeable, intelligent, cunning, helpful, honest and bald.

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Bloom	0(0.0)	29(15.8)	29(7.9)
Keloğlan	12(6.9)	6(3.3)	18(4.9)
Akın	13(7.5)	3(1.6)	16(4.4)
Princess Sofia	1(0.6)	14(7.6)	15(4.1)
Gumball	12(6.9)	1(0.5)	13(3.5)
İbi	0(0.0)	10(5.4)	10(2.7)
Benten	10(5.7)	0(0.0)	10(2.7)
Spiderman	10(5.7)	0(0.0)	10(2.7)
Elsa	1(0.6)	8(4.3)	9(2.5)
Ladybug	0(0.0)	9(4.9)	9(2.5)
Batman	8(4.6)	0(0.0)	8(2.2)
Stella	0(0.0)	8(4.3)	8(2.2)
Other	14(8.0)	23(12.5)	37(10.1)

5. Characteristics of the characters they want to design

	Total
Aesthetic qualities	45(11.9)

Funny stuff	42(11.1)
Exemplary behavior and features	39(10.3)
Special Powers	34(9.0)
Action	17(4.5)
Princess	16(4.2)
Power	15(3.9)
Animal	9(2.4)
Robot	8(2.1)
Fighting	8(2.1)
Family	8(2.1)
Sports	6(1.6)
Being intelligent	6(1.6)
Alien	5(1.3)
Creature	5(1.3)

The answers given to the question of what kind of character would you create if you had the opportunity to create a cartoon character were evaluated and many categories were created. The students brought the aesthetic qualities the most to forefront with 11.9% when mentioning the character they want to design. Funny stuff (11.1%), exemplary behavior and features (10.3%) were emphasized. 9% of the students brought special powers to the forefront, and 4.5% emphasized action. A striking feature of the research findings is that 18.6% of the students refer to existing cartoons or characters when defining a character that the students would like to create. It can be considered that this situation points to borders and encirclement of the imaginations of the students, keeping in mind that the students have replied to the questions in a limited time.

Female students have brought aesthetic aspects to forefront with 16.5% when replying to the question “what kind of character would you create if you had the opportunity to create a cartoon character?” Subsequently, exemplary behavior and features (12.9%) and being funny/enjoyable (10.3%) were emphasized. Male students responding to the same question have emphasized ‘funny/enjoyable’ aspect of the character they will design with 12.6% the most. Then the most emphasized features werethat the character having special powers (9.7%) and exhibiting exemplary behavior and features (8%).

Discussion and Conclusions

According the findings 42.1% of the students have more than one, that is at least two TVs at home. This finding is consistent with the findings of the study of İlhan and Çetinkaya conducted in 2013. In the mentioned study, it is seen that almost half of the students have 2 televisions in their houses. (2013, p.321) Although 42% of the houses have 2 televisions, about 15% of the children have television in their rooms. However, it should be noted that a ratio of 15% is a considerable amount when the drawbacks of a primary school student having a television in his/her own room are considered. At this point, the importance of raising awareness of families about directing the use of television and technology in general is once again emerging. Unlike the findings of our study, in

the study of İlhan and Çetinkaya conducted on 40 students, it was found that only 2 students had television in their rooms. (2013, p.321)

Children's television watching duration is a matter emphasized by psychologists, physicians and educators. There are prescriptions for screen times suitable for different age groups. In our study, it is seen that 56.3% of the students watch television for 1 hour at most. However, about half of them spend more than 1 hour a day in front of the television. As for the research of Doğan and Göker, about 80% of the primary school students spend more than 1 hour watching television. (2012, p.13) Similar findings were also obtained in the research for Viewing Habits of Primary School Students' for Cartoons on Thematic Children's Channels. 50% of the students watch television for at least one hour before going to school and 15% for at least 2 hours (İlhan&Çetinkaya, 2013, p.322). Considering that the time spent by students at school limits the time spent watching television, it is clear that we are faced with a picture that is not suitable for the prescriptions of the experts. It is necessary to address the issue on a sociological basis by moving away from the child-parent and communication cycle. Nowadays, the number of elementary families living away even from their close relatives for occupational reasons is increasing. The culture of playing on the street has almost disappeared. Parents have a great deal of responsibility in this environment which away from social solidarity. Of course, the conditions do not justify condemning the children to the screen. However, when making evaluations, it is necessary to take the social and economic conditions into account.

There are 17 thematic children's channel broadcasting in our country. According to the findings of the research, TRT Çocuk is the most watched cartoon channel. Also according to two different studies conducted in 2012 (Doğan & Göker, 2012, p.15) and 2013 (İlhan & Çetinkaya, 2013, p.323), TRT Çocuk is the first choice of children. When the data of Television Audience Research Agency (TİAK) for years 2016-2018 are examined, TRT Çocuk has a rating average of 0.62. This rating shows that TRT Çocuk is well ahead of other cartoon channels included in the viewership research. (tiak.com.tr) TRT Çocuk is the thematic children's channel of the public broadcaster TRT, that started to broadcast on 2008. In line with its public broadcasting approach, the channel differs from other channels by focusing on domestic productions and not broadcasting advertisements. In the context of the concerns of cultural imperialism and the dissemination of the consumption culture, TRT Çocuk's policies are gaining significant importance. It is observed that the most followed cartoon channels after TRT Çocuk belong to global companies. This priority position of TRT Çocuk is an important source of hope and motivation for the need to increase the productions suitable to our own culture and values. The scarcity of domestic production in the cartoon channels of local capital is also noteworthy. Local capital owners and publishers need to be more diligent in supporting local production. The fact that the cartoon most watched by primary school students being a local production means that the increase in domestic production will have a response. According to the research, Rafadan Tayfa is the most watched cartoon. Broadcast on TRT Çocuk, Rafadan Tayfa tells the story of a group of friends living in the times where neighborhood life is dominant. Values such as charity, solidarity, sharing are prominent in the production. (Sadioğlu et al. 2018, p.248) According to a survey conducted in 2018, Rafadan Tayfa is still one of the most watched cartoons. (Özsevgeç & Saka, 2018, p.728) The students answered the question of which cartoon do you watch the most with

72 different cartoon names, and most of them are foreign productions. These findings point to how intensely the children are under the siege of a content. Unlike the previous studies, it was found that domestic productions were higher in the ranking of the most watched cartoons.

According to the research results, children viewers also follow the types of programs other than cartoons. While discussing the drawbacks in content for children, children's exposure to adult programs initiates a separate discussion. Although television programs differ according to the child and adult audience, this distinction is eliminated during consumption. In their research, Cesur and Paker (2007) found that children and adults are the viewers of same contents. (p. 125) In a similar study, it was stated that adult television programs were watched substantially and the possibility of encountering inappropriate messages for children in these programs was highlighted. (Doğan & Göker, 2012, p.15) The importance of parents being more leading in the family is once more evident. The fact that 68.7% of children say that they watch television together with an adult should be considered in this context. Consistent with the findings presented above, it is seen that half of the parents do not limit the time of watching television. Also in a similar study, it is stated that families leave the choice of programs to children because they do not have much information about cartoons. In addition, it was identified that parents do not intervene with the cartoons causing negative behavior. (Yetim & Sarıçam, 2016, p. 356; Şahin, 2018, p. 231)

It is seen that primary school students like Keloğan the best among hundreds of different characters. It is stated that the tradition has been updated by transforming Keloğlan, who we know as the fairy tale hero, as a cartoon character. (Bayraktar, 2014, p. 48) According to the research results, Kara Vezir is the most unliked cartoon character because of his characteristics. The objective of Kara Vezir, who is always intolerant of the imperfections of those around him, is to become the sole ruler of the world. (Bayraktar, 2014, p. 42-43)

The thematic children's channels broadcasting in our country have a decisive influence on the viewing times as well as the hundreds of different cartoons they offer.

Although there is a significant increase in the number of domestic productions compared to the past, the fact that a significant portion of the cartoons reaching children is imported from abroad is a continuing problem. Besides being commercial products produced within the cultural industry, they also constitute the source of this problem by being not suitable for our cultural values.

TRT Çocuk channel increasing the number of domestic projects since its establishment, the children started to prefer Turkish productions and enjoy domestic characters. In this context, it is necessary to emphasize once again that how important it is for both state and private sector sources to support domestic productions.

The results of the research reveal that parents are not sufficiently aware about monitoring the television watching times of children. Therefore, state-backed projects such as "Let the Children Grow with Peer not Screen" should be increased, informative programs for parents should be organized.

The findings show that children have intense interest on cartoon characters with super powers. In this context, production of cartoons telling stories of domestic super heroes supplied by our own cultural values is thought to be beneficial.

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