Analyses of the Cartoon Series from a Gender Equality Perspective: Pepee

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Abstract

Mass media play an important role in the formation and continuation of the concept of gender equality within society. The purpose of this research is to analyze and evaluate the cartoon series called "Pepee" according to the concept of gender equality. Presentation of gender roles through various educational tools in society is important in terms of the construction and formation of children's perspective about gender.

This is a descriptive study utilizing a qualitative research design. The study sample which was analyzed was composed of 45 episodes of the Pepee cartoon series. Research data were analyzed both using the methods of content analyses and semiotics. It was revealed that both the female and male characters of this cartoon limited by gender roles in terms of stereotypes which are related to gender equality, actions, colors and the types of clothing and also it was revealed that it includes messages which mat reproduce sexist viewpoints. Based on the analyses, considering the findings in a holistic sense, it was observed that, the Pepee cartoons did contain messages of gender inequality.

Analyses showed that even though many of the activities illustrated in the cartoon can be performed by both males or females, there were many activities, such as watering flowers, setting the table, and taking care of the baby, which were solely attributed to the female characters, while activities such as, driving a car, and riding a bicycle or a balloon were attributed to the male characters. Messages of gender inequality were identified in all episodes regarding such aspects as clothing colors, clothing types, emotional situations and the games played by the characters.

All cartoons designed for educational purposes should involve episodic content and program scenarios to be in line with the principals of human rights and equality. All parts of the components of the societal system such as these cartoons have the responsibility in the society to prevent gender discrimination, as well as to promote gender equality awareness.

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Introduction

Democracy is not only a form of governance; it is a life style. It is necessary that the values and principles, which are forming the life style, to be internalized by individuals, societies, and institutions. This embracement should not be considered as Apple and Beane (2007) explained as an "idealized" series of values and principles, but instead it is a philosophy which is much deeper and more meaningful.

Two of the guiding principles of democracy are freedom and equality. According to Republic of Turkey's Constitution, all citizens have inviolable, inalienable, and indispensable fundamental rights and freedoms (Constitution of Turkey; 1982, Article 12) and everyone is equal before the law without any distinctions based on language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, and sect (Article 10).

In addition to this, political institutions also agreed that humans are equal in terms of law, politics, social and moral areas, as well as, that each human is of equal value. However, studies have shown that even in the most advanced democratic societies individuals are often treated unequally due to their religious beliefs, ethnicity color, sex, political opinion and philosophical belief (Alesina, Di Tella, & MacCulloch, 2004; Aran, Sarı¬ca, & Yazıcı, 2010; Candaş, Yılmaz, Günseli, & Ça¬kar, 2010; Delaney, 2001; Dökmen, 2012; Filmer, & Scott, 2008; İmamoğlu, Yasak-Gültekin, 1993; Ökten, 2009; Sayılan, 2012; The World Bank, 2005; Ulusoy, 1999; Üner, 2008). In order to fully spread the culture of democracy throughout whole society, it is necessary that formal equality, in the legal sense, should be transformed into equality in daily life. One of the most fundamental responsibilities of democracy in a country, where citizens are equal to each other in all the areas and they live under equal conditions, are the prevention of gender discrimination, as well as ensuring the equality between women and men (Balkır, 2013).

The Council of Europe's identification of the importance of the relationship between democracy and gender equality is worth considering:

> "One of the immutable elements of society is, it is formed by men and women. Women together with men should have the right to determine the organization and functioning of the society, in which they live, as well as to pursue the interests of the community. Even though having equal value and dignity of human beings is mentioned in the main international documents and constitutions of many European countries for protecting human rights, de facto inequality situation of women continuing in diverse structures and processes in societ (starting from family to whole decision-making mechanism) precludes the establishment of a truly pluralistic democracy. Women and men having equal responsibilities regarding the functioning of society should be considered as a prerequisite for achieving to a real democracy and a fairer society" (Council of Europe, 1992, p. 34).

In this study, "gender", which is one of the differences considered in equality conception, one particular aspect of the principle of equality, is emphasized. The two basic concepts of gender equality are biological sex and gender.

While biological gender (sex) explains an individual's genetic, physiological and biological properties as a man or woman; social gender (gender) explains personality traits, roles, values, and stereotypes about expectations for women and men are attributed by their society and culture (Akın & Demirel, 2003; Bhasin, 2003; Dökmen, 2012; Koca, 2006; Kottak, 2002; Yogev, 2006).

Gender equality is defined as the equal treatment of women and men based on the rule of law, as well as, having equal access to resources, opportunities and equal enjoyment of services provided for women and men in the realms of community and family (WHO, 1998; Demirel, 2007). Even though gender equality is required by law, one of the most problematic barriers of seeing equality in action is the stereotypes that persist in the minds of individuals and communities.

Stereotypes are, in general, the images formed in people's minds about entities, events, and phenomena. Stereotypes about people can be defined as organized beliefs and attitudes regarding the characteristics of all the members of a particular group (Golombok & Fivush, 1994). Stereotypes form the cognitive aspect of attitudes while prejudices form the emotional aspect of those attitudes. As a

result, stereotypes play a role in the formation of prejudices. Generally, stereotypes about gender, age, occupation, minority groups, and nationalities are more robust than others. Stereotypes are reinforced in childhood through one's family life, later on in schools and social institutions and have become ingrained into individual's minds and have been internalized. Mass media have a strong effect on formation of stereotypes also have an important role on sustaining of these stereotypes, besides have a role in manipulating people in line with these stereotypes. Especially in the last second half of the 20th century, it is a fact that the process of enculturation, cultural change and cultural deformation we have been facing with unforeseen and unavoidable scenery. Mass media has developed and this fact has open up a way to media with all its aspects to intervene every dimension of human life. This intervention is not happening through ineffective and one way interaction, on the contrary this intervention shows its effects on dimensions of human life from thinking styles to clothing preferences actively.

Bandura argues that people learn almost all their behaviors from observations and modelling others (Akers, Krohn, & Lanza, 1979; Bandura, 1989). Learning through observation or in other words the social learning theory, posits that an individual seeks a role model for herself/himself and builds and sustains her/his life via the socialization processes and through enculturation. Similar to Bandura's (2001) modelling processes, Kelman (1961) also divided the modelling and imitating behavior into three stages: imitation, identification and internalization. Imitation is the repetition of a behavior of a person or situation due to a one's being effected by the observed behavior (Bandura, 1965; Bear, Peterson, & Sherman, 1967; Milgram, 1965). Imıtating the behavior can not only strengthen individual and societal prejudices but can also create situations where individuals are unaware of the content and conditions of events and, as a result, engage in superficial assessments (Einhorn, Hogarth, & Klempner, 1977; Le Bon, 2001). According to Kağıtçıbaşı (2005), the model's three stages provide different gains to a person. Massages obtained through mass media have effects on personality areas such as, imitation and getting acceptance, rewarding and punishment; trying to look alike with other people by identification and finally internalization such as understanding the truth and requirement of applying the truth. However, acting on behaviors at the level of imitation without first questioning the content and not utilizing the behaviors in the stage of identification can later cause negative consequences in a child's future.

In line with the ideas mentioned above, Ayrancı, Köşgeroğlu and Günay (2004) were mentioned that mass media effects society and its cultural standards, life styles, interpersonal relations, behavioral stereotypes, social problems and behaviors in consumption areas in which people get these messages unconsciously. These ideas are supported by the research which was conducted by Kuntsche (2004) and according to this research results, 65% of the American people mentioned that the basis of their world view was shaped by mass media publications. These results are also seemed valid for children at an even greater rate.

Lippmann (1998) argued that stereotypes formed in the minds of pre-school children regarding ethnic groups were mainly developed in accordance with the messages about ethnic groups which were presented through television programs. Evra (2004) determined that the most rudimentary behaviors children observed through television programming and then later applied to their lives were behaviors related to gender and violence. Giroux (1983) also argues that cartoons play an important role on teaching the social values to children more influential than family, schools, and religious institutions as mentioned above.

In today's post-modern world, our children often meet and become acquainted with the "magical" world of television at very early ages and before they have an opportunity to meet many of their relatives consciously (Aşkın, 2013).

Öztürk (2002,p.67) commented on this interaction between television and children by stating;

"Television, in a way, saves people from troubles by thinking and dreaming actually for them or it shows signs about in which way people should think and dream".

Cartoon messages provided both directly and indirectly play an important role in an individual's development process; such as, self-formation, personality development, and enculturation. Cartoon messages can have a tremendous effect on young children who cannot yet distinguish dreams from reality and, as a result, they create much of their world through what they observe. Constructivist approach and Cultivation Theory explain that sexist content in cartoons influences children's

understanding and realization regarding gender roles (Graves, 1999; Klein, Shiffman, & Welka, 2000). It is argued in these theoretical perspectives that being exposed through the visuals and pictorials to examples of gender roles is an effective way of developing children's understanding of gender roles, social values, and cultural norms (Graves, 1999; Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002).

Cartoons have been the subject of many scientific research studies, both nationally in Turkey, as well as, internationally (Alan, 2009; Aşkaroğlu, 2006, Ergöz, 2006; Eskandari, 2007; Hubka, Hovdestad, & Tonmyr, 2009; Kalaycı & Şahin, 2013; Kılcı, 2009; Lacroix, 2004; Klein, Shiffman, & Welka, 2000; Seymenoğlu, 2009; Ogletree et al., 2004; Martinez, Turner, & Mason, 2004; Orenstein, 2006; Türkmen, 2012; Thompson & Zerbinos 1997; Yapıcıoğlu, 2010; Yorulmaz, 2013; Wiserma, 2001).

Aktaş (2005) mentions that since cartoons are the programs preferred most by children, they are also one of the programs most targeted for criticism. According to Klein, Shiffman, & Welka (2000), many children are constantly being exposed to the negative effects of information presented in many cartoons. In another example, a study conducted in Denmark determined that children who grew up watching the cartoon series "Tom and Jerry" had punched their friends in their first street fight, and were also surprised by the amount of damage it had caused (Dündar, 1996). Another study determined that elementary school students who had watched cartoons which included intense violence admitted to using physical violence and also preferred physical violence as a solution to their problems at a higher rate (Tokdemir, et al., 2009). A child's modelling of a behavior observed in violent movies can at times result in tragic consequences. Some examples of criminal violence, for instance, bear striking similarities with violence portrayed in TV programs. Even in some violent assaults, rapes, and murders have been directly copied or modelled from violent acts presented on TV programs (Ayrancı, Köşgeroğlu, & Günay, 2004). In another study (Güler & Akman, 2006), investigating pre-school age children's opinions on science it was determined that the view of scientists in the mind of these children was greatly shaped by the effects of images they had observed through cartoons and films.

In another study, the cartoon series named "Pokemon" was analyzed in terms of gender roles. It was determined that the male Pokemon characters, as well as the male Pokemon trainers were depicted as the main characters of each episode. Also, a vast majority of the children in the study stated that they preferred the male Pokemon trainer character as their favorite educator more than the female trainer character (Ogletree et al., 2004).

Many behaviors exhibited by preschool children are generally what they have observed and repeated behaviors (Pighin, 2005). The continuity of these learned behaviors being displayed is directly related to other people's frequency of repeating these behaviors (Akers, Krohn, & Lanza, 1979; Yörükoğlu, 2004). Important to remember is that the behaviors modelled by children are not only those displayed by the people around them but also the behaviors seen in movies and viewed in books. Based on this explanation, it can be understood that children are not only the observers of the behaviors practiced by family members and also the receivers and practitioner of these messages. The research conducted by Uluyağcı and Yılmaz (2007), in which the gender roles in relation with woman and man that approved by the society carried and reinforced by children by doing so, gender roles are reproduced for future.

Cartoons can offer extremely colorful and fun scenery and they don't have any limitation in themselves and because of the fact that they are in relation with the imagination dimension of the life, these cartoons gain public admiration and they have a strong effect on daily aspects of life. Because of the fact that cartoons have become part of the popular culture and becoming a cultural icon they have been used as for consumption item. Toys, accessories, stationeries, t-shirts, posters, and games of many cartoon characters have entered the mainstream consumption market. The prevalence of these characters in the marketplace leads to the reinforcing of children's modelling cartoon characters behavior at a higher rate.

According to a Turkey Radio and Television Supreme Council (2012) research project, children begin watching television on a regular basis when they are 2 to 2.5 years old. Aral, Ceylan and Bıçakçı (2011) also stated that television has an important place in the lives of children and they ultimately can spend more time watching television than being participated in other activities.

In Turkey, various cartoons are generally broadcasted on the local and national channels during the morning on weekdays and on weekends. In addition, there are some other channels such as the Cartoon Network, TRT Çocuk, and Yumurcak TV which broadcast cartoons at almost any time of the day or reserve a large timeslot of their programming for cartoons.

Cesur and Paker (2007) determined that children have a strong interest in cartoons until they reach the age of ten years old. According to the Radio and Television Supreme Council (2006) survey, the most popular cartoons are Tom and Jerry (22.3%), Bugs Bunny (17.9%), the Smurfs (9.9%), and Spiderman (3.4%). According to another investigation regarding the most popular cartoons in Turkey, which was conducted in 2013, the most watched cartoons in Turkey were "Keloğlan" and "Pepee", which are broadcasted on TRT's Children channel and "Ben 10" broadcasted on the Cartoon Network channel (İlhan & Çetinkaya, 2013).

There are many researches that has determined cartoons as the effective tools which also play roles in defining how women should be represented in the society, reproducing sexism and sustaining the sexism (Dawn, Descartes & Collier-Meek,2011; Hubka, Hovdestad & Tonmyr,2011; Gündüz- Kalan, 2010; Kaypakoğlu, 2004; Keloğlu-İşler, 2014; Ogletree ve diğ.,2004; Oliver ve Green, 2001; Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995,1997).

In this study the Pepee cartoon, which has been analyzed through many aspects before, has been analyzed in terms of gender equality. The research findings of other investigations related to the Pepee cartoon series are as follows: Dilber (2013) stated that the Pepee cartoon was originally created in Turkey and it provided an outlet for Turkish folk dances and folk songs. Furthermore, since the Pepee cartoons did not portray violence in its episodes it was considered a positive non-violent programming. Turkmen's (2012) study emphasized that the Pepee cartoons were an important tool for reflecting upon and transferring Turkish culture but not enough for this purpose. Yorulmaz (2013) analyzed the Pepee cartoon series based on religion and values and ultimately criticized the cartoons for not providing a place in any of its episodes to present the symbols and practices of Islam. Şeker and Balcı (2013) investigated the opinions of audiences who had viewed the Pepee cartoon. Audience members, including both parents and children, were queried regarding their opinions and observations of the messages presented in the Pepee cartoon. All of the parents stated that educational messages are successfully given in the cartoon. Study's findings revealed that the Pepee cartoon provided a lot about important messages according to children's opinions. The messages provided children with information from a variety of areas including things such as friendship, brotherhood, toilet training, and math.

In Keloğlu-İşlerin's (2014) investigation of cartoons produced and broadcast nationally, emphasis was placed on researching the socio-cultural values by using Gerbner's cultivation theory. In the study, three locally produced cartoons were selected; "Pepee", "Canım Kardeşim", and "Biz İkimiz". The basic assumption of the study was that locally produced cartoons have an important role in the construction of culture. Keloğlu-İşlerin (2014) stated that locally produced cartoons intensely attempt to emphasize local culture through the messages put-forth in their cartoons.

In this research, the cartoon series named "Pepee" was anaylzed in terms of gender equality. In order to conduct this analyzes the following research questions were asked:

1. How and at what rate are the gender roles, regarding work, divided inside/outside the house chores, in relation with female and male characters in the cartoon series?
2. How and at what rate are the roles regarding games/ hobbies divided between the female and male characters in the cartoon series?
3. What colors of clothing are used when depicting the female and male characters in the cartoon series?
4. What types of clothing are used when depicting the female and male characters in the cartoon series?

This study presents importance in order to provide data for the researchers who are conducting studies about gender equality. This study is important because of the fact that it aims to increase awareness of gender equality and media literacy of parents, teachers, children and producers and scenarist of child movies, and also aims to enhance the expansion of democracy culture in the society.

Methods

Research Model

In order to conduct complete, careful and in-depth analyses of the Pepee cartoon series based on issues related to gender equality, the researcher followed qualitative research methodology utilizing a descriptive study design. The data were derived from the episodes of the Pepee cartoon. Each episode can be accepted as a unique document. Thus, document analyses technique was applied in this study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008).

Population/Sample

The 56 episodes of the Pepee cartoon has been broadcasted between the years 2012 and 2013 on Turkish Radio & Television (TRT) kids channel were the target population of the study and the sample study of the research consists of 45 episodes of this cartoon. 11 episodes of this cartoon had not been analyzed because of two main reasons. The first reason was that some of the first episodes were not obtained for analyzing and the second reason is some of these unanalyzed episodes contained less amount of data compared to the analyzed episodes. Each cartoon episode is approximately 10 minutes long. The episodes of the cartoon were accessed via the internet, then downloaded, archived and analyzed.

Description of Pepee Cartoon

The Pepee cartoon series was started to air on the TRT kids channel in 2008 and until the end of 2013 it was aired both on weekdays and weekends. The Pepee cartoon series is prepared by Düşyeri Çizgi Film Studio in Eskişehir, Turkey and the target audience for this cartoon is 3 to 6 years old children. The scenario of the cartoon is developed by Ayşe Şule Bilgiç and Ali Tufan Kıraç. Pepee is the name of the main character of the cartoon series and is characterized as a four-year-old boy with speech difficulties. The character name, Pepee, derives from the term used in the Anatolian region of Turkey, "Pepe", for someone with speech difficulties, which the character exhibits. (Retrieved from; http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pepee). The characters of the cartoon series are; Pepee, his mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, sister Bebe, cousin Şila, the giraffe Zulu, the dog Köpüş and an outside narrator Şuşu (Retrieved from; http://www.dusyeri.com.tr oni).

Preparation of Data Collection Tool, Data Collection and Analyses

In order to obtain data from the Pepee cartoon series, a coding manual (code-book) was created. The steps followed in the creation of the coding manual, as well as, the analyses of data are explained below:

First of all, in order to conduct objective analyses, 5 out of 45 episodes of the cartoon (10% of the total episodes) were watched by a researcher and by another researcher independently from each other. In second step, the researchers watched identical episodes of the Pepee cartoon independently and while doing so they used previously constructed forms to track information regarding the cartoon. On top of each form they wrote the names of the characters seen in the episode, and also they recorded the types of activities carried out by each particular character, how the activities were completed, and in what situations the characters were placed. During the data collection process, no interpretation had been mentioned. Since it is difficult to focus on all the characters at once during observations, the researchers instead focused on only two characters at a time. The notes of the two researchers were then independently written on previously semi structured forms. Two notes taken by two independent researchers were later on written by using computer. Later, these notes transferred by two independent researchers on computer were analyzed together, similar and un-similar books were created and all these processes were done in table format.

By determining the frequencies a classification can be established based of the number of the occurrences of the phenomenon furthermore the interpretations can be done based on phenomenon, importance and their effect rate (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001). By quantifying the qualitative data in this manner, the reliability of data is increased and the bias is reduced allowing for better comparisons of the data (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). For these reasons the frequency of the observed codes were recorded. The codes which were recognized as not being associated in any way with gender equality or inequality were excluded from the analyses. The codes that were associated with gender equality and inequality were analyzed and categories which may contain appropriate codes were determined. The names of the categories were; "Work done inside the house/outside the house", "Games/hobbies", "Colors of clothing", and "Types of clothing". Conducting these processes by two independent researchers separately and by discussing to reach the mutual general categories has provided "category reliability" for this research. After watching five episodes independently, the two researchers met to analyze and discuss the prepared codes, frequencies and percentages of the observed codes. Then, the researchers made the necessary adjustments to the table and eventually this table was turned into the coding manual (code-book) for the research. For these five episodes, inter-coder reliability, defined as "Renewability-Reproducibility", out of three reliability approaches proposed by Krippendorff (2004), was calculated. According to this calculation, the total consensus co-efficiency between researchers was PT: 0.830 and the total (general) consensus rate was 83%.

When a problem was faced during analyzes process of the series by each researcher, each cartoon episode was available to be re-watched if there was any discrepancy between the researchers in terms of their observed and coded behaviors. Also, each episode of the cartoon series was relatively short; as a result, the researchers were able to review them again and again if necessary. The opportunity to review the information repeatedly probably affected the internal validity of the study in a positive manner.

For analyzing of the remaining 40 Pepee cartoon episodes, the researchers followed the same processes defined above. The observations compiled from these 40 episodes were categorized according to the appropriate codes from the coding manual which was extracted from five episodes (code-book). The codes extracted from 40 episodes were placed under the appropriate categories written in codebook. During the whole process contend analyses were utilized.

The purpose of the content analyses was to obtain similar data (code) and categorize the collected information into readable and countable outputs (Bauer, 2003; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The process of inductive approach (Emergent Coding) was utilized for analyses of the first five Pepee cartoon episodes and the process of deductive approach (Pre-set Coding) was followed for analyses of the remaining 40 episodes (Denzin ve Lincoln, 2005; Fraenkel ve Wallen, 2002).

In this research study, Pepee cartoon episodes were analyzed through a method of semiotics in order to investigate whether the signs displayed in the cartoons carried connotative information regarding gender. Also, for purposes of improving the study's research reliability, both content analyses and semiotics were used as two different methods.

Semiotics is the process of examining data in a systematic way by describing the signs, determining the relationships they establish with each other, determining how signifiers are formed, and by classifying these signs (Rıfat, 1990). In the process of using semiotics evaluation, not only are the overt signs examined but also covert signs which hold cultural phenomena are evaluated. When conducting semiotics research the assumption is made that culture is basically founded on information conveying (Erkman-Akerson, 2005).

The semiotics approach used in this research is based on Barthes's (2012) connotation approach. Signs do not always represent exactly what is being viewed and instead a sign can communicate a message about an item, a person or a thing. According to Barthes (2012), a sign is formed by a relationship between a signifier and a signified. Signifiers uncover what is to be told, while signified reflects the content and meaning. As a result, meaning arises from the relationship between expression and content. What a sign is actually signifying is described as denotation, while how the sign is being signified is described as connotation. The main claim of semiotics is that variation in meaning ultimately depends upon the nature of the language, as well as, upon the patterns of how the signs and symbols are arranged according to the cultural knowledge shared by the sender (coder) and receiver (analyzer) (Mcquail & Windahl, 2005).

In this study, in order to conduct the semiotic analyses, the categories created and arranged following the content analyses were utilized. The codes and categories established following the content analyses were used as "signification strings" in the semiotics analyses process (Barthes, 2012), and in this study, they were discussed as "signs". The table created to organize the information collected regarding semiotics has the following columns; "Sign; Signifier-Denotation; Signified; and Connotation" (Table 2).

In order to increase the internal reliability of the analyses, the tables created by the researcher were reviewed by two independent researchers, and their opinions regarding whether each denotation and connotation was appropriately associated or not. Based on their comments, the received feedback was followed to finalize the tables. In addition, the raw data and codes are maintained so that future researchers can examine the collected data for further analyses.

In order to ensure the external reliability of the study, both the processes of semiotics and content analyses are explained in detail as mentioned above. These detailed descriptions of the analyses process; it is believed that the likelihood of findings being affected by subjective assumptions and prejudices will be reduced. The descriptions may also contribute to future researchers conducting similar studies.

Findings

In this study, the findings obtained from the content and semiotics analyses are presented in the following four categories: 1. Works done inside the home/outside the home; 2. Games/hobbies; 3. Colors of clothing; and 4. Types of clothing.

1. Findings Regarding Works Done Inside the Home/Outside the Home

Table 1. Distribution of Findings Regarding Work Done Inside the Home/Outside the Home Based on Gender

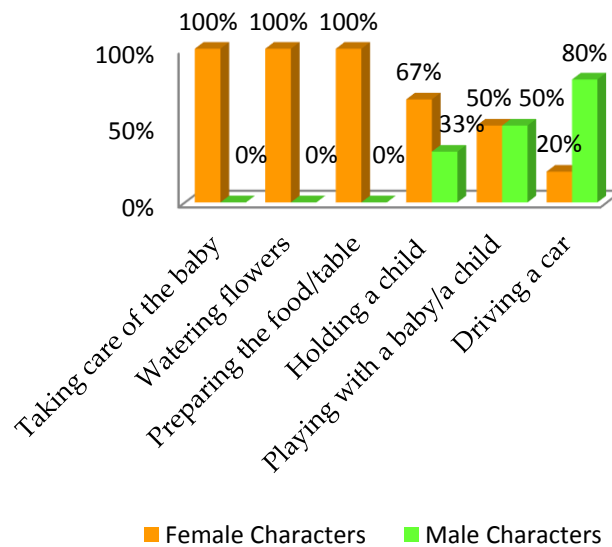| Categories	Codes (Actions)	Female Characters		Male Characters		Total	
		f	%	f	%	F	%
Work done inside the home/outside the home	Taking care of the baby	5	100	0	0	5	100
	Watering flowers	52	100	0	0	52	100
	Preparing the food/table	6	100	0	0	6	100
	Cuddling the child	18	67	9	33	27	100
	Playing with a baby/a child	7	50	7	50	14	100
	Driving a car	1	20	4	80	5	100

Figure 1. Distribution of Findings Regarding Works Done Inside the Home/Outside the Home Based on Gender

Table 2. Analyses of Findings Regarding Works Done Inside the Home/Outside the Home According to Semiotics

Sign	Signifier/ Denotation	Signified	Connotation
Taking care of a baby	The baby is taken cared of	The 'mother' character takes care of the baby	Taking care of a baby is a woman's duty
Watering flowers	Flowers are watered	Women water the flowers	Watering flowers is a woman's duty
Preparing the food/Table	Food/Table is prepared	The 'mother' character prepares the food/table	Preparing food/table is a woman's duty
Cuddling the child	The baby is held	Women and men hold the baby	Both women and men can hold the baby
Playing with a baby/a child	The baby/child is played with	Women and men play with the child	Playing with a baby/child is a duty of both women and men
Driving a car	The car is driven	Mainly men drive a car	A car can be driven by men

Findings presented in the tables and the figure clearly illustrate that the work done inside the home and outside the home can easily be accomplished by both genders without discrimination. However, it was recognized that in particular the first three work activities were completely done by the female characters, and the fourth work activity was mainly completed by the female characters. The female characters were mainly working inside the house and other family members were not collaborating in the in and out of home-related works, males as being the audience of the daily chores or the director of the chores are in complete contradiction with being a family. It was observed in episodes that taking care of the baby and preparing the food and table were performed by Pepee's mother and i was determined that the male characters did not consider these types of work activities as being their duty. For example, this kind of behavior was observed in an episode called "Pepee is Brushing His Teeth". In this episode, after the family had a meal together the grandfather asked the grandchildren; Pepee, Şila, and the baby "Let's leave the table so your mother can clean the table more comfortably/easily". At this moment, the mother was holding the baby and the grandfather's suggestion were accepted by the mother with pleasure. According to the definition from the system perspective, a family is defined as a complex structure in which members share a history, have an emotional connection, and plan strategies to assist with the needs of a family member or the needs of all the family members (Sabatelli & Bartle, 1995). In the scenario of Pepee cartoon series, it can clearly be observed that the characteristics of a patriarchal family structure are used when strategies are planned for meeting the family's needs.

In the Pepee cartoon series, it was observed that the father character was illustrated both verbally and visually as working outside the home; however, for the mother character it was only verbally mentioned that she worked outside the home and it was never visually shown. In the entirety of one the analyzed sections of the Pepee cartoons, there was never any dialogue, implication, and/or emphasis placed on the mother having a job outside the home. Even though the mother character has a job outside the home as does the father character, all of the household chores and childcare duties were assumed to be completed by the mother character. In addition, in most instances during the cartoon, when the mother character is portrayed, she is shown performing household chores or taking care of the baby either in the house or outside in the garden. In each instance, when the mother character is witnessed going outside the home, she is only seen returning to the home and her outside employment is never illustrated. The connotation here is that in a traditional Turkish family structure women do not work outside the home or that for women having a job outside the home is not important. Instead, her main duties are inside the home and taking care of children. Also, she does not participate in any social activities and participating into such activities is not considered right. These observations are consistent

with Esen & Bağlı's (2002, p.151) study in which images of men and women were investigated through textbooks. Their opinions regarding their findings are provided below:

The messages of gender inequality and sexism are presented by the Pepee cartoon in such a naturalistic way that children and parents believe that these behaviors are "part of the Turkish culture". For example, in an episode called "Playing House or Playing Soccer", when the instances of playing house were shown, Pepee's actions could be construed as sexist and portraying roles of gender inequality. To begin, Pepee treats his female cousin, Şila, playing house with him as the wife/mother figure by saying; "My wife, bring me some tea. The baby is crying. Take care of the baby!" As a result, Şila followed his command and gave him some tea. Then she looked happily and simultaneously taking care of the crying baby. At the same time, Pepee was sitting cross-legged, was portrayed with a moustache and he used a deeper sounding voice when talking because he was acting as the "man of the house". There are two anonymous Turkish sayings one of them is "grapes are getting darker by looking at the other grapes" meaning that one person/child learns things in life by observing people around them and the second Turkish folkloric saying is "get the news from the child" meaning that children express their ideas or their observations as actually what they are, without covering, changing or manipulating them. These scenes give us clues that an intensive patriarchal family structure is practiced by Pepee's parents and the children of the family are adopting these roles. There are many researchers which are expressing that the kids watching these characters and their behavioral structures can easily adopt these kinds of behavioral patterns. Similar findings have been demonstrated in several other studies as presented below. According to Oruç, Tecim and Özyürek's (2011) study findings regarding children modelling the behavior of cartoon characters, in cartoons like *Tom and Jerry*, which has two characters, the children most often modelled the character 'Jerry' while 'Tom' was modelled as a secondary character. In another category, the children modelled the behaviors of characters from these cartoons; Barbie, Keloğlan, Gilbert, and Pepee. When an evaluation of gender was made regarding these cartoons, it was determined that male children clearly preferred watching and modelling a character named 'Ben', while the female children on the other hand preferred the character named 'Rozy' as their model. The focus of these findings is not which characters and why these characters were modelled by the children, but the fact that the children are indeed modelling the cartoon characters behaviors.

In Çelik and Uysal's (2012) newspaper article, the newspaper coverage of women's position in public life was analyzed. According to their investigation, the four major newspapers in Turkey which covered stories regarding women's public life were Birgün (1,8%), Hürriyet (1,1%), Radikal (0,8%), and Zaman (0,6%). The data obtained from these newspapers indicated that men are much more dominant than women in public life, as well as, women are identified more with the home as a special area for women (i.e., family life). Under-representation in newspapers of women in public life is in line with the findings related to the study of the Pepee cartoon series. Studies conducted since the 1970's indicate that female characters have been displayed as less significant in television programs, commercials, and cartoons then male characters. In instances of these productions where female characters are portrayed in professional settings, the characters are more likely displayed in lower status positions, as well as, less knowledgeable than their male counterparts (Thompson & Zerbinos; 1995).

In these programs and advertisements men are generally depicted at their jobs working, talking on the phone, or carrying their business bags. It appears the goal of these messages is to display men as the "bread winners" of the home. In these types of commercials seeing an unsuccessful man is almost non-existent. Instead, men are generally portrayed as a senior executive, authoritarian figure, and knowledgeable businessman relaxing in his big office with his legs stretched out resting on the table. Also, the masculine features of the male characters are brought to the forefront. For example, men are appearing to be successful, ambitious, self-assured, confident, and powerful. As a result, society is reminded about what the roles of men should be (Marchand, 1986). Strikingly, these findings remain valid in today's society.

Research by Gencel and Binark (2000), determined that when women are seen in commercials they are primarily portrayed as mothers and wives carrying out tasks related to cleaning and food. In a later study, Sabuncuoğlu (2006), also established that when woman are seen in programming it is usually in the background and the women are responsible for some type of housework. Below, Friedan (1963, p.31), explains one of the reasons for this view;

> *"Mass media provides thousands of persuasive messages to American housewives in order to make them feel proud of themselves and convert their feelings of guilt into something different so that the women can repress the feeling of emptiness that grows inside them every day. These messages are transformed into misleading, crude and impolite television advertisements by using the techniques and concepts of modern social sciences. People exposed to these commercials will begin to believe that women do not want anything other than being a housewife. Even if these commercials and their designers are not responsible for sending women to their homes, they are certainly responsible for keeping women in their homes (p.31)".*

In *The Simpsons* cartoon series the father character, Homer, is seen as the bread winner of the family (i.e., the money earner), as the head of the family, as a faithful husband, and as a devoted father. While conversely the mother character, Marge, is portrayed as a mother who will do anything for her children and is a skillful housewife who is very much in love with her husband. These portrayals are important references regarding the "family myth" which is being disseminated to the television audience. Thus, the Simpson family can lead audiences to easily identify with them by creating a perception that they live in the same community and share similar cultural values as the viewers (Gürel & Alem, 2010). During the research study the current most dominant family structure in Turkey was the patriarchal family system. For this reason, the producers of the Pepee cartoon series may have utilized the patriarchal family system in the cartoon episodes so that the society could more easily adapt to watching the Pepee cartoon. However, producing cartoons or other educational materials that accept the society's norms and habits without questioning in order to ensure the program's acceptance and to increase its popularity should be considered using commercial motives rather than having educational intentions.

The main result of the present study that women's essential and basic role is in the family and home life is in parallel with the previous studies. These findings relate to taking care of children, doing housework, caring for their husband, preparing meals for their family, setting up the table, as well as, being passive and serving in a secondary role in the household structure. For example, Köseler's (2009) study showed that in story books written for pre-school aged children, female characters are primarily pictured inside the home taking care of the children and/or doing household tasks. Thus, it appears that the message being disseminated in these books is that a female's main role in life is being a mother. In addition, several other studies argued that some educational programs and the textbooks utilized in those programs attempted to impose specific pre-ordained societal rules relating to gender roles and behaviours (Asan, 2010; Esen & Bağlı, 2002; Gümüşoğlu, 2013; Kalaycı & Hayırsever, 2012; Kılıç & Eyüp, 2011; Sayılan, 2012).

If an example has to be given with more concrete data for this issue, when the actions of male and female characters found in women elementary first grade alphabet book and Turkish language textbook, 33,96% of the male figures actions are related to public and work life and 19,81% of their actions are related to childcare. The female figures on the other hand are pictured carrying out the following actions; 50,42% related to childcare, 11,01% related to housework and only 10,59% related to public and work life (Esen & Bağlı, 2002). Helvacıoğlu (1994) stated that the society also wants women to constrained their activities in life by home activities and raising children.

According to the Gender and Family Life Statistics (Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Aile Yaşam İstatistikleri), the highest proportion of adult responses regarding why women should not be working outside the home is the notion that women's "primary duties" are child care and household chores (TÜİK, 2006). In a study conducted by Kalaycı, Keleşoğlu and Hayırsever (2012) similar responses were received from students, especially those in schools with lower socio-economic status (SES), and they believed that household chores were the responsibility of females. Household chores, taking care of children, and sending their husband off to work were seen as the reason for women's existence. If women received assistance in these household activities it is believed that their social and economic worth would be jeopardized, if not lost at all (Koray, 1995).

Driving is also primarily displayed as a task done by only male characters. Providing this message follows a parallel structure with social life. However, any vehicle can be operated successfully by either gender. Oruç, Tecim and Özyürek's (2011) research demonstrated that children are more likely to adopt heroes who are the same gender. Also, when the gender is the same, the children tend to connect a more positive meaning with the hero character. This adhering of positive meaning can be seen in real life as well. This occurs because the reasons children identify and model cartoon characters are the same reasons they identify with and model people in real life. In other words, the reason a child models his/her parents is similar to the reason they choose a particular cartoon character as a role model. Labelling almost half the population as incapable and unqualified to complete certain jobs is a form of gender discrimination. Not only are books, cartoons, films and other tools providing this message now, but the children who will be the next generation of adults are receiving this message directly and/or indirectly and it will affect their views of gender equality in the future. With a new generation of citizens who have a negative sense of gender equality the prospect of a nation achieving its lofty goals during the 21st century is at risk. In fact, the pervasiveness of disseminating these sexist messages is one of the obstacles blocking the success of achieving these goals.

2. *Findings Regarding Games/Hobbies*

Table 3. Distribution of Findings Regarding Games/Hobbies Based on Gender

| Category	Code (Actions)	Female Characters		Male Characters		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
	Playing blindfold/Playing doctor	4	67	2	33	6	100
	Playing house	2	67	1	33	3	100
	Jumping rope	3	60	2	40	5	100
	Dancing	5	36	9	64	14	100
	Racing (running, cycling, etc.)	3	30	7	70	10	100
	Doing karate	2	25	6	75	8	100
	Playing ball	2	25	6	75	8	100
Games/	Taking a hot air balloon ride	3	21	11	79	14	100
Hobbies	Riding a bicycle	2	25	6	75	8	100
	Doing excessive physical movements (Jumping-flying around-flipping)	0	0	9	100	9	100
	Taking a picture	0	0	6	100	6	100
	Trekking/hiking	0	0	5	100	5	100
	Taking a boat ride	0	0	6	100	6	100
	Playing with a sword/gun	0	0	3	100	3	100
	Swimming	0	0	10	100	10	100
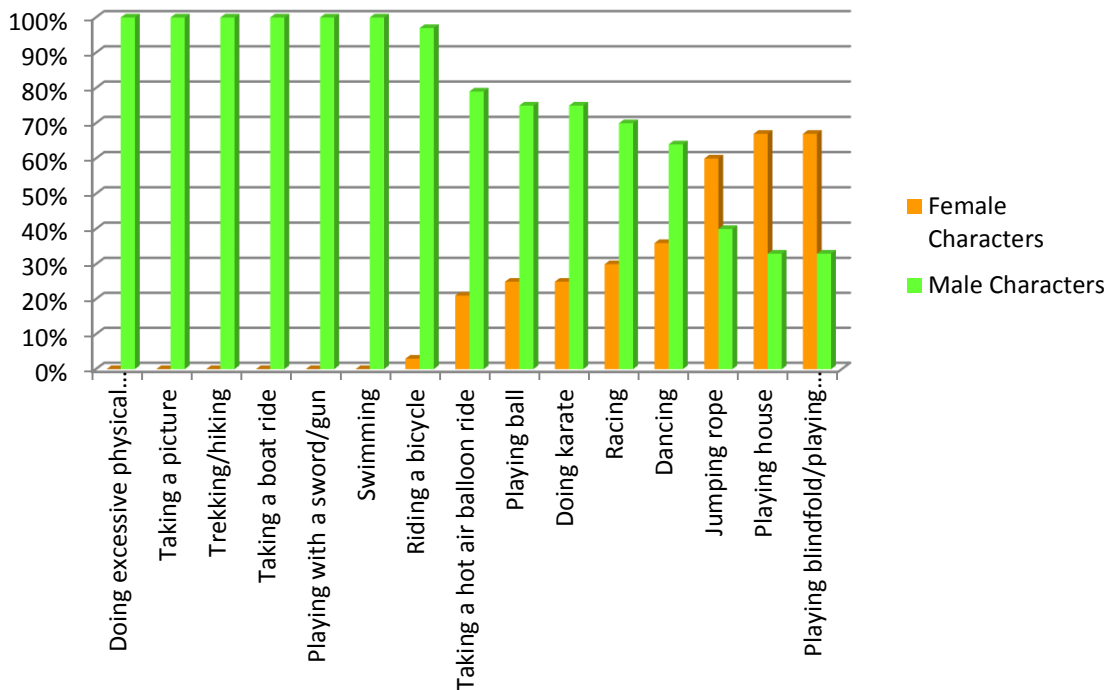
Figure 2. Distribution of Findings Regarding Games/Hobbies Based on Gender

Table 4. Analyses of Findings Regarding Games/Hobbies According to Semiotics

Sign	Signifier/ Denotation	Signified	Connotation
Doing excessive physical movements (jumping, flying around, flipping	Excessive physical movements are done	Male characters do excessive physical movements	Excessive physical movements can be done by males
Taking a picture	Pictures are taken	Male characters take pictures	Pictures can be taken by male characters
Trekking/hiking	Trekking is performed	Male characters trek	Trekking can be done by male characters
Taking a boat ride	A boat is ridden	Male characters rode boats	Boats can be ridden by male characters
Playing with a sword/gun	A sword/gun is played with	Male characters play with a sword/gun	A sword/gun can be played with by male characters
Swimming	Swimming performed	Male characters swam	Male characters can swim
Riding a bicycle	A bicycle is ridden	Male characters rode bicycles	Male characters can ride bicycles
Taking a hot air balloon ride	Balloons are ridden	Male and female characters took a hot air balloon ride	Male and female characters can take a hot air balloon ride
Playing ball	A ball is played with	Male and female characters played ball	Male and female characters can play ball
Doing karate	Karate is done	Male and female characters did karate	Male and female characters can do karate
Racing (running, cycling, etc.)	Racing is done	Male and female characters raced	Male and female characters can race
Dancing	Dance is performed	Mainly men characters danced	Dancing is mainly affiliated with male characters
Jumping rope	Jumping rope is done	Male and female characters jumped rope	Male and female characters can jump rope
Playing house	Playing house is played	Male and female characters played house	Male and female characters can play house
Playing blindfold/Playing doctor	Blindfold/doctor games are played	Male and female characters played blindfold/doctor	Male and female characters can play blindfold/doctor

When the findings were analyzed it was recognized that activities which were performed outside and required physical movements, such as trekking/hiking, taking a boat ride, and playing with a sword/gun were performed exclusively by male characters. On the other hand, the female characters engaged in games which were played in groups, such as, playing house, playing blindfold, and dancing. The connotation of this finding is that it is more appropriate for males to participate in independent games and activities then females. In their study, Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) investigated children's perceptions regarding cartoons and their findings illustrated that children not only perceived male characters as more active and prone to violence but also that female characters were more docile, domesticated, had interest in the male characters, and were too worried about their physical appearance. The findings from Thompson and Zerbinos's (1995) research regarding the messages and perceptions relating to the activities carried out by male or female characters were reaffirmed by the current study.

The findings from this study indicated that swimming was an activity only accomplished by male characters. Kalaycı and Şahin's (2013) study also uncovered similar information in a cartoon called "Keloğlan". For example, only the male characters were capable of swimming and the female characters were not only depicted as not knowing how to swim but were so clumsy that they almost caused the male character that was swimming to drown. It is not an accident that these research findings share some similarities in findings. The concrete achievements by Turkish women in sports, including swimming, have been around for generations. Even as far back as 1934, Turkish female swimmers Leyla Asım Turgut (Fenerbahçe) and Cavidan Erbelger (İstanbul Swimming Club) achieved international success alongside their male counterparts. To this day, competitive female swimmers and other female athletes in Turkey, continue to achieve success in their chosen sport and/or activity (http://www.tarihteilkler.com/ilk/iLK_YUZME_SPORU/390/).

Another observation uncovered is that playing with a ball is primarily an activity carried out by male characters. In Kalaycı and Hayırsever's (2014) research, students from low SES (67%) and middle SES (27%) backgrounds, regarded playing soccer as predominately a male activity. These findings cannot be underestimated because this is a large proportion of students who believe that playing soccer is a male only sport. These results affirm the existence of gender inequality existing in the minds of students. The belief that sports are a specific domain for males is a by-product of the patriarchal mind-set established by a male-dominated society. These research results are a worrying sign because it demonstrates that families are already following a paternalistic pattern in their family lives. This is not as worrisome as the fact that a majority of the society will also continue to harbor these stereotypes and unchanged perceptions which from day-by-day can go into with more intense beliefs that only lead to a perpetuation of gender inequality in society.

As observed in the tables and figure, the analyses results indicate that in the Pepee cartoon series all the activities were completed by the male characters. However, the female characters were only allowed to perform a few of the activities and games. Also, in all programs and children's programming on TV, women or female children always lag behind the men or male children in terms of their representation. Any opportunity to be considered, watched, and do something remarkable most often was presented to men (Günaydın, 2011). Male characters are recognized as muscular, powerful, wonderful and heroic individuals, for example, "Rambo". These male characters become the heroic role models for children; as a result, the children model these characters. The heroes, especially in action and war movies or cartoons, are most often male characters. In these productions the female characters are portrayed as minor characters who are attractive but have secondary importance. Their role is only to patiently wait to be rescued by their hero husbands or companions. According to Erjem and Çağlayandereli (2006) who investigated the effects of film on young peoples' behaviours stated that approximately 72% of study participants modelled the characters from TV series. It was also determined that not all of the behaviours modelled by participants were considered positive behaviours. The message that women are only attractive and un-useful characters waiting to be rescued by their hero husband or companion, and those women's needs can only be met by men. Very important characters are imposed to women at every opportunities and this is a fallacy that should be criticized in order to maintain a correct sense of reality in modern society. The male dominant, female submissive scenario is consistent with lasting-standing proverbs and idioms. While men are dominant, independent, skillful and successful characters in society, women are often depicted as dependent on men for sustenance (consuming what men provided as the bread winner), in love (having attractive features but a small brain), emotional (one should not cry like a woman), and finally women are said to not be able to handle some tasks all by themselves. In Turkey, the understanding of what it means to be a man is to not be like a woman. A man does not walk like a woman, does not talk like a woman, does not laugh like a woman, does not wear clothes like a woman, does not deal with easy tasks like a woman, and does not do the household chores that women do. Instead, being a man is characterized as being tough, strong, and competent (Büker and others, 1998).

In Kalaycı and Hayırsever's (2014) study, approximately 30% of the eight-grade students from low and middle SES schools who were surveyed, noted "Boldness" as being a specific characteristic of males. All of the students with this opinion were also male. This finding can be explained by arguing that courage/boldness continue to be ascribed in a traditional patriarchal society as an appropriate gender role for men.

The activities that are listed in the table are always performed with ease by the male characters during every episode of the Pepee cartoon series. On the other hand, the female characters in the cartoon series are viewed as being discouraged, tired, fragile or timid. For instance, in one episode called "Playing House or Playing Soccer", the characters Pepee and Şila played soccer together. The male character, Pepee, was portrayed as an active and conscious child who was playing soccer very well and was consistently scoring goals. Meanwhile, Şila, who was playing the goalkeeper position was continuously portrayed as incompetent, sad, and not being able to catch the ball. Compared to Pepee, Şila was always presented as weak and unsuccessful. In another cartoon, Keloğlan, the female characters were portrayed as fearful, insecure, sad, suffering and timid. Relating to this issue, Durlu (1995) and Timisi (1996) identified that female characters in cartoons are most often portrayed as being weak, passive, always ask for help, and waiting to be rescued by the male characters. Even though almost 20 years has passed since these observations were made the ideology that female characters should be weak and incompetent is still prevalent in the cartoons of today.

Male characters are often presented as infringing on others' rights, acting in a threatening manner, being vengeful, as well as, having an aggressive demeanor. These are not positive traits but this is the impression that is being made about the male characters. Findings from other studies though give an impression that male characters are more reliable, sensible, and knowledgeable than the female characters (Kalaycı and Şahin, 2013).

One of the activities depicted in the cartoon was Turkish folk dancing. In the Pepee cartoon episode called, "Pepee Horon Tepiyor", a traditional Turkish folk dance of the Black Sea region was performed. Introducing and providing examples of folk dancing is a positive way to share traditional Turkish culture with children. In the cartoon episode, Pepee and some giraffes played together and danced Turkish folk dance. While Pepee and his companions were dancing together the mother of the house only watched them dancing. Later, the father and grandfather joined in on the traditional dance but the mother character remained the only character excluded during this cultural and social activity. The female character, Pepee's mother, being excluded in the folk dance goes against folk dance tradition because both men and women dance Turkish folk dance.

The egalitarian nature, in which women and men are presented side by side, has existed in Turkish culture for centuries. The representation the Pepee cartoon is attempting to forward is sexist, that women are not equal to men. This message is contrary to democratic values and is not correct. If changes are to be made to Turkish culture, then these changes should be made in a manner consistent with universal and national values.

3. Findings Regarding Colors of Clothing Category

Table 5. Analyses of Findings Regarding Colors of Clothing According to Semiotics

Sign	Signifier/ Denotation	Signified	Connotation
Male characters wore blue color clothing	Blue is only color that can be used for clothes	Blue color is used for male characters' clothes	Blue is a color mainly for men
Female characters wore shades of pink and purple color clothing	Shades of pink and purple are only colors that can be used for clothes	Shades of pink and purple are used for female characters' clothes	Shades of pink and purple are colors mainly for women

Analyses revealed that in almost every episode of the Pepee cartoons the female characters wore clothes which were the color pink or one of its shades. Conversely, the male characters in the same cartoons always wore blue and/or dark color clothes. This is important because a child's gender identity is being shaped from the time we wrapped them in blankets; pink colored blankets for girls and blue blankets for boys (Yogev, 2006). This effect was also recognized in Ağaç and Harmankaya's (2009) research in which female elementary school students chose pink, lilac, and blue as favorite colors for their clothing, while the male students preferred the colors blue, dark blue, and black for their favourite colors of clothes. This occurrence can be explained by the Turkish proverb; "ne ekersen, onu biçersin" which translates to "You reap what you sow". Thus, as a society we need to be careful about our decisions of what we sow as a culture.

Another noteworthy point is that in traditional Turkish attire there was no discrimination regarding color of clothing, for example, pink was not assigned to females for their clothing and blue was not assigned to males for their clothing. This sort of gender discrimination based on clothing color is not even a part of the western-European and/or American style of clothing. In fact, what can be stated as the "traditional sexist discrimination of colors" was only offered as a choice in "fashion" some one hundred years ago. These days though the idea of pink for females, and blue for males is being imposed on children and families as a cultural norm which must be followed. These false beliefs, based on incorrect stereotypes and sexist opinions, as well as, on unreasonable practices and hearsay habits should not be presented to our children and their families as a "true cultural tradition".

4. Findings Regarding Clothing Types

Table 6. Analyses of Findings Regarding Clothing Types According to Semiotics

Sign	Signifier-Denotation	Signified	Connotation
People's clothes	People put on clothes	Females wear skirts/dresses	Females should only wear skirts/dresses. They should not wear pants.
Doing sports	Children do sports	Females should wear skirts when they are doing sports	Females should wear skirts in every situation
Family going to the beach	The family members go to the beach together	Females wear dresses and they do not swim	Females do not wear swimsuits and they do not swim
Family going to the beach	The family members go to the beach together	Men wear swimsuits and they swim	Man can wear swimsuits and they swim

In Table 6 it can be recognized that female characters only wore skirts and did so in all situations including while doing sports. The wearing of only skirts by female characters was observed in every episode of the Pepee cartoons, so this occurrence should not be considered only coincidental. Even when the wearing of skirts should seem out of place and inconsistent with the behaviour the females are seen wearing skirts in the Pepee cartoons, for example, the female characters were wearing skirts while playing soccer which is contrary to the rules, characteristics, and application of soccer. If a female is

displayed playing soccer wearing a skirt by mistake, then this should be a clear indication that the cartoon episodes are not thoroughly reviewed and checked prior to being broadcasted. Having females wear skirts while playing sports is as ridiculous as having male characters wear Scottish kilts while doing an all-male Turkish folkdance called, Zeybek. The connotation of this observation that females were wearing skirts while playing soccer is evidence of a hidden message being disseminated that females should not be playing soccer and if they are then it should be seen as funny and/or out of place.

It is not a problem that nationally televised cartoons transmit messages about culture and cultural practices. Issues arise when the cultural messages transmitted are inappropriate and do not represent the culture properly. The question to ask is if the general population is represented or are only the ideas of a select group represented. Through examination of the Pepee cartoon series it was recognized that the cultural ideas of only one select perspective were being transmitted through the cartoons (Keloğlu-İşler, 2014,p.67). Unfortunately, the selective message about culture being transmitted was leading to the dissemination of gender stereotypes and sexist messages.

Evaluation also showed that during all of the Pepee cartoon episodes the female characters wore only skirts and dresses while in and around the house. In reality, a woman can wear whatever clothes are appropriate for her actions and what activities she is carrying out. Moreover, the children viewing these cartoons may believe restricting female characters to this type of attire is normal. This perception may lead to a consolidation of their ideas regarding gender stereotypes.

A glaring example of gender inequality in action occurs during one episode of the Pepee cartoon episode called, "Pepee mavi arıyor", when on a sunny hot summer day the female characters are portrayed at the beach wearing their regular outfits instead of wearing swimsuits. In addition, the female characters were not only spending time at the beach they were serving refreshments to the male characters who were swimming and enjoying the sea.

In another Pepee episode, gender stereotypes again are prevalent when the female character, Şila, is placed in the role of doctor. Ironically, here pink colored everyday attire suddenly switched to blue colored clothing which primarily represents men's clothing. Also, interesting is that when Şila was examining Pepee the voice of Şila got deeper. Similar observations were also stated in Kalaycı, Keleşoğlu and Hayırsever's (2012) study. In an illustration from a Citizenship and Democracy Education course book, women working in the laboratory were illustrated as wearing shirts and ties with a white apron over their shirts. The connotation of this finding is quite clear; women who do have jobs can only accomplish their professional role if they dress and appear like men. According to Topçuoğlu (1978), women's traditional roles were considered to be the only roles for women but there is evidence that women are capable of carrying out any profession just successfully as their male counterparts. The result is that women have been obliged to maintain their traditional roles even with their new status in society because of the social division of labor (Yeşilorman, 2001). Explanations from Topçuoğlu in 1978 and Yeşilorman in 2001 regarding the existence of a sexist social structure seem to retain their validity even in the current day.

Discussion

The Pepee cartoon series has been analyzed in several studies from a variety of perspectives. In this study, the Pepee cartoon series was evaluated in terms of gender equality and it was determined that the Pepee cartoons do limit, both male and female characters, via several gender stereotypes in terms of their roles, actions, types of clothing, and colors of clothing. It was also determined that messages containing a sexist point of view were delivered through the cartoons. When the findings of this study were evaluated holistically, it can be recognized that the Pepee cartoon series contains messages that promote gender inequality.

Analyses of the Pepee cartoon series has shown that the female characters were predominantly portrayed as homemakers staying around home taking care of children and dealing with the household chores. Also, gender-based terms regarding the division of labor in society were reflected in the Pepee cartoons. For example, the labelling of women as only "mother and wife" and men as "working outside of the house" established a division of labor that reinforces traditional stereotypes. When we consider the idea of the great scholar Plato (427-347 BC), as "There are no jobs specific only to females or males in the society" and having these stereotypes which are contradicting with Plato's idea meaningful contradictors indeed for our society.

Women are stereotypically portrayed in the news as being exposed to violence, poor, vulnerable, a good wife, a good mother, a bad wife, a bad mother, ruining others' marriages, and freeloading on others. While the role of homemaker, doing the household courses, is assigned to women the men are assigned roles of breadwinner and working out in public. Discourses of this nature serve to reinforce the patriarchal gender ideology and the idea of women's dependency on men, as well as, minimize women's importance as secondary and emphasize the primacy of the role of homemaker for women (Gürses, 2003).

Keloğlu-İşler's (2014, p.75) study analyzed three cartoons televised nationally throughout Turkey and stated;

> "The female characters from national cartoons are always portrayed involved in some household related chores or tasks. They are not depicted creating any form of cultural production, they do not work outside the family in a social environment, they have no career or have a menial job, they are not seen travelling to and from work, it is unknown if they earn money, they are not seen driving a car, they are constantly preparing meals for their families, and/or delivering new babies. Alternatively, in foreign cartoons, examples of gender equality can been witnessed. For example, in the cartoon "Caillou", the mother can say to her children; "kids you play all by yourself, I will study in my room". Or the father/husband can prepare the meal for the family and/or his spouse. Is it a coincidence that women are only being presented as working inside the home doing household chores and care giving while not being portrayed working or producing anything outside of the house? Or are these gender stereotypes being presented purposefully? Identifying the sexist roles of gender is repeatedly continued".

However, mass media should not limit the possibilities for children's understanding by presenting gender stereotypes and sexist viewpoints. Instead, mass media should contribute to children's development by presenting them with the broadest range of social models and diversity. For example, a Pakistani television producer Aaron Harun Raşid's cartoon, "Burqa Avenger", is important in the fact that it defends the idea that females should be afforded education just as males. Raşid emphasized the message that; "being male or female does not matter, getting an education is your fundamental right. Do not let anyone take this right away from you" (the Animated Hero of Pakistan: Burkali Ninja, 2014).

Based on data from 2012, there are approximately 37 million women in Turkey. Of the total female population in Turkey, there were 27 million that were considered able-bodied and ready for work in terms of age and health but only 7 million were listed in the workforce. The number of housewives was listed as 11 million, so in Turkey there were approximately 4 million more housewives than women listed in the workforce (Özdemir & Dündar, 2012). In terms of women's participation in the labour force, Turkey is not only behind the developed countries but it also falls behind many rapidly industrializing countries in Asia and Latin America. Unfortunately, in terms of labour force participation by women, Turkey remains close to North Africa and the Middle East.

> *"Due to being forced to be obedient and deprived of the ability to query women chose the easy way and followed the slogan saying "women's place is their homes"* (Katırcıoğlu, 2010, p. 4).

Another finding of this study indicated that in the Pepee cartoon series, physical activities and games which can be played outside and participated in independently, such as; trekking/hiking, camping, taking a boat ride, playing with swords/guns were performed 100% by the male characters. In contrast, the female characters from the Pepee cartoon episodes were observed participating in group activities, such as playing house, playing blindfold, and/or dancing. The connotation of this finding is that males are more capable of participating in active and independent activities than are females. Research in this field has disclosed, such as Tanrıöver (2007), that there is a problematic nature in mass media's strategy of how it represents women and all "others" in its programming. It was also stated that television programming contributes greatly to these attitudes and stereotypes. However, mass media is not the only source responsible for creating gender stereotypes. Other sources, such as, course books, educational programs, teachers, families and society, all have an impact and responsibility creating these beliefs. The focus of this research study was to evaluate the Pepee cartoon series in order to determine if messages of gender inequality and sexism were present in the cartoon episodes. It was determined that messages which promote gender stereotypes, gender inequality, and sexism are present in the Pepee cartoon series and that these are not innocuous messages.

Any aspect of these cartoons which is used to reinforce and reproduce inappropriate gender stereotypes promoting gender inequality and sexism should be considered a serious problem. The target audience for these programs is pre-school age children; thus, they are the ones who are subject to the messages of gender inequality most. An audience of this age is not mature enough to watch these cartoons with a critical eye and instead view the characters they are watching as role models. Provided this is the case, it should be a warning to us all that this sort of programming and these types of messages are disseminated to children.

Almost in all episodes of the Pepee cartoon series, the female characters were portrayed wearing clothing that was either the color pink or a shade of pink; while the male characters wore clothes that were either blue or a dark color. Women characters wore skirts even they wore skirt in sport activities and also this situation was observed for all population of the study cannot be seen as random situation. These presented sexist messages have been effecting perception of women by society and these dominant stereotypes are being reproduced constantly for to be used in public circulation area. To produce cartoons which can reverse this negative situation is possible for us to produce. This is just not a recommendation but it is a requirement because the number of the qualified people, technical knowledge and variation of these sources are available for our country at the moment.

In Turkey, cooperation cartoon/the animation arts and academics is a requirement for realizing higher quality productions. Evaluating these cartoons by experts on this field and using those evaluation results in production stage of the cartoons are the important steps for the solution of these problems.

When the media literacy on macro level become a part of the public policy the purpose goes far beyond person entrepreneurship stage and reaches to the phase of these personal efforts becomes state requirements. In micro level, increasing the number of parents, individuals, teachers and students which have the media literacy quality may force the cartoon movie producers and scenarists and directors to be more careful about their product.

According to a UNICEF (2003) report regarding the Republic of Turkey, the social environment in which teachers are brought up, as well as, the forms of socialization and training they receive often prevents them questioning gender inequality. Female teachers are also as unsusceptible as male teachers when it comes to being "blind to gender inequalities" and they are in the tendency of directing students to the traditional public gender roles and reinforcing the sexist ideas in public understanding. When teachers do not recognize, question, and confront sexism it is likely an indication that they also have internalized the traditional perspective on gender. Based on these findings it is critical that adequate training for educators, especially those in early childhood education, because the parents are in close communication with teachers, the teachers can easily educate the parents on gender equality issue.

Researches analyzing cartoons from various viewpoints have to be given more importance. On this research topic, longitudinal and observation based, deep, meaningful data gathering researches are required. In order to realize the gender equality in our society conscious effort and collaborating between all the stakeholders will and must result in.

Kaynakça

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