EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' VİEWS AND SELF REPORTED
PRACTICES ABOUT STEREOTYPICAL GENDER ROLE MESSAGES IN
CHILDREN'S CARTOONS

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ABSTRACT

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' VİEWS AND SELF REPORTED PRACTICES ABOUT STEREOTYPICAL GENDER ROLE MESSAGES IN CHILDREN'S CARTOONS

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate early childhood teachers' views on stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons and their effects on children's gender role perceptions. Another purpose of the study was to investigate the way early childhood teachers address the effects of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in their classrooms. The participants of the study were 25 early childhood teachers who serve in public preschools in Niğde, Türkiye. The study was conducted in phenomenological design from qualitative research strategies. The study data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Findings of the present study indicated that according to most of the early childhood teachers, children's cartoons include stereotypical gender role messages such as association of female cartoon characters with domestic roles and attribution of prominent roles to the male cartoon characters. Also, the teachers observe the effects of the stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons on children's behaviors in free time, consumption behaviors, beliefs about gender and peer relationships. In spite of teachers observing the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender

perceptions, most teachers do not address the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender perceptions in the classroom.

ÖZ

OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÇOCUK ÇİZGİ FİLMLERİNDE VERİLEN TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET MESAJLARINA YÖNELİK GÖRÜŞLERİ VE ÖZ BİLDİRİME DAYALI PRATİKLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk çizgi filmlerinde verilen toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarına ve bu mesajların çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet algısına olan etkisine ilişkin görüşlerini araştırmaktır. Buna ek olarak, öğretmenlerin bu etkilere yönelik sınıf ortamında neler yaptığını belirlemek amaçlanmıştır. Bu araştırmanın katılımcıları Niğde ilindeki devlet okullarında eğitim veren 25 okul öncesi öğretmenidir. Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemi kapsamında bir olgubilim çalışması olarak yürütülmüştür. Çalışmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları göstermiştir ki okul öncesi öğretmenlerinden bir çoğuna göre çocuk çizgi filmleri kadın karakterlerin ev içi roller ile ilişkilendirilmesi, erkek karakterlerin ise daha ön plandaki rollerde gösterilmesi gibi kalıp yargısal toplumsal cinsiyet mesajları içermektedir. Ayrıca öğretmenler çizgi filmlerdeki toplumsal cinsiyet mesajlarının etkilerini çocukların serbest zamandaki davranışlarında, tüketim davranışlarında, toplumsal cinsiyet inançlarında ve akran ilişkilerinde gözlemlemektedir. Çizgi filmlerin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet algısına olan

etkilerini gözlemlemelerine rağmen, birçok öğretmen sınıf ortamında bu etkilere yönelik bir müdahalede bulunmamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: okul öncesi eğitimi, okul öncesi öğretmeni, çocuk çizgi filmleri, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, toplumsal cinsiyet algısı

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"It started when an alien device did what it did
It stuck itself upon his wrist with secrets that it hid.
Now he's got super powers, he's no ordinary kid
He's Ben 10
So if you see him you might be in for a big surprise
He'll turn into an alien before your very eyes
He's slimy, freaky, fast and strong
He's Ben 10
Armed with powers, he's on the case
Fighting off evil from earth or space
He'll never stop till he makes them pay
'Cause he's the baddest kid to ever save the day
Ben10."(Kaula, 2015).

The song quoted above is the theme song of Ben 10, the animated cartoon that was broadcasted on the Cartoon Network Channel and one of the most watched cartoons among the school-aged children and young children (İlhan & Çetinkaya, 2013; Schiau, et al., 2013; Şahin & İlhan, 2019, Kidenda, 2006). In Ben 10, a male-oriented children's cartoon, the main character saves the world from aliens. As mentioned in the theme song of the cartoon, Ben is a strong, fast, and brave male character. In their study Ahmad and Wahab (2014) analyzed gender role portrayals in ten Cartoon Network cartoons and revealed that Ben 10 is not the only children's cartoon with a strong and brave male character. Study results revealed that 70% of the main male characters in the examined cartoons were portrayed as strong and brave, stereotypical attributes associated with males.

Similar to the aforementioned example, literature exploring the content of children's media argued that most of the media contents targeting children include stereotypical gender role messages (Baker & Raney, 2007; Walsh &

Leaper, 2020; Steyer, 2014). According to the report published by the Common-Sense Media, children's media include stereotypical gender role messages in terms of gender-typed appearance, occupations, interests, emotional situations, and social roles (i.e. males are leaders, females nurture children) (Ward & Aubrey, 2017). A similar report published by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (2019) about the gender gap in children's television. The report revealed that there are more than twice as many male lead characters than female lead characters in content for children. The report also revealed the reproduction of gender role stereotypes in children's television such as associating females with physical beauty and males with violent behaviors.

Cartoons are the most popular television programs among children in the early childhood period (Aktaş Arnas, 2005; Temiz, 2019). Giroux (1983) suggested that cartoons are more influential than school, family, and religious institutions in the transference of social values to children. According to Ward and Aubrey (2017) stereotypical gender role messages in the media have certain effects on the way children perceive the world including a sense of self, worth attributed to self and others, and beliefs about how interpersonal relationships occur. Also, the literature suggested that children's gender role beliefs, beliefs about occupations and activities, beliefs about dominance and aggression and beliefs about physical appearance are affected by stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons (Hust & Brown, 2008; Şahin & Alat, 2021; Blakemore et al., 2008). Hence, many studies investigated the association between the gender role perceptions and cartoon engagement of children. Studies showed that cartoon engagement have observable effects on children's gender typed play (Coyne et al., 2014; Coyne et al., 2016), beliefs about what other people thought about whether girls and women or boys and men were better (Halim et al., 2013), body image (Slater & Tiggemann, 2016), perception of physical beauty (Golden & Jacoby, 2018) and perception of gender typed occupations (Bond, 2016).

Gender role development of females and males begins at a very early age and continues with learning some basic gender stereotypes throughout the early

childhood years (Blakemore et al., 2008, p. 14). These stereotypes learned from different sources including the media are varied. Some of these stereotypes are as follows: boys playing with cars and girls playing with dolls, doctors being males, nurses being females, and girls being allowed to express sadness while boys being allowed to express anger. The concern here is that these stereotypes restrain children by making them believe that they have to play with certain toys, work at specific jobs, develop certain personality characteristics, act in certain ways, have particular interests and have a specific appearance. Therefore, children surrounded by various stereotypical frames may never realize their full potentials or individual talents (Sikora & Pokropek, 2011). As an inevitable result of these restrictions, children may have limited experiences and develop particular characteristics and abilities instead of being free and versatile (Blakemore et al., 2008, p. 356). This means that developing a healthy gender perception starting from early childhood is essential not only for overall development, but also for revealing the full potential of children. Considering the previously mentioned effects, stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons should be reviewed and evaluated by adults in terms of appropriateness for the child's developmental level and messages included (Ward & Aubrey, 2017; Berns, 2013, p. 340).

Children in the early childhood period have a limited ability to distinguish fantasy in the media from the real world (Smith et al., 2008, p. 221, Peters, & Blumberg, 2002). In other words, children in the early childhood period may think that the interactions and social roles including stereotypical gender roles in the media also exist in the real world. As mentioned above, stereotypical gender role beliefs affect children in certain ways like having a poor self-concept and limiting multidimensional development. However, taking the media rich world into consideration, protecting children from the harms of the media by prohibiting the media use may not be rational. Instead, teaching children the skills necessary to truly evaluate media messages will be a better and permanent solution (Vodopivec, 2011). According to the literature, active adult mediation to children's media use might minimize the negative effects of stereotypical gender

role messages in the media (Hust & Brown, 2008, p.113). The focus of the child and media literature includes parental views on the general effects of the media on children (Merdin, 2017; Ciboci et al., 2014; Nikken & Schols, 2015). Considering the early childhood period, an early childhood teacher can be regarded as a specialist in child development, a facilitator for the child's learning, a creator of the learning environment and a person who knows about the child through everyday observations. Therefore, the views of early childhood teachers on how children's cartoons affect children is also critical, specifically on gender role development of children and should be included in the early childhood education literature.

1.1. Problem Statement

The children in today's world are born and live in a media saturated environment. They use the media for an important part of the day. According to the Common-Sense Media report, daily use of screen media of children between the ages of 2 to 4 is two and a half hours and for children between the ages of 5 to 8 it is over three hours and 73% of this screen time involves television viewing (Rideout, & Robb, 2020). Also, young children's media exposure has been increasing more and more every day (Rideout, 2013; Rideout, & Robb, 2020). As a consequence, children are exposed to certain media messages in children's cartoons, including stereotypical gender role messages. To protect themselves from the detrimental effects of stereotypical gender role messages like developing traditional gender role beliefs, limited career aspirations and poor body image, children need to learn critical media literacy skills (access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate) (Flores-Koulish et al., 2011). However, critical media literacy education does not exist in the Preschool Education Curriculum in Türkiye and there are insufficient number of programs, projects, and studies on this topic (Temiz, 2019).

As a consequence of their developmental period, preschool children are susceptible to stereotypical gender role messages given in children's cartoons as

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they learn by imitating real and fantasy characters. Therefore, children's acquisition of abilities necessary to criticize and truly evaluate media messages is crucial in the media saturated environment they live in (Vodopivec, 2011). Otherwise, children will be open to harmful messages given in children's cartoons, including stereotypical gender-role stereotypes and their harmful effects.

The effects of gender-role stereotypes on children may also continue in later years and contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles in society. According to Ward and Aubrey (2017) the internalization of gender stereotypes influences individuals' life choices and psychological situations. For example, a study investigating the career expectations of 15-year-old students from the PISA countries in 2006 suggested that male students stayed away from the occupations related with nurturing and teaching, which are stereotypically labeled as female occupations, whereas female students stayed away from mathematics, engineering, computers, and physics stereotypically which are labeled as male occupations (Sikora & Pokropek, 2011). Another study argued that adolescent males and females who develop unrealistic and gendered body images are likely to have problems like poor body image, eating disorders and risky exercise behaviors (Rodgers, 2020).

Furthermore, addressing the stereotype threat theory may shed light on risks on this issue. According to the theory, when individuals encounter a negative stereotype that the group they belong to does not have sufficient capacity in a certain area, individuals may not be able to demonstrate their actual performance in that area (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Hartley and Sutton (2013) conducted a research consisting of three phases to reveal the impact of stereotype threat on the academic achievement of boys. In the first phase, the researchers claimed to understand what children believe about the academic achievement level of girls and boys and what is their notion about adult ideas regarding the academic achievement level of boys and girls. Two hundred and thirty eight children between the ages of 4 to 10 participated in the first phase. The results indicated

that as children's age increases, their level of adopting the stereotypical idea that girls are superior to boys in terms of academic achievement also increases. In addition, their belief regarding adults also sharing this view increased. In the second phase, researchers conducted an experiment with children aged 7-8 years old. They tested children by manipulating stereotype threat through telling the children that boys are less capable to perform in the test than girls. Exposure to this stereotype threat hindered boys' test performance, while it had no effect on girls' test performance. In the third and last phase the researchers conducted a different experiment by telling children that they anticipate similar results from girls and boys in the test. The experiment resulted with an increase in test performance of boys while test performance of the girls stayed the same (Hartley & Sutton, 2013). Furthermore, stereotype threat is an issue that might cause permanent impact. For example, a negative stereotype about the elderly is believing that they are passive, helpless, unattractive, and boring (Barber, 2017). Barber (2017) argued that children who adopt these ideas might become self-relevant in the future. The same pattern should be considered relevant for the gender stereotypes as it was mentioned above. Children who were restrained by the gender stereotypes might never try to have the occupation or do the sport attributed to the opposite sex in their lifetime. Hence, children's cartoons are a source of gender stereotypes, and they should be considered significant as they have detrimental effects like it was mentioned in the second phase of Hartley and Sutton's (2013) study.

An early childhood teacher plays an important role in helping children to acquire skills for them to critically analyze all the messages in media including stereotypical gender role messages (Erdem & Eristi, 2018). They can empower children against the negative effects of stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons by discussing such messages with children, planning activities, and using teachable moments (Strasburger et al., 2013, p. 570; Flores-Koulish et al., 2011). Considering all these, it is important to investigate early childhood teachers' views on the stereotypical gender role messages in

children's cartoons, and their effects on children's gender role perceptions, and the way they address this issue in the classroom.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to investigate early childhood teachers' views on stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons and their effects on children's gender role perceptions. Another purpose of the study was to investigate the way early childhood teachers address the effects of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in their classrooms. To achieve these goals, the present study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are early childhood teachers' views on the stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons?
2. What are early childhood teachers' views on the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions?
3. How do early childhood teachers address the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in the classroom environment?

1.3. Significance of the Study

In the early childhood period children develop in cognitive, social-emotional, motor, and linguistic areas. In addition, this period is considered the first step of character development. Early childhood is a critical period that shapes the future lives of children (Güven, & Azkeskin, 2018). Therefore, the support of adults and proper education is essential for developing a healthy world view in this period. The gender role beliefs of children also develop in this period. Based on the study findings, it can be said that children's cartoons include stereotypical gender role messages (Baker & Raney, 2007; Walsh & Leaper, 2020; Steyer, 2014) and affect children in various ways (Hust & Brown, 2008; Şahin & Alat, 2021; Blakemore et al., 2008; Davidson et al., 1979). Therefore, adults should

pay attention to children's exposure to gender-role stereotypes in children's cartoons.

In the related literature some studies had examined how adults address children's media use and media effects on children and the adult views on children's media use (Merdin, 2017; Ciboci et al., 2014; Nikken & Schols, 2015; Güngör, 2014; Samur et al., 2014; Darga et al., 2021; Neumann et al., 2020; Türkkent, 2012; Özdemir Adak & Ramazan, 2012; Erdiller, 2003; Çelebi, 2014; Şahin et al., 2018). These studies mostly focused on the general effects of the media on children. However, a limited number of studies were conducted to explore the views of early childhood teachers about the media impact on children's gender role perceptions (Malhoyt-Lee, 2018).

Early childhood teachers are the adults children spend the most time after their parents. Teachers support children's development in all areas by planning activities, reading books, discussions and play during the school days. Children are open to the messages given by the teachers during the daily routines, so early childhood teachers have the power to shape the way children view children's cartoons (Çelebi, 2014). By having discussions and making activities, early childhood teachers can empower children to understand the fictional realism created in the media and evaluate the messages truly (Chakroff & Nathanson, 2008, p. 568). Also, early childhood teachers can lead families to mediate their children's media use to make it a more positive and educative experience (Chakroff & Nathanson, 2008, p. 563). Therefore, by active mediation and proper media literacy education, early childhood teachers can prevent children adopting traditional gender role representations in children's cartoons.

According to Pajares (1992) teacher beliefs are one of the important study areas of educational inquiry. In spite of the studies suggesting that teacher views and classroom practices are weakly correlated (Wen et al., 2011), there are various studies that revealed that teacher views are important determinants of classroom practices (Erdiller, 2003; Dickie & Shuker, 2014; Pajares, 1992). When these

studies are examined together, the studies presented suggestions about teachers' professional development (Wen et al., 2011; Erdiller, 2003; Sharkins et al., 2015), and required changes in the education program (Monteiro et al., 2022; Dickie & Shuker, 2014; Hendriyani et al., 2014) by means of the teachers' views. Hence, many studies investigated teachers' views on media integration in education (Vidal Hall et al., 2020; Sharkins et al., 2015), media impact on children (Monteiro et al., 2022; Gjelaj et al., 2020; Dickie & Shuker, 2014) and challenges and opportunities in children's media use (Hendriyani et al., 2014). Considering the stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons, it is important to investigate early childhood teachers' views on this issue, because early childhood teachers have a critical role in preventing the detrimental impacts of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions. Therefore, the present study will contribute to the area of research with significant suggestions about required improvements in teacher education and changes both in the early childhood education program and the teacher education programs in Türkiye.

In addition to this, most of the studies in the literature were conducted by using quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods aim at revealing the truth by using quantitative data, investigate the causal relationships between variables and provide generalized conclusions based on the research results (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013, p. 13). On the other hand, qualitative studies aim at understanding human behavior in multiple ways and use people's ideas and experiences to achieve this (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 37). According to Strasburger et al. (2013, p. 553) more qualitative studies are needed on media education. Flores-Koulish et al. (2011) also stated that more studies should be conducted to investigate how early childhood teachers address issues stemming from media in the classroom. Furthermore, Ward and Grower (2020) suggested that although gender and media subjects have been discussed since the 1970s, there are still gaps in this study area. The results of the present study will draw a picture of early childhood teachers' views on the stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons, one of the most popular media among children

in the early childhood period. Also, the study results will reveal early childhood teacher views on the effects of stereotypical gender role messages on children's gender role perception and the ways early childhood teachers address this issue in the classroom environment.

Qualitative data obtained from the present study will provide a detailed perspective about early childhood teachers' views to be used by content creators, teachers, teacher trainers, researchers, policy makers and governments. The study is valuable for the content creators of children's cartoons as early childhood teachers are professionals of child development and education. It is thought that the way early childhood teachers evaluate both stereotyped content and its effects on children's gender role development will guide content creators for the children's cartoons they will create in the future. Kalaycı (2015) suggested that the creators of children's cartoons must adopt an egalitarian gender perspective in the messages they include in children's cartoons, as each unit in the community has the responsibility to provide gender equality in society. For teachers, this study is expected to provide new perspectives about the effects of stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons and the strategies used to address this issue in the classroom environment. In addition, early childhood teachers who do not have any background information about this issue can develop awareness. For teacher trainers, this study is expected to provide data about the needs of the early childhood teachers stemming from the needs of children. For researchers, the present study is expected to provide a background for further studies. It is believed that the findings of the present study will shed light on new research needs in the early childhood education literature. Lastly, this study will provide a pedagogical perspective to the policy makers and governments who are the responsible units in the community in terms of determining regulations about the contents targeting children.

1.4. Definition of Terms

Sex*: Biological factors that determine being a man or woman such as hormones and genes (Blakemore et al., 2008, p. 3).

Gender: Social category that defines being a male or female (Helgeson, 2015, p. 3).

Gender roles: Behaviors, interests or features the society expects from men and women (Helgeson, 2015, p. 4).

Gender role development: "How children are socialized to assume behaviors, values, and attitudes considered appropriate for their sex, relate to feelings, behavior, cognitive development, and information-processing" (Berns, 2013, p. 73).

Gender role stereotype: Beliefs or prejudices people have about the traits of males and females including psychological situation, behaviors, or physical appearance (Ding & Littleton, 2005, p. 147).

Children's cartoons: Animated cartoons, series and movies watched by children in the early childhood education period.

1.5. Limitations

In this section, limitations of the present study are explained. The first limitation is that the study included only 25 early childhood teachers from Niğde-a small city in Türkiye. For this reason, the results revealed in this study could not be considered for across the country.

The data from this study has been collected from 24 female and only one male teachers. Studies in the literature showed that there is a difference between male

and female early childhood teachers' self-confidence and parent interaction styles (Sak et al.,2015), job satisfaction (Şahin & Sak, 2016) and perceptions of child aggression and rough and tumble play (Bosacki et al., 2015). Future studies with an equal number of male and female teacher participants might pave the way for better understanding in female and male teachers' perspectives regarding media's influence in gender roles.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on the related literature about the effect of stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions. To create a basis for the study, literature review included three main areas: Theoretical Background of Gender, Theoretical Background of Media, and Research on Teacher Views and Practices Addressing the Media Effects on Gender Role Development. Theoretical Background of Gender includes the gender role development process of children and theories of gender role development. Theoretical Background of Media includes media effect theories, stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons, and the effects of gender role messages in children's cartoons.

2.1. Theoretical Background of Gender

2.1.1. Gender Development of Children

Gender development of children begins with identifying males and females around them. Later on, they classify themselves as a boy or girl (Blakemore et al., 2008, p. 14). Even if it is difficult to collect data about early development of gender from children at a very young age because of limited verbal ability (Poulin-Dubois et al., 2002; Martin & Ruble, 2010), there are various studies on this subject. According to related literature children develop primitive gender understanding at very early ages. For example, in a study aiming at understanding the categorization of gender and voice in two- and six-month infants, it was determined that six-month infants were able to discriminate between male and female voices (Miller, 1983). Another study conducted by Levy and Haaf (1994) revealed that 10-month infants were able to associate

gender typed objects (eg. a hammer, a scarf) with male and female faces. Researchers observed an increased attention in 10-month infants when an object previously paired with one sex was paired with other sex (Levy & Haaf, 1994). According to a study conducted by Zosuls et al. (2009), children acquire the ability to use gender labels around 19 months. In the study, researchers conducted a longitudinal method to examine whether there is a relationship between the ability of using gender labels and sex-typed play of 82 children who participated in the study. The researchers collected data from weekly observation reports of mothers and videotapes of playtime of children aged 17-21 months. The study showed that children are able to use gender labels at 17 months (25%), but the rate increases after 21 months (68%). Besides, this increase is also accurate for the sex-typed play of children. Researchers concluded that, the ability of gender labeling can predict children's sex-typed play (Zosuls et al., 2009). Another study was conducted with children in the following months by Poulin-Dubois et al., (2002). The researchers performed two experimental procedures with toddlers in 24 months (girls and boys) and 31 months (only boys). The experimental procedures included children's imitation of gender stereotypical, non-gender stereotypical and gender-neutral activities demonstrated by using a gender-neutral toy. The children imitated the activities by selecting and using a gender stereotyped (male or female) toy. Activities presented to the toddlers were activities that they could observe in their home environment from their parents. In the first experiment, researchers concluded that girls have gender stereotypical knowledge about daily activities by 24 months, but this result was not pertinent to boys. The researchers conducted a second experiment with boys of 31 months. The boys exhibited comprehension of gender stereotyped knowledge for activities only stereotypically associated with males. Although the researchers found that girls develop knowledge of gender stereotyped activities before boys, they suggested the results might be related to the method used in the experiment. Therefore, the researchers concluded that by the second year of their life, children develop knowledge about gender stereotypes in daily activities (Poulin-Dubois et al., 2002).

Gender development of children continues in the early childhood period (Blakemore et al., 2008, p. 14). Gender essentialism is one of the important terms about gender development of children in the early childhood period. In preschool years, young children develop an essentialist belief on the concept of gender. Essentialist gender belief can be defined as deducing some typical extrinsic characteristics of males and females with the essence of being a woman or man. For example, preschool children might believe that having long hair is an inherent trait for women instead of a choice (Gelman et al., 2004; Taylor, 1996). Another term about gender development of children in the early childhood period is gender constancy. Gender constancy is the idea that acquisition of gender is permanent, and people can't change their gender by changing their appearance (Shaffer, 2009, p.505; Warin, 2000). Warin (2000) conducted a study on development of gender constancy in young children. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data from 100 children between 54 and 77 months and qualitative data from 10 children. In the study, various scales and interview methods were used. Results showed that gender constancy continues to develop at 4 and 5 ages (Warin, 2000). Between the ages of 5 and 7, children gain the understanding that gender of a person does not change by wearing clothes associated with the opposite gender (Ruble et al., 2007; Shaffer, 2009, p.267).

Gender stereotypes are more sophisticated and important in the preschool years because children develop gender constancy in this period, which means they understand that the situation of being a girl or boy stays the same even if they grow up or change their appearance (Shaffer, 2009, p. 251). In a study aiming to reveal the gender role perceptions of preschool children, data were collected from eight preschool children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The study determined that preschool children's play, toys, clothing, and color choices overlap with the traditional gender roles. In addition to this, children attributed less prominent characteristics to females than males (Yağan Güder, 2014). In another study, similarly, Yağan Güder and Alabay (2016) collected data from 118 preschool children to reveal the relationship between gender role perceptions

and toy preferences. Study revealed that, children's toy choices overlap with the traditional gender roles, for instance, girls preferring dolls and boys preferring balls. Also, Liben et al., (2001) collected data from children aged 6-11 years to understand their beliefs about occupations. The study revealed that children believed that occupations traditionally attributed to males have higher status than occupations attributed to females.

2.1.2. Theories of Gender Role Development

Scientific theories aim at organizing main principles in the area of research and generating new research by not only providing a background for them but also being modified if there is an error in the theory as a result of the research (Blakemore et al., 2008, p. 15). To better understand the effect of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions, it is of vital importance to introduce some of the main theories in this field. These theories are Gender Schema Theory and Gender Role Socialization Theory.

2.1.2.1. Gender Schema Theory

Gender Schema Theory explains how children learn about gender. According to the theory, after children label gender around the age of two, they observe behaviors of men and women around them and learn about the roles of both genders (Berns, 2013, p. 476). Children create a gender schema to organize the social knowledge they gain by observing their environment (Shaffer, 2009, p.268). They create schemas about the roles of men and women in society. When children identify themselves as a male or female, they imitate the behaviors of the same sex models (Berns, 2013, p. 476). For example, a girl learns about cooking but rejects learning about how to fix broken things. This is because she observed that only males fix things. According to the study conducted by Oruç et al. (2011), children model not only the people around them, but also the cartoon characters. The researchers collected data from 66 children (aged 5-6 years), and their parents and teachers. As a result of the study children modeled same-sex

models. For example, boys modeled the Ben character from the cartoon named Ben 10, whereas girls modeled the Rosy character from the cartoon named Calliou (Oruç et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be said that children's cartoons are effective in children's development of gender schema.

Furthermore, the media not only affect the new gender schemas children constitute, but also activates the existing gender schemas in children. Calvert and Huston (1987) defined gender stereotypes as a kind of gender schema. For this reason, the media can activate existing gender stereotypes in children. Also, the gender stereotyped content consistently presented to children might affect their memory. For example, children might recall missing events in a gender stereotyped way or they might recall a gender egalitarian presentation in a gender stereotypical way (Calvert & Huston, 1987).

One of the aims of the present study is to learn about early childhood teachers' views about the impact of stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons on children's gender role development. The theory grounds the present study by elaborating how children constitute gender role schemas and how children's cartoons affect this process by presenting models to them. Besides, the theory proves the critical role of the early childhood teacher in children's process of developing gender schemas. The children's cartoons consistently present gender stereotypical content to the children (Zor & Bulut, 2020; Kalaycı, 2015; Zulfiqar, 2018; Walsh & Leaper, 2020). Early childhood teachers who are aware of the impact of the media on children's process of constituting gender schemas can make necessary attempts to help children in developing egalitarian gender schemas. Based on theory, it can be said that early childhood teachers can make a difference if they provide children with egalitarian gender roles and help them acquire skills that will enable them to correctly understand and criticize gender stereotypes in the media.

2.1.2.2. Gender Role Socialization Theory

Gender Role Socialization Theory is based on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Helgeson, 2015, p. 152). In Social Learning Theory, Bandura argued that children's learning occurs by observation and direct experience (Bandura, 1977, p. 16). Children learn the behaviors that are accepted as appropriate by society through observing various sources like teachers, family, peers, or media (Blakemore et al, 2008, p. 181). Children also learn by direct experience through seeing the results of their behaviors. If the result of the child's behavior is positive, the child continues to repeat the behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. 17).

In a similar manner, Gender Role Socialization Theory suggests that gender role perception of children is formed by the socialization agents in the child's environment such as family, community, and media. Children learn accepted gender roles in society by observing how males and females act. Also, they learn by directly experiencing the consequences of their gender appropriate behaviors. The social environment of the child provides both male and female models to imitate and rewards for the favorable gender appropriate actions. If we exemplify the situation, this is the way boys learn to express assertiveness and suppress emotions while girls learn to express emotions and suppress assertiveness (Helgeson, 2015, p. 152).

According to the Gender Role Socialization Theory, the media presents various gender role models to the children and affects the gender role socialization process (Helgeson, 2015, p. 161). Children who are frequently exposed to the traditional gender role messages in the media can internalize them and exhibit gender-biased attitudes and behaviors (Witt, 2000). For example, violence in children's cartoons is mostly displayed by male characters (Zulfiqar, 2018). Children who watch these cartoons may consider that violent behaviors are acceptable for males and internalize this belief. Such a belief can cause normalization of male violence and affect people's whole lives.

One of the purposes of present study is to investigate the way early childhood teachers address the effects of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in their classrooms. The Gender Role Socialization Theory suggests that children continue to repeat reinforced gender role behaviors (Helgeson, 2015, p. 152). Therefore, it can be said that The Gender Role Socialization Theory provides a basis for this aim because the way teachers respond to stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons and children's reproduction these gender stereotypes will be a determining factor in terms of whether the children will internalize the stereotypical gender roles in cartoons or not.

2.2. Theoretical Background of Media

2.2.1. Theories About Media Effect

The primary concern of media theories is the specific socialization effects of the media. They also address how the mechanisms of the media realize these effects. The theories discuss the reasons why media has the power of socializing children (Kirsh, 2010, p. 26). Therefore, theories about media effect provide a basis for the present study since the study sheds light on how media affects the gender role socialization process of children. In this section, the researcher elaborates on Gerbner's Cultivation Theory.

2.2.1.1. Gerbner's Cultivation Theory

Gerbner's Cultivation Theory is about television's long-term effects on people. The theory argues that heavy viewers (or people who watch TV more than 4 hours a day) perceive the world as it is represented on television (Gerbner et al., 2002). Their belief about the world is shaped by television. This theory explains the effects of television with excessive exposure to the messages in televised contents (Mosharafa, 2015).

Literature on media includes studies investigating the effects of excessive use of television on people. Villani (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to understand the effects of media on adolescents and children. In the meta-analysis, the researcher synthesized studies examining how media affects adolescents and children conducted between 1900 and 2000. Meta- analysis conducted by Villani (2001) showed that excessive television viewing is associated with having high risk behaviors and problematic human relationships. In terms of the effect of children's cartoons on children's gender role perception, studies suggested that excessive television viewing is associated with children having more stereotypical gender role beliefs (Ward & Grower, 2020; Frueh & McGhee, 1975). Furthermore, Oppliger (2007) conducted a meta-analysis reviewing 52 studies to examine whether there is a relationship between media use and gender role beliefs. The study results showed that excessive media use affects people's gender related beliefs, but the effects are more obvious in children. In another study Gündüz et al. (2020) examined the studies that investigated the effects of television on gender role stereotypes of children and adolescents. Researchers examined 23 studies conducted between 1960 and 2020. Results showed that increase in frequency of television viewing is associated with more stereotypical beliefs and attitudes.

An examination conducted by the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) revealed that 97.9% of Turkish children have a television in their house (RTÜK, 2013). Another study showed that 25% of children in the early childhood period were heavy television viewers (Rideout et al., 2003). Hence, the Cultivation Theory provides a basis for the present study in terms of how and why the children's cartoons shape children's perception of reality about gender roles.

2.2.2. Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

To elaborate on the stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons, related studies from Türkiye and abroad are presented in this section.

2.2.2.1. Studies in Türkiye

Yağan Güder et al., (2017) conducted a study analyzing the Niloya cartoon which was one of the most-watched cartoons by children in the early childhood period. Researchers examined 50 episodes of the cartoon using the content analysis method. The study results determined that traditional gender roles were reproduced in the cartoon Niloya in terms of clothing, chores, play, and toy preferences. It was revealed that cooking, nurturing, and cleaning were presented as the household chores completed by the female characters. However, outside chores such as driving, and gardening were presented as the chores completed by the male characters.

Zor and Bulut (2020) conducted a qualitative study analyzing three popular children's animated movies (Ice Age, Shrek, and Winx Club). According to the study results, there was a female objectification in the movies. Also, the female characters were represented as individuals in need of male protection, particularly in the movies Ice Age and Winx Club. It was also determined that the female characters in these animated movies needed male encouragement or magical power to be successful. In addition to this, there was a perfect body ideal for female characters. On the other hand, Shrek included more egalitarian gender roles like denying the submissive behaviors attributed to females and the perfect body image.

Kalaycı (2015) conducted a study analyzing 45 episodes of Pepee, a very popular cartoon in Türkiye, to determine whether gender role messages were included in the cartoon or not. The results of that study revealed that Pepee included stereotypical gender role messages in terms of clothing, activities, games, and hobbies. In Pepee, preparing dinner was displayed as a role for female individuals and driving was displayed as a role for male individuals. The study recommended that cartoons targeting children in the early childhood period should be carefully designed and should not include stereotypical gender role messages, because children in this period cannot analyze these messages and

they model behaviors displayed in the cartoons. It can be said that such messages in cartoons bring about the existing stereotypical gender roles in society.

Duman and Koçtürk (2021) analyzed 30 episodes of the cartoon Pırıl broadcasted in TRT Çocuk television channel in terms of the gender role portrayals. Features of the male and female character names, occupations, play and toy preferences, and daily activities of the father and mother characters were examined in the cartoon. Results of the study revealed that the cartoon Pırıl reinforces stereotypical gender roles in terms of the occupations of males and females, play and toy preferences, and daily activities of the mothers and fathers. Deniz (2021) examined four children's cartoons broadcasted on thematic channels in terms of representation of gender. The researcher used the content analysis method to analyze cartoons named as Kral Şakir, Canım Kardeşim, Biz İkimiz, and Neşeli Dünyam. The analysis focused on the mother, father, daughter, and son characters in the cartoons. Daily activities, behaviors, parent-child relationships and being in the public space were the main themes of the content analysis. Results of the study revealed that the mother characters in the four cartoons were mostly displayed doing daily activities like cooking, cleaning, and childcare. For example, the code regarding cooking showed that the rate of the mother characters doing the cooking was 89.3%, whereas the rate of the father characters doing the cooking was 10.7%. Also, in the cartoons the mother characters were associated with being emotional (71%) and represented in the public space less (18 times) compared with the father characters (37 times). On the other hand, the father characters were associated with business life (76.5%), used cars (91.7%), and were interested in science and technology (81,6%). Under the parent-child relationship theme, the study results revealed that the mother characters were serious and directive, but the father characters communicated with their children like a friend in the cartoons analyzed. Furthermore, the results regarding the daughter characters were similar to the results regarding the mother characters. This was similar for the son and father characters. For instance, the study found that while girls were associated with domestic work (84.2%), the rate of car use was higher for boys (63.6%). The researcher concluded that the

cartoons included in the analysis reinforced the gender stereotypes existing in the society.

In her dissertation, Şen (2020) examined the television cartoons preferred by children in the early childhood education period. Three hundred and forty-four children and 324 mothers in the city of Uşak participated in the study. The researcher used various forms to obtain data about favorite cartoons of children and their views on them, mothers' views about the cartoons and the general features of the cartoons targeting children in the early childhood period. Five popular cartoons came to the fore as a result of the data collection process, namely Keloğlan Masalları, Niloya, Rafadan Tayfa, Pepee, and Heidi. The researcher used the "Cartoons for Preschool Children Gender Evaluation Form" to evaluate the cartoons preferred by the participating children. Study results showed that there was a stereotypical representation of colors in the cartoons. In terms of clothing of the characters, pink was associated with females while blue and brown was associated with males. Another noteworthy result was the stereotypical representation of occupations. In the cartoon named as Rafadan Tayfa, female characters were not represented as having any careers, whereas male characters were portrayed as having seven different occupations. The situation was similar in the other three children's cartoons examined in the study. In addition, male characters were shown outside the house while the female characters were mostly represented inside the house doing household chores. The portrayal of personal characteristics was also stereotypical. In the cartoons, the personal characteristics associated with females were being anxious, emotional, compassionate, and helpful. On the other hand, male characters were portrayed as intellectual, curious, nervous, and leaders. Games and toys was one of the other themes formed in the analysis of the cartoons. In a similar vein, games and toys preferred by the characters in the five series were gender stereotypical. Female characters were portrayed playing with dolls and games that require less energy and power, whereas male characters were portrayed playing games and toys that require high motor power (Şen, 2020).

2.2.2.2. Studies in Abroad

In a study conducted to examine television shows targeting children aged 2-6 years in terms of gender representation, Walsh and Leaper (2020) analyzed 34 children's shows. The study results revealed that there were twice as many male characters as female characters in the examined television shows for preschool children. Also, the female characters had a higher talking rate than the male characters. In addition, although there was no statistically significant gender difference in the masculine stereotyped activities, there were gender differences in the female stereotyped activities. Although aggression was not very common in the TV shows analyzed, it was determined that the male characters outnumbered the female characters in the depiction of aggression. In terms of gender-specific appearance, there was a gender difference in the use of colors, accessories, and body types. On the other hand, there was no meaningful difference in supportive speech and suggestions (Walsh & Leaper, 2020).

Zaheen, Manzoor, and Safdar (2020) conducted a study to analyze gender role portrayals in 12 children's cartoons broadcasted in four different children's television channels. Results of the analysis showed that female characters were underrepresented in the cartoons in terms of screen time and being the main character. In addition, female characters gave more messages about housework, being attractive, and nurturing. Unlike other studies analyzing gender role portrayals in children's cartoons (Zor & Bulut, 2020; Şen, & Deniz, 2019), the researchers did not find a significant difference between the male and female characters in terms of being intelligent, competent, and independent (Zaheen et al.,2020).

Zulfiqar (2018) conducted a content analysis to reveal what kinds of violent behaviors are exhibited in the children's cartoons and the ratio of male and female characters displaying different categories of violent behaviors. The study analyzed 150 episodes of 30 children's cartoons broadcasted on Cartoon Network, Disney Channel and Nickelodeon in Pakistan. The researcher

examined words, sounds, frames, and gestures of the characters and coded them by taking into consideration the character's gender under three main categories. The categories were verbal aggression, physical violence, and destructive violence. Ratio of males was higher for all types of violent behaviors. Difference in the ratio of male and female characters was highest under the destructive violence category with 79.4% for the male characters. For verbal aggression, the ratios of male and female characters were close to each other, but the ratio of male characters was still high for this category with 53.5%.

Sahi (2022) examined gender bias in the Japanese manga series titled *Crayon Shin Chan* and *Doraemon*. In *Shin Chan,* both the male and female character portrayals were gender stereotypical. The father in the series worked in an office, and he was the breadwinner, head of the family, and the decision maker. On the other hand, the role of the mother was raising children and doing the household chores. In the series, the family sometimes spent time together and the father was portrayed as being tired after a busy workday. In addition, the father would get disturbed by children's noise. In contrast, the mother's work during the day was ignored. In the same vein, in *Doraemon,* Shizuka, one of the female characters, dreamt about being a proper and nice wife even if she was a brilliant student. According to the researcher, both of the manga series reinforced traditional gender roles and imposed girls to be submissive and nice and boys to be smart and strong.

On the other hand, there are studies in the literature revealing contradictory results about stereotypical gender representations in children's cartoons. Laskar (2021) analyzed gender representation in the cartoon *Masha and the Bear*. The researcher watched 47 episodes in total from the first and second seasons of the cartoon to form themes and codes. Then, the researcher examined four episodes to make a detailed narrative and textual analysis. Laskar (2021) concluded that the female character Masha was the dominant character in the cartoon and the verbal ability of the character was one of the reasons for this dominance. Also, the Bear was a male character who did not have stereotypical male

characteristics. For example, the Bear did activities stereotypically associated with females like cleaning the house and taking care of Masha. Even if the cartoon contained some stereotypical gender representations like associating fashion and beauty with females and intelligence with males, it mostly included counter hegemonic patterns while representing gender roles.

Dora the Explorer and *Doc McStuffins* are two other children's animated cartoons challenging gender stereotypes according to a study conducted by Keys (2016). Keys (2016) examined the cartoons *Dora the Explorer* and *Doc McStuffins* by using critical textual analysis to reveal whether they challenge the existing stereotypes about gender and race. The researcher selected these animated cartoons because both of them had a female protagonist, and these protagonists were from the racial minorities in the US. The researcher analyzed the seasons from 2013. The study concluded that both of these cartoons challenged gender and race stereotypes since the female protagonists had the characteristics traditionally attributed to the white male characters in children's cartoons such as being adventurous, clever, leader, and fearless. According to the study, both of the main characters were interested in science, math, and nature, which are mostly associated with males. Also, the characters challenged existing beauty standards like being white as snow and having a perfect appearance by having dark brown skin and natural hair (Keys, 2016).

In another study, Martin (2017) analyzed children's television entertainment and educational programs targeting children aged 3-6 years in terms of emotion stereotypes. Eight children's programs were examined in the study, four entertainment programs and four educational programs. Examining the facial expressions, verbal indicators, and behaviors in the programs, the researcher coded 10 episodes in terms of four emotions, namely fear, sadness, happiness, and anger. Although the results revealed that male protagonists outnumber females similar to the past studies, in the both program types there was a counter-stereotypic trend in terms of emotions of the characters.

2.3. Effects of Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

Various studies previously mentioned that gender role stereotypes in children's media affect children in terms of factors like beliefs about expression of emotions, occupations, hobbies, or physical appearance (Hust & Brown, 2008; Şahin & Alat, 2021; Blakemore et al., 2008). Signorielli (1990) examined various studies about the impact of television on gender role perception of children and adults. The researcher grouped the studies she examined under four themes. The themes were about the impact of television on occupational and behavioral gender role stereotypes, the impact of watching counter stereotype portrayals, children's identification of the television characters and the cultivation theory related studies. The main results of the study suggested that television viewing is associated with having a stereotypical gender role perception about physical appearance, behaviors, occupations, and personal characteristics not only for children but also for adults. In addition, children identify themselves with the same sex models on television instead of the characters from the opposite sex. Also, watching neutral gender portrayals is associated with having neutral gender role perception about topics like division of labor (Signorielli, 1990). This section of the present study provides a more in-depth look at the studies conducted to reveal the effects of stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons.

One of the preliminary studies in this area of research was conducted by Kimball (1986, as cited in Berns, 2013, p. 483). Kimball (1986) aimed to reveal the impact of television on children's gender role perception. The town Notel in Canada was a place where there was no television in those years. The researcher measured children's gender attitudes in Notel before television came there. After two years of television, the researcher observed a significant increase in the stereotypical gender attitudes of children. According to Signorielli (1990), the study conducted by Kimball is quite important for studies examining the impacts of television because studies conducted with naturalistic participants who had never encountered television are rare in the literature.

Golden and Jacoby (2018) conducted a study to investigate preschool girls' interpretation of Disney princess behaviors in pretend playtime and their ideas about the princesses. The researchers collected data from 31 preschool girls aged 3-5 years in New England. They collected data by observing children's pretend play, using parent questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews with the preschool girls. The study results revealed that preschool girls attributed high importance to princesses' clothing, accessories, and physical beauty. In addition, the following themes were formed after the pretend play observations: princess body movements, the position of hands, dancing style, and the exclusion of boys. Based on results of their study Golden and Jacoby (2018) recommended that teachers and parents should consider the amount and content they provide children as these restricted roles attributed to females and reinforced in children's pretend play can influence children's gender identity negatively. Another study was conducted by Slater and Tiggemann (2016) with an older group of girls. Researchers assessed the impact of sexualized television programs and magazines on girls aged 6-9 years. Three hundred girls participated in the study conducted in Australia. To determine how much they were exposed to the sexualized content, the researchers asked the girls to number television programs and magazines from 0 to 2. Then, the researchers showed participants a girl drawing with six different clothes with a gradually increased sexiness. They asked girls which clothes were similar to their clothing and which was the clothing they would like to have. They also asked them which outfit was the most desirable for boys. In addition, a similar procedure was conducted to assess girls' body esteem by presenting different body silhouettes. Questions were asked to the children to assess their body dissatisfaction level. In the last phase, an age-appropriate scale measuring body esteem was completed by the girls. Results showed that girls' selection of their actual clothing and their ideal clothing differed. The girls' selection of ideal clothing is sexier than their actual clothing selection. The result was associated with the internalization of the messages in the sexualized media. Another staggering result was that girls' selection of their ideal clothing that they would like to have was the same with the outfit they believe that it is the most desirable one for boys. Slater and

Tiggemann (2016) concluded that exposure to the sexualized media was correlated with a negative body image and endogenization of the sexualized messages.

Bond (2016) conducted a study to investigate the influence of television on girls' STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) perceptions. The researcher collected data from 20 girls aged 6-9 years. The study employed the posttest experimental design. Children were randomly assigned to one of the conditions as stereotype condition, counter stereotype condition, and control condition. The researcher's evaluation measures were girls' self-efficacy towards math and science, career aspirations, and scientist perceptions. The study showed that girls who watched the stereotypical content reported higher aspiration to the careers stereotypically attributed to females and were less likely to have an egalitarian scientist perception. However, girls who were exposed to counter-stereotypical conditions did not show a significant difference from the other groups. The study concluded that very short exposure to the stereotypical condition can uncover existing stereotypical gender schema, but a very short counter stereotype exposure is not effective in breaking STEM stereotypes.

In addition, Boyle (2018) conducted a study with 41 preschool children and their parents. Boyle (2018) aimed to investigate the impact of children's home family structure and parental attitudes on how susceptible they were to the gender role stereotypes portrayed in children's cartoons. The researcher learned about the parents' education level, the current primary caregiver of the child, and the financial provider in the family by using a demographic information form. The demographic information form also aimed to learn whether the family structure of the children was traditional or non-traditional. In another procedure, the researcher showed 18 drawings to the children, nine of which represented stereotypical gender role behaviors while nine of them represented non stereotypical examples. The researcher measured likeability by asking children whether they liked the drawing they were shown or not. Also, reality was measured by asking children whether the drawing represented a real-life

situation or not and about the reason for their answers. In addition, the researcher measured the gender attitudes and mediation styles of the parents who participated in the study. Results indicated that children who had a non-traditional family structure liked the drawings representing stereotypical gender behaviors more. Another result was that children who came from non-traditional families were more likely to evaluate non-stereotypical gender behavior drawings as real.

Another study in Romania aimed to investigate how cartoons affect preschool and schoolchildren. To understand different perspectives, researchers collected data not only from parents and early childhood teachers but also from children. Study results showed children's speech style, daily life routines and behaviors were affected by the cartoons, according to their teachers. For example, sometimes they prefer watching cartoons instead of doing another daily activity like going to school, and they use the words they heard in the cartoons even if they do not have any idea about the word's meaning. Children want to have products with their favorite characters on them. Concordantly, children's answers showed that they are affected by the cartoons they watch. For instance, they want to have the occupation their favorite character has in the future and imitate their favorite characters in their free plays (Schiau et al., 2013).

The study conducted by Çelebi (2014) aimed at investigating early childhood teachers' views on television viewing habits of children and the impact of television on children's daily life and behaviors. The researcher surveyed 23 early childhood teachers in Adana. Teachers claimed that children were unattended during the time they watched television at home. Also, the study showed that television had a great impact on children's daily life. These effects were mostly detrimental. Teachers believed that violence in television made children more tolerant towards violent behaviors in real life.

2.4. Research on Teacher Views and Practices to the Media Effects on Gender Role Development

When children start early childhood education the teacher comes into their life as an important adult after their parents. Various studies in the literature revealed that the early childhood teacher is an important figure in the development of gender role perceptions of children (Gosselin, 2007; Chen & Rao, 2011; Koch, 2003; Retelsdorf et al., 2015). The teachers can affect gender role perceptions of children not only by directly talking about the subject matter, but also by the tacit messages they give to the children. This also can be named as the hidden curriculum in which the messages children take from the daily routines, relationship patterns or division of works even if the teachers do not intend to teach (Koch, 2003). To reveal teacher contribution to the gender role socialization process of children, Chen and Rao (2011) observed daily routines, peer relationships, and teacher-child interactions once a week for 10 months in four kindergartens. Based on the study results the researchers argued that the early childhood teachers perpetuated traditional gender roles with the tacit messages included in their practices, daily routines, and relationships. For example, boys are privileged in daily routines like entering the classroom after the toilet routine and interaction with the teacher. According to Berns (2013), teachers' past experiences and the way of interpreting situations affect their teaching practices at this point. Therefore, it can be said that the gender perception of the teacher affects the way children perceive gender roles, because the teacher will reflect own gender role perception to the materials and activities she or he selects, the learning environment and classroom management (Yıldız, 2019).

From this point of view it can be considered that the early childhood teacher is going to affect how children perceive gender messages in children's cartoons. According to the Social Learning Theory, children learn from the consequences of their behaviors. If the behavior is rewarded, it is more likely to be reproduced (Bandura, 1977, p. 17). In their study investigating Disney princess impact on

children's pretend play, Golden and Jacoby (2018) observed that teachers gave different reactions to the children's imitations of media characters. For example, the reaction given by the teacher to a girl wearing a princess dress was about her beauty while the reaction given to a boy wearing a superhero costume was about his bravery. Based on the Social Learning Theory, it is believed that teacher's giving different rewarding reactions for boys and girls might cause more internalization of the stereotypical gender roles such as girls should be beautiful while boys should be brave. Therefore, how teachers react to the children's imitations of media representations is one of the factors determining whether children will internalize and reproduce them or not.

In addition to gender stereotype free reactions, active mediation to the children's media use inside and outside the classroom is a beneficial strategy to reduce the effects of stereotypical gender role messages in all children's media including television. Active mediation involves discussions about the media contents with children during and after media consumption on the real intention of the media content and conformity of the content with the real life. By active adult mediation, children will develop cognitive defenses to truly evaluate the media messages. The process of active mediation in the classroom might include processes like talking about how the media contents are created, what are their purposes and comparing them with reality (Kirsh, 2010, p. 244). For example, Nathanson et al. (2002) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of active mediation on impacts of gender stereotypes in a television show. Eighty three children from kindergarten to the 6th grade participated in the experimental study. In the experimental condition, the researcher provided messages contradicting the gender role stereotypical representations in the television show, for example, the show being wrong because girls actually do various things instead of only painting their nails. Children who were in the experimental condition made fewer positive evaluations about the characters that had stereotypical gender roles. Also, the positive impact of the active mediation was more obvious in younger children who participated in the experiment. Another study aiming at understanding the effect of active mediation to the aggression-

promoting impact of violent cartoons conducted by Nathanson and Cantor (2000). The researchers employed an experiment with 351 children from two to six graders. The researchers divided children into three conditions. The first and second groups exposed a violent cartoon for five minutes. One of the groups was told to think about how the victim in the cartoon might be feeling. The third group was the control group and children in this group were not exposed to violent cartoons. The researchers measured aggression tendencies of children pre and post exposure to the violent cartoon. Also, the researchers measured how children evaluate the violence in cartoons after exposition. Study results indicated that children who were told to think about how the victim in the cartoon might be feeling were less likely to have an increased aggressive tendency after exposition and less likely to have a positive evaluation about the perpetrator. As a result of their study, Nathanson and Cantor (2000) emphasized that adult mediation is a simple but influential way of helping children to truly evaluate or criticize the media messages. If the study is considered from the aspect of gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons, it can be said that the early childhood teachers have tools to create difference by practicing some mediation strategies.

In addition to active mediation, Siibak and Vinter (2014) suggested that talking with children about their favorite characters from popular culture can make a difference. They argued that by activities and discussions to be held in the preschool classrooms, children would be able to process the media messages rather than being vulnerable receivers. To increase the awareness of children about gender roles they suggested activities like rewriting the scripts of the children's favorite characters and videotaping children's acts. Then, discussing the videotapes created by children.

On the other hand, various studies concluded that early childhood teachers are not competent enough to help children in criticizing stereotypical gender messages (Gosselin, 2007; Malhoyt-Lee, 2018; Temiz, 2019; Yankovych et al., 2019). Malhoyt-Lee (2018) conducted a study with the mothers and teachers of

four year old girls. The researcher aimed at investigating participants' views on media impact on girls' identity development. The researcher also investigated how teachers and mothers engaged children in terms of analyzing media messages and how they responded to children's behaviors. The study revealed that the teachers and mothers observed effects of media on girls' behaviors such as changes in speech style, outfit preferences and sexualized dancing. However, they did not help children to criticize media messages. Similar results were revealed in an ethnographic study conducted by Gosselin (2007). Gosselin (2007) revealed that even if teachers have good teaching practices, they need improvement in criticizing existing gender ideas and developing alternative ways of communication with children to help them in developing an authentic gender identity. Temiz (2019) also investigated views of parents and teachers about the impact of television programs on children. The researcher revealed that the teachers do not make a special attempt to evaluate television's impact on children.

2.5. Summary of Literature Review

To sum up the literature review, the Gender Schema Theory constitutes the basis of this study by explaining how children develop gender role schemas and how children's cartoons are the sources of these schemas. The Gender Role Socialization Theory provides rationality for the study by bringing an explanation to the importance of teacher opinions and responses in children's gender role development stemming from learning by modeling through direct experience and learning from consequences of their behaviors. Cultivation Theory answers why and how children's cartoons shape the perception of gender role reality in children's minds. Finally, the literature about teacher views and practices on the effects of children's cartoons on gender role development are addressed in this section. It was seen that the related literature included very limited studies focusing on the early childhood teacher's roles and practices targeting the effects of media on children's gender role development.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This section includes a road map to reach the study aims. The design of the study, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedure, data analysis, and validity and reliability of the present study are explained in the section.

3.1. Design of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to investigate early childhood teachers' views on stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons and their effects on children's gender role perceptions. Another purpose of the study was to investigate the way early childhood teachers address the effects of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in their classrooms.

In other words, the study explores how early childhood teachers experience a very common phenomenon in the literature- the media impact on children's gender role development. In order to achieve this aim, the study employed phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is mainly preferred when the researcher aims at gaining a holistic understanding of certain activities, incidents, situations, or relationships (Fraenkel et al., 1993, p. 430). Meanwhile, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, aims at gaining an in-depth understanding regarding different experiences, perceptions, situations, activities, or events (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 69). According to Ersoy (2019, p. 95) in phenomenological educational research, the main aims are defining and understanding lived experiences in the educational process and improving the learning and teaching processes. For this purpose, each perception, thought, belief and experience shaped in the educational processes can be a concern of

phenomenological educational research (Ersoy, 2019, p. 95). The present study investigates the views and self-reported practices of early childhood teachers about the media impact on children's gender role development.

Also, this method focuses on a phenomenon that people know, but do not have a detailed and deep understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 69). Moustakas (2010, p. 52) suggested that phenomenological study explores the essence of the experience and asks questions like "What is it like to experience this phenomenon? Under what conditions does it occur? What are the possible meanings?". Phenomenological research design is considered to be the most appropriate research design for the present study, as it will reveal the essence of the aforementioned phenomenon that is the subject of many educational studies.

A phenomenological study aims to reveal some commonalities in the experiences and ideas between different people about the same phenomenon (Fraenkel et al., 1993, p. 437). Patton (2001, p. 104) suggested the best way to get such data from the participants is to conduct interviews with people who have direct experience with that phenomenon. Unlike observation, interviews provide data about previous experiences related to the phenomenon (Patton, 2001, p. 104). Therefore, the data of this present study was collected through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews include both specific questions and freedom of providing deeper information (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013). The researcher took advantage of this feature of semi-structured interviews during the data collection process.

3.2. Participants

In line with the study aim, the participants of this phenomenological study were determined by the criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. In the criterion sampling method, study participants are determined by certain predetermined criteria. These criteria might be determined by the researcher according to the nature of the study or they might be determined from

the literature (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 122). In the present study, the researcher determined two inclusion criteria based on the nature of the study. The first criterion was teachers having at least five-year experience in teaching young children since teachers needed to ground their answers to their classroom experiences. The second criterion was teachers actively working since teachers needed to know about current children's cartoons watched by children. Moustakas (2010, p. 89) suggested that selecting participants who have experience and knowledge about the phenomenon is essential to upgrade research. Therefore, teachers who had a certain amount of experience with young children and were actively working were selected so that they would provide richer data for the study.

Although there are various suggestions about the appropriate sample size for phenomenological studies, form 3 to 10 (Dukes, 1984) or from 5 to 25 (Polkinghorne, 1989, as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 121), some flexibility is more appropriate in sampling process of this type of research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 222). The researcher might increase the number of individuals who participate in study if needed or end data collection if data saturation is reached (Robinson, 2014). Data saturation means encountering repeated data in the data collection process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 422). In the present study, the researcher began data analysis concurrent with the interviews and took into consideration the repeated data in the selection of sample size. The researcher ended data collection when data collected reached adequate levels.

The target population of the study was determined as 25 early childhood teachers working in public preschools in Niğde, who had at least five years experience of teaching young children and were continuing to teach during the study's data collection process. Also, the participants were teachers serving children from low and middle SES families.

Table 1.

Demographic Data of the Study Participants

Participant	Gender	Graduation Program	Year of Experience	Age group (month)	Media literacy education	Gender education	School
P1	F	BD	6	48-60			1
P2	F	BD	8	48-60	In-service		1
P3	F	BD	13	48-60	Seminar	Seminar	1
P4	F	BD	9	60-72	In-service		1
P5	F	BD	13	36-48	Projects		2
P6	M	BD	13	Mixed	In-service		2
P7	F	BD	10	36-48	In-service		1
P8	F	BD	5	48-60	In-service		3
P9	F	BD	26	36-48	In-service		3
P10	F	BD	15	48-60	Seminar		3
P11	F	BD	8	36-48			3
P12	F	BD	14	60-72	In-service		3
P13	F	BD	11	60-72	Projects		4
P14	F	BD	18	36-48	Projects	In-service	4
P15	F	BD	12	48-60	In-service		5
P16	F	BD	12	48-60	In-service	In-service	5
P17	F	BD	13	48-60			6
P18	F	BD	21	48-60		Seminar	7
P19	F	BD	15	60-72	In-service		7
P20	F	BD	22	48-60			8
P21	F	BD	17	48-60	In-service		8
P22	F	BD	18	48-60			8
P23	F	BD	16	48-60	In-service		8
P24	F	BD	12	48-60			8
P25	F	BD	13	60-72			8

F: Female

M: Male

BD: Bachelor's degree

3.3. Instrumentation and Data Collection

The study data was collected by using a semi-structured interview protocol prepared by the researcher. Semi structured interviews include predetermined questions, but allow the researcher to learn more from the interviewee with the researcher probing. The researcher has the opportunity of seeing the world from an interviewee's perspective (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 69). After the researcher

constructed the first version of the interview questions, it was sent to two academics and two early childhood teachers. One of the academics was studying media and children and working at a public university. She has been in the field for 12 years. The other was studying gender in early childhood education and working at a private university. She has been in the field for 16 years. Besides, the early childhood teachers had at least ten years' experience in teaching young children. The teachers and academics provided expert opinion on the interview questions. In accordance with the expert opinions, certain changes were made in the interview questions. For example, some probe questions were added, and some questions were rewritten to make them clearer.

3.3.1. Pilot Study

A pilot study with seven teachers has been conducted. Revisions were made in the interview protocols based on the feedback provided by the participants of the pilot study. For example, it was observed that some teachers felt rather uncomfortable answering questions including the terms "gender roles" and "gender role perceptions". The central reasons for that were thought to be teachers' lack of familiarity with the terminology and/or hesitation for speaking on a rather controversial topic as a civil-servant. Therefore the aforementioned terms were changed to 'boy and girl roles' and 'children's perception of male and female roles' in subsequent interviews. These small revisions to terminology seemed to work as the teachers were observed to be able to express their opinions with less hesitation in later interviews.

3.3.2. Data Collection Procedures

The necessary ethical permissions were obtained from the university Research Center for Applied Ethics as well as the Provincial Directorate of National Education in Niğde to collect data from the public schools in Niğde. A total of eight schools agreed to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted on location, in relatively quiet places provided by school administrators (i.e.

offices, drama rooms and/or empty classrooms). Participating teachers were informed about the purpose of the study, procedures of voice recording and other ethical issues. A verbal confirmation for participation (as well as a written approval in an informed consent form) was obtained from each participant before each interview. The interview protocol contained 7 demographic questions and 11 open ended interview questions. The interviews began with some casual conversations about daily issues to make teachers feel comfortable. Then, the researcher asked some demographic questions to learn about the teachers' experiences and educational backgrounds. After the collection of demographic information, the researcher started the voice recordings. The second part of the interviews were recorded as the participants were answering questions, each of which corresponded to the research questions. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interview protocol is presented in the Appendix A.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research requires flexibility and creativity. In qualitative research, data analysis cannot be standardized because each qualitative study has different characteristics and standardizing data analysis might restrict the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018, p. 238). In the present study, the data analysis method for phenomenological studies suggested by Creswell (2007, p. 159) was utilized by the researcher in line with the nature of the study. First, the researcher transcribed all the voice recorded interview data before the analysis. After reading the transcripts several times to have a general understanding, the researcher listed the important statements. In other words, the researcher created codes. The coding process converts the information into data (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 182). Then, by grouping the listed statements, or codes, the researcher created categories. In the end, the researcher developed tables to express the findings clearly and understandably to the reader. All three steps were completed by two coders. The first coder was the researcher and the second coder was an early childhood teacher who was a master's student in the area of

early childhood education. After the process was completed, the coders compared their codes and categories. In the data analysis process, the researcher used Maxqda 2020, a practical tool to analyze qualitative data. The study results are presented in the *Findings* section.

Merriam (2009, p. 165) suggested that it would be better if the researcher conducted data collection and analysis simultaneously in a phenomenological study. Thus, the researcher began the data analysis after the first interviews were conducted.

3.5. Validity

According to Creswell (2007, p. 206), validity in qualitative research refers to the findings' accuracy. To provide this accuracy, external audits, rich and thick description, member checking, clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study, refining hypotheses as the inquiry advances, peer review, triangulation, prolonged engagement, and persistent observation in the field are strategies suggested by Creswell (2007, p. 208). In the present study, the researcher conducted a pilot study and took expert opinions to ensure validity.

3.6. Reliability

In qualitative research, reliability refers to the data's consistency (Merriam, 2009, p. 220). The reliability of the present study was ensured using the inter-coder reliability strategy. This strategy involves two coders conducting data analysis separately, discussing codes and themes, and having an agreement about the codes and categories at the end. According to Miles and Huberman's formula of "Reliability= Number of agreements/ (total number of agreements + disagreements)", the expected agreement should be around 70% in general when the level of agreement is met (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64).

In the present study, the first coder was the researcher, and the second coder was an early childhood teacher and master's student in the area of early childhood education. The inter-coder reliability was found .87.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings from the interviews with the early childhood teachers are presented. The findings presented in relation to each of the research questions. The researcher gave codes and categories in the tables under each theme. Also, the researcher exemplified and explained each code under the headings of the categories. In addition, the researcher shared direct quotations from the participants.

Prior to the findings, the demographic information of the participants is explained in this chapter. Detailed explanation about characteristics of the participants is considered important to create a clear understanding of the findings because data of the study is qualitative.

4.1. Demographic Information of the Participants

At the beginning of the interviews the researcher asked a number of questions to the participants to obtain demographic information. The participants were 25 early childhood teachers in 8 public schools in low and middle SES neighborhoods. 24 female and 1 male early childhood teacher participated in the study. The researcher asked what age groups the participant early childhood teachers are currently teaching. There were 14 teachers who currently teach children in 48-60 months, 5 teachers who currently teach 60-72 months, 5 teachers who currently teach 38-48 months and 1 teacher who has a mixed age group in his classroom. The year of experience participant teachers have in teaching young children was also asked. Because one of the participation criteria was having at least 5 years of experience in teaching young children, the least experience year teachers have was 5 years of experience. There were 5 teachers

who have 5 to 9 years of experience, 17 teachers who have 10 to 19 years of experience and 3 teachers who have experience over 20 years. All of the teachers had a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

In addition to these, the researcher asked whether the teachers received any education on media literacy and gender subjects. Seventeen of the teachers received an education on media literacy. The types of media literacy education teachers received were in service training (n=12), seminar (n=2) and project-based meetings (n=3). On the other hand, only 4 of the teachers received an education on gender. The types of gender education teachers received were in service training (n=2) and seminar (n=2).

In the presentation of findings, the researcher used participant numbers instead of actual names of the teachers with ethical considerations. The researcher used titles from P1 to P25 to anonymously ascribe the participants.

4.2. Research Question 1: What are early childhood teachers' views regarding the stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons?

First, the researcher asked questions to the participating early childhood teachers to learn about the popular children's cartoons and characters in their classroom. Identifying popular cartoons at the beginning of the interviews was important as it would lay the groundwork for the next questions.

Then, in line with the research question, the researcher asked questions to the early childhood teachers to learn about their ideas on the characteristics of the male and female cartoon characters. As a result of the teachers' responses, codes were revealed, and categories were formed based on these codes.

The researcher also aimed to learn about participants' general ideas about the stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons. Instead of asking their view directly, the researcher said, "Let's say you took part in a project. You need to

modify the roles of male and female characters in the cartoons popular among the children in your classroom to include egalitarian gender role messages. What changes would you make?". The researcher coded the answers based on the main idea behind the changes the teacher wanted to make. For instance, if the teacher wanted to change the division of house works between male and female characters, the researcher coded the response as "gender stereotypical distribution of chores".

The findings regarding the issues are given in tables below.

Table 2.

Popular Cartoons

Cartoons	Frequency
Rafadan Tayfa	11
Frozen	11
Spiderman	7
Kral Şakir	5
PJ Masks	5
Batman	4
Niloya	3
Elif'in Düşleri	3
Masha and The Teddy Bear	3
Pepee	2
SpongeBob	2
Doru	2
The Smurfs	2
Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs	2
My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic	2
Heidi	2
Akıllı Tavşan Momo	1
The Incredible Hulk	1
Keloğlan Masalları	1

Table 2. (continued)

Puss in Boots	1
Rapunzel	1
Superman	1
Star Wars	1
Şeker Hoca	1
Tozkoparan İskender	1
Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug and Cat Noir	1
Thumbelina	1
Cars	1
Super Wings	1
Sonic the Hedgehog	1
Winx Club	1
Aslan	1
Kukuli	1
İbi	1
Transformers	1

As seen in Table 2, the most popular animated series among the preschool children were Rafadan Tayfa (n=11), Frozen (n=11), Spiderman (n=7), Kral Şakir (n=5), and PJ Masks (n=5) according to the participants. These were followed by Batman (n=4), Niloya (n=3), Elif'in Düşleri (n=3), and Masha and The Teddy Bear (n=3).

Table 3.

Popular Characters

Cartoon	Character	Frequency
Frozen	Elsa	12
Spiderman	Spiderman	11
Rafadan Tayfa	Hayri	6
Batman	Batman	5

Table 3. (continued)

PJ Masks	PJ Masks	4
Superman	Superman	4
Niloya	Niloya	4
Kral Şakir	Kral Şakir	2
Niloya	Tospik	2
Aslan	Aslan	2
Frozen	Anna	2
Kral Şakir	Canan	2
Cars	Lightning McQueen	2
Tom&Jerry	Tom	1
Rafadan Tayfa	Nuri	1
Rafadan Tayfa	Kamil	1
Kral Şakir	Remzi	1
Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug and Cat Noir	Ladybug and Cat Noir	1
Niloya	Mete	1
Rapunzel	Rapunzel	1
Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs	Snow White	1
Niloya	Murat	1
Keloğlan Masalları	Keloğlan	1
Heidi	Heidi	1
Elif'in Düşleri	Elif	1
Rafadan Tayfa	Rüstem Abi	1
Kral Şakir	Necati	1
Frozen	Olaf	1
Masha and The Teddy Bear	Masha	1
Aslan: Hürkuş Kayıp Elmas	Hürkuş	1

As seen in Table 3, Elsa (n=12), Spiderman (n=11), Hayri (n=6), and Batman (n=5) are the most popular cartoon characters according to the early childhood teachers. PJ Masks (n=4), Superman (n=4), and Niloya (n=4) are also stated to be popular animated characters among preschool children.

4.2.1. Views on Characteristics of Female Cartoon Characters

Table 4.

Views on Characteristics of Female Cartoon Characters

Categories	Codes
Physical Characteristics	● Standardized beauty (n=10) ● Standardized colors (n=2)
Personal Characteristics	● Passive (n=7) ● Naive (n=7) ● Affectionate (n=2) ● Calm (n=2) ● Smart (n=1) ● Self-sufficient (n=1)
Roles	● Domestic (n=10) ● Princess (n=8) ● Not expected to succeed (n=2) ● Occupational roles (n=2) ● Driving car (n=1) ● Protagonist (n=1) ● Leader (n=1)

4.2.1.1. Physical Characteristics

As shown in Table 4, participants expressed their views on the appearance of the female characters in the cartoons children in their classroom prefer to watch. There are two codes regarding the beauty and color standards presented to the children in the cartoons under the *Physical Appearance* category.

4.2.1.1.1. Standardized Beauty

According to Table 2, the princess characters like Elsa and child characters like Niloya and Elif are popular among children. The participants (n=10) stated that

there is a standardized beauty presented to the children in the cartoons such as being thin, having long blond hair, having blue or green eyes, and having fancy clothes and accessories. P23 shared her view on the subject as follows:

> The women always have blonde and long hair, they're beautiful, and have blue or green eyes, look at Elsa. Unicorn is a horse anyway. It's because it's a different kind of animal. Look at Anna, she's her friend. They are all very beautiful. The long-haired Barbie. I mean, they're always beautiful long-haired characters.

P13 expressed her idea by stating the following:

> Generally, they're like thin princesses. I mean, we don't have a different character.

Response given by P11 not only supported the views of other participants, but also mentioned that beauty standards in cartoons are unrealistic:

> They're all thin, they're beautiful, their hair is well-done and they're never unkempt. They're not real because mothers actually work. And, mothers get tired when they work, but it's not like that in the series. I mean, children always do the right thing, they don't make mistakes, and the mothers never get tired. They're always well-kept, always beautiful, they never even raise their voices to their children. So, the children may also expect this behavior from their own mothers.

4.2.1.1.2. Standardized Colors

Participants (n=2) mentioned the colors being different for the male and female characters in the cartoons. According to P4, pink and red colors are associated with the female characters in the cartoons. On this issue, P4 said the following:

> For example, while Aslan is dressed in blue, I mean his male friend is green or orange. So, the girls are pink or red. Actually, the colors are differentiated in the series … For example, in terms of colors, Niloya's color is pink and the color of her friend, Mete, is blue. So, the colors are differentiated.

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4.2.1.2. Personal Characteristics

Many of the early childhood teachers participating in the study (n=19) mentioned that female cartoon characters have traditional personality characteristics associated with women. According to the teachers, female cartoon characters take a back role compared to the male cartoon characters. Also, they suggested that female characters are portrayed as being naive, affectionate, and calm which are personality traits traditionally attributed to women. Some of the teachers criticized the traditional female personality traits in the cartoons due to being unrealistic. On the other hand, there are also codes which are not traditionally associated with women such as being smart (n=1) and self-sufficient (n=1).

4.2.1.2.1. Passive

According to the early childhood teachers, female characters take a back role compared to the male characters. Teachers criticized the female cartoon characters for being in the cartoons with passive roles supporting the main male characters and caring for the children at home. P5 expressed her idea on the matter as:

> … Girls are side characters or they're behind them, and you know, just supporting them. But they aren't put on the forefront.

In the same way, P11 stated the following:

> Women appear more in the background. For example, previously, the character in Pepee written by Şule Bilgiç for TRT Çocuk, the mother, was always at home. The mothers are always housewives. We haven't seen a working mother.

In addition, P19 criticized the passive roles attributed to the older female characters in the cartoons. According to P19, that kind of portrayal is not realistic for the age we live in. She expressed her opinion as follows:

Grandmothers always wear headscarves and just sit in a corner and knit, they just tell stories. You know, right now, the grandparents of the children, the children in our age group, are young people and there are still workers among them. I mean, there are those who have a job but didn't retire. They should show them, too … But no, the grandmothers just sit in a corner in the same house. They move slowly. They give advice to children. I think it's unrealistic, I mean, it's not like that nowadays. Today's reality is different. The same is true for clothing as well.

4.2.1.2.2. Naive

The early childhood teachers who participated in the study expressed that female characters in the popular cartoons among their students are portrayed as fragile, delicate, and waiting to be rescued by a man. P1 stated her idea regarding the issue using the following words:

The female characters they take as an example are just like I said are princesses, they're like delicate, fragile, always in like a princess.

Besides P10 expressed her idea on the issue as:

Women are like in the background, they're fragile, they're waiting to be saved. We said they are princesses, so they wait to be saved. They make no effort to be saved, a hero comes, and that hero is a man. The man comes, saves the woman, saves the princess.

4.2.1.2.3. Affectionate

According to the teachers (n=2) female characters in the cartoons show affectionateness. P2 exemplified the situation as follows:

For example I can give an example from Peter in Heidi. They're best friends and Peter always protects Heidi. Heidi is caring and helpful, so Peter is always her hero.

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4.2.1.2.4. Calm

According to early childhood teachers attending the study (n=2), the female characters in the cartoons popular in their classrooms have a calm personality. About this P2 suggested:

> … Girls are represented as more naive, with calmer personality traits.

On this issue, P11 stated that women being always calm is not true in real life and that kind of representation might cause unrealistic expectations among children:

> … the mothers never get tired. They are always well-kept, always beautiful, they never raise their voices to their children. Children may also expect this behavior from their mothers, for example, saying her mother was never angry.

4.2.1.2.5. Smart and Self Sufficient

Despite the traditional personality traits attributed to women mentioned above, there are codes about being smart and self-sufficient. Both of the codes came from the statements given by P5. The teacher talked about the children's cartoon named İbi which includes a female protagonist. The teacher expressed her ideas about the character as:

> There's research, there's conclusion, and as a girl, she doesn't have a parent with her. Next to her is that turtle, they're together, I like it. That's why I love Ibi so much. So, I think she is a character that girls should emulate.

4.2.1.3. Roles

Teachers also talked about the roles of the female characters in the cartoons. Most codes were formed around the roles of being domestic and a princess, which are traditional gender roles attributed to women. However, the teachers

also mentioned egalitarian roles like portrayal of women having occupational roles and being a leader.

4.2.1.3.1. Domestic

Many of the participants (n=10) focused on the domestic representation of the female characters in the cartoons. The teachers shared their observations about the female characters in children's cartoons like Kral Şakir, Rafadan Tayfa, Elifin Düşleri, Pepee, Niloya and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, which are the popular series among children in their classroom as shown in Table 2. According to the teachers, female characters in the cartoons were mostly represented in roles like cooking and childcare. One of the teachers (P12) suggested that there is an imposition of the idea that women should stay home in the series even if this is not true in real life:

> Niloya's mother was always at home. I remember she mostly cooked. So was Elif's mother. I think that most series impose that mother characters have to be at home. In most series, I see that mothers aren't working. Actually, I think working mothers should be shown as well. I think they are imposing this, like a mother should stay at home. Fathers go to work. This is generally the case.

P8 criticized the Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs cartoon in terms of the attitude towards women and drew attention to the danger behind watching such content for children:

> For example, in Snow White, the girl is walking away from something, but when she enters a male environment, the first thing she sees is ah, how messy is this place, let me clean up and cook for them. Afterwards, what do the dwarves say when they come home, how wonderful, the house has been cleaned, the food has been made, Snow White should always stay with us, our food will be ready. This is the perspective. I mean, children can internalize this very well, by watching them.

According to P4, the female characters in Rafadan Tayfa are represented as specialists of cooking:

For example, look, there was something like this there. They were making tomato paste the other day, and women were trying to make it. Women bought it from home. Girls know more about this. The men are a little in the background.

In a similar vein, P7 stated:

But other than that, I sometimes observe this, well, that girl in Kral Şakir. There is an aunt or something, and they are just like that, housework.

4.2.1.3.2. Princess

Some of the teachers in the study (n=8) mentioned that there are various princess characters in the cartoons popular among the children in their classroom. According to the teachers, princesses are unrealistically beautiful, need magical power to succeed, are fragile and have fancy clothes. They mostly focused on the Elsa character in the cartoon named Frozen. P5 expressed her view on the matter using the following words:

I don't know exactly if it was Elsa or Anna. There is something there, like a power that comes from being a queen or being a princess.

4.2.1.3.3. Not expected to succeed

Two of the teachers mentioned that female characters in the cartoons are not expected to succeed. P4 shared her observation about the subject by giving an example from the Rafadan Tayfa cartoon:

They thought that the men would win in the hoop game because they had practiced before, but Hale won the game. Hayri's sister won and they said wow or something, how did you come up with this maneuver. For example, they expected men to win more.

4.2.1.3.4. Occupational roles

One of the participants mentioned two different occupations the female characters had. One of them was the mother character in Elifin Düşleri. She expressed that in the second season of the cartoon the mother character started to work, but she did not mention what was the job the female character started doing. The other was the female dentist character Niloya went to with her mother.

4.2.1.3.5. Driving car

One of the teachers talked about the mother character who drives the father character to his destination in the cartoon named Aslan.

4.2.1.3.6. Protagonist

One of the teachers participating in the study mentioned the cartoon İbi. İbi is the female protagonist of the cartoon. The teacher evaluated the cartoon as a good example of egalitarian role distribution in the cartoons.

> I love Ibi so much, why? As I said, for example, there are always girls in the group in Rafadan Tayfa, and yes, they give ideas, their opinions are valued and so on, but in Ibi, the series is based entirely on a girl character.

4.2.1.3.7. Leader

One of the participants suggested that the female characters in the cartoon Keloğlan represented as leaders. P24 expressed her ideas as follows:

> I mean, the leadership characteristic, there was such a thing in these series, for example, in Keloğlan or something. There, the girl characters having like the leadership quality there.

4.2.2. Views on Characteristics of the Male Cartoon Characters

Table 5.

Views on Characteristics of the Male Cartoon Characters

Categories	Codes
Physical Characteristics	● Powerful (n=10) ● Muscular (n=3) ● Standardized colors (n=1)
Personal Characteristics	● Dominance (n=7) ● Leader (n=3) ● Smart (n=1) ● Self-confident (n=1)
Roles	● Being a hero (n=8) ● Winner (n=8) ● Violent act (n=8) ● Breadwinner (n=6) ● Physically Active (n=5) ● Protagonist (n=4) ● Outside home presentation (n=6) ● Playing ball (n=3) ● Driving car (n=2) ● Technology and science (n=2)

4.2.2.1. Physical Characteristics

Early childhood teachers who participated in the study expressed their opinion about the physical characteristics of male cartoon characters. Many of them (n=10) stated that male cartoon characters are powerful. Also, they mentioned that the male characters have muscular bodies and use traditional colors associated with men.

4.2.2.1.1. Powerful

Many of the early childhood teachers argued male characters in the popular cartoons are powerful as they can do anything they want to succeed. They are able to commit violence by using their power. The teachers mainly focused on the characters like Batman, Supermen, Spiderman, and Hulk. The teachers stated

that boys in their classrooms are more likely to like these characters. P13 reflected her opinion using the following words:

> With big hands and big arms. With a big mouth. They like the dominant characters that are more frightening, how can I say, stronger, dominant characters and the ones who give more damage to the other one. Boys like it if the character has a strong tendency towards violence.

In addition, according to P11 the powerful male stereotype in the society is perpetuated by presenting powerful male characters to the children in the cartoons they watch.

> Men are always at the prominent roles, as in our own society. They are always strong and, for example, in Spiderman, men seem to be able to cope with every injustice.

P22 expressed similar ideas on the subject:

> If we talk in terms of assessing Batman and Spiderman, I think there is of course, a message that male characters must be stronger.

4.2.2.1.2. Muscular

Three of the teachers suggested that the male characters in the cartoons have a muscular and big body.

4.2.2.1.3. Standardized colors

One of the early childhood teachers expressed that the colors used for the male characters are reflective of the traditional colors associated with men like blue. P4 said the following:

> Yes, he is wearing pants, but actually, for example, Aslan wears blue while his male friend wears green or orange … Mete's blue… Colors are actually distinct.

4.2.2.2. Personal Characteristics

The early childhood teachers talked about the personal characteristics like being dominant, leader, smart and self- confident. A notable fact is that all of the personal characteristics the participants mentioned are the attributes traditionally associated with men.

4.2.2.2.1. Dominance

Many of the teachers (n=7) stated that the male characters are more dominant in the cartoon in terms of the power and value given to the male characters. Two of the teachers mentioned the children's cartoons Vikings and Rafadan Tayfa. P5 shared her ideas about Vikings and focused on the father character Halvar and the main character Viki who is the son of Halvar. According to the teacher, these are the dominant characters in the cartoon in terms of being the leader of the village and the main characters. In addition, the teacher shared her observation about the female characters who are overshadowed by the male main characters such as the mother Ylva and the girl Ylvi. According to the teacher, the cartoon imposes gender discrimination. She expressed her ideas with the following words:

> For example, there was Al, I think it was the father's name. The mother character was not a very dominant character… The father is directing the team. There is a child. For example, there is another girl with him, she is also smart, they share ideas, but for some reason that girl is always in the background, for example, the boy is always in the foreground. I can't remember the name of the little one, can it be Viki? I think that he is imposing sexism there.

About the Rafadan Tayfa cartoon, P6 said:

> In general, we already mentioned Kamil and Nuri there. Again, there are characteristics that men love and dominate there. What are they? They're characteristics that contain strength again.

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4.2.2.2.2. Leader

According to the teachers (n=3) male characters in the cartoons are portrayed as leaders. P20 stated her opinion on the subject:

They are usually muscular, strong, invincible, they can dominate anyone.
P7 stated that:

> …especially the male character is more like a hero, who closes everything and makes decisions.

4.2.2.2.3. Smart

One of the participants shared her views on the smart male character Viki in the cartoon Vikings. She mentioned the gesture he does by touching his nose and finding solutions for the problems faced in the episodes.

4.2.2.2.4. Self-confident

One of the teachers reflected her ideas on the cartoon character Aslan who is the main character of the cartoon with the same name. She mentioned the character's self-confident statements about his belief that he will succeed.

4.2.2.3. Roles

The teachers mentioned their ideas on the roles male characters take in the popular cartoons in their classroom. The main codes are about heroic behaviors, being the winner, violent acts, being breadwinner and being active. Also, there are codes titled protagonist, outside home presentation, occupational roles, playing ball, driving car and technology and science.

4.2.2.3.1. Being a hero

Many of the early childhood teachers (n=9) mentioned the heroic roles of the male characters. According to the teachers, male characters in the cartoons help people in trouble by using their superpowers and fighting with evil. The teachers mostly mentioned Spiderman and Batman. P18 suggested that such kinds of roles attributed to the male characters in the cartoons cause normalization of male violence in the society. The teacher stated her opinion regarding the subject with the following:

> A savior but also violent. In this sense, society actually accepts male violence.

P22 expressed her opinion by these words:

> Strong, with extraordinary powers, like Spiderman, he's like that. As the savior who runs and saves the people in distress. Batman is the same, both of them are heroes in the eyes of children.

4.2.2.3.2. Winner

The teachers talked about the role of always being the winner given to the male characters in the series. According to the teachers (n=9), the male characters in the cartoons win all of the races and defeat the evil characters in war by using their power. P11 linked the winner role given to the male characters in the cartoons with an existent stereotype in the society. She stated:

> Men are always at the forefront, as in our own society. They are always strong, and for example, in Spiderman, men seem to be able to cope with any injustice.

Similarly P2 mentioned:

> Men always have character traits such as intervening at an event, rescuing someone, being a hero or winning the race, being a champion.

4.2.2.3.3. Violent act

Many teachers drew attention to the violence perpetrated by male characters in cartoons. According to the teachers (n=8) the male characters in the cartoons fight, attack, damage and be cruel many times. P7 reflected her view as follows:

> As they see them as heroes, especially Spiderman, Batman, who are male, are actually a bit, sometimes ruthless, protective, generally percussive, warrior. I observe them like this.

4.2.2.3.4. Breadwinner

According to the teachers male characters in the cartoons are portrayed as breadwinners. P8 expressed her opinion with these words:

> Well, there isn't one man who is cooking, the man always works outside or goes out to buy something, but the woman is always at home, as I said.

P11 shared her ideas by giving an example:

> For example, in the character in Pepee written by Şule Bilgiç in TRT Çocuk, the mother was always at home. The mothers are always housewives, we have never seen a working mother. The father is the bread maker, you know, it's the same here. Men are always in a position of power.

4.2.2.3.5. Outside home presentation

Some of the teachers (n=6) mentioned that the male characters in the cartoons are represented outside the home. According to the teachers, male characters are not included in any of the domestic works, but they take on the roles that require them to be outside the home. Also, they are represented as having diverse occupations such as veterinarian, dentist, farmer, and watchmen. P21 exemplified the situation with the following:

> In Elif'in Düşleri (Elif's Dreams). Here was Elif going to the dentist with her mother. In the series, the dentist, by the way, the dentist character is a man. Yes,

there is a mother as a character, there is a grandmother there. For example, on Yumurta's birthday, there was a guard there. The guard there was also male, then the Yumurta character was also male, after that there was the uncle. Another uncle that comes to my mind. The farmer talks about how he grows wheat.

Another teacher P9 shared an example from the Stone Age cartoon she watched in her childhood:

Generally, men are more out. For example, there was once the Stone Age when I was a child. Our time is also the stone age. Mothers usually take care of their children, live inside the house, but fathers mostly go out, driving.

4.2.2.3.6. Physically Active

The early childhood teachers stated that male characters in the cartoons are physically active and able to jump, run and fly. P25 expressed her observation on this issue:

Spiderman is jumping, hopping, he's energetic, not stopping. Kids generally love Spiderman.

4.2.2.3.7. Protagonist

According to the teachers (n=4) male characters are portrayed as the protagonist more than the female characters. P5 commented on the subject with these words:

In general, it's always like this, goes through men, you know, we impose it from the bottom, actually, men always do it.

4.2.2.3.8. Playing ball

Participants (n=3) mentioned male characters in the cartoons playing ball. On this subject, two of the teachers mentioned the Rafadan Tayfa cartoon. P12 shared her observation from the cartoon as follows:

Men are usually like as I said, it's like they have to be outside, there's playing ball, for example, in Rafadan Tayfa, men always play ball. I've never seen guys play girls' games. I think it imposes this on boys as well. There is a clear distinction. The boys are playing their own games. For example, a ball, car, etc. Girls are playing with baby dolls more. They don't go into girls' territory.

P4 expressed her similar views on the subject with the following words:

For example, there are Sevim and Hale, there. The boys are playing basketball or football on a field, they usually don't play with them, girls don't join.

4.2.2.3.9. Driving car

Two of the early childhood teachers said that male characters in the cartoons are driving car and this is a prominent role for male characters.

4.2.2.3.10. Technology and science

According to the teachers (n=2), male characters in cartoons are given roles related to science and technology more than the female characters. On this subject, P19 said:

Yes, in Rafadan Tayfa, girls only help their mothers. Extra, I don't see a game that they play a lot. They appear as side characters. That four children does it all. So one of them, for example, uses the computer very well.

4.2.3. Views on Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

Table 6.

Views on Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

Categories	Codes
Gender Inequality	● Gender stereotypical distribution of chores (n=11) ● Women are represented as not being able (n=11) ● Lack of female characters having careers (n=8)
Imposition of the Gender Stereotypes	● Imposition of violence to boys (n=4) ● Standardized beauty (n=2)

4.2.3.1. Gender Inequality

Many of the early childhood teachers suggested that there is a gender inequality in children's cartoons. The teachers focused on the aspects like the inequality in distribution of duties between male and female characters (n=11). They also mentioned that women are represented as not being able (n=11) and they do not have careers in these cartoons (n=8).

4.2.3.1.1. Gender stereotypical distribution of chores

Many of the teachers (n=11) stated that the household chores are not equally distributed between the male and female characters in children's cartoons. The participants addressed the problem from different points of views. P21 focused on the fact that the distribution of tasks between male and female characters in cartoons is not egalitarian and does not reflect the current state of society in terms of the subject. She mentioned that the children's cartoons perpetuate the existent gender stereotype of a domestic female and working male. However, with the changes in the society children have different family structures and absence of these families in the cartoons might have detrimental effects on children who have a working mother and a father at home. Also, the participant mentioned the cartoon Elif'in Düşleri to address the existent gender stereotypical representations in children's cartoons:

For example, it could be a father who makes the breakfast. It can be the mother who reads the newspaper, I mean, it's like mothers do and fathers read the newspaper. Usually that's how I saw it. That's how I saw it in Elif'in Düşleri series. Dad can also make the breakfast. … maybe the father can stay at home, too, the mother can go to work, you know, because nowadays there are such things, there are many unemployed fathers, there are mothers who are the only breadwinners. I mean, the society shouldn't find this odd. It may happen, in order not to have a bad effect on children, series should depict that such things can happen, and the father can take care of his child, too…

P15 addressed another dimension of the subject. The participant talked about how some of the roles in children's cartoons are attributed to only one gender. She expressed her opinion as follows:

As I said, it isn't like this role is for women, this role is for men. You know, a woman does the cleaning, takes care of the children, and the man works. This isn't it. I mean, everyone can work, everyone can help or everyone can be a savior, and everyone can pay attention to their appearance, and men can pay attention to their appearance, too. They don't necessarily grow their hair, but they may have clean nails. I'd try to give that cleaning, helping and being a savior don't depend on gender.

P20 shared a similar opinion by mentioning the existing wrong perspective in the society that it is called help when men do household chores because household chores are actually for women in the eyes of the society. She emphasized that women should be represented participating more in social life in children's cartoons:

That women can also be more active in daily life. For example, men can also do housework, you know, there are always roles and tasks that stick to us. I think if we distribute these roles more evenly, children understand this. I mean, even in real life, there are children whose father helps their mother, I don't really like the phrase to help, it's not actually helping. It's actually sharing that burden together, unfortunately, it is 'helping' in our society. I don't know, mom can go to work and dad can do housework. For example, there are storybooks like these. I like them a lot. My kids are spilling the beans there. My father does that, my mother does that. I mean, when a man does it, he is rewarded, when a woman does it, it's her duty. For example, I guess I'd try to end this because life is about sharing.

P19 focused on similar aspects of the subject in her response. She suggested that female characters should be more active in social life. The participant expressed her ideas by giving an example from the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa:

> For example, in Rafadan Tayfa, I'd represent all of them as a team. I mean, I don't remember the girls' names right now, because they seem to be the weak. I'm just saying, there is the one who helped her mother make baklava pies during the feast, they run around if they're going to notify people. You know, they're playing a basketball game, only boys play. I'd change that. For example, one of them would work in a grocery store as an apprentice, and I'd place the other one somewhere else. She'd also work in another place for a short time. If someone works at a mechanic, someone would at a grocery apprentice… I'd change these.

4.2.3.1.2. Women are represented as not being able

Many of the teachers (n=11) expressed that female characters are represented as lacking certain abilities in the children's cartoons. Teachers stated that certain roles are attributed only to the male main characters in the cartoons like being a hero. According to P15 this kind of representation might influence preschool children's gender role perceptions. She stated:

> You know, a woman always does this, a man always does that ... A woman isn't a savior, she's more passive. The man is the savior. Or this character becomes a woman… So, for example, why is the Spiderman is Spider man" instead of Spider"woman"? Not having these kinds of distinctions because 0-6 age group is a very important age group. The most important period of their lives. I think it'd be better if attention was paid to the characters of the series without making any distinction between boys and girls so that it's not coded into their subconscious mind.

P18 also shared similar ideas regarding the subject:

> I would include content where women are more competent.

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4.2.3.1.3. Lack of female characters having careers

Many of the early childhood teachers stated that (n=8) female characters in children's cartoons are not represented as having careers. P12 expressed that working mothers are not represented in children's cartoons even if women are included in the work life in today's society. The participant said:

> For example, I'd make working mothers. I'd like them to show a little bit of its difficulty as I am myself working. There should be working mothers, I think mothers shouldn't always be at home. You know, the fathers could help a little. They shouldn't portray as dads are the only ones going out and making money. Nowadays, mothers are always choosing to a work life. It's not like it used to be anymore, mothers were always at home in the past. Gradually, I think they should change this in the series, but I can't see it. As I said, I only saw it in one series, but the mother was at home, there, too. Working mothers should also be included.

In addition, P21 stated that most of the occupational roles are given to the male characters in children's cartoons. She exemplified the situation by mentioning the cartoon Elif'in Düşleri. She said:

> Here is Elif, who goes to the dentist with her mother, the dentist character, by the way, is a man. Yes, there is a mother as a character, there is a grandmother there. For example, on Yumurta's birthday, there was a guard there. The guard there was also male, then the Yumurta character was also male, after that there was the uncle. Another uncle that comes to my mind. The farmer talks about how he grows wheat (Interview 21, Location 18) … Maybe there are more female farmers in Türkiye, they may work hard, too. I mean, women can also be shown as farmers.

4.2.3.2. Imposition of the Gender Stereotypes

The early childhood teachers suggested that there is a violence imposition to the preschool boys via the male cartoon characters and an imposition of beauty standards to the preschool girls via the female cartoon characters.

4.2.3.2.1. Imposition of violence to boys

Some of the early childhood teachers (n=4) stated that there is an imposition of violence on preschool boys. P13 emphasized the presentation of violence as a problem-solving way in children's cartoons:

> I'd focus more on something, for example, we don't have to be strong all the time, or things won't be solved by always eating something or destroying something.

In addition, P22 mentioned her classroom observations regarding the subject in her response:

> As I said, I think it's necessary to make serious changes on these male characters. They should be more adaptable, okay, they should help. Solutions should be found to problems, but not in a way that requires extraordinary powers or being an extraordinary being. I'd like to design it in more probable ways and without resorting to violence. Because now, children learn to solve problems violently. When a child has even a small problem, he can punch the other person or he can just push the other.

4.2.3.2.2. Standardized beauty

Two of the early childhood teachers emphasized the imposition of beauty standards through children's cartoons. P13 expressed her opinion about the subject by focusing on perfectionism:

> ... with girls, hmmm, it can be normal, like how it should be. You can achieve anything, always be a princess, always be thin. It also gives us a little bit of perfectionism. You have to be that way, you have to be more beautiful, well, we may not be. I mean, we can be less weak.

The other teacher P2 exemplified the situation by giving an example from the Elsa character in the cartoon Frozen. The teacher suggested that Elsa could have physical features other than long hair and wearing a princess dress:

> For example, Elsa's hair doesn't need to be long. Elsa doesn't have to be a princess. The theme of these series, movies, the colors chosen for them, the

objects chosen there, the clothes, there isn't a rule saying that Elsa should wear a princess costume. Her hair can be short and she can be without make-up.

4.3. Research Question 2: What are early childhood teacher's views about the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions?

To address the second research question, the researcher asked participants about their views on the effect of the children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions. The researcher asked questions separately for girls and boys. For example, the researcher asked, "How do you think girls are affected by the animated characters you mentioned?". Then, the same question was asked for boys. The researcher also directed the interview by asking probe questions like "You mentioned violent behaviors of Spiderman. Do you observe the impact of these behaviors on children who watch Spiderman?" and "How do you observe the impact of these animated characters on consumption behaviors of girls?".

Another interview question corresponding to the second research question aimed to understand how the teachers positioned the effect of children's cartoons on children's perception of gender roles. The researcher asked participants "Let's think about family, friends, society, and children's cartoons. Which is more effective on children's perception about the roles of women and men in society? Can you rate based on your own observations?". After the teacher answered the question, the researcher asked about the reasons behind that rating. For this interview question, the researcher coded responses of the participants under the predetermined categories of family, friends, society, and children's cartoons.

4.3.1. Views on Cartoon Impact on Gender Role Perception of Girls

Table 7.

Views on Cartoon Impact on Gender Role Perception of Girls

Categories	Codes
Free Time Activities	• Identify themselves with the characters (n=8) • Imitating characters' behaviors (n=7) • Traditional female role while playing house (n=5) • Drawings (n=2)
Beliefs	• Body perception (n=15) • Passive (n=3) • Future goals (n=3) • Observing egalitarian roles (n=1)
Consumption	• Products children use (n=12) • Colors (n=5)
Peer relationships	• Discrimination against boys (n=1)

4.3.1.1. Free Time Activities

In the previous section, the findings about the teachers' views on male and female characters in cartoons were mentioned. This part involves teacher observations and views on what ways these male and female character presentations affect preschool girls' gender role perception. According to the teachers, impacts of children's cartoons on preschool girls' gender role perception gather around free time activities, children's beliefs about themselves and others, consumption behaviors and peer relationships.

4.3.1.1.1. Identify themselves with the characters

Many of the teachers (n=8) stated that girls identify themselves with the female characters in the cartoons. Teachers mostly talked about the princess characters such as Elsa. According to the teachers, girls want to identify themselves with the characters who are presented as beautiful and powerful. P2 expressed that even if a girl's actual appearance is not like Elsa, the girl wants to get the role of Elsa in make-believe play. However, the teacher observed that they wanted to

give certain roles similar to the child's actual appearance. The teacher mentioned her observation as follows:

> So, for example, they directly say you are Hayri to an overweight kid in our class, they associate the closest thing to a kid directly and assign that role to him. But for example, most of them don't look like Elsa, they don't look like Anna, but because they always want to be, so, they argue about it among them, like No, I'm Elsa, I'll be Anna. There is also not being able to share a role. Because they all want to be her, they all want to have her power.

P10 shared her similar observations from a younger age group:

> Last year's students were younger than this age group. For example, when playing house, they all wanted to be a princess. They all wanted to be a princess. They were upset when they couldn't. And in that age group, you know, there is a parallel play period in some of their things, they'd be cross with each other. They'd literally turn their backs to each other and lock horns with each other saying I am a princess or something like that.

P25 expressed her comment regarding the situation with these words:

> But so, my girls who're Elsa become queens, they organize parties, they organize dress-up parties. There is no problem with girls like this, I think the problem is more with male heroes.

4.3.1.1.2. Imitating characters' behaviors

Many of the early childhood teachers (n=7) expressed that girls in their classroom imitate behaviors of the female characters in cartoons. The teachers mentioned behaviors such as dancing like Elsa, using magic to solve problems, walking like a princess, and talking like a princess in their make-believe play. P6 explained the situation with these words:

> Here, Anna and Elsa's outfits, for example, those bright dresses, the way they talk, the hairstyle, the way they sit and walk. Usually my girls take on that role when they look at it.

P3 mentioned her observation regarding the issue as follows:

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They begin to act like them. They start doing their hair like them. Well, when I look at Elsa or something, I mean, as I said, they can also take on a bad character, children can try to do the same with that character, I mean, in terms of behavior.

4.3.1.1.3. Traditional female role in playing house

According to the teachers, in their make-believe play girls do domestic work such as cooking and childcare, which are traditionally associated with women in the society. Therefore, teachers argued that the stereotypical female roles presented in cartoons are taken as a model by girls. According to P11 there is a link between the domestic mother role girls take in their make-believe play and the domestic mother figures in the cartoons. The teacher expressed her ideas with the following words:

> In series, movies, children are always at home and cook when they become mothers. They clean up the house. They take care of their children and take them to the park. I don't see any other activity in children. It is the same in the series because if the mother is cooking, they go to the park later. They play in the park and come back again. So, with children, I've never seen children play a working mother. They play a mother who is always at home.

P2 shared a make-believe play observation to exemplify the situation:

> It's actually in the series. For example, when the children are playing house, they say to one, you be the Hayri, I don't remember exactly whether it was Mete, but you be Mete. They immediately say to the girl, come on, you be the mother, for example, you be Hayri's mother, they say you should make meatballs for the whole neighborhood and give them, they direct her to the kitchen, they expect her to make meatballs and distribute them to the children playing in the neighborhood. For example, if Hayri's mother is cooking in the kitchen in the series, if she gives something to eat to the children playing in the neighborhood, they directly take this and place it in their games. For example, children don't say "Come on, Hayri's father should make cookies for us". This doesn't come to their minds. Naturally, whatever they see there, they directly reflect it on their games.

P12 stated that the roles that girls take in the make-believe play reflect the female roles in the cartoons. The teacher argued that a change in the roles of the

female characters in the cartoons might affect the roles in the make-believe play of the children. She stated her idea as follows:

> Girls, like babysitting, cooking or kitchen utensils, mostly take their mothers as an example. As I said, since mothers are at home and cooking more in the series, this also affects them. If only more different roles were shown, then they would reflect them in their plays a little bit, too.

4.3.1.1.4. Drawings

Two of the teachers suggested that cartoons girls watch affect their drawings. Teachers shared their observations about the subject. They mentioned girls are drawing characters like Elsa and Anna. Also, one of the teachers expressed that girls reflect the physical features of the cartoon characters like faces, eyes and bodies in their drawings.

4.3.1.2. Beliefs

According to the teachers participating in the study, the cartoons they watch affect the perceptions of girls about women's appearance, social roles, and behavioral patterns. The teachers explained their ideas on the subject and shared examples based on their classroom observations.

4.3.1.2.1. Body Perception

According to the early childhood teachers (n=15) beauty standards presented in the children's cartoons via the female characters affect body perception of preschool girls. The teachers mentioned the girls in their classroom wanting to look like Elsa and adopting the physical characteristics of Elsa as standards of being beautiful. Furthermore, they want to be perfectly beautiful just like the female cartoon characters presented. They wear clothes and make hairstyles like Elsa. P23 mentioned a conversation she did with the girl in her classroom:

Well, you know, they orient the kids to fuss and feathers, with nail polish, with well-kept hair and blue or green eyes. For example, my student said the other day, teacher, you know Elsa's eyes are blue, so when I grow up, I will wear contacts and be like Elsa. She said my mom won't let me because I'm young. For example, I have a student in my class now with a lock of her hair dyed pink. For example, I have a student with a lock of her dyed yellow. They are emulating Elsa or Barbie or something. So, their character traits are also reflected in the children.

As seen in the teacher's response, the girl wants to have the physical appearance of Elsa. P11, another teacher mentioned that the girls in her classroom emulate to be thin like the female cartoon characters and talked about dieting.

Always well-kept, always wearing the same clothes, always thin, I mean, never gaining weight. Because I have children who are on a diet, they say they are on a diet, they don't actually, but they say I'm on a diet teacher, I have children who say they've gained weight. This is the same in Elsa. Everything will be good, she'll always wear clothes. She won't do anything just like Elsa.

4.3.1.2.2. Passive

Three of the participants stated that cartoons children watch include messages indicating women are passive and unassertive. The teachers argued that such messages direct preschool girls to be more passive and less self-confident. P1 stated her opinion in relation to the subject with the following words:

Hmm, since girls are always shown as more unquestioning, more fragile, and princesses, they really feel that way in reality. … They think that girls don't do certain things. Same with certain professions.

P10 mentioned the girls are not playing games that require energy and engaging in heroic deeds in their make-believe play. She stated her ideas using the following statements:

So my girls, nothing more. That's what I'm doing right now, but girls are more unquestioning, more fragile, as I said. They are the princess, they are their mama's girls. This reflects on them like that. They prefer games more like, they prefer those kinds of games that won't tire themselves. I think this may be a reflection of what they watch.   …they are nothing like, here I am the hero. I'm going to go and save. There's nothing like I'm going to do this and that.

4.3.1.2.3. Future goals

Three of the teachers stated that gender role representations in children's cartoons affect girls' future goals. According to the teachers, the domestic female figure presented in the cartoons might impact girls' dreams about their future. P8 expressed that the girls talk about being a mother in the future instead of being an adventurer or a businesswoman. She expressed her view regarding the issue as follows:

> … the girls are more like this, as I said, I'll be a mother when I grow up. I mean, it's not like I want to be like this when I grow up, I want to do this, I want to travel there. They say I'm going to be a mother. As I said, I think this is because of their family structures and the influence of what they watch.

4.3.1.2.4. Observing egalitarian roles

One of the teachers mentioned that children observe and find it strange when they encounter some roles associated with the females taken by the male characters. P4 shared her observation with these words:

> For example, Big Bear made a cake. Masha said she was very hungry. He made a cake. The kid was so surprised, he even said to the teacher that he's making a cake. He said the bear's making a cake. He asked if the bear is male or female. I said male. But, the bear has one friend with him, it's a she, they need to know that the bear is male, they do things together. He's wearing a hat or something, he's wearing a bow tie, like that, I said Big Bear is male. But she said, she's making a cake, she was stuck there, she's doing the laundry, she said does a bear sew? I said he can sew, why wouldn't he? But does a male bear sew? Do men sew? So yes, that's what came to my mind right now. They even said so when I showed them last week. This means that they notice.

4.3.1.3. Consumption

The participants suggested that cartoons affect preschool girl's consumption behaviors in terms of the products they prefer to use and colors.

4.3.1.3.1. Products children use

Many of the teachers (n=12) mentioned girls like to use products, wear clothes and play with toys related to their favorite cartoon characters like Canan from the cartoon named as Kral Şakir and Elsa from Frozen. According to the teachers when girls wear an outfit with a character on it, they feel like they are the character on their outfit. Also, there is a discrimination between the characters preferred by preschool boys and girls. Children do not easily accept when they see a character associated with boys on a product that belongs to a girl. P4 shared her observation related to the issue as follows:

> For example, the water bottle, I was very surprised by the water bottle. I mean, I was also surprised at first. I mean, we know what girls usually wear. But I saw it on the girl's hand, and her name was written on it. There were two exact water bottles in the classroom, they are the same. They took her to the boy. He said whose bottle was it. They said it was Özlem's. He said it's a boy's water bottle. He said girls don't drink from this. She said why wouldn't girls drink from it. She said she loves Spiderman very much. I said yes, I said why wouldn't she drink from that bottle? Can't it be with Spiderman, your friend's? He asked can she have it. I said why not? Look, she has it, so it can happen. She always comes with that water bottle. They don't find it odd anymore, they found it a little odd at first, but now they got used to it. They're used to it, that's why they aren't probably doing anything.

P19 shared her similar experience by mentioning her own daughter as follows:

> One of the series is Kral Şakir (King Şakir). For example, even products, let's say a t-shirt is being sold there, right, they will buy it. There is one with a picture of Canan and her mother. The girls prefer it. I know this thing from my own children, she says there is no girl on it, I said, Kral Şakir is a character you like. After all, they're all together. It just doesn't have to be a girl. I mean, even when buying and selling products, I mean, they make their toys more.

P21 expressed her idea by asserting:

> They love Elsa very much. Those girls have an admiration for Elsa. There was another character in a purple dress. They're always very interested in these, their water bottles, their bags, extra.

In addition to these P2 exemplified the situation about girls feeling like the character when they use a related product:

> But the movies are also a big influence. For example, if there is Elsa in an outfit in the store, the girl immediately wants to buy it. She feels like Elsa the next day when she wears it and comes to school.

4.3.1.3.2. Colors

Some of the teachers (n=5) suggested that girls do not want to use products or materials if they don't have a color associated with girls like pink or purple. Teachers mentioned the problems they experienced in the classroom during the activities such as arguing to take the pink paper. Teachers defended that the cause of such a strict distinction about the colors is the cartoons children watch, because the colors are differentiated for the girls and boys in the cartoons. P4 expressed her idea about the subject as follows:

> But, in series, it's usually either blue or green or orange. Well, they're doing it, it's like they're polarizing it a bit. The colors are separated. Then, when we give something to the children, they say it's a girl's color, this happens a lot with us. We were doing something, for example, we were making photocopies. We were copying pink for girls and blue for boys. This even escalates into fights. I mean, like you didn't give me pink …

4.3.1.4. Peer Relationships

One of the early childhood teachers mentioned the impact of cartoons on children's peer relationships. The teacher suggested that gender role presentations in the cartoons children watch cause separation in the games preschool girls and boys play.

4.3.1.4.1. Discrimination of boys

The teacher who suggested the girls do not want to play with boys in their make-believe play expressed her ideas with these words:

In general, there are roles in these series in which women are maternal, they clean the house, food, extra, and men are more dominant. We can easily observe this in children in the classroom. They immediately reflect what they see there in their games. As I said, children immediately form groups made up of boys and girls. Girls don't want boys to join in their games.

4.3.2. Views on Cartoon Impact on Gender Role Perception of Boys

Table 8.

Views on Cartoon Impact on Gender Role Perception of Boys

Categories	Codes
Free time activities	● İmitation (n=15) ● Identify themselves with the characters (n=9) ● Violent behaviors in the make-believe play (n=6) ● Boys always want to be the winner (n=4) ● Traditional male role in playing house (n=3) ● Drawing the cartoon characters (n=2)
Consumption	● Products children use (n=15) ● Colors (n=5)
Peer Relationships	● Discrimination against girls (n=6) ● Violent behaviors (n=5)
Beliefs	● Adopting traditional gender roles (n=6)

4.3.2.1. Free time activities

The early childhood teachers who participated in the study suggested that they observe the effects of stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons on children. The teachers mentioned preschool boys imitate behaviors of the male cartoon characters and identify themselves with the characters. Also, according to the teachers, preschool boys reproduce the violence presented in children's cartoons in their dramatic play. The preschool boys attribute a great importance to always being the winner because the main male characters always fight and win. The teachers mentioned that with the impact of the cartoons preschool boys always play the traditional male role in dramatic play like being the breadwinner. In addition to these, preschool boys draw the cartoon characters they like.

4.3.2.1.1. İmitation

Many of the teachers (n=15) mentioned boys in their classroom imitating cartoon characters. They expressed similar observations regarding the subject. Teachers suggested that boys mostly imitate the cartoon characters' movements in the classroom. According to the teachers, boys take the characters like Spiderman and Batman as a role model, and they want to be powerful and unbreakable like them. The dream world presented in the cartoons affect children in terms of being powerful and winning in all situations. Children run, talk, and move like them in their make-believe play. P20 expressed her opinion by saying that:

> … the desire to be like him develops as they watch the series again and again. Well, he sees that he never loses. Which of us would like to lose or have a bad experience? Maybe the child wants to take on that role all the time, maybe because it can never be real as he is. At least in the game, maybe he wants to satisfy this feeling, but the series reflects the games a lot, it's reflected in a real and incredible way. They copy him with all his words, with his style, that is, the gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, everything comes into play. Believe me, ma', they copy him exactly.

P7 shared her similar ideas by saying that:

> Boys are more like they want to be Batman and Superman and they play games like they are running and fighting each other.

4.3.2.1.2. Identify themselves with the characters

The early childhood teachers (n=9) suggested that boys identify themselves with the characters they watch in cartoons like Pijamasks, Spiderman and Superman. The teachers said that children imagine themselves as the characters they like and verbalize the situation by using sentences like "I am Spiderman". P2 shared her observations related to the subject as follows:

> …I'm a race car, I'm Spiderman, I'm Pijamask, so that's how it is.

P16 expressed her ideas on the matter:

What I observed about the effects of series and movies is that mostly male students can display violent attitudes towards each other. Since Spiderman flies and runs, the child thinks that he has that kind of power.

P20 reflected her opinion by focusing on the desire of the boys to take the role of a powerful character:

Usually in this way, children do the same to their friends and always want that strong character to be themselves in the games. They fight about this, too. There is only one and they say I want to be that hero, I want to be that hero because he dominates the others that way, he can rule the game, because he becomes a more dominant character. This is how it is, he's always successful, infallible, invincible.

4.3.2.1.3. Violent behaviors in make- believe play

The early childhood teachers (n=6) stated that preschool boys reproduce the violence they saw in children's cartoons in their make-believe play. The teachers mentioned this as an undesirable impact of the violence in the cartoons. According to the teachers, children feel a sense of heroicness and power when they imitate the violent behaviors they watch in children's cartoons. P20 shared her feelings and the observations regarding the issue:

Unfortunately, it's usually war, attack, destruction, İt's always like that, I'm really sorry. Well, no one wants to make these observations, I don't want to witness them. Those little kids are really like this. In the game, they are in the mode like I'm strong, I defeat everyone, no one can say anything to me. That's why they want so much to take on that character.

P7 mentioned her similar classroom observations:

Well, in general, there's heroism, I think they have this warrior feeling. Hitting and stuff, and more. That way, I think they're a little bit more cruel to each other when they watch this, when they take on that character. More vicious and ruthless.

4.3.2.1.4. Boys always want to be the winner

According to some of the participants (n=4) there is an imposition about always being the winner to the boys in children's cartoons because the powerful male main character always wins the fights he struggles. One of the teachers P4 mentioned boys want to be enrolled in competitive games and take it as a requirement of being a boy:

> Boys said, "teacher, this is a girl game, isn't there a competitive game?"

Another early childhood teacher P10 expressed that the preschool boys experience emotional distress when they lose a game:

> There was a lot of desire to win at the games. There was a desire to race among the children. The boys were very upset when they lost at the racing games. I also think that series have an effect on this. Because the hero there always wins. He never loses. I mean, there's always a winner. The child associates the race with being a boy.

4.3.2.1.5. Traditional male role in playing house

According to some of the early childhood teachers (n=3) children reflect the traditional father figure presented in the cartoons in their make-believe play. P11 shared her observation regarding the situation:

> Or we rarely see fathers helping mothers in the series. Fathers are working as I said but not helping. Maybe if there is a husband model helping the mother at home, children can model this by observing this. Because in the roles we play in the classroom, the boy plays a father who doesn't do any work at home and who goes to work.

4.3.2.1.6. Drawing the cartoon characters

Two of the early childhood teachers suggested children draw the cartoon characters they like such as Lightning McQueen and various scary characters they watched in the cartoons or saw in the online games they play.

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4.3.2.2. Consumption

The early childhood teachers mentioned that children's cartoons affect consumption behaviors of the preschool boys in terms of stationery equipment and clothes. The teachers suggested that using such products cause children to identify themselves with the characters. Besides, children classify products for girls and boys based on their colors.

4.3.2.2.1. Products children use

Many of the participants (n=15) suggested that boys like to wear clothes and use products that include visuals of their favorite cartoon character such as toys and stationery equipment. P7 stated her experience about the matter:

> Now, in my class, I sometimes have students who want to come in costumes with my permission, especially boys. They especially value their toys, the toys of that series. They want to buy their bags, shoes, and clothes. Boys always want to go around with the character.

P23 shared her similar experience related to the subject. According to the participant, these kinds of clothes direct children to imitate those cartoon characters or identify themselves with the character:

> Children also have clothes specific to these characters, like blouses with capes in some stores, you know? There are pants from the Hulk, similar like that, children like to wear them, and when they wear them, of course, they take on this identity. They try to apply these on each other in the classroom, so they get up on the table, they fly and they jump onto the floor.

P10 reflected her opinion by focusing on the restriction these products cause:

> Since they don't have the right to choose, the children take the hero they don't know. Then, this happens, he becomes his fan, he researches or wants to watch. He wonders who he is, or I mean, when his friend comes to school, he wears a Batman suit or something. It's heroism. You know, he likes these kinds of things. I think it's limiting.

4.3.2.2.2. Colors

The participants (n=5) suggested that preschool boys have a desire to use colors traditionally associated with men both in the society and the children's cartoons. P4 exemplified the situation by mentioning an issue about water bottles of two children:

> I have two of the same, one in my female student and one in my male student. But here it is, teacher, it's a boy's water bottle. I ask how do you know that this is a boy's bottle. He says, look, there's Spiderman, it's color is red, there are black dots on the cap.

4.3.2.3. Peer Relationships

The participants stated that they observed the impact of stereotypical gender role representations in children's cartoons on peer relationships of preschool boys. The teachers suggested that with the impact of cartoons they watch, preschool boys discriminate against preschool girls in their games and they exhibit violence they watched in the cartoons.

4.3.2.3.1. Discrimination against girls

The early childhood teachers (n=6) mentioned preschool boys tend to discriminate against preschool girls when they play a game which is played by the male characters in children's cartoons. The teachers suggested that preschool boys believe that preschool girls are not able to succeed in some games. According to an anecdote from the response, P2 shared her experience, preschool boys associate car races with men. They don't want to include girls in the game because they believe girls cause losing the car race. P2 expressed her experience as follows:

> I mean, in car racing games, for example, I say to boys to choose a girl next to you, for example, choose a girl next to you. For example, they name themselves the car names from Hot Wheels, I say choose a girl next to you and give her that

name as well. He says no. Well, he says a boy should do this, they'll win the race. So, they don't accept it, they don't want to get out of that zone.

P4 shared a similar experience regarding the issue. She expressed that preschool boys didn't include girls in the basketball game like in the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa, because they believe that basketball is a man thing:

> For example, they do what they see on TV, they try to play the games in that Rafadan Tayfa series. We have a basketball hoop down. Boys go there. More boys, they don't accept girls to the game. They say let's play more with the boys. This game is a boys' game, they can't shoot. For example, I hear this from boys.

P10 focused on another issue in her comment. She suggested that boys perceive girls as weak and they don't include girls in their games unless they need someone to rescue:

> Well, as I said, they only allow girls into their zombie games. Because they see them as something to be saved. But otherwise boys are more like rigid in these things, I mean, playing with girls.

4.3.2.3.2. Violent behaviors

Some of the teachers (n=5) mentioned children's cartoons affect preschool boys in terms of using violence towards their peers. P7 shared her observation in terms of the issue by suggesting that:

> This is quite true for some of my students. This is especially the case with Pijamaskeliler, Spiderman, and Batman. He does their moves, for example, when another one has a toy in his hand and he wants to take that toy, he says "Spiderman" and hit him, runs towards him, hits the toy in his hand, makes him drop it by running and takes it.

P16 also expressed a similar experience:

> What I observed about the effect of the series is that mostly male students can display violent attitudes towards each other, you know.

4.3.2.4. Beliefs

4.3.2.4.1. Adopting traditional gender roles

Participants (n=6) suggested that children's cartoons affect gender role beliefs of the preschool boys in terms of power, occupations, and duties. P11 expressed her ideas on the subject with these words:

> Men are always the powerhouse. As I said, women are always in the background. They don't show women's strong roles. All roles, all roles always working hard are the male roles. I think the children adopt this, too because boys always want to be strong like Spiderman. They want to do what he does.

4.3.3. Factors affect gender development

Table 9.

Factors affect gender development

Categories	Codes
Family	• Most influencing factor on gender role perception of children (n=17)
Cartoons	• Proliferation of existing gender roles (n=7) • Factors affect children's cartoon selection (n=6) • Insufficient family and community interaction (n=4) • Cartoons have the least impact on children's gender role perception (n=4) • Covid 19 Pandemic process increased the cartoon impact on children's gender role perception (n=4) • Highest impact (n=3)
Peers	• Peer relationships (n=11)
Society	• Strict gender role distinctions (n=5) • Community interaction (n=1)

4.3.3.1. Family

4.3.3.1.1. Most influencing factor on gender role perception of children

Many of the early childhood teachers (n=17) stated that the most influential factor on children's gender role perception is family. P15 expressed that most of

the children in her classroom have traditional families and she observes reflection of children's family structure in their make-believe play:

> Boys become fathers, for example, they never do anything, after all, they are a father. They even come and say that teacher, I became the father, I became the mother, they would be sharing. Sometimes it even caught my attention outside, he calls and says, do you need anything? What should I bring home when I come? These are what they see from their own families because my students' mothers are housewives and the fathers are working. The father goes out, the father calls, the father takes care of the needs. They reflect these exactly the same in their games.

P16 shared similar ideas as follows:

> Of course, the family is much more dominant over the children in this regard. Because we see the family. We can analyze the child accordingly. I mean, we can see the behavior of the child in the family in some way.

In a similar vein P13 described the family as the place where the child's first learning occurs:

> I think that it is the family first, I mean, the family establishes the foundation and the child welcomes the first learnings in the family as if they're normal. Even if it is wrong, well, since his first learnings took place there, he sees there, he can easily speak slang here if for example his father speaks slang. Because why? Are the words our father says right for us? So, when he comes here and uses a slang word, we understand it's from the house.

P19 defended that in the early childhood period family is the most important factor affecting children's gender role perception:

> I think this might change depending on age. Family is very important in our age group.

4.3.3.2. Cartoons

The early childhood teachers mentioned cartoons as a factor causing the proliferation of the existing gender roles in the society. Some of the teachers identified cartoons as the least effective factor on children's gender role

perception, while some of them argued that it is the most effective one. The teachers mentioned that peers and families affect cartoon selection of the preschool children in terms of watching the cartoons associated with their own gender. In addition to these, teachers mentioned the process of Covid 19 pandemic and insufficient family and community interaction as factors that increase the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perception.

4.3.3.2.1. Proliferation of existing gender roles

The early childhood teachers (n=7) suggested that children's cartoons reproduce the stereotypical gender roles existent in the society. According to P2 children who have a traditional family structure adopt stereotypical gender roles presented in the cartoons easily, because the roles correspond to their own daily life:

> For example, if the child sees that the father goes to the kitchen and helps the mother. He also does cleaning in the house if necessary. If the child sees these, maybe he will criticize when he watches the series in real life. The child will criticize and ask why the father there doesn't cook, or why the mother always cooks, why the father doesn't do housework there, maybe the child won't want to watch the series. But whatever the children see at home, for example, my mother cooks, they watch the series, and the mother always cooks there, too. The child doesn't find it odd, doesn't feel strange to the child, and the child watches the series as if it's normal. It's deeply embedded in his mind that the mother has to cook and do the housework. When there is a continuation of this in the series, it seems normal to the child now, and when the child sees these roles in the family and watches the same things in the series afterwards, he also comes to school and displays the same things.

P14 also shared a similar opinion regarding the subject. According to the teacher children's cartoons present an ideal for each gender and affect children's beliefs about their own future:

> So the family also has an effect on this. After all, the child takes the environment she grew up in as an example. Not only the series, but as I said, if the man is dominant in the family and the woman is always at home and has the responsibility of the house, cleaning, childcare, extra, if it's on the woman, the child already sees that series as very normal and the girls think that they'll be like that in the future.

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P15 shared her ideas in the same vein. According to the participant, preschool girls like passive female characters such as princesses, because they associate them with their mother and preschool boys like powerful male characters such as heroes because they associate them with their fathers:

> …they choose the series according to their interests. I mean, what they see at home. They choose to watch series according to the roles they feel close to. Like I said, why don't girls watch Spiderman? I don't hear that much from them. Why always the boys? Because boys see their father as the savior, the one who brings food to the house, the one who provides the order of the house, the one who brings money, I mean, at the subconscious level, their father is the savior, the man is the savior. That's why he watches the roles in which the male is more dominant. he adopts it. I interpret it as he loves him and feels closer to him. Why do girls watch other female characters who are more like Elsa, who dress up like that, or who are the passive ones? Because she sees it, too. She feels close to her. She continues this accordingly in the series. So, if we make her watch another series or movies, maybe she won't feel close.

4.3.3.2.2. Insufficient family and community interaction

Some of the early childhood teachers (n=4) mentioned low level of family and community interaction as a factor increasing the impact of the cartoons in children's gender role perception. P8 mentioned her opinion regarding the subject as follows:

> …as I said, if there isn't much interest from the family, the child turns to series.

4.3.3.2.3. Cartoons have the least impact on children's gender role perception

Some of the early childhood teachers (n=4) mentioned children's cartoons as the factor that has the least impact on children's gender role perception.

> …I put on the series last. Because, when necessary, we watch television and cartoons within certain hours in our children's lives. I think the most unimportant factor is the series that I can put on the last, at four.

4.3.3.2.4. Covid 19 Pandemic process increased the cartoon impact on children's gender role perception

The early childhood teachers (n=4) suggested that with the Covid 19 pandemic process children are highly exposed to children's cartoons. Therefore, the impact of cartoons on children's gender role perception has increased. P23 stated her view on the subject as follows:

> I think cartoons are more effective. The children already reflect their families in a way, but they are under the influence of the series more at this time.

P13 also mentioned her similar ideas:

> … due to the pandemic process, these series, I mean, adopting heroes, I think series are more important than us.

4.3.3.2.5. Factors affect children's cartoon selection

Some of the early childhood teachers (n=6) mentioned that families and peers get involved in the cartoon selection of preschool children. P10 suggested that families direct children to select cartoons compatible with the traditional gender roles:

> A small city, we're in Central Anatolia. Families are like, I'm sure they even interfere with the series they watch. Let them be innocent. It's more of a girl's series. Like watching the series that is more appropriate for you.

P6 defended the preschool girls in his classroom like the cartoons with energetic characters with the impact of the boys:

> Climbing and jumping, you know, they usually watch series that highlight the character with power. You may have a question like this, are the girls in the classroom like this, too? Since there are now 6 girls in my class and 15 boys, maybe because the girls are influenced by the boys, the girls also like these series very much.

4.3.3.2.6. Highest impact

Some of the early childhood teachers who participated in the study suggested that nowadays the children's cartoons have the highest impact on children's gender role development when it is compared to the other factors like family, society, and peers.

4.3.3.3. Peers

The participants mentioned peer relationships as a factor affecting children's gender role perceptions.

4.3.3.3.1. Peer relationships

The early childhood teachers (n=11) mentioned gender issues emerge in the peer relationships of preschool children. P21 stated that the interests of children are affected by their peers:

> …if his friend is interested in the firefighting profession, maybe that child has no prior knowledge about the firefighting profession. Going to school, I'm always a firefighter or a police officer on the school bus. He also learns from him during his free time activities .

P4 expressed that there is a peer pressure to use products with the cartoon characters associated with their own gender:

> For example, the water bottle of one of my students was with Spiderman. A girl's water bottle. The children thought it belonged to a boy, but the girl was also watching Spiderman. She said she has been watching it and she loves him. But the others said that's a boy's water bottle.

Some of the early childhood teachers mentioned preschool children tend to watch cartoons associated with their own gender by their peers:

They also say this while watching the series. Girls object when it's a series just for boys. And when it's just for girls, guys object. They say let's not watch that girl thing. We're trying to find the middle ground. You know, animated movies don't affect that much. Their preferences in series are also in that direction. You know, maybe those who have sisters and brothers can have knowledge about them all. It exists, too much.

4.3.3.4. Society

The early childhood teachers mentioned society factors on children's gender role perceptions. The teachers suggested that children observe preferences of the community they live in and expose the existing gender stereotypes of the society.

4.3.3.4.1. Community interaction

Many of the early childhood teachers (n=11) mentioned society as a factor affecting children's gender role perception. According to the teachers, the expectations of the community and respect given by the community shape children's occupational choices, behavioral traits, and interests. P21 stated that preschool boys want to be a police officer or firefighter because of the respect of the occupations that require wearing a uniform in the community.

> Society also affects it because that thing looks attractive. You know, being a police officer, the kids love the car, the uniform. They like it no matter what the profession. Military service, police work, firefighting, and their clothing is respected by society, so I think that's why children love uniformed professions.

Besides, P25 suggested that preschool boys take their male relatives as a role model:

> They have an uncle they take as an example. For example, boys identify with their uncles (maternal) the most. They support the team they're supporting. For example, if they love their uncles a lot or fathers first, of course, father, but sometimes I've seen that uncles are also effective in this. There are children who love their uncles very much. I've seen children who support their uncle's team and walk from his road.

4.3.3.4.2. Gender role stereotypes of society

Some of the early childhood teachers (n=5) stated that children are exposed to strict gender role stereotypes by the community they live in. P14 expressed that children encounter stereotypical ideas on gender roles in terms of occupations, behavioral traits and emotional aspects in their schools, families, and neighborhoods:

> ... at school, we said that profession suits girls best. After that, it progressed slowly, they said the same in the society, too, they said girls don't sit that way, girls don't laugh that way, they don't talk that way, we separated boys and girls. I mean, it started in the family with "boys don't cry" and then the school, the environment, the streets, the neighborhood all affected each other.

P5 exemplified the situation by sharing her own experiences related to the subject. She expressed that boys are more valued than girls by the grandparents and the grandparents believe that girls must engage in domestic works instead of boys:

> My husband is from Sivas and for his family, a boy is very important. Even when talking on the phone, the first thing my mother-in-law asks for is my son, for example. When we say, here is our daughter, talk to her, most of the time she talks like that. I think this comes from there, too. For example, my son would drink water there. When I tell my son to take the glass on the counter, she would say, would a boy do that, give it to his sister. I think the child sees these, too. After all, there is a subtext. It's not like my sister took my glass to the counter and done. It's not like that. They see everything very well.

4.4. Research Question 3: How do early childhood teachers address the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in the classroom environment?

To address the third research question the researcher asked participants about their reactions after they shared their observations. For instance, after the teachers responded to the questions about the impact of cartoon characters on

children, the researcher said "What is your approach to these situations that you observe? Can you give examples?"

In addition to this, the researcher asked direct questions, "We talked about male and female roles presented in cartoons. Are you addressing this issue in the classroom like talking with children, doing activities, etc.?". The participant shared if she/he had an experience regarding the issue. If the participant had no experience related to the subject, the researcher asked his/her suggestions about what could be done.

4.4.1. How Teachers Address Stereotypical Gender Role Messages In the Cartoons

Table 10.

How Teachers Address Stereotypical Gender Role Messages In the Cartoons

Categories	Codes
Problem focused interventions	• Talking with the children (n=18) • Restrictions on certain toys (n=1) • Collaboration with the family (n=2)
Activity suggestions	• Drama (n=10) • Literacy activities (n=2)

4.4.1.1. Problem focused interventions

The early childhood teachers talked about some problem-focused interventions that they implemented to address the stereotypical gender roles such as talking with the children, restricting some of the games and toys, and collaborating with the families. However, it can be obviously seen that even if teachers addressed gender equality subjects in the classroom, some of the practices they mentioned did not directly address the gender issues in children's cartoons.

4.4.1.1.1. Talking with the children

Many of the early childhood teachers (n=18) talked with the children about the subjects related to gender equality like power, beauty, occupations, and social roles. However, responses given by the teachers were rarely about the gender stereotypes children were exposed to in the cartoons. The teachers did not share instances where they directly talked about the stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons. Teachers brought up gender equality related subjects in the classroom due to the situations they observed during the activities or the free time. P13 expressed that she talked with children about the imposition of standardized beauty:

> For example, there shouldn't be a tummy? Why wouldn't we have a tummy? We can have a tummy, we sometimes can gain weight or we can do it wrong. Sometimes our hair can be messy or not straight. Putting makeup on all the time is unhealthy. I mean, we can't walk around with makeup all the time. I mean, I'm trying to show that besides perfection, we may have weaknesses or shortcomings.

P8 expressed that she talks with children about the subject in necessary cases after they watched a cartoon by giving examples from her own life:

> Even if it is based on something we watched, we talk with the children in the evaluation of it. At that time, if one of the children says you're a girl, you have to do that. When they say housework, I intervene there. I say no. Housework can be done together. I'm married., too. I have a husband, too. I can be tired, too. I come here and spend time with you. When I go home, I am tired. In that case I say that my husband and he also cooks, we clean the house together on the weekends. And, I say it's not a girl thing, don't think like that. I say boys and girls should do it together because I say life is shared. This is how we talk to children.

P7 referred to an incident that happened in her classroom in her response. She expressed that, she talks with the children in necessary cases like children imitate violence in cartoons:

> It could be about a toy. This happens a lot in my class. I have a student at the entrance of the classroom. He has a toy in his hand. For example, my other

student thinks of himself as a Spiderman and runs to that boy. Since he's Spiderman, he hits the toy in his hand and drops it down. There, of course, the child whose toy was dropped is demoralized and tries to oppose him. But, that student doesn't realize what he did was wrong because he adopted the role of Spiderman so much. We usually encounter such situations, but I always like to be descriptive and explain the reason and the result to the children. In such a situation, I tell that his friend dropped his toy and he feels bad about it, and that his behavior is not right, I say it is just a series, it is not real, and I ask if it was done to him, how would he feel if his friend dropped his toy?

P24 expressed that she talks about the stereotypical gender roles in the classroom:

I try to instill this more in the classroom. You know, there is no discrimination, you are all equal, if he can do it, you can do it too, or boys can do this, too. I mean, doesn't any of them say something, yeah, sometimes they do. They say, for example, my dad doesn't do that, or my mother doesn't do that, my dad always does it. We talk sometimes about this. Well, for example, I ask, can't you do that. So, when I say that, he says I can actually do it.

P18 mentioned preschool girls in her classroom desire physical beauty and marriage. The teacher mentioned that she talks with the preschool girls about the importance of their education and having an occupation:

In girls, it's all about being a bride, being fancy, being beautiful, being well-groomed, dressing. Their priorities are these. For example, I always emphasize to my girls in the class. Being a bride is not important. Anyone can be a bride, you will be a bride anyway, but that's not the point. I always try to emphasize that their education, what they will be, what profession they will have should be important to them.

P4 mentioned a game children saw in the cartoon Maşa and the Teddy Bear and played in the classroom. The teacher shared the intervention she did when the preschool boys underestimated and discriminated against the preschool girls during the game:

For example, I said why can't they play, girls can play, too. They can throw, too. For example, they say they can't play. I said why not. You have 4 arms and girls have 2 arms. Is that it? So, you are throwing using 4 arms? I said they can help you, too. But I said they can do it. I said I believed in them. So, they played with the girls. The girls actually played better. Boys began to say, you threw it wrong. This time they started a fight. And, I said stop it, and I asked them to

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form 2 teams as boys and girls, I said let's see who will win. They like more competitive things, who will win this time, the girls won. This time, the boys said it was unfair because they practiced more.

P3 focused on the color and toy discriminations between the preschool girls and boys. She shared her experience as follows:

For example, I don't say that every color is special and beautiful for us, and then take this pink, it's yours. Look, this is important for us. I say I can wear a blue sweater, you can wear yellow instead of pink, I'm trying to create a little more awareness in their perceptions. I even have a student. We have a toy day on Fridays. For example, a girl brings me a car and shows me the car, you know, when she gets a reaction from her other friends, I heard them say, "Why did you bring a car, why didn't you bring a baby doll?", I said that this is normal, that girls can play with Legos and cars, and that boys can play with dolls, and we discussed this issue.

4.4.1.1.2. Restrictions on certain toys

One of the early childhood teachers (P13) stated that some dolls impose beauty standards on preschool girls so she restricted playing with this kind of dolls:

I also pay attention to dolls being more normal. I mean, I'm not in favor of makeup, the dolls who look like models. I actually don't want that kind of doll or something. We have more normal dolls in our classroom. You know, toys are actually beautiful, those dolls, but I think the toys they bring, especially the toys they bring on the toy day, lead them to such formalism. I mean, I don't want them to agree to the idea that everybody should be like that lady, everybody should be like that princess. I limit them a little in that way. Because the process is too early for the early childhood education period. I try to put some limitations on those matters.

4.4.1.1.3. Collaboration with the family

Two of the teachers mentioned that they collaborated with the families on gender related issues. However, these practices are not intended for the gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons. P2 shared a project she did that involved fathers in childcare and educational processes:

What would I do in a classroom setting? For example, at night, children sleep with their mothers, as I know, they usually wear their pajamas, clean their bodies before going to bed, and usually do these with their mother. She is with her mother, including the story telling time until she falls asleep. For example, I'd like the father to do this process. I did this last year. I did a "Tell me a story dad" project with the class and invited the fathers to the class. Each father came for a week in turn and read fairy tales to the children. They really liked this. For example, when they got home, the kid asked his father to read the tale that day. I explained that the father can be responsible for the child's sleep and self-care, and that the father can put the child to bed. And during the distance learning process, I did a "I made a cake with my father" project last year. The children made cakes with their father. They liked it very much and the mothers liked it, too. It was very nice, mothers even said that they didn't even think their husbands would enter the kitchen. She said the kids were so happy. My husband began to help in the kitchen and I got good feedback similar to these.

4.4.1.2. Activity Suggestions

The teachers suggested some activities to address gender issues in the classroom like drama and literacy activities. It can be said that the teachers made some efforts to address gender equality in their classroom. However, not all of the examples were about the stereotypical gender role representations in children's cartoons.

4.4.1.2.1. Drama

Many of the teachers (n=10) suggested making a drama activity to mention gender equality issues. However, not all of the drama activities suggested by the teachers addressed the gender role stereotypes in the cartoons. P22 shared a drama activity she prepared for the Senior Citizens Week and Theater Week. She expressed that she considered gender equality in the drama activity:

> Now, it's like this, not in the direction of the messages that the series give us, but as a social content in general, I always talk about the existence of equality with children. So, we did drama study. We combined the Senior Citizens Week and the Theater day and made a drama. In the drama, there was an old lady, there was an old man. They're sitting at home. The lady is knitting and the man is sitting next to her. The wife says, I wish you made coffee and we drank. The man gets up, makes coffee, and brings it to his wife. You know, I did this on purpose there. I mean, I deliberately made the man make coffee for his wife.

P12 suggested making a drama activity through a story which is about an egalitarian family:

> For example, I have never done any activity about them, but if I want to do it, I would find a story. In the story, there should be a family sharing the workload . Imean there should be a family who shares tasks. For example, the mother should work, drive the car and do everything. She should do housework, too but by sharing it with her husband. Not just men earning money outside. I'd want to find a story like that and ask them to play it using drama.

P8 mentioned a project she is planning on this subject. Within the scope of the project, she is planning to show a cartoon about one of fairy tales to the children and act out the tales by reversing the male and female roles between the preschool boys and girls. She explained the project with the following:

> So, we have already started a project. Through eTwinning, it will be about fairy tales and children playing it. We will, for example, use the classic tales that are known. We determine this by voting. There are certain classic fairy tales, such as Puss in Boots, Rapunzel, Little Red Riding Hood. It can be watching series, movies that the members will choose. It may be narrating this with a TV strip. Afterwards, we will have the children act out these fairy tales we have told them with the drama method. At that time, we won't give the role of the princesses only to girls, but also give that role to boys to ensure that boys can internalize this. So in this way, we'll try to make them understand and empathize with each other. We can do this because it is more effective for children to practice and see something than to watch and talk about it. We thought about this. That's why we started such a project.

In addition to these, P3 suggested conducting a drama activity through giving the male roles in the cartoons to the preschool girls and female roles to the preschool boys:

> I actually wanted to act out the series, movies using drama. And as you said, we could say let's switch roles this time, let's be like this, the boys will have girls' roles, girls will have boys' roles or become a father. I mean, we could achieve this role changing with drama.

4.4.1.2.2. Literacy activities

Two of the teachers expressed that they mentioned gender equality issues in their literacy activities. However, these activities do not address the gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons. P18 explained her experience:

> I especially try to teach these in Turkish-language activities. When I need to give examples from my own life, I try to emphasize this issue. I exemplify my relationship with my husband. I try to talk about their expectations. I try to join their games and pull the game to another channel.

P10 shared the books she is reading with the preschool children to give an egalitarian gender role perception to them:

> Today, for example, I brought this thing as a book about Women's Day. I brought Nezahat Onbaşı's book because men have this thing. You know, there are only men in the military, there are no girls in the military. They ask, "Can there be a woman who is a firefighter?" For example, to destroy this image a little bit, maybe it was a coincidence with you, too, I brought the book. Tomris Hatun, I brought Okçu's book, I will read it.

4.5. Key Findings

Views of Early Childhood Teachers on Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

Table 11.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers About Popular Cartoons and Popular Cartoon Characters

Popular cartoons and cartoon characters
● According to the early childhood teachers the most popular cartoons among the preschool children are Rafadan Tayfa, Frozen, Spiderman, Kral Şakir, and PJ Masks.
● According to early childhood teachers Elsa, Spiderman, Hayri, and Batman are the most popular cartoon characters.

Table 12.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers About
Characteristics of Female Cartoon Characters

Characteristics of female cartoon characters
According to early childhood teachers: ● There is a standardized beauty in the cartoons in terms of being thin, having long blond hair, colored eyes and having fancy clothes and accessories. Also, these beauty standards in the cartoons are unrealistic. ● Female cartoon characters have traditional personality traits associated with women such as being naive, affectionate, and calm. Also, the traditional female personality traits in the cartoons are unrealistic for the present age. ● Female characters in the cartoons are mostly presented in domestic roles like cooking and childcare.

Table 13.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers About
Characteristics of Male Cartoon Characters

Characteristics of male cartoon characters
According to early childhood teachers: ● Male characters in children's cartoons are powerful and they display violence by using their power. ● Personal characteristics of male characters are being dominant, leader, smart and self- confident. ● Male characters in cartoons are always the winner. ● Male characters in the cartoons are represented as the breadwinner and they are not shown doing household chores. ● Male characters are presented in diverse occupations such as veterinarian, dentist, farmer, and watchman.

Table 13. (continued)
- Male characters are shown as the main characters in the cartoons more than the female characters.   - Male characters in children's cartoons are physically active. They are able to jump, run and fly.   - Male characters in cartoons are represented in roles related to science and technology more than female characters.

Table 14.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers Regarding the
Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons
According to early childhood teachers: - Distribution of the chores between male and female characters in children's cartoons is not egalitarian and does not reflect the current state of society in terms of this subject.   - The children's cartoons perpetuate the existent gender stereotype that portrays a domestic female and working male.   - In children's cartoons female characters are represented as lacking some abilities.   - Female characters in children's cartoons are not sufficiently represented in the career roles.   - There is a violence imposed on preschool boys.   - There is an imposition of beauty standards in children's cartoons.

Views of Early Childhood Teachers on the Impact of Children's Cartoons on Children's Gender Role Perceptions

Table 15.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers Regarding the Impact of Children's Cartoons on Preschool Girls' Gender Role Perception

Impact of Children's Cartoons on Preschool Girls' Gender Role Perception
According to early childhood teachers: - Preschool girls identify themselves with the female characters in the cartoons, especially those who are presented as the beautiful and powerful.   - Girls imitate behaviors of the female characters in cartoons such as dancing like Elsa, using magic to solve problems, walking like a princess, and talking like a princess in their make-believe play.   - In their make-believe play, girls do domestic work such as cooking and childcare, which are traditionally associated with women in the society. The stereotypical female roles presented in cartoons are taken as a model by girls.   - Girls reflect physical characteristics of their favorite cartoon characters in their drawings.   - Beauty standards presented in the children's cartoons via the female characters affect body perception of preschool girls. Preschool girls have a desire to be beautiful as the female cartoon characters presented.   - The domestic female figure presented in the cartoons might impact future goals of the preschool girls.   - Girls like to use products, wear clothes, and play with toys related to their favorite cartoon characters. When they wear an outfit with a character on it, they feel like they are the character on their outfit.   - There is a discrimination between the characters preferred by preschool boys and girls.   - Preschool girls do not want to use products or materials if it is not with a color associated with girls like pink or purple. Teachers defended that the cause of such a strict distinction on the colors is the cartoons children watch, because the colors are differentiated for the girls and boys in the cartoons.

Table 16.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers Regarding the Impact of Children's Cartoons on Preschool Boys' Gender Role Perception

Impact of Children's Cartoons on Preschool Boys' Gender Role Perception
According to early childhood teachers: - Preschool boys mostly imitate the cartoon characters' movements in the classroom.   - Favorite cartoon characters of preschool boys are powerful and unbreakable in general, and they want to be like them.   - Preschool boys reproduce the violence in children's cartoons in their dramatic play.   - Children's cartoons impose always being the winner to boys, because their favorite powerful male main character always wins the fights he struggles.   - Boys like to wear clothes and use products that include visuals of their favorite cartoon character such as toys and stationery equipment. Also, when they use those products, the situation of identifying themselves with that character increases.   - Preschool boys want to use colors traditionally associated with men both in the society and the children's cartoons.   - Preschool boys tend to discriminate against preschool girls when they play a game which is played by the male characters in children's cartoons. The teachers suggested preschool boys underestimate girls.   - Children's cartoons affect preschool boys in terms of using violence towards their peers.

Table 17.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers Regarding How They Position the Effect of Cartoons on Children's Gender Role Perception

Factors affect gender role perception of preschool children
According to early childhood teachers: ● The most influential factor on children's gender role perception is family. ● Children's cartoons reproduce the stereotypical gender roles existent in the society. ● Insufficient family and community interaction is a factor increasing the impact of the cartoons in children's gender role perception. ● With the Covid 19 pandemic process, children were highly exposed to children's cartoons. Therefore, the impact of cartoons on children's gender role perception has increased. ● The expectations and credit of the community shape children's occupational choices, behavior traits and interests.

How Early Childhood Teachers Address Impact of Children's Cartoons on Children's Gender Role Perceptions

Table 18.

Key Findings from Interviews with Early Childhood Teachers Regarding How They Address Impact of Children's Cartoons on Children's Gender Role Perceptions

How teachers address impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions
- Even if teachers address gender equality subjects in the classroom, not all of the practices they mentioned are directly addressing gender issues in children's cartoons.   - The early childhood teachers talk with children about the subjects related to gender equality such as power, beauty, occupations, and social roles. However, responses given by the teachers were rarely about the gender stereotypes children were exposed to in the cartoons.   - Teachers bring up gender equality related subjects in the classroom based on the situation they observe during the activities or the free time.   - The teachers suggested some activities to address gender issues in the cartoons like drama and literacy activities.   - It can be said that the teachers make some efforts to address gender equality in their classroom. However, not all of the examples were about the stereotypical gender role representations in children's cartoons.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, discussion of the findings is presented initially. The findings are discussed under separate headings to address each of the research questions. Therefore, there are three main headings under discussion of the findings. Then, the implications and recommendations for the further studies are presented.

5.1. Discussion of the Findings

5.1.1. Early Childhood Teachers' Views on Stereotypical Gender Role Messages in Children's Cartoons

In this section, views of early childhood teachers on stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons are discussed. However, first, the popular children's cartoons and cartoon characters stated by the participants are discussed.

Rafadan Tayfa, Frozen, Spiderman, Kral Şakir, and PJ Masks were the children's cartoons mentioned by many of the teachers as the popular children's cartoons in their classroom. The aforementioned cartoons that were considered as popular by the teachers are in line with the children's cartoons mentioned in the literature. These cartoons were also identified as the most popular children's cartoons by various researchers (Sadioğlu et al., 2018; Şen & Deniz, 2019b; Yaralı & Avcı, 2018, Akça & Çilekçiler, 2019; Şen, 2020; Şahin & İlhan, 2019).

As it was mentioned before, after learning the names of the popular children's cartoons from the perspective of the participants, the researcher asked questions aiming at learning early childhood teachers' views on the gender roles presented

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in the children's cartoons through the animated characters. Accordingly, the researcher asked questions to learn about the teachers' views on the female and male characters.

5.1.1.1. Views on The Female Characters

First, the participants shared their ideas about the female cartoon characters. Statements about the physical appearance of the female cartoon characters are given under the "Physical Characteristics" category. The teachers mentioned that there is an imposition of beauty standards through the female characters in the cartoons about being thin, and having long blond hair, blue or green eyes, fancy clothes, and accessories. Also, the teachers stated that the female beauty imposed on the children is different from female appearance in real life. In other words, the female characters' representation in children's cartoons is unrealistic. These findings are consistent with those of other studies that put forth that female beauty is overemphasized in children's cartoons (Zor & Bulut, 2020; Golden & Jacoby, 2018; Northup & Liebler, 2010; Zaheen et al., 2020; Walsh & Leaper, 2020; Zor & Bulut, 2020; Hentges & Case, 2013). Similarly, Papson (2019) discussed Disney's representation of princesses in her dissertation. The researcher examined four Disney princesses, one of whom was Elsa from the animated movie Frozen which is mentioned as a popular animated movie by the participants of the present study. The researcher mentioned the appearance of Elsa in terms of her thin waist and big hips that emerged when she transformed into a free woman who can use her powers. She criticized this since it reinforces the idea that women must take care of their beauty even when they gain an enormous power as a beautiful physical appearance is supposedly the main source of a happy life. Papson (2019) also argued that the body proportions of Disney princesses are unrealistic.

In addition to the beauty standards, the teachers mentioned there is a differentiation between the colors used for male and female characters in the cartoons. They expressed that female characters' outfits are mostly pink, purple,

and red. Similarly, in her doctoral thesis, Şen (2020) reported that in the cartoons Niloya and Pepee pink was the color most used in the outfits of the female characters. Uyar and Genç (2017) also found that pink was the color most observed with the belongings of the female characters in six popular TRT Çocuk cartoons.

"Personal Characteristics", the second category, includes participants' views on the female characters' personality characteristics in children's cartoons. According to the early childhood teachers, female characters have passive personality traits like supporting the male characters. Also, teachers stated that female cartoon characters are naive, affectionate, and calm, which are some of the other personality characteristics traditionally associated with women. There are various studies in the related literature with parallel results (Ünlü, 2017; Martin, 2017; Sahi, 2022; Şen, 2020; Leaper et al., 2002; Rodríguez, 2016; Hentges & Case, 2013; Case, 2015). A study supporting the views of the participants in the present study was conducted by Leaper et al. (2002). In the aforementioned study, researchers examined gender-stereotyped content in four children's cartoons broadcast on television channels. Results showed that female characters are more likely to be portrayed in supportive roles and are kind to others. Leaper et al. (2002) also revealed that the number of male characters is quite higher than the number of female characters in the cartoons. Another study conducted by Şen (2020) examined the latest children's cartoons broadcast in the TRT Çocuk Channel, namely Rafadan Tayfa, Niloya, Keloğlan Masalları, Heidi, and Pepee. The study reported that female characters are represented as affectionate, emotional, anxious, and helpful. However, they were not represented as leaders (Şen, 2020). Related to this subject, it is important to address an older study conducted by Thompson and Zerbinos (1995). The researchers replicated another study conducted in the 1970s to learn whether a change occurred regarding the presentation of gender roles in children's cartoons. The researchers examined 41 children's cartoons. According to the study, the rate of female characters being presented as affectionate, frail, and domestic in the cartoons was higher than the rate of male characters. Also, the

female characters were not presented as assertive and independent as the male cartoon characters. It is striking that female representation in children's cartoons has not changed much from past to present. It can be considered that the early childhood teachers who participated in the present study were aware of this situation.

On the other hand, not all of the ideas expressed by the teachers were about the stereotypical personal characteristics attributed to female characters in children's cartoons. The cartoon İbi was mentioned as a cartoon that includes an independent and intelligent female character. In the current literature there are studies that include İbi in the content analyses. Göltaş (2020) examined the cartoons Rafadan Tayfa, Vikings and Ibi in terms of gender equality. She concluded that the events were resolved by a female character only in the cartoon Ibi among three cartoons she examined. Another study was conducted by Yener et al. (2021) to examine the cartoons in the TRT Çocuk Channel in terms of the values. The researchers found that independent thinking, courage, and leadership values were included in cartoon İbi. Another study was conducted by Demiral and others (2016) with the purpose of examining educational messages in 21 children's cartoons broadcast on TRT Çocuk Channel. According to the study, the cartoon Ibi includes messages about discovery, problem-solving, math, science, and geography. Results of the aforementioned studies support the ideas shared by the participants in the present study, because the cartoon Ibi has a female protagonist, and the character is associated with characteristics like leadership, independent thinking, adventure, and intelligence.

The third category was about female characters' roles in children's cartoons. Many of the teachers asserted that female characters in children's cartoons are represented in domestic roles most of the time. The teachers shared their comments about the female characters in cartoons Kral Şakir, Rafadan Tayfa, Elifin Düşleri, Pepee, Niloya, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Various previous studies confirmed the views of the participants on this subject. Muratoğlu Pehlivan (2019) analyzed four children's cartoons broadcast on the

TRT Çocuk Channel according to the representation of the mother and father. Two of the cartoons analyzed in the study were Niloya and Elif'in Düşleri which were also mentioned by the participants of the present study. Results indicated that the mother characters were never represented outside the house other than going to the playground with children. In terms of the childcare role, the rate of mothers taking care of the children is 2.3 times that of the fathers. In addition, mothers were responsible for cooking almost completely (Muratoğlu Pehlivan, 2019). Another study whose findings were parallel with the views of the participants in the present study was conducted by Deniz (2019). She evaluated four children's cartoons according to gender role representations. One of the cartoons was Kral Şakil which was also mentioned by the participants of the present study. In the animated series analyzed by Deniz (2019), mothers were engaged in household chores like cleaning and cooking. In Kral Şakir, the research results revealed that the father character did household chores only when he had to. Furthermore, under the activities of daily life category, the daughter characters were represented mostly while helping with the household chores. In the related literature, there are more studies with similar results (Yağan Güder et al., 2017; Zaheen et al., 2020; Sahi, 2022; Şen, 2020; Duman Koçtürk, 2021; Kalaycı, 2015; Ünlü, 2017; Yaralı & Avcı, 2017; Hentges & Case, 2013).

Another role for female characters in children's cartoons many of the participants mentioned was being a princess. They stated that children like princess characters in the cartoons. Teachers emphasized that these characters have magic and are associated with perfect beauty. Most of the teachers mentioned Elsa from the animated movie Frozen while sharing their comments. Elsa was one of the popular characters in most of the teachers' classrooms. They criticized the character due to her powers being based on magic instead of her own effort. According to Streiff and Dundes (2017), even if Elsa gained the respect of people as a powerful female character, the movie involves gender stereotypical ideas. The researchers suggested that the movie Frozen conveyed the message that a woman with powers should be controlled. Also, power is an

obstacle for having a romantic relationship when it is possessed by women. As it was stated before, Papson (2019) also mentioned the importance attributed to the female beauty in Frozen.

The participants stated that female characters in children's cartoons are not expected to succeed in games and change undesirable situations. One of the teachers shared her observation about the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa. The teacher expressed that the child characters were playing hula hoop in the cartoon and the girls were also included in the game. However, boys were not expecting that girls could succeed in the game. When Hale, who is the sister of the Hayri character, won the game, the boys were surprised. The observation of the participant supports the results of a study conducted by Şen (2020). The aforementioned study revealed that girls are presented as having an anxious personality in the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa while boys are presented as being intelligent and curious. Also, the girls in the cartoon never attended the football game boys played. It can be said that the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa imposes the idea that girls are not expected to succeed in certain games. This is also consistent with other study results in the literature. Thompson and Zerbinos (1995) reported that the female characters in children's cartoons ask for protection and advice more than the male characters. Similarly, Lemish (2010, p.2) put forth that female characters in children's programs are vulnerable and dependent.

Furthermore, the participants mentioned that female characters in children's cartoons also engaged in non-stereotypical roles in terms of occupations, driving, and being a main character and a leader. The participant who talked about female characters being presented in a leadership role mentioned the cartoon Keloğlan Masalları. However, one of the studies in the related literature revealed that female characters are not seen in a leadership role while male characters were coded as a leader six times in Keloğlan Masalları (Şen, 2020). Similar results were obtained in another study examining the cartoon Keloğlan Masalları in terms of gender messages. Ünlü (2017) encountered male characters six times in leadership roles, but never encountered a female character in a leadership role in

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the cartoon Keloğlan Masalları. It can be said that the related literature is not in parallel with the view of the participant in the present study. A possible explanation for this might be that the teacher has some misunderstandings about gender roles. Another possible explanation might be that the teacher did not watch the cartoon with critical eyes.

5.1.1.2. Views on Male Characters

The views of the early childhood teachers participating in the study on the male cartoon characters are grouped under three categories, namely physical characteristics, personal characteristics, and roles.

Most of the participants mentioned the muscular body, physical strength, and power stereotypes attributed to the male characters in children's cartoons. This is consistent with other studies in the literature that analyzed children's cartoons. Various studies revealed that physical strength or forcefulness is associated with masculinity in children's programs (Lemish, 2010, p.2; Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, 2020; Weltzien, 2005; Rodríguez, 2016). Lemish (2010, p. 6) stated that forcefulness of the male characters is supported by their muscular and huge bodies. According to the teachers who participated in the present study, preschool boys like powerful characters like Spiderman and Batman. Siibak and Vinter (2014) obtained similar results from the study on the same subject they conducted interviews with preschool children. According to their study, preschool boys like characters who have superpowers and are engaged in violence.

In addition, while talking about the physical characteristics of the male characters in children's cartoons, one of the early childhood teachers stated that colors are used in a stereotypical way like the use of blue, green, and orange. There are various studies in the literature that support the view shared by the teacher (Şen, 2020; Kalaycı, 2012; Yağan Güder et al., 2017).

Regarding the personal characteristics of the male cartoon characters, many of the teachers stated that male characters are dominant and are the leaders in the cartoons. The teachers expressed that male characters are presented in more prominent roles in children's cartoons. They are mostly the main characters and shape the storyline in the cartoons. The teachers mentioned the cartoons Vikings and Rafadan Tayfa as examples of male-oriented cartoons. Similar to the views of the participants in the present study, many studies in the literature determined that male characters outnumber female characters in children's cartoons and are presented in more prominent roles (Lemish, 2010; Martin, 2017; Ward & Grower, 2020; Rodríguez, 2016; Smith et al., 2012; Case, 2015). Martin (2017) interpreted this with media creators' concerns about losing their male audience. Martin (2017) based her argument on a study conducted by Luecke-Aleksa et al. (1995). According to Luecke-Aleksa et al. (1995), after children gained gender constancy, boys tend to watch male-oriented programs more, but this change does not apply to girls. Although this is exactly how it is interpreted by Martin (2017), the high number of male characters in children's cartoons and their dominant roles should be taken into consideration in terms of how preschool children's perception of the world is affected. It is believed that it is inevitable for girls who are constantly exposed to such cartoons to perceive the world as the men's world.

In addition, participants stated that male characters in the cartoons are smart and self-confident. Many studies in the literature in Türkiye and abroad also revealed that male characters in children's cartoons are portrayed as intelligent and self-confident (Rodríguez, 2016; Brownlow & Durham, 1997; Şen, 2020; Uyar & Genç, 2017; Deniz, 2019).

The participants also mentioned various roles attributed to the male characters in children's cartoons. According to the teachers, male characters appear in the roles such as a hero, winner, physically aggressive, breadwinner, someone outside the home, physically active, ball player, driver, and someone engaging with technology and science. The roles mentioned by the teachers participating

in the present study overlap with the data of many studies examining gender stereotypes in children's cartoons (Rodríguez, 2016; Hentges & Case, 2013; Luther & Legg, 2010; Case, 2015; Brownlow & Durham, 1997; Sahi, 2022; Şen 2020; Uyar & Genç, 2017). According to the study conducted by Case (2015) that examined the three networks of Nickelodeon, Disney Channel and PBS according to gender representation, being brave and hero are associated with male cartoon characters. Another study conducted by Hengtes and Case (2013) revealed that the characters who are engaged in dangerous activities and rescue people in the children's cartoons target male audiences. The role of the winner mentioned by the participants in the present study is in parallel with two studies that evaluated some of the TRT Çocuk Channel's cartoons according to gender (Şen, 2020; Uyar & Genç, 2017). Both of the studies revealed that the male characters in children's cartoons are more ambitious and competitive than the female characters.

Two of the other roles stated by the participants for the male animated characters are the characters being breadwinners and being outside the home. In her Master's thesis, Deniz (2019) revealed that male characters in children's cartoons are presented in the public space more than the female characters and are presented as the actual breadwinners of the family. Sahi (2022) also obtained similar results about the father character in the cartoons Crayon Shin-Chan and Doraemon. The roles of driving and playing ball were also mentioned by the early childhood teachers. Similar to the views of the participants in the present study, Şen (2020) determined that playing ball and driving are roles associated with male characters in the cartoons Keloğlan, Pepee, and Rafadan Tayfa.

Furthermore, teachers participating in the present study argued that physical violence is usually committed by the male characters in the cartoons. The study conducted by Luther and Legg (2010) analyzed the violence perpetrated by the male and female characters on Cartoon Network, Toon Disney, and Nickelodeon television channels. The study revealed that while social violence is perpetrated by female characters in children's cartoons, physical violence is mostly

perpetrated by male characters. Similar results were revealed also by Hentges and Kim Case (2013). In contrast, Case (2015) found that aggressive behaviors were more frequent for the female characters in children's programs on PBS, Nickelodeon and Disney Channel. However, the examination of the definition of aggression given by Case (2015) in the study shows that the researcher discussed social and physical aggression together. This may be the reason why aggressive behaviors were more frequent for the female characters in Case's (2015) study.

The last role associated with male characters by the participants was the male characters being engaged in science and technology. This view of the teachers is parallel with some of the studies in the literature (Deniz, 2021; Rodríguez, 2016; Brownlow & Durham, 1997). Rodríguez (2016) conducted a study to analyze the cartoon Phineas and Ferb. Phineas and Ferb are the two main male characters who gave their names to the cartoon. The study revealed that male characters are engaged in science and engineering in order to produce creative devices. An older study was conducted by Brownlow and Durham (1997) to analyze science and technology use in children's cartoons according to gender. The study results showed that male characters appeared more in science and technology related roles. In addition, it was determined that while male characters use technology in an aggressive and damaging way, female characters use it for the sake of others.

5.1.1.3. Views on Gender Stereotypes in Children's Cartoons

The researcher also aimed to reveal the views of early childhood teachers on the stereotypical gender representations in children's cartoons. As it was mentioned before, instead of directly asking the teachers' views, the researcher asked about the aspects of the children's cartoons teachers would want to change to remove the stereotypes they have. Many of the teachers expressed that they want to change the gender stereotypes about the distribution of chores between the male and female characters. Teachers especially focused on the household chores attributed to the female characters in the cartoons. For example, one of the teachers mentioned the father character in the cartoon Elif'in Düşleri who reads

magazines when the mother character prepares dinner. The teacher expressed that she wants to change such traditional family characteristics in children's cartoons. Moreover, most of the teachers stated that they want to change the representation of the women as characters who are not able and as not having careers. Regarding the representation of the women as characters who are not able, one of the teachers stated that female characters in the animated series are not represented in heroic roles. She exemplified the situation from Spiderman and criticized the cartoon in terms of not including female superheroes. Regarding the female characters not having careers, teachers stated that children's cartoons do not reflect the reality of today's world. Considering the responses of the teachers about the male and female animated characters, it can be said that the teachers have consistent ideas about the gender representation in children's cartoons.

In addition to the comments on gender inequality in children's cartoons, the participants mentioned two additional aspects of the cartoons, imposition of violence to preschool boys and imposition of beauty standards to preschool girls. Teachers argued that violence in children's cartoons is presented as an appropriate problem-solving tool. Also, one of the teachers criticized the imposition of power as a must on the preschool boys through the male cartoon characters. Regarding the standardized beauty, teachers stated that the media impose an ideal beauty and perfection on girls. Teachers expressed that the appearance of female characters in children's cartoons should go beyond the stereotypical understanding of beauty.

To sum up the first heading of the discussion part, many of the ideas teachers mentioned on the cartoon characters are compatible with the results of the studies that analyzed contents of the children's cartoons in terms of gender. It can be said that the teachers interpret the cartoon characters with critical eyes and notice certain gender stereotypes in children's cartoons.

5.1.2. Early Childhood Teachers Views on the Impact of Children's Cartoons on Children's Gender Role Perceptions

The second research question of the present study aimed to reveal early childhood teachers' views on the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions. Since children's cartoons present male and female characters with different characteristics and since girls and boys select different cartoons, teachers' views on the subject are discussed separately for girls and boys.

5.1.2.1. Views on the Impact of Children's Cartoons on Girls' Gender Role Perception

Responses of the participants about the impact of the children's cartoons on girls' gender role perceptions were examined under four categories based on the ways the teachers observed the cartoons impact children's gender role perception. The categories are free time activities, children's beliefs, consumption behaviors and peer relationships. In this section, the researcher discussed the study results based on these categories.

As it was mentioned in the Findings section, the early childhood teachers observe the effects of children's cartoons on girls' gender role perception during the free time activities. According to the teachers, girls identify themselves with the cartoon characters and imitate their behaviors in dramatic play. The teachers expressed that they observed children saying "I'm Elsa" or "I'm a princess". In addition, the teachers stated that these were accompanied by them imitating the princess characters' magic, and dancing, walking and speaking styles during the dramatic play. A study conducted by Malhoyt-Lee (2018) to reveal the views of mothers and teachers on how media impact girls' gender development determined similar observations regarding the subject. The participants stated that girls imitate behaviors of the characters shown to them in the media. At this point, it is important to mention the words of Kendrick (2005) about the link

between children's identity and play. Kendrick (2005) stated, "Because children's visions of the future can be linked to their current actions and sense of self, the imagined identities they portray in play may be particularly revealing in terms of understanding how children position themselves in the world". From this point of view, it can be believed that the characters that girls imitate in their dramatic plays give clues about how they perceive themselves now and in the future. Thus, it can be said that teachers should pay special attention to this issue. In a similar manner, the teachers mentioned that the roles that girls take while playing house are similar to the roles attributed to female characters in children's cartoons, such as doing housework, taking care of children, and cooking. One of the teachers stated that while the children were playing the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa, they gave the task of making meatballs for the whole neighborhood to a girl in accordance with the cartoon. Another teacher stated that girls always portray the mother who is a housewife in the house game, and this may be related to the fact that the mother characters in children's cartoons are always portrayed at home (Muratoğlu Pehlivan, 2019; Deniz, 2019; Sahi, 2022; Yağan Güder et al., 2017; Zaheen et al., 2020). Researchers stated that children tend to imitate and identify themselves with the same sex models in media (Signorielli, 1990; Siibak & Vinter, 2014; Akça & Çilekçiler, 2019). Taken together with the related literature, it can be believed that as teachers mentioned there is a link between the domestic representation of female characters in children's cartoons and girls' preference of being a mother who is a housewife while playing house.

In addition to play behaviors, the teachers expressed that girls reflect images from the children's cartoons in their drawings. Some of the teachers said that the drawings of the girls reflect the physical characteristics of the female characters presented in the cartoons. The related literature also revealed that children reflect the images in children's cartoons in their drawings (Can, 1995; Mamur, 2012).

Many of the teachers who were interviewed expressed that body perception of preschool girls is highly affected from the body ideals they see in children's cartoons. One of the teachers shared a girl in her classroom wanting blue eyes

just like Elsa and planning to use contact lenses to have them. The teacher also stated that there are girls with partially dyed hair in her classroom. The other teachers mentioned that girls want to have clothes of the animated characters and say that they are dieting to be thin. The results are consistent with the findings revealed in other studies. Brown and Slaughter (2011) conducted a study with female participants aged 4-26 years. They aimed to determine participants' perception of a normal body and attractive body. Study results showed that the body shown as attractive is thinner than the body determined as normal from childhood to adulthood. Similar findings were also revealed in another study. The mothers and teachers of four years old girls in the study conducted by Malhoyt-Lee (2018) mentioned that with the impact of beauty standards presented in the media the girls want to have beauty products and say that they are not happy with their bodies. There are other studies in the literature that put forth the negative effects of the media on girls' body perception (Afzaal et al., 2021; Slater & Tigemann, 2016; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006).

The participants also mentioned that the children's cartoons impose on girls to have a passive personality. Teachers stated that girls believe that they could not achieve certain things, such as being a savior. They expressed that these beliefs might be due to gender stereotypes portrayed in children's cartoons. According to a study conducted by Grace and Henward (2013), children accept the stereotype that girls are more passive than boys, do not fight and are physically weak. Afzaal et al. (2021) also argued that girls identify themselves with the female characters in children's cartoons and adopt their stereotypical characteristics like being passive and unassertive. In addition, the teachers stated that girls' future goals are affected by the stereotypical female representations in children's cartoons. One of the teachers said that girls in her classroom want to be mothers in the future. According to a study by Reby et al. (2022), children assign occupations to males and females in a gender stereotypical way. The researchers argued that the reason behind this may be the way children observe the distribution of occupations in their environment. In another study, Schıau et al. (2013) indicated that children are inspired by their favorite cartoon characters

when they dream about their future occupations. Even if Reby et al. (2022) did not mention the impact of the media, the media present models to the children just like their social environments and it is a fact that female characters are presented not having many occupations in many of the children's cartoons (Şen, 2020). Also, Deniz (2019) determined that the mother character doesn't go to work in some of the children's animated series even if it is known that she has an occupation. Therefore, it can be said that the teachers' views on this subject are consistent with the related literature.

Teachers stated that they also observed the effects of gender roles in children's cartoons on children's consumption behaviors. According to the teachers, there is a clear difference between the products used by girls and boys with animated characters on them. For example, a girl's use of a product with Spiderman on it was found strange by other children in the classroom. In addition, the teachers stated that girls want to have products and items with the colors associated with female characters in the cartoons such as pink. Similar to the result of the present study Schıau et al. (2013) revealed that the teachers observed preschool children wanting to have products or clothes with their favorite animated characters. Another aspect the participants in the present study argued was girls identifying themselves with the characters when they use products related to them. In this regard, Ray (2009) discussed the Disney culture, Disney products and princess play of young girls in her Master's thesis. The researcher discussed the issue from different aspects. The first idea in her thesis was that play is a very important area in children's identity development and since Disney presents itself as a friend, it is included in girls' play. Consequently, the brand being seen as a friend can have an important impact on girls' identity development. Also, young girls use the Disney products like clothes, toothbrushes, or sheets and according to Ray (2009), because the brand associated being a princess with being attractive and owning fancy things, young girls are included in princess play every time they use these products.

The last category stated by the teachers regarding the impact of children's cartoons on girls' gender role perception was peer relationships. One of the

teachers expressed that girls do not want to include boys in their playing house during the free time. The teacher stated that children only encounter domestic female figures in the cartoons and reflect this to their imaginative play. A possible explanation for this might be that children do not want to include boys because they did not encounter this in their lives or in the cartoons they watch.

5.1.2.2. Views on the Impact of Children's Cartoons on Boys' Gender Role Perception

Early childhood teachers' views on cartoon impact on gender role perception of boys are mentioned under four categories as free time activities, consumption, peer relationships and beliefs.

One of the most repeated participant views in the present study was that boys imitate male cartoon characters in their free time and identify themselves with the characters. The teachers stated that boys say "I'm Spiderman!" and imitate the movements and speech styles of the cartoon characters. Boys also want to be powerful and unbreakable like the superheroes. Besides, the teachers stated that boys reflect the violence they see in children's cartoons to their imaginative and dramatic play in free time. Teachers expressed that this is an undesirable situation. According to the teachers, the elements of cruelty, heroism, physical violence and being strong are seen in children's play. In addition, the teachers mentioned that boys always want to play competitive games and be the winner in these games. According to the teachers, this may be related to the fact that the main male characters in children's cartoons are always the winners. Various studies in the literature revealed similar findings with the present study. A study conducted by Afzaal (2022) examining the impact of animated characters on identity development of children in elementary school determined that boys identify themselves with superheroes like Spiderman and Superman. Children adopt the characters' characteristics like being the rescuer, independent, and powerful. Coyne (2014) revealed that preschool boys who frequently watch superhero media internalize their stereotypical male characteristics and reflect

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this in their activities and play. Siibak and Vinter (2014) also stated that boys identify themselves with their favorite characters and they want to have their abilities. It can be said that, with this aspect, there might be a detrimental impact on boys' psychology.

The teachers also stated that boys are not given the roles related to household chores and childcare while playing house. According to the teachers, the reason for this may be that children do not see male characters in domestic roles in children's cartoons. In the literature of children and media, there are many studies revealing that male characters are not portrayed in domestic roles as much as female characters (Thompson & Zerbinos, 1995; Yağan Güder et al., 2017; Zaheen et al., 2020; Sahi, 2022; Şen, 2020; Duman & Koçtürk, 2021; Kalaycı, 2015: Ünlü, 2017; Yaralı & Avcı, 2017; Hentges & Case, 2013).

According to the teachers, children's cartoons also affect children's drawings. The teachers stated that boys draw not only their favorite animated characters, but also the characters they saw in other media like online games.

Another category related to the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions was boys' consumerism and color preferences. According to the teachers, boys want to have products, toys and clothes with their favorite cartoon characters on them. The teachers believe that using these characters' products and wearing their clothes limit children in terms of their identity development and play opportunities because children tend to imitate the characters when they wear their clothes and play with their toys. These views are consistent with the literature. Various studies argued that there is a link between children's consumption behaviors and watching television (Robinson et al. 2001; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). Also, in a study that examined children's products in the U.S. in terms of the gender stereotypes, Murnen et al. (2016) revealed that the toys and clothes targeting boys are produced in accordance with the stereotypical male characteristics. For example, male character toys have bodies in motion, weapons as an accessory, and neutral or angry facial expression.

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According to Murnen et al. (2016), the characters on the products used by children direct them to imitate the characters. Similarly, Raj et al. (2021) revealed that in the products targeting boys the colors green and blue are used more often and have superheroes on them. Also, they argued that such products expose children to gender stereotypes. Based on the results of the present study and the related literature it can be said that the early childhood teachers must pay attention not only to the cartoons children watch but also the products they use and toys they play.

One of the most notable study results was the participants saying that preschool boys believe girls cannot succeed in certain games like playing ball and car race. For this reason, preschool boys discriminate against girls during games. The teachers associated this with the stereotypical gender role representations in children's cartoons. According to the teachers, the reason why boys do not let girls join their basketball games is that basketball is only played by male characters in the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa. Similarly, the reason why boys believe that girls cannot succeed in car races is that the car race is associated with men in the animated movie Cars. The examination of the relevant literature showed that the participants' views are parallel with the results of previous studies. As it was previously mentioned, male characters are represented in more prominent roles such as dominant, skilled, and powerful in children's cartoons (Lemish, 2010; Martin, 2017; Ward & Grower, 2020; Rodríguez, 2016; Smith et al., 2012; Case, 2015). Also, similar to what was mentioned by the participant in the present study, Şen (2020) determined that female characters were not included in the football game in the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa. In addition, many studies in the literature put forth that male characters outnumber female characters in children's cartoons, and this causes children perceive the world as the men's world (Martin, 2017; Lemish, 2010; Ward & Grower, 2020; Smith et al., 2012; Case, 2015; Gökçearslan, 2010; Calvert & Huston, 1987; Leaper & Friedman, 2007). Furthermore, one of the participants in the present study added that preschool boys include girls in their games when they need someone to play in the victim role. In a similar vein, in their study, Grace and Henward (2013)

conducted interviews on media with children and found that children believe girls cannot fight. Taking into consideration the fact that female characters are represented as in need of male protection in many animated series (Oliver and Green, 2001; Thompson and Zerbinos, 1995; Zor and Bulut, 2020), the connection teachers made between this and stereotypical gender role representations in children's cartoons makes sense.

Another aspect teachers mentioned regarding the impact of children's cartoons on preschool boys' peer relationships was violent behaviors. The teachers stated that children perpetrate violent behaviors they see in children's cartoons. For example, a child imagines himself as Spiderman taking the toy he wants by hitting the other boy. Many studies revealed that male characters in children's cartoons use violence towards others (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, 2019; Zulfiqar, 2018; Afzaal, 2022; Luther & Legg, 2010; Hentges & Kim Case, 2013). In the related literature, there are various studies similar to the views of the participants from the present study. According to a study that Çelebi (2014) investigated early childhood teachers' views on the effect of television on children's behaviors, the teachers believe that televised violence makes children more tolerant towards the violence in real life. Coyne et al. (2017) revealed that the engagement of children with superheroes in the early childhood period is associated with physical violence. İşçibaşı (2001) also stated that boys can commit violence when they watch violence perpetrated by a superhero. Signorielli (1990) and Siibak and Vinter (2014) also argued that children tend to imitate same sex animated characters. All taken together, it can be said that the observation teachers made is accurate.

The last category mentioned by the teachers was preschool boys' beliefs. According to the teachers, boys internalize gender role stereotypes in the cartoons in terms of roles, occupations, and personality traits portrayed in them. Teachers' views are supported by the previously made statements on how boys perpetrate violence, discriminate against girls, believe that girls are not as skilled as boys, and identify themselves with the superheroes. Similarly Leaper and

Friedman (2007) and Afzaal (2022) argued that children can internalize gender stereotypes in the cartoons they watch. It is important to emphasize that preschool boys' (as well as girls') internalizing gender stereotypes can contribute to perpetuation of the gender stereotypes in the societies. As the members of the future generation, the belief patterns they have will constitute structures of the future societies.

5.1.2.3. Factors Affecting Children's Gender Role Perception

In this section, the teachers shared their ideas on the effects of family, children's cartoons, peers, and society on children's gender role perceptions. Most of the teachers in the study stated that family is the most effective factor on children's gender role perception. This is because family is the place where children's first learning occurs and children reflect their family culture in every situation. Also, some participants said that the degree of the factors affecting gender role perception change depending on age and that the most influencing factor is the family during the early childhood period. Blakemore et al. (2008, p.275) stated that many children are born into their families and many of the parents decide names, activities, chores, and clothing of the children depending on their gender. Also, parental expectations, tolerance level to various behaviors and emotions, discipline methods and domains might change depending on the child's gender (Blakemore et al., 2008, p.287). Although the most influential factor might change depending on the time and situation, it can be said that family is an essential part of preschool children's gender role perception development as it is the place they are born into.

Regarding the children's cartoons, the participants shared various ideas on the subject. While some teachers evaluated children's cartoons as the most influencing factor on children's perception of gender role, some of them stated that children's cartoons are the least influencing factor. One of the prominent ideas of the participants was that children's cartoons contribute to the reinforcement of the existing gender stereotypes in children's families and the

society they live in. According to the teachers, children adopt the traditional gender roles in children's cartoons because the representations are consistent with their own life. The participants of the present study were teachers serving children from low and middle SES families. Some of the teachers stated that their students' mothers are housewives, and the fathers are the actual financial providers in most of their families. This is similar to the status of the families in the cartoons children watch. The examination of the related literature showed that the results of the present study are consistent with the previous studies. Regarding the subject, İşçibaşı (2001) stated whether children experience similar situations in their own life determines whether the children are going to adopt gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons or not. Similarly, Sahi (2022) drew attention to the possible reinforcing role of parents in the acceptance of stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons. Moreover, Boyle (2019) investigated the impact of traditional and nontraditional family structures on children's acceptance of non-stereotypical and stereotypical characters in children's cartoons. The results revealed that children from nontraditional families are more likely to detect non-stereotypical characters in children's cartoons as they do not reflect reality. Thus, it can be said that the views of the participants in the present study are similar with the study results in the literature.

The teachers also commented that peers and families affect the selection of children. Regarding the family, teachers mentioned that parents might be directing children towards gender appropriate cartoons like telling girls to watch "girly" cartoons to make them a more "girly" girl. Regarding the peers aspect, the teachers stated that children affect each other when they select what cartoons to watch. On this issue, Oliver and Green (2001) revealed that children reference their environment to determine which cartoons are more appropriate for them. For instance, when the researcher asked children how they understand a cartoon is for girls or boys, the children said they selected them based on the comments and preferences of their peers and male or female adults. Moreover, Malhoyt-Lee (2018) drew attention to the importance of mothers and teachers as the

gatekeepers of the media children consume. According to the researcher, adults should help children in their cartoon selection to develop a healthier perception of gender.

The participants also mentioned that factors like insufficient family and community interaction and restrictions that came with the COVID-19 pandemic increased the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perception due to increased television viewing time. Similarly, recent studies in the field of child and media reported that children's screen time has increased with the COVID-19 pandemic process (Ribner et al., 2021; Bergmann et al., 2022). According to the study conducted by Ribner et al. (2021) across six countries, daily screen time of children aged 3-7 years increased by 50 minutes. Furthermore, the study of Bergmann et al. (2022) showed that screen time increased even in children between 8 to 36 months old during the COVID-19 pandemic process. According to the studies in the literature, a high level of television viewing in children is associated with having more gender role stereotypes (McGhee & Frueh, 1980; Halim et al., 2013; Ward & Grower, 2020; Frueh & McGhee, 1975). Therefore, it can be said that the participants' views on this subject are consistent with the studies in the related literature.

Regarding the peer impact on children's gender role perception, the participants in the present study shared their ideas. Teachers suggested that children in the early childhood period like to be interested with the same things with their same sex peers. Also, they are likely to expect their peers to play with toys, use products and watch cartoons designated as appropriate for their gender. Similarly, studies in the literature argued that children tend to play with their same sex peers in preschool years (Blakemore et al., 2008, p.337). According to the longitudinal study of Martin and Fabes (2001), children in the early childhood period who mostly play with same sex peers show more gender stereotyped behaviors like engaging more in physically active play for boys. Also, children who like the same television programs are good friends with each other (Ünlüsoy, 2007).

Lastly, the teachers shared their ideas about the impact of society on children's gender role perception. According to the teachers, children notice the expectations of the community they live in and to whom the community gives respect to and these factors affect children's future goals, behaviors, and interests. Also, teachers mentioned the relatives of children as a factor affecting children. Children considered some of their same sex relatives as a role model and these relatives' gender role perception affect children's gender role perception.

5.1.3. Practices of early childhood teachers to address the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in the classroom environment

The third research question of the present study was aimed at learning about how early childhood teachers address the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perceptions in the classroom environment. Answers of the participants were gathered under two categories, namely problem-focused interventions, and activities. Most of the teachers stated that various problems arise in the classroom due to the stereotypical gender ideas that children adopt. For example, one of the teachers mentioned that boys didn't want to include girls into a throwing game because they believed that girls cannot succeed in the game. Then, the teacher talked with the children and included girls in the game. Therefore, under the problem-focused intervention category, the researcher presented how teachers interfere when gender-related issues come up in the classroom like in the aforementioned example. Most of the teachers talk with children about unrealistic beauty standards, importance of girls' education and having an occupation, equal distribution of chores between the genders, how boys and girls can play with whatever toy they want and how they should not discriminate against their peers from the other sex. Teachers bring up gender equality related subjects in the classroom when they witness a situation during

the activities or the free time. It can be said that teachers use teachable moments to address gender issues in the classroom.

Although the teachers were mostly aware of the gender role stereotypes of children and addressed this issue by talking with the children, most of them did not consider the reasons for such stereotypical ideas children have. At the end of the interview, the researcher asked the participants if they had any other thoughts they would like to add on this subject and what this study made them think about. Teachers mentioned that this study made them think that they should watch children's cartoons more carefully. They also added that they realized they had never questioned where children's perceptions of gender roles came from. As a result, it can be said that teachers bring up gender issues in the classroom to some extent but the interventions they implement do not address the effects of children's cartoons directly. Similarly, Temiz (2019) determined that teachers evaluate the effects of the media on children by observing them, but they talk with the children on this issue only when the conversation comes to children's cartoons. Malhoyt-Lee (2018) also revealed that parents and teachers do not try to teach children how to critically analyze messages in the media.

As another example of problem-focused interventions, one of the early childhood teachers stated that she restricts dolls which impose beauty standards on preschool girls. The teacher explained that she doesn't want children to think they have to look like that doll to be beautiful. It is known that hypersexualized and highly gendered toys (e. i. Barbie, Bratz) cause body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem in preschool girls (Şalgam, 2015; Dittmar et al., 2006). For this reason, the teacher's intervention might make sense. However, children cannot escape from such kinds of toys throughout their childhood. Therefore, it may be better if teachers empower children to view these toys with a critical eye and help children develop their self-love and self-esteem.

As the last problem-focused intervention, the teachers stated that they try to collaborate with families on gender issues. One of the teachers shared that she

conducted a project that involved fathers in childcare and household chores, and she received positive feedback from the families involved in the project.

In addition to the problem-focused interventions, the teachers suggested planning some activities or talked about the activities they conducted to address gender issues in the classroom. These were the drama and literacy activities. The suggested drama activities to address gender issues included planning drama activities involving acting in certain stories with egalitarian gender roles and acting fables and children's cartoons by reversing the male and female characters. For example, if children are acting in the cartoon Rafadan Tayfa, roles of the male characters would be played by girls and roles of female characters would be played by boys. The participants who suggested the aforementioned activity believed that children could understand gender stereotypes are wrong through experiencing that they can do what children of the other sex does. The activity suggested by the teachers can be considered from two aspects as children's gender development process and children's understanding of gender roles. From the gender development aspect, development of gender constancy is important in these years. Warin (2000) argued that gender constancy still continues to develop between 4 and 5 years old. Ruble et al. (2007) added that children gain understanding of the gender constancy between the ages of 5 and 7. From this aspect, some children might get mixed about their own gender because of such an activity. Moreover, children might think that some activities or behavior traits are for the opposite gender, and they need to change their gender for certain activities and to behave in some ways. For example, a girl who plays the role of the male character Hayri playing football might think that she needs to be male like Hayri to be able to play football in real life instead of thinking that both boys and girls can play football.

Various studies in the literature stated that teachers should discuss media messages with children in terms of whether they reflect reality or not and what messages give (Siibak & Vinter, 2014; Boyle, 2019; Nathanson et. al.,2002).

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Also, the teachers can support these discussions with some fun activities such as drawings or games (Ünlüsoy, 2007). Children should be empowered to be able to filter media messages with critical eyes starting from the early childhood period instead of being vulnerable receivers. Active adult mediation and critical media education are the essential factors in this process. Also, it is essential to start critical media education in early years (Jongenelis et al., 2014). However, critical media education is not included in the Turkish Early Childhood Education Curriculum (MONE, 2013). For this reason, teachers must be equipped to make appropriate attempts regarding the issue. As it was mentioned in the Methods section, some of the teachers who participated in the present study had received critical media literacy education in in-service training. However, as it was mentioned before, the teachers have not been engaging in sufficient and appropriate practices to equip children for media messages. These findings might be explained by the fact that media literacy education received by the teachers did not serve its purpose.

5.2. Implications

Although there is a growing body of literature on gender and children's cartoons, the studies mostly focused on content analyses of children's cartoons and measuring impacts of the cartoons on gender role perceptions of children. Present study contributed to the literature by showing teachers' perspectives on the subject. Also, the study highlighted the effects of gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons on children by relying on the teachers' experiences. Lastly, the ways the teachers addressed the effects of the cartoons they observed in the classroom were revealed. The researcher also presented conclusions of the present study. Furthermore, the researcher revealed the implication areas of the study in light of the conclusions.

The first conclusion indicates that the teachers had some ideas about the gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons and these ideas are consistent with the related literature. The teachers pointed out aspects like presentation of beauty standards, association of female characters with domestic roles and passive

personality traits attributed to women. Also, they shared comments on the prominent roles attributed to the male characters. As it was explained in the *Discussion* section, these were the aspects addressed by many studies in the related literature. However, it is important to mention that most of the teachers who shared detailed comments were the ones who watch children's cartoons with their own children. The teachers who did not watch children's cartoons shared their thoughts by making inferences from the images of the cartoons they had seen on the products children use and the outfits they wear. As a positive outcome of the study, the teachers shared that their awareness increased, and they would like to watch the favorite cartoons of the children in their classrooms. In addition to this, it would be a good suggestion to state that early childhood teachers should follow the cartoons watched by the children in their classrooms and examine their contents. If teachers can detect stereotypical gender role messages in the cartoons children watch, they can produce proactive solutions about their effects on children. In the same way, early childhood teachers should inform parents of children about the impacts of stereotypical gender role messages in children's cartoons, and they can recommend families to actively mediate when children watch cartoons. Also, asking children questions about the cartoons they watch and discussing the content of the cartoons can help them view gender roles in the cartoons more critically. For example, if a child wears a dress with the character Elsa from the movie Frozen, the teacher can ask "What kind of person is Elsa?" and "Do princesses always have to wear dresses?". In the same way, the teacher who observed that children play basketball like the characters in Rafadan Tayfa and girls are not included in the game can show the National Female Basketball Team of Türkiye to the children and discuss the issue with children by asking questions like "Can't women really play basketball?".

Another main conclusion of the study was that the teachers observed the effects of the stereotypical gender roles in children's cartoons on children's behaviors in free time, consumption behaviors, beliefs about gender and peer relationships. The results discussed in the previous section. It can be said that the aspects teachers mentioned are parallel with the findings of previous studies. The results

showed that the impact of children's cartoons on children's gender role perception mentioned in the related literature are actually observable in the classroom environment. It is important to add that some of the teachers stated they have never considered the source of some gender-related beliefs and behaviors of children. Also, they thought about the effects of children's cartoons on children's perception of gender roles, and they gained awareness on this issue through this interview. In the light of this result of the present study, it can be suggested that early childhood teachers should investigate the source of children's gender typed behaviors and that they should also consider children's cartoons while doing this investigation.

As it was mentioned in the *Findings* section, teachers observe that children internalize gender stereotypes in children's cartoons such as men have qualities to be a leader and they are required to be strong, and women are required to engage in childcare and domestic works. The situation must be considered not only from the child development perspective, but also the economical, societal, and psychological aspects. According to the study conducted by Çakır (2022) in 2022 women still experience some discriminations in business life like lower salaries, verbal and sexual abuse, glass ceiling syndrome and difficulties in recruitment. Also, the number of female managers is still less than male managers. Another study conducted by Sayın and İncioğlu (2022) with a sample of 25 companies traded on the Istanbul stock exchange, the rate of female managers is only 15,67 percent. From the psycho-social perspective, men have to overcome some problems because of masculine norms like being tough, having status, avoiding feminine traits, or hiding emotions (Sakallı & Türkoğlu, 2019). Thus, children's cartoons must be evaluated in the bigger picture with its potential of proliferation of existing gender stereotypes in the society. It is expected that the results of the current study will inform the content creators in terms of the impact of gender role stereotypes on children and encourage them to make attempts to change the stereotypical gender representations in children's cartoons.

Another important implication should be considered for teacher educators. The teacher educators should support teacher candidates during their education to follow children's media and critically analyze them. The teacher candidates can conduct observations regarding the possible media effects on children during their internships. Also, the education policy makers should add a compulsory critical media literacy course to the education program of teacher candidates.

Last conclusion of the study was that the teachers address gender issues in the classroom when they encounter a gender-related situation. They talk with children, tell them to not play with certain toys and collaborate with the families. They also suggested doing some drama and literacy activities. The teachers did not mention practices like discussing gender role stereotypes in children's cartoons with children or making activities to address the issue. Most of the practices they mentioned addressed only the gender issues. From this point of view, it can be said that teachers do not go to the basis of children's adoption of gender role stereotypes, and they deal with the issue in a superficial way. Also, some of the activities the teachers suggested were not appropriate for children. Although there were many teachers who received media literacy education in in-service training or in seminars, it can be said that the teachers did not receive adequate education on the subject in these training or they experienced problems in putting into practice what they had learned. The study results will inform the educators who develop the in-service media literacy training for teachers. The media literacy training for teachers must include how to critically analyze media messages and how to empower children to critically analyze media messages beyond how teachers can use the media to reach information. Critical media education must be seen as an important requirement of children's identity development because children who vulnerably exposed these messages may carry effects of them in their personality for their whole life. Additionally, the education policy makers should consider including critical media education to the early childhood education curriculum after making necessary attempts related to teacher education.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Studies

Based on the findings of the present study, several recommendations for further studies can be presented. This study was a phenomenological study that collected data from 25 participants using semi-structured interviews. The participants were teachers in public preschools in Niğde, a small city in Türkiye.

The present study included only early childhood teachers, but further studies can also include families to learn from their experiences and give recommendations to equip families to discuss media contents with their children.

The present study only focused on early childhood teacher ideas on impacts of cartoons on gender role perceptions of children. Further studies might focus on other media children use like games, YouTube videos and the adult series children are exposed to.

The results revealed in the present study were based on teachers' thoughts and observations. In further studies, researchers can make systematic longitudinal observations in early childhood classrooms to obtain more objective results.

The participants in the present study were mostly the female teachers. The researchers can conduct the same study with more male teachers. Male early childhood teachers might present different views on the subject. They might focus on different aspects of the issue. Thus, this study can provide an understanding of male and female teachers' views on the impact of the media on children's perception of gender roles.

Moreover, researchers can analyze the contents of current media literacy education programs for teachers and present recommendations to enrich the programs received by the teachers. Also, examining the critical media literacy education programs in various countries might help to create an applicable and

adequate critical media literacy education program for early childhood teachers in Türkiye.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demografik Bilgiler

*Mezun olduğunuz program (Lise/Ön lisans/Lisans/Yüksek lisans/Doktora/Diğer)

*Okul öncesi öğretmeni olarak meslekte kaçıncı yılınız?

*Hangi yaş gruplarına eğitim verdiniz? (0-36 ay/36-48 ay/48-60 ay/60-72 ay)

*Şu anda eğitim verdiğiniz yaş grubu nedir? (0-36 ay/36-48 ay/48-60 ay/60-72 ay)

*Çalıştığınız kurum türü nedir? (Özel/Devlet)

*Medya okuryazarlığı konulu bir eğitim aldınız mı? Türü nedir? (Seminer/Üniversitede ders olarak/ Hizmet içi eğitim/Diğer)

*Toplumsal cinsiyet konulu bir eğitim aldınız mı? Türü nedir? (Seminer/Üniversitede ders olarak/ Hizmet içi eğitim/Diğer)

Görüşme Soruları

1) Sınıfınızdaki çocuklar arasında popüler olan çizgi filmler nelerdir?

2) Sınıfınızdaki çocuklar bu çizgi filmlerdeki hangi karakterlerden bahsediyorlar?

3) Bu çizgi film karakterlerinden erkek olanlar nasıl özellikler taşıyorlar? (Sondalar: Görünüş, kişilik özellikleri, davranış, yapılan işler, oynanan oyun ve oyuncaklar)

4) Bu çizgi film karakterlerinden kadın olanlar nasıl özellikler taşıyorlar? (Sondalar: Görünüş, kişilik özellikleri, davranış, yapılan işler, oynanan oyun ve oyuncaklar)

5) Sizce oğlan çocukları bahsettiğiniz çizgi film karakterlerinden nasıl etkileniyorlar? (Sondalar: akranlarla iletişim, görünüş, tüketim alışkanlıkları, oyuncak tercihleri, oynadıkları oyunlar, gelecek hedefleri)

6) Sizce kız çocukları bahsettiğiniz çizgi film karakterlerinden nasıl etkileniyorlar? (Sondalar: akranlarla iletişim, görünüş, tüketim alışkanlıkları, oyuncak tercihleri, oynadıkları oyunlar, gelecek hedefleri)

7) Gözlemlediğiniz bu durumlara karşı sizin yaklaşımınız nasıldır? Örnek verebilir misiniz?

8) Diyelim ki bir projede görev aldınız. Sınıfınızdaki çocuklar arasında popüler olan çizgi filmlerdeki kadın ve erkek karakterlerin rollerini eşitlikçi mesajlar içerecek şekilde düzenlemeniz/değiştirmeniz gerekiyor. Nasıl değişiklikler yapardınız?

9) Aile, arkadaş, toplum ve çizgi filmleri düşünelim. Çocukların kadın ve erkeklerin toplumdaki rollerine ilişkin algısı üzerinde hangisi daha çok etkilidir? Kendi gözlemlerinize dayanarak bir sıralama yapabilir misiniz?

-Neden bu şekilde bir sıralama yaptınız?

10) Çizgi filmlerde sunulan kadın ve erkek rolleri ile ilgili konuştuk. Sınıfta da bu konuya değindiğiniz oluyor mu? (Çocuklarla konuşma, etkinlik yapma vb.)

-Yok ise; peki neler yapılabilir?

11) Bu konuda belirtmek istediğiniz başka görüş ve öneriniz var mı?

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS

ETHICS COMMITTEE

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ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Sayı: 28620816 /

14 OCAK 2022

Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Volkan ŞAHİN

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Nida ALTIPARMAK'ın "Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Çizgi Filmlerdeki Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolü Temsilleri Hakkında Görüşleri ve Sınıf İçi Uygulamaları" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **0065-ODTUİAEK-2022** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY
İAEK Başkanı

ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ öğretim elemanlarından Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Volkan Şahin danışmanlığında Nida Altıparmak tarafından yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Bu çalışma çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kalıp yargısal toplumsal cinsiyet mesajları ve bu mesajların çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algılarına olan etkisi hakkında okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin görüşlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf içerisinde bu konuya nasıl değindiğini açığa çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Bu çalışma 3 yıl ve daha fazla süredir mesleğine aktif olarak devam eden okul öncesi öğretmenlerine yöneliktir. Katılımcılardan araştırmacının soracağı açık uçlu görüşme sorularını kendi deneyimlerine dayanarak cevaplamaları beklenmektedir. Görüşme yaklaşık 20 dakika sürecektir.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Görüşmeler sırasında ses kaydı alınacak, ses kayıtları yalnızca araştırmacı tarafından erişilebilen kilitli bir dosyada tutulacak, üçüncü kişilerle kesinlikle paylaşılmayacaktır. Ses kayıtları yalnızca araştırmacı tarafından yürütülen çalışmaya veri sağlamak amacıyla kullanılacaktır.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Bu araştırmada yer almak tümüyle sizin isteğinize bağlıdır. Çalışma kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp görüşmeyi sonlandırmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye, görüşmeye devam etmek istemediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır. Araştırmada yer almayı reddedebilirsiniz ya da başladıktan sonra yarıda bırakabilirsiniz. Bu araştırmanın sonuçları bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacaktır. Araştırmadan çekilmeniz halinde sizinle ilgili veriler kullanılmayacaktır. Sizden elde edilen tüm bilgiler gizli tutulacak, araştırma yayınlandığında da kimlik bilgilerinizin gizliliği korunacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için ODTÜ öğretim üyelerinden Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Volkan Şahin (E-posta: vsahin@metu.edu.tr) ya da Nida Altıparmak (E-posta: nida.altiparmak@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad   Tarih   İmza

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APPENDIX D: TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

GİRİŞ

Çocuk ve medya literatürü, çocuklara yönelik medya içeriklerinin çoğunun kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajları içerdiğini göstermektedir (Baker ve Raney, 2007; Walsh ve Leaper, 2020; Steyer, 2014). Çocuklara yönelik içeriklerde kadın baş karakterlerden iki kat daha fazla erkek baş karakter bulunması ve kadınların fiziksel güzellikle erkeklerin ise şiddet içeren davranışlarla ilişkilendirilmesi cinsiyet rolü kalıp yargılarının çocuk medyasında yeniden üretilmesine örnek olarak verilebilir (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, 2019).

Çizgi filmler, erken çocukluk döneminde çocuklar arasında en popüler televizyon programlarıdır (Aktaş Arnas, 2005; Temiz, 2019). Giroux (1983), toplumsal değerlerin çocuklara aktarılmasında çizgi filmlerin okul, aile ve dini kurumlardan daha etkili olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Ward ve Aubrey'e (2017) göre medyadaki stereotipik cinsiyet rolü mesajları, çocukların benlik duygusu, kendine ve başkalarına atfedilen değer ve kişilerarası ilişkilerin nasıl oluştuğuna dair inançlar dahil olmak üzere dünyayı algılama biçimleri üzerinde önemli etkilere sahiptir.

Toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargıları ile çevrili çocuklar, tam potansiyellerini veya bireysel yeteneklerini asla gerçekleştiremezler (Sikora ve Pokropek, 2011). Bu kısıtlamaların kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olarak, çocuklar özgür ve çok yönlü olmak yerine sınırlı deneyimlere sahip olabilir ve yalnızca belirli özellikler ve yetenekler geliştirebilir (Blakemore vd., 2008, s. 356).

Bu nedenle çocuk çizgi filmleri çocuğun gelişim düzeyine uygunluğu ve içerdiği mesajlar açısından yetişkinler tarafından değerlendirilmelidir (Ward ve Aubrey, 2017; Berns, 2013, s. 340). Ancak günümüzde dünya medya ile çevrelenmiştir

ve medya kullanımını yasaklayarak çocukları medyanın zararlarından korumaya çalışmak akılcı bir yöntem olmayacaktır. Bunun yerine çocuklara medya mesajlarını doğru bir şekilde değerlendirmek için gerekli becerileri kazandırmak daha faydalı bir çözüm olacaktır (Vodopivec, 2011). Okul öncesi öğretmeni, çocuk gelişimi konusunda uzman, öğrenme ortamının yaratıcısı ve çocuğu günlük gözlemlerle tanıyan kişidir. Bu nedenle, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki toplumsal cinsiyet mesajlarının çocukları nasıl etkilediğine ilişkin görüşleri de özellikle çocukların gelişimi konusunda kritik öneme sahiptir ve erken çocukluk eğitimi literatürüne dahil edilmelidir.

PROBLEM DURUMU

Günümüz dünyasındaki çocuklar her geçen gün medyaya (Rideout, 2013; Rideout ve Robb, 2020) dolayısıyla da medyadaki kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarına daha fazla maruz kalmaktadırlar. Bu mesajların onları sınırlı kariyer planları ve tek tip beden algısı gibi çerçeveler ile sınırlandırmasına izin vermemeleri için çocukların eleştirel medya okuryazarlığı becerilerini (erişim, analiz, değerlendirme ve iletişim) öğrenmeleri gerekir (Flores-Koulish ve diğerleri, 2011). Ancak Türkiye'de Okul Öncesi Eğitim Programı'nda eleştirel medya okuryazarlığı eğitimi yer almamakta ve alan yazında bu konuda yeterli sayıda program, proje ve çalışma bulunmamaktadır (Temiz, 2019).

Toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarının çocuklar üzerindeki etkileri daha sonraki yıllarda da devam edebilir ve toplumdaki kalıplaşmış cinsiyet rollerinin pekiştirilmesine katkıda bulunabilir. Ward ve Aubrey'e (2017) göre toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarının içselleştirilmesi, bireylerin yaşam tercihlerini ve psikolojik durumlarını etkiler. Literatürde toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarının çocukların meslek seçimlerini (Sikora ve Pokropek, 2011) ve beden algılarını (Rodgers, 2020) etkilediğine dair çalışmalar bulunmaktadır.

Okul öncesi öğretmenleri, kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajları da dahil olmak üzere medyadaki tüm mesajları eleştirel olarak analiz edebilmeleri için

gerekli becerileri çocuklara kazandırmada önemli bir rol oynar (Erdem ve Eristi, 2018). Çocuklarla bu tür mesajları tartışarak, etkinlikler planlayarak ve fırsat eğitimi yoluyla, çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kalıp yargısal toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarının olumsuz etkilerine karşı çocukları güçlendirebilirler (Strasburger vd., 2013, s. 570; Flores-Koulish vd., 2011). Dolayısıyla, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kalıp yargısal toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajları ve bunların çocukların cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin görüşleri ve sınıfta bu konuyu ele alma biçimlerini ortaya koymak önemli olacaktır.

ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ

Erken çocukluk eğitimi literatüründe çocukların medya kullanımı, medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki etkileri ve çocukların medya kullanımına ilişkin öğretmen ve ebeveyn görüşlerinin araştırıldığı çalışmalara rastlanmaktadır (Merdin, 2017; Ciboci vd., 2014; Nikken ve Schols, 2015; Güngör). Bu çalışmaların medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki genel etkilerine odaklandığı görülmektedir. Ancak, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin medyanın çocukların cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin görüşlerini araştıran sınırlı sayıda çalışma yapılmıştır (Malhoyt-Lee, 2018).

Okul öncesi öğretmenleri, çocukların ebeveynlerinden sonra en çok zaman geçirdikleri yetişkinlerdir. Çocuklar günlük rutinler sırasında öğretmenlerinin verdiği mesajlara açık oldukları bilinmektedir. Bu nedenle okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların çizgi filmlere yüklediği anlamları şekillendirme gücüne sahip olduğu söylenebilir (Çelebi, 2014). Okul öncesi öğretmenleri tartışmalar ve etkinlikler yaparak çocukların medyada yaratılan kurgusal gerçekliği anlamalarını ve mesajları doğru bir şekilde değerlendirmelerini sağlayabilir (Chakroff ve Nathanson, 2008, s. 568). Ayrıca, çocukların medya kullanımını daha olumlu bir hale getirmeleri için aileleri yönlendirebilirler (Chakroff ve Nathanson, 2008, s. 563). Okul öncesi öğretmenleri çocukların

çizgi filmlerde maruz kaldıkları kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet mesajlarını benimsememelerini sağlayacak becerileri kazandırmakta önemli bir role sahiptir. Öğretmen görüşleri, eğitim literatürünün önemli çalışma alanlarından biridir (Pajares, 1992). Çalışmalar öğretmen görüşlerinin öğretmenlerin sınıftaki uygulamalarının önemli bir belirleyicisi olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır (Erdiller, 2003; Dickie ve Shuker, 2014; Pajares, 1992). Alan yazında öğretmenlerin eğitimde medya entegrasyonuna ilişkin görüşlerini (Vidal Hall ve diğerleri, 2020; Sharkins ve diğerleri, 2015), medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin görüşlerini (Monteiro vd., 2022; Gjelaj vd., 2020; Dickie ve Shuker, 2014) ve çocukların medya kullanımındaki problemler ve fırsatları (Hendriyani vd., 2014) araştıran çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çizgi filmlerde yer alan kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajları bu konudaki görüşlerinin araştırılması önemlidir, çünkü okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çizgi filmlerin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerinin önlenmesinde kritik bir rolü vardır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, öğretmen eğitiminde yapılması gereken iyileştirmeler ve gerek okul öncesi eğitim programında gerekse Türkiye'deki öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında yapılacak değişiklikler konusunda önemli önerilerle alanyazına katkı sağlayacaktır.

Bu çalışmadan elde edilen nitel verilerin, içerik üreticiler, öğretmenler, öğretmen eğiticileri, araştırmacılar, politika yapıcılar ve hükümetler için fayda sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin hem kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarını değerlendirme biçimlerinin hem de çocukların cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkilerini değerlendirmelerinin, gelecekte oluşturulacak çocuk çizgi filmler için içerik üreticilere yol gösterici olacağı düşünülmektedir. Öğretmenler için bu çalışmanın, çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kalıp yargısal toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarının etkileri ve bu konuyu sınıf ortamında ele almak için kullanabilecekleri stratejiler hakkında farkındalık kazanmalarına yardımcı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Öğretmen eğiticiler için bu çalışmanın okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin günümüz çocuklarının gereksinimlerinden kaynaklanan ihtiyaçları hakkında bilgilendirici olması beklenmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulgularının erken çocukluk eğitimi literatüründeki yeni araştırma

gereksinimlerine ışık tutacağı düşünülmektedir. Son olarak, bu çalışma, çocuklara yönelik içeriklere ilişkin düzenlemelerin belirlenmesi konusunda toplumda sorumlu birimler olan politika yapıcılara ve hükümetlere pedagojik bir bakış açısı sağlayacaktır.

TERİMLERİN TANIMLARI

Cinsiyet: Hormonlar ve genler gibi erkek veya kadın olmayı belirleyen biyolojik faktörler (Blakemore vd., 2008, s. 3).

Cinsiyet: Erkek veya kadın olmayı tanımlayan sosyal kategori (Helgeson, 2015, s. 3).

Toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri: Toplumun kadın ve erkeklerden beklediği davranışlar, ilgi alanları veya özellikler (Helgeson, 2015, s. 4).

Cinsiyet rolü geliştirme: "Çocuklar, duygu, davranış, bilişsel gelişim ve bilgi işleme ile ilgili olarak cinsiyetlerine uygun olarak kabul edilen davranışları, değerleri ve tutumları üstlendiği sosyalleşme süreci" (Berns, 2013, s. 73) .

Cinsiyet rolü klişesi: İnsanların psikolojik durum, davranışlar veya fiziksel görünüm dahil olmak üzere kadın ve erkeklerin özellikleri hakkında sahip oldukları inançlar veya önyargılar (Ding ve Littleton, 2005, s. 147).

Çocuk çizgi filmleri: Okul öncesi eğitim döneminde çocukların izlediği animasyon çizgi film, dizi ve filmler.

ARAŞTIRMA SORULARI

1. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kalıp yargısal toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarına ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?
2. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk çizgi filmlerinin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin görüşleri nelerdir?
3. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri çocuk çizgi filmlerinin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkisini sınıf ortamında nasıl ele almaktadır?

YÖNTEM

Araştırma Yöntemi

Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenolojik desen kullanılmıştır. Fenomenoloji farklı deneyimler, algılar, durumlar, etkinlikler veya olaylar hakkında derinlemesine bir anlayış kazanmayı amaçlar (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2018, s. 69). Ersoy'a (2019, s. 95) göre fenomenolojik eğitim araştırmalarında temel amaçlar, eğitim sürecinde yaşanan deneyimlerin tanımlanması ve anlaşılması ile öğrenme ve öğretme süreçlerinin iyileştirilmesidir. Eğitim süreçlerinde şekillenen her algı, düşünce, inanç ve deneyim fenomenolojik eğitim araştırmalarının konusu olabilir (Ersoy, 2019, s. 95). Bu çalışma, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin medyanın çocukların cinsiyet rolü gelişimi üzerindeki etkisi hakkındaki öz bildirime dayalı pratiklerini ve görüşlerini araştırmaktadır.

Moustakas (2010, s. 52) fenomenolojik araştırmaların deneyimin özünü araştırdığını ve "Bu fenomeni deneyimlemek nasıl bir şey? Hangi koşullarda oluşur? Olası anlamlar nelerdir?" gibi soruları cevapladığını belirtmiştir. Bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin öz bildirime dayalı pratikleri ve görüşleri araştırıldığından bu çalışma için en uygun araştırma deseni fenomenoloji olarak belirlenmiştir.

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Bu çalışmanın verisi yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler hem belirli soruları hem de sonda sorular vasıtasıyla daha derin bilgi alma özgürlüğünü içerir (Büyüköztürk vd.,2013).

Katılımcılar

Bu araştırmanın katılımcıları amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenmiştir. İki dahil etme kriteri belirlemiştir. İlk kriter, öğretmenlerin cevaplarını sınıf içi deneyimlerine dayandırması gerektiğinden, en az beş yıllık öğretmenlik deneyimine sahip olmalarıdır. Öğretmenlerin çocukların izlediği güncel çocuk çizgi filmleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olması gerektiğinden ikinci kriter öğretmenlerin aktif olarak öğretmenlik mesleğine devam ediyor olmalarıdır.

Araştırmanın hedef evreni, Niğde ilinde devlet anaokullarında görev yapan, en az beş yıl öğretmenlik deneyimine sahip ve halen mesleğine devam etmekte olan 25 okul öncesi öğretmeni olarak belirlenmiştir. Katılımcılar, alt ve orta sosyo ekonomik düzeyden ailelerinin çocuklarına hizmet veren öğretmenlerden oluşmaktadır.

Veri Toplama Aracı ve Süreci

Araştırma verileri, araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme protokolü kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Araştırmacı, görüşme sorularının ilk versiyonunu oluşturduktan sonra iki akademisyen ve iki okul öncesi öğretmenine göndermiştir. Akademisyenlerden biri çocuk ve medya alanında çalışmalar yürütmekte ve bir devlet üniversitesinde çalışmaktadır. Alanda 12 yıllık deneyime sahiptir. Diğeri ise erken çocukluk eğitimi ve toplumsal cinsiyet alanında çalışmalar yürütmekte ve özel bir üniversitede çalışmaktadır. Alanda 16 yıllık deneyime sahiptir. Görüşü alınan okul öncesi öğretmenleri ise on yıldan fazla öğretmenlik deneyime sahiptir. Görüşme sorularına ilişkin olarak öğretmenler ve akademisyenlerin sunduğu uzman görüşleri doğrultusunda bazı

sonda soruları eklenmiş ve bazı sorular daha anlaşılır olması için yeniden yazılmıştır.

Pilot Çalışma

Yedi öğretmenle pilot çalışma yapılmıştır. Pilot çalışmanın katılımcıları tarafından sağlanan geri bildirimlere dayalı olarak görüşme protokolünde düzenlemeler yapılmıştır. Örneğin, bazı öğretmenlerin "toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri" ve "cinsiyet rolü algıları" terimlerini içeren soruları yanıtlarken rahatsız oldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Bunun temel nedenlerinin öğretmenlerin terminolojiye aşina olmaması ve/veya tartışmalı bir konuda konuşmaktan çekinmesi olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu nedenle, daha sonraki görüşmelerde bahsi geçen terimler 'erkek ve kız rolleri' ve 'çocukların erkek ve kadın rollerine ilişkin algıları' olarak değiştirilmiştir. Daha sonraki görüşmelerde öğretmenlerin görüşlerini daha az tereddütle ifade edebildikleri gözlemlendiğinden, terminolojide yapılan bu küçük revizyonların işe yaradığı görüldü.

Veri Toplama Süreci

Niğde'deki devlet okullarından veri toplamak için Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi'nden ve Niğde İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü'nden gerekli etik izinler alınmıştır. Toplam sekiz okul araştırmaya katılmayı kabul etmiştir. Görüşmeler, okul müdürleri tarafından sağlanan sessiz yerlerde yapılmıştır. Katılımcı öğretmenlere araştırmanın amacı, ses kaydı ve diğer etik konular hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Her görüşmeden önce her katılımcıdan katılım için sözlü bir onay (ayrıca bilgilendirilmiş bir onam formunda yazılı onay) alınmıştır. Görüşme protokolü 7 demografik soru ve 12 açık uçlu görüşme sorusu içermektedir. Görüşmeler yaklaşık 30 dakika sürmüştür. Mülakat protokolü Ek A'da sunulmuştur.

Veri Analizi

Bu çalışmada, Creswell (2007, s. 159) tarafından önerilen fenomenolojik araştırmalar için veri analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İlk olarak, araştırmacı, analizden önce tüm sesli görüşme verilerini yazıya dökmüştür. Araştırmacı dökümlerdeki önemli ifadeleri belirleyerek kodları oluşturmuştur. Daha sonra araştırmacı listelenen ifadeleri veya kodları gruplayarak kategoriler oluşturmuştur. Son olarak bulguları okuyucuya açık ve anlaşılır bir şekilde ifade etmek için tablolar geliştirilmiştir. Her üç adım da iki kodlayıcı tarafından tamamlanmıştır. İlk kodlayıcı araştırmacı, ikinci kodlayıcı ise erken çocukluk eğitimi alanında yüksek lisans öğrencisi olan bir okul öncesi öğretmenidir. İşlem tamamlandıktan sonra kodlayıcılar kodlarını ve kategorilerini karşılaştırmışlardır. Veri analizi sürecinde araştırmacı Maxqda 2020'yi kullanmıştır.

BULGULAR

1.   Çocuk Çizgi Filmlerindeki Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolü Mesajlarına İlişkin Öğretmen Görüşleri

Çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarına ilişkin okul öncesi öğretmeni görüşleri çizgi filmlerdeki erkek ve kadın karakterler için incelenmiştir. Katılımcılar kadın karakterlerin standartlaşmış güzellik algısına uygun fiziksel özelliklere sahip olmalarına değinmişlerdir. Ayrıca kadın karakterlerin genellikle daha pasif, naif ve şefkatli gibi toplumda kadınlara atfedilen kişilik özelliklerine sahip olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler çizgi filmlerdeki kadın karakterlerin en çok ev içi rollerde ve prenses rolünde gösterildiğini düşünmektedirler.

Öğretmenler erkek çizgi film karakterlerinin ise toplumda erkeklere atfedilen güçlü olmak ve kaslara sahip olmak gibi fiziksel özelliklere sahip olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Baskın ve lider olmak ise öğretmenlerin erkek çizgi film

karakterlerinin sahip olduğunu düşündükleri kişilik özellikleridir. Öğretmenler ayrıca erkek karakterlerin kahraman olmak, oyunlarda kazanan olmak, şiddet uygulamak, evin geçimini sağlayan kimse olmak, fiziksel olarak aktif olmak ve baş karakter olmak gibi rollerle ilişkilendirmişlerdir.

Öğretmenler çizgi filmlerin kadın ve erkek karakterlerin cinsiyet kalıp yargılarına uygun görevlere sahip olmaları, kadınların bazı becerilere sahip değilmiş gibi gösterilmeleri ve kadın karakterlerin kariyer rollerinde gösterilmemesi gibi toplumdaki var olan toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarını sürdürdüğünü düşünmektedirler. Ayrıca öğretmenler çizgi filmlerin kız çocukların tek tip bir güzellik algısını, erkek çocuklarına ise şiddeti dayattığını düşünmektedirler.

2. Çizgi Filmlerin Çocukların Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolü Algısı Üzerindeki Etkilerine Yönelik Öğretmen Görüşleri

Okul öncesi öğretmenleri çizgi filmlerin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algısı üzerindeki etkilerini serbest zaman etkinliklerinde, inançlarında, tüketim davranışlarında ve akran ilişkilerinde gözlemlediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin birçoğu serbest zamanda erkek ve kız çocuklarının kendilerini favori çizgi film karakterleri ile özdeşleştirdiklerini ve bu karakterleri taklit ettiklerini gözlemlediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerinin birçoğu çocukların tüketim davranışlarının sevdikleri çizgi film karakterlerinden etkilendiğini belirtmiştir. Öğretmenlerden bazıları çizgi filmlerde kadın karakterlerin çoğunlukla anne rolünde bulunmasının kız çocukların evcilik oyunlarında anne rolünü oynamasını pekiştirdiğini düşünmektedir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin birçoğu çizgi filmlerde gösterilen kadın karakterlerin fiziksel özelliklerinin standart güzellik algısına uygun olmasının kız çocuklarının beden algısını olumsuz yönde etkilediğini düşünmektedir. Benzer şekilde öğretmenler çizgi filmlerde erkek karakterlerin şiddet uygulayan rollerde gösterilmesinin oğlan çocuklarının serbest zaman oyunlarında şiddet içerikli oyunlar oynamasını pekiştirdiğini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğretmenler çizgi filmlerdeki erkek

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karakterlerin her zaman savaşlarda veya oyunlarda kazanan rolde olmasının erkek çocuklarında her zaman kazanan olma isteğini pekiştirdiğini düşünmektedirler. Bazı öğretmenler kadın karakterlerin çizgi filmlerde pasif ve başarması beklenmeyen kişiler olarak temsil edilmesinin, erkek çocukların bazı serbest zaman oyunlarında kız çocuklarını dahil etmek istememelerine sebep olduğunu düşünmektedir.

Öğretmenlerin önemli bir çoğunluğu çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet algısını şekillendiren en önemli faktörün aile olduğunu düşünmektedir. Ancak çizgi filmlerin aile ve toplumda var olan kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini yeniden üreterek pekiştirdiğini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca bazı öğretmenler Covid 19 salgını neticesinde sosyal ilişkilerin azalmasının, çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algısı üzerinde çizgi filmlerin etkisini artırdığını düşünmektedir.

3.	Çizgi Filmlerin Çocukların Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolü Algısı Üzerindeki Etkisine Yönelik Öğretmen Pratikleri

Öğretmenler çizgi filmlerin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algısı üzerindeki etkisine yönelik çocuklar ile konu hakkında konuşmak, bazı oyuncakları kısıtlamak, aile ile işbirliği yapmak gibi önerilerde bulunmuşlardır. Ayrıca çizgi filmlerdeki kadın ve erkek karakterlerin rollerini yer değiştirerek çocuklara dağıtarak drama aktivitesi yapılmasını ve Türkçe-dil etkinliklerinde bu konunun ele alınması gibi öneriler sunmuşlardır.

TARTIŞMA

Alan yazındaki çalışmalar incelendiğinde araştırma sonuçlarının öğretmenler tarafından çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarına ilişkin belirtilen görüşler ile örtüştüğü görülmektedir. İlgili literatürdeki birçok araştırma çizgi filmlerdeki standartlaşmış güzellik algısına değinmiştir (Zor ve Bulut, 2020; Golden ve Jacoby, 2018; Northup ve Liebler, 2010; Zaheen vd., 2020; Walsh ve Leaper, 2020; Hentges ve Case, 2013). Benzer şekilde

öğretmenlerin kadın çizgi film karakterlerinin pasif, naif, şefkatli ve sakin kişilik özelliklerini göstermesi ve daha çok ev içi rollerde temsil edilmesine ilişkin görüşleri alan yazındaki çalışmalar ile paralellik göstermektedir (Ünlü, 2017; Martin, 2017; Sahi, 2022; Şen, 2020; Leaper vd., 2002; Rodríguez, 2016; Case, 2015; Muratoğlu Pehlivan, 2019; Deniz, 2019).

Bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların görüşlerine benzer olarak alan yazındaki birçok çalışmada, çocuk çizgi filmlerinde erkek karakterlerin kadın karakterlerden daha fazla olduğu ve daha belirgin rollerde sunulduğu belirlenmiştir (Lemish, 2010; Martin, 2017; Ward ve Grower, 2020; Rodríguez, 2016; Smith vd., 2012; Case, 2015). Ayrıca öğretmenlere göre erkek karakterler kahraman, kazanan, fiziksel olarak saldırgan, evin geçimini sağlayan gibi rollerde yer almaktadır. Bu araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin bahsettiği bu roller, çocuk çizgi filmlerinde toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarını inceleyen birçok araştırmanın verileri ile örtüşmektedir (Rodríguez, 2016; Hentges ve Case, 2013; Luther ve Legg, 2010; Case, 2015; Brownlow ve Durham, 1997).

Öğretmenlerin çoğu, çizgi filmlerde erkek ve kadın karakterler arasındaki ev içi görevlerin dağılımına ilişkin toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarının sürdürüldüğünü ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin çoğu, kadınların başarması beklenmeyen ve kariyer sahibi olmayan karakterler olarak temsil edilmesinin değiştirilmesi gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler, çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kadın karakterlere verilen rollerin günümüz dünyasının gerçeğini yansıtmadığını belirtmişlerdir. Erkek ve kadın çizgi film karakterlerine ilişkin öğretmenlerin verdiği yanıtlar dikkate alındığında, öğretmenlerin çocuk çizgi filmlerinde cinsiyet temsili konusunda tutarlı fikirlere sahip oldukları söylenebilir.

Bulgular bölümünde de belirtildiği gibi okul öncesi öğretmenleri, çocuk çizgi filmlerinin kız çocuklarının cinsiyet rolü algısı üzerindeki etkilerini gözlemlediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenler çocukların "Ben Elsa" ya da "Ben prensesim" gibi ifadeler ile kendilerini çizgi film karakterleri ile

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özdeşleştirdiklerini, bu karakterleri taklit ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Malhoyt-Lee'nin (2018) medyanın kız çocuklarının cinsel gelişimini nasıl etkilediğine ilişkin anne ve öğretmenlerin görüşlerini incelediği bir araştırmada da konuya ilişkin benzer gözlemler saptanmıştır. Kız çocukların dramatik oyunlarında taklit ettikleri karakterlerin kendilerini şimdi ve gelecekte nasıl algıladıklarına dair ipuçları verdiği düşünülebilir. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin bu konuya özellikle dikkat etmesi gerektiği söylenebilir.

Görüşülen öğretmenlerin çoğu, kız çocuklarının beden algısının, çocuk çizgi filmlerinde gördükleri beden ideallerinden yüksek oranda etkilendiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Alan yazındaki konuya ilişkin çalışmalarda da medyadaki güzellik standartlarının kız çocuklarının beden algısı üzerindeki olumsuz etkisi ortaya konmuştur (Brown ve Slaughter, 2011; Malhoyt-Lee, 2018; Afzaal vd., 2021; Slater ve Tigemann, 2016; Dohnt ve Tiggemann, 2006). Bu anlamda öğretmenlerin alan yazında belirtilen bu olumsuz etkileri sınıf içerisinde gözlemledikleri söylenebilir.

Öğretmenlerin birçoğu çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin çocukların tüketim davranışları üzerindeki etkisini de gözlemlediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlere göre kız ve erkek çocukların kullandığı ve üzerinde animasyon karakterler bulunan ürünler arasında bariz bir fark vardır. Öğretmenler hem kız hem erkek çocuklar için üzerinde sevdikleri karakterin görseli bulunan ürünleri kullandıklarında çocukların kendilerini bu karakterler ile özdeşleştirmeye daha yatkın olduklarını düşünmektedirler. Alan yazında da mevcut çalışmanın katılımcılarının düşüncelerini destekleyen bulgular ortaya koyan çalışmalar mevcuttur (Schıau vd., 2013; Ray, 2009).

Kız çocukların kendilerini çizgi film karakterleri ile özdeşleştirmesi ve onları taklit etmesine benzer şekilde öğretmenler erkek çocukların da benzer davranışlar sergilediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler erkek çocukların favori süper kahramanları gibi hareketli ve şiddet içeren davranışlar sergilediğini ve bunun istenmeyen bir durum olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Buna ek olarak bazı

öğretmenler erkek çocukların genellikle rekabetçi oyunlar oynamak ve bu oyunlarda kazanan olmak istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler bu durumu çizgi filmlerdeki erkek baş karakterlerin her zaman kazanması ile ilişkilendirmiştir. Alan yazındaki çalışmalar öğretmenlerinin kurduğu bu ilişkiyi doğrular niteliktedir. Afzaal'ın (2022) çizgi film karakterlerinin ilkokul çağındaki çocukların kimlik gelişimine etkisini incelediği çalışmasına göre çocuklar çizgi film karakterleri ile kendilerini özdeşleştirmektedirler. Coyne (2014), süper kahraman medyasını sıklıkla izleyen okul öncesi erkek çocuklarının kalıplaşmış erkek özelliklerini içselleştirdiklerini ve bunu etkinliklerine ve oyunlarına yansıttıklarını ortaya koymuştur.

Öğretmenler ayrıca ev işleri ve çocuk bakımı ile ilgili rollerin erkek çocuklara evcilik oyunlarında verilmediğini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlere göre bunun nedeni çocukların çizgi filmlerde erkek karakterleri ev içi rollerde görmemeleri olabilir. Çocuk ve medya literatüründe erkek karakterlerin kadın karakterler kadar ev içi rollerde tasvir edilmediğini ortaya koyan birçok çalışma bulunmaktadır (Thompson ve Zerbinos, 1995; Yağan Güder vd., 2017; Zaheen vd., 2020; Sahi, 2022; Şen, 2020; Duman ve Koçtürk, 2021; Kalaycı, 2015; Ünlü, 2017; Yaralı ve Avcı, 2017).

En dikkate değer araştırma sonuçlarından biri ise bazı öğretmenlere göre erkek çocukları kız çocukların top oynama ve araba yarışı gibi bazı oyunlarda başarılı olamayacağına inanmakta bu nedenle oyunlar sırasında kız çocuklara karşı ayrımcılık yapmaktadır. Öğretmenler bu durumu çizgi filmlerdeki kalıplaşmış cinsiyet rolü temsilleriyle ilişkilendirmiştir. Öğretmenlere göre erkeklerin kızların basketbol maçlarına katılmalarını istememesinin nedeni Rafadan Tayfa çizgi filminde basketbolun sadece erkek karakterler tarafından oynanmasıdır. Alan yazındaki birçok çalışmada, çizgi filmlerdeki erkek karakterlerin baskın, yetenekli ve güçlü gibi rollerde temsil edildiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır (Lemish, 2010; Martin, 2017; Ward ve Grower, 2020; Rodríguez, 2016; Smith vd., 2012; Case, 2015). Ayrıca birçok çizgi filmde kadın karakterlerin erkek korumasına muhtaç olarak temsil edildiği dikkate alındığında (Oliver ve Green, 2001;

Thompson ve Zerbinos, 1995; Zor ve Bulut, 2020), öğretmenlerin kurduğu ilişkinin anlamlı olduğu söylenebilir.

Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin çoğu, ailenin çocukların cinsiyet rolü algısı üzerinde en etkili faktör olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Aile, çocukların ilk öğrenmelerinin gerçekleştiği yer olduğunu ve çocukların her durumda aile kültürlerini yansıtacaklarını savunmuşlardır. Katılımcıların öne çıkan görüşlerinden biri ise çizgi filmlerin çocukların ailelerinde ve içinde yaşadıkları toplumda var olan toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarının pekiştirilmesine katkıda bulunduğuydu. Öğretmenlere göre, çizgi filmlerdeki temsiller kendi yaşamları ile tutarlı olduğu için çocuklar çizgi filmlerde gösterilen kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini benimsemektedirler. Konuyla ilgili olarak, İşçibaşı (2001), çocukların kendi yaşamlarında benzer durumları yaşayıp yaşamamalarının, çocukların çizgi filmlerde cinsiyet rolü kalıp yargılarını benimseyip benimsemeyeceklerini belirlediğini ifade etmiştir. Katılımcılar ayrıca yetersiz aile ve toplum etkileşimi ve COVID-19 pandemisi ile gelen kısıtlamalar gibi faktörlerin, artan televizyon izleme süresi nedeniyle çocuk çizgi filmlerinin çocukların toplumsal cinsiyet rolü algısı üzerindeki etkisini artırdığını dile getirmişlerdir. Son dönemdeki birçok araştırma COVID-19 pandemi süreci ile çocukların ekran başında geçirdikleri sürenin arttığını göstermiştir (Ribner vd., 2021; Bergmann vd., 2022). Dolayısıyla katılımcıların bu konudaki görüşlerinin ilgili alan yazındaki çalışmalarla uyumlu olduğu söylenebilir.

Bu çalışmanın üçüncü araştırma sorusu, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk çizgi filmlerinin çocukların cinsiyet rolü algıları üzerindeki etkisine yönelik öz bildirime dayalı pratiklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır. Katılımcıların yanıtları problem odaklı müdahaleler ve etkinlikler olmak üzere iki kategoride toplanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin çoğu, çocukların benimsediği kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet inançlarından dolayı sınıfta çeşitli sorunların ortaya çıktığını ifade etmiştir. Örneğin öğretmenlerden biri, erkeklerin kızların oyunda başarılı olamayacağına inandıkları için kızları top atma oyununa dahil etmek istemediklerinden bahsetmiştir. Öğretmen çocuklarla konuşmuş ve kız

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çocuklarını da oyuna dahil etmiştir. Öğretmenlerin çoğu çocuklarla gerçekçi olmayan güzellik standartları, kız çocuklarının eğitiminin ve meslek sahibi olmanın önemi, işlerin cinsiyetler arasında eşit dağılımı, kız ve erkek çocukların istedikleri oyuncakla oynayabilecekleri ve ayrımcılık yapmamaları gerektiği konularında çocuklarla konuşmaktadır. Öğretmenler çoğunlukla çocukların cinsiyet rolü kalıp yargılarının farkında olmaları ve bu konuyu çocuklarla konuşarak ele almalarına rağmen, çoğu, çocukların sahip olduğu bu tür basmakalıp fikirlerin nedenlerini araştırmamaktadır. Görüşme sonunda araştırmacı, katılımcılara bu konuda eklemek istedikleri başka düşünceleri olup olmadığını ve bu çalışmanın onlara ne düşündürdüğünü sormuştur. Öğretmenler, bu çalışmanın kendilerine çizgi filmleri daha dikkatli izlemeleri gerektiğini düşündürdüğünü belirtmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak öğretmenlerin sınıfta toplumsal cinsiyet konusunu bir yere kadar gündeme getirdikleri ancak uyguladıkları müdahalelerin çizgi filmlerin etkilerini doğrudan ele almadığı söylenebilir.

Bunlara ek olarak öğretmenler sınıfta cinsiyet konularını ele almak için bazı etkinlikler planlamayı önermişlerdir. Bu etkinlikler drama ve Türkçe- dil etkinlikleri olarak sınıflandırılabilir. Öğretmenler tarafından önerilen drama etkinliğinde çizgi filmlerdeki erkek karakterlerin rollerini kız çocuklarına, kadın karakterlerin rollerini ise erkek çocuklara vererek empati yapmalarını sağlanabileceği ifade edilmiştir. Çocukların gelişimsel dönemlerine uygun olmadığı ve çocukları top oynamak için erkek olunması gerektiği veya yemek yapmak için kadın olunması gerektiği gibi yanlış algılara sürükleyebileceği nedeniyle uygun bir öneri olarak değerlendirilmemiştir.

Alan yazında öğretmenlerin medya mesajlarının gerçeği yansıtıp yansıtmadığı ve verdiği mesajların ne olduğu konusunda çocuklarla tartışması gerektiği belirtilmektedir (Siibak ve Vinter, 2014; Boyle, 2019; Nathanson vd.,2002). Ayrıca, öğretmenler bu tartışmaları çizim, oyun gibi eğlenceli etkinliklerle destekleyebilirler (Ünlüsoy, 2007). Çocuklar, savunmasız alıcılar olmak yerine erken çocukluk döneminden itibaren medya mesajlarını eleştirel gözle süzgeçten geçirebilmeleri için güçlendirilmelidir. Aktif yetişkin arabuluculuğu ve eleştirel

medya eğitimi bu süreçte temel faktörlerdir. Ancak eleştirel medya eğitimi Türkiye Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Programında yer almamaktadır (MEB, 2013). Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin konuyla ilgili uygun girişimlerde bulunabilecek donanıma sahip olmaları gerekmektedir. Bu araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin bir kısmı hizmet içi eğitimde eleştirel medya okuryazarlığı eğitimi almıştır. Ancak öğretmenler çocukları medya mesajlarına karşı güçlendirmek için yeterli ve uygun uygulamalar yapmamaktadır. Bu bulgular öğretmenlerin aldığı medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin amacına hizmet etmemesi ile açıklanabilir.

ÖNERİLER

Araştırma sonuçlarına göre okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıflarındaki çocukların izledikleri çizgi filmleri takip etmeleri ve içeriklerini incelemeleri gerektiği söylenebilir. Öğretmenler çocukların izledikleri çizgi filmlerde toplumsal cinsiyet mesajlarını tespit edebilirlerse çocuklar üzerindeki etkileri konusunda proaktif çözümler üretebilirler. Aynı şekilde okul öncesi öğretmenleri çizgi filmlerindeki kalıplaşmış toplumsal cinsiyet rolü mesajlarının etkileri konusunda çocukların ailelerini bilgilendirmeli ve ailelere, çocukların çizgi film izlerken aktif olarak aracılık etmelerini önerebilirler. Ayrıca çocuklara izledikleri çizgi filmlerle ilgili sorular sormak ve çizgi filmlerin içeriğini tartışmak çizgi filmlerdeki cinsiyet rollerine daha eleştirel bakmalarına yardımcı olabilir. Örneğin; eğer bir çocuk üzerinde Elsa karakteri olan bir elbise giydiyse, öğretmen "Elsa nasıl bir insan?" ve "Prensesler her zaman elbise giymek zorunda mı?" diye sorabilir. Aynı şekilde çocukların Rafadan Tayfa'daki karakterler gibi basketbol oynadığını ve kızların oyuna dahil edilmediğini gözlemleyen öğretmen, çocuklara Türkiye A Milli Kadın Basketbol Takımı'nı gösterip "Kadınlar gerçekten basketbol oynayamaz mı?" gibi sorular sorarak konuyu tartışabilir. Ayrıca bu araştırmanın bulguları ışığında okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların cinsiyete dayalı davranışlarının ve inanışlarının kaynağını araştırmaları ve bu araştırmayı yaparken çocuk çizgi filmlerini de dikkate almaları önerilebilir.

Mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarının, içerik oluşturucuları cinsiyet rolü kalıp yargılarının çocuklar üzerindeki etkisi konusunda bilgilendirmesi ve onları çocuk çizgi filmlerindeki kalıplaşmış cinsiyet temsillerini değiştirmeye yönelik girişimlerde bulunmaya teşvik etmesi beklenmektedir.

Öğretmen eğitimcileri, öğretmen adaylarını eğitimleri boyunca çocukların medyalarını takip etmeleri ve eleştirel olarak analiz etmeleri için desteklemelidir. Öğretmen adayları stajları sırasında medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki olası etkilerine ilişkin gözlemlerde bulunabilirler. Ayrıca eğitim politikası belirleyicileri, öğretmen adaylarının eğitim programlarına zorunlu bir eleştirel medya okuryazarlığı dersi eklemelidir.

Belirtildiği üzere öğretmenlerin çocuklarda çizgi filmlerdeki toplumsal cinsiyet kalıp yargılarına yönelik farkındalık yaratmak amacıyla önerilen etkinliklerin bazıları çocuklara uygun değildir. Hizmet içi eğitimlerde veya seminerlerde medya okuryazarlığı eğitimi alan çok sayıda öğretmen olmasına rağmen bu eğitimlerde öğretmenlerin konuyla ilgili yeterli eğitim almadıkları veya öğrendiklerini uygulamada sorunlar yaşadıkları söylenebilir. Araştırma sonuçları, öğretmenlere yönelik hizmet içi medya okuryazarlığı eğitimini geliştiren eğitimcileri bilgilendireceği düşünülmektedir. Öğretmenlere yönelik medya okuryazarlığı eğitimi, öğretmenlerin bilgiye ulaşmak için medyayı nasıl kullanabileceğinin ötesinde, medya mesajlarını eleştirel olarak analiz etmeleri için çocukların nasıl güçlendirileceği konusunu içermelidir.

Eleştirel medya eğitimi, çocukların kimlik gelişiminin önemli bir gereği olarak görülmelidir, çünkü bu mesajlara savunmasız bir şekilde maruz kalan çocuklar, bu mesajların etkilerini tüm yaşamları boyunca kişiliklerinde taşıyabilirler. Bunlara ek olarak, eğitim politikası belirleyicileri, öğretmen eğitimi ile ilgili gerekli girişimleri yaptıktan sonra eleştirel medya okuryazarlığı eğitimini erken çocukluk eğitimi müfredatına dahil etmeyi düşünmelidir.

APPENDIX E: THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU