



# CHILD PARTICIPATION IN CARTOONS: THE EXAMPLE OF TURKISH RADIO AND TELEVISION CORPORATION CHILDREN'S CHANNEL

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## Abstract

*It is considered necessary to support the participation of children socially, and media tools having a significant effect on individuals today should reflect child participation. The aim of this study was to examine the right to participate in cartoons prepared for primary school children. The study was conducted with a descriptive survey model. The sample of this study was determined by criterion sampling and consists of a total of 10 cartoons on the TRT Children's channel for primary school children. The data were collected with a checklist and were analysed with descriptive analysis. As a result of the research, it was determined that in the cartoons, child-led participation was the most common level of participation, while collaborative participation was the least common. Furthermore, it was determined that the qualities of participation in cartoons were mostly related, voluntary and respectful and the safe and sensitive to risk were the least.*

**Keywords:** children's participation, media, primary school children, right to participate

## Introduction

Today, it is seen that the importance given to participation and the right to participate is increasing. Participation is the process of being involved in and sharing decisions affecting the individual and the society in which they live (Akyüz, 2013). Supporting children's participation processes in their family, school and social lives enables them to become active citizens when they become adults (Merey, 2017). Furthermore, participation, which is one of the basic principles of democracy, improves children's self-esteem, communication, decision-making skills, and emotional well-being (Hart & Brando, 2018; Lansdown et al., 2014). Children's participation is also important in terms of democratic governance and meeting societal needs (Erbay, 2016).

The right to participate, an important component of human rights-based societies (Burger, 2018), is one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The right to participate is a right that enables children to express their views in situations that concern them, in accordance with their age and developmental level, and to be active individuals in the family and society, such as gathering and forming associations (United Nation Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2009). This right also provides a basic framework for addressing other rights and taking into account children's interests and needs (Lansdown, 2020). Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) establishes

the right to participate, emphasizing the importance of considering children's views (UNICEF, 2004). It is stated that Article 12 includes every child from birth (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009). It is also emphasised that children should be able to express their views, and their participation should be supported according to their age and maturity levels (Lansdown et al., 2014). Other articles related to participation are Articles 13, 14 and 15. In the CRC, Article 13 explains children's freedom of expression, Article 14 their freedom of religion and conscience, and Article 15 their freedom of peaceful assembly and association (UNICEF, 2007). The right to information emphasised in Article 17 also directly includes children's participation in the media. In order to put children's rights into practice, media content should be prepared in line with the principles of the CRC (Reza & Haque, 2020). Despite the technological innovations seen today, cartoons and television channels (Kol, 2021), which are one of the most important media tools and are welcomed with interest by children, are important in terms of supporting children's participation. Therefore, in this study, it was aimed to investigate children's participation in cartoons, which can be easily accessed by children and have important effects on children through the messages they give.

In order for practices related to the right to participate to be realised and sustainable, some requirements need to be implemented (Lansdown, 2011). Transparent and informative is the provision of complete and accessible information about the scope, purpose and possible effects of participation and how participation will be realised, appropriate to children's age and developmental level. Voluntary means that children can choose whether or not to participate in the processes that affect them, and they can withdraw at any time. Respectful means that the necessary environment is created for children to express their views or initiate activities, and those children's views are respected by the audience. The relevant includes the ability of children to express their views based on their experiences and knowledge on issues related to their own lives (UNICEF, 2009).

Inclusive means that participation is inclusive for all children without any discrimination and that due consideration is given to the cultures of all participating children. Its child-friendly characteristic is that participatory methods are developed in partnership with children, environments and activity areas are prepared in a child-friendly manner, and it is accessible to children with disabilities and minority groups (UNICEF, 2018). Supporting that children have to facilitate their active participation and prepare them for participation is an indicator of the requirement supported by education. Safe and risk-sensitive means that adults are responsible for taking precautions against violence, exploitation or any other negative outcome that may occur when working with children. Accountable is that at the end of the participation process, children are given explanations about how their views are interpreted and used (Lansdown, 2011).

The right to participate encompasses all actions affecting children's lives in the home, school, health care, and local communities (Lansdown, 2005). Mothers and fathers should guide their children to use their participation rights and guide them in accordance with their developmental levels. To ensure effective child participation in school, education programmes should be designed to encourage active participation beginning in early childhood. Furthermore, children should participate in decision-making processes at school (Lansdown, 2005). Participation in health care includes informing children about appropriate and accessible treatments for children (Erbay, 2013). Participation in local governments involves providing children with the necessary support to express their views on policies and services that affect children's lives at local and national level (Lansdown, 2005). The inclusion of children's views in situations that affect their lives, such as the design of playgrounds, and practices such as children's assemblies are examples (UNICEF, 2009).

Children can generally participate in activities, processes and decision-making at three different levels and each form of participation is legal and appropriate in different contexts

(UNICEF, 2018). Consultative participation, which involves adults developing an understanding of children's views and experiences on issues that affect them, is an adult-initiated and adult-led process. It also emphasises children's views in the development of laws, policies and local practices (Lansdown, 2010). Collaborative participation enables a partnership of ideas between adults and children and is often initiated by adults but supports children to be the pioneers of an initiative. It includes, for example, the creation of an advisory group of children to support the work of an organisation or launching a campaign with children to make school councils effective (UNICEF, 2018). In child-led participation, children start the participation process of their own volition and have the opportunity to determine the issues and agendas that concern them. Adults respect the decisions made by children and support them to realise their processes when necessary (Lansdown, 2010).

Atinel (2018) has stated that cartoons are films that are formed by animating characters, lines and graphics in different techniques and methods in line with a text to be broadcast in digital environments. Cartoons, which aim to educate while entertaining children, have an impact on their personality and social development, as well as enriching their imagination (Rosiek et al., 2015). There are studies that concluded that cartoons positively affect children's language (Asghar & Chohan, 2019; Parvin & Islam, 2020), social-emotional (Aslan et al., 2021; Darga et al., 2020); character (Şahin & İlhan, 2019) development and different academic skills (Borzekowski, 2018). On the contrary, there are also studies indicating that with the increase in the duration of watching cartoons, children have attention deficit (Görmez, 2018), disorders in their physical development (İmİK-Tanyıldızı & Karabulut, 2018), negative behaviours and tendency to violence (Beaino, 2021). Cartoons can be used as both an entertaining and educational tool for children when they are created with the child's age and developmental level in mind, as well as different developmental areas and expert opinions (Yaşar Ekici, 2015). Cartoons were found to be effective educational materials in social studies (Oruç & Teymuroğlu, 2016; Selanik Ay & Korkmaz, 2017), English (Bülbul & Oruç, 2019), and science (Ateş, 2019) lessons in primary school. Children's modelling of characters in cartoons improves their social-emotional and cognitive skills and empathy (Demiral et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important that cartoons are a good representation of children's rights based on children's lives.

### *Research Focus*

It is critical that children understand their right to participate and use it effectively in order to raise democratic citizens in the future. It is necessary to support children's participation rights at the basic education level, where academic and life skills are acquired, which is critical for later levels of education. Media tools can also be used to facilitate child participation. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate cartoons, which are easily accessible to children and have important effects on children through the messages they give, in terms of children's participation.

### *Research Aim and Research Questions*

This study aimed to examine child participation in cartoons prepared for primary school children. Answers to the following questions were sought within the scope of the study:

- How are the participation levels of/Consultative/Collaborative/Child-led/participation/included in the cartoons prepared for primary school children on the TRT Children's Channel?
- How are the/participation in different settings/requirements of participation included in the cartoons prepared for primary school children on TRT Children's Channel?

## Research Methodology

### *Research Design*

This research was conducted using a descriptive survey model. A descriptive survey examines individuals, institutions, methods, or materials to define, compare, compare, classify, analyse, and interpret events or entities that constitute various research areas (Cohen et al., 2007). This study is descriptive because it examines the existing situations for child participation in cartoons fully, carefully, and in depth.

### *Sample*

The sample of this study was determined by criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling types. The first criterion was the cartoons prepared for primary school children. The second criterion was to determine the children's channel with the highest viewership rate among the children's channels broadcasting on television. In this regard, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTSC) ratings for August 2020 were examined, and Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) Children was identified as the children's channel with the highest viewership rate (Television Viewing Research, 2020). The TRT Children channel broadcasts content for preschool and school-aged children. TRT Children is a state-approved broadcasting channel that promotes children's physical, mental, spiritual, and moral development through animations, music, news, and sports. TRT Children aims to support children's development, introduce Turkish language and culture, and promote fun learning through responsible broadcasting in line with global educational standards (TRT, 2021). The third criterion was determined as the realisation of an interaction between children or between children and adults in the episodes watched. According to all these criteria, a total of 10 cartoons published on the official website of TRT Children were determined. Episodes of these cartoons were randomly selected and a total of 200 episodes constituted the study group.

**Table 1**  
*Cartoons Reviewed*

Cartoons	Number of episodes analysed
Aslan	25
Dijital Tayfa	5
İbi	26
Keloğlan	20
Max ve Maestro	20
Nasreddin Hoca Zaman Yolcusu	26
Pırl	26
Rafadan Tayfa	26
Trafik Tayfa	9
Z Takımı	16
Total	200

According to Table 1, within the scope of the research, a total of 200 episodes were analysed, including Aslan-25 episodes, Digital Crew-5 episodes, Ibi-26 episodes, Keloğlan-20 episodes, Max and Maestro-20 episodes, Nasreddin Hoca Time Traveller-26 episodes, Pırıl-26 episodes, Rafadan Tayfa-26 episodes, Tarafik Tayfa-9 episodes and Z Team-16 episodes.

### *Instrument*

The checklist developed by the Akyol (2019) was used as a data collection tool. This checklist consists of two parts. The first part, which includes information about the cartoons, includes general features such as the name of the cartoon, scriptwriter, cartoon producer, number of episodes watched, and the subject of the cartoon. The second part consists of components related to child participation. In this part, there are 3 items related to the levels of participation, 9 items related to the requirements of participation and 6 items related to participation in different settings, totalling 18 items. Based on the expressions detected in the cartoons, the equivalent of each item is recorded as “Yes” in the checklist, and the equivalent of each item that is not detected is recorded as “No” in the checklist. While preparing the checklist, the General Comment No. 12 (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009) and the Children’s Participation Handbook (UNICEF, 2009) were utilised.

### *Procedures*

This study was gathered using the document analysis method. In this study, data were obtained from cartoons, video documents. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021) recommended using films, videos, and pictures for document analysis to preserve nonverbal behaviours like facial expressions, gestures, and movements. In the first stage, the researchers transcribed the cartoon scenarios and evaluated the inclusion of child participation in the cartoons using a checklist. The checklist’s completion, as well as the statements and situations included in the cartoons, were all discussed. In the second stage, all the cartoons broadcasted on TRT Children’s channel were analysed one by one and a table was created by collecting information about the imprint information of the cartoons. Considering the content of the cartoons, the age groups they appeal to and all the criteria of the research, it was decided to analyse the episodes of 10 current cartoons. In the third stage, the researchers watched the cartoons three times in detail and created written transcripts from the scenarios of each cartoon. The items in the checklist were recorded as “Yes” based on the events, situations, and expressions in the cartoons, and the equivalent of each item that was not detected was recorded as “No” in the checklist. The researchers completed the checklists after watching the cartoons once and reviewed them after watching the cartoons again. Finally, the completed checklists were reviewed alongside the transcribed cartoon scenarios.

### *Data Analysis*

Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the data of this research. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that involves summarizing and interpreting data collected using various data collection techniques based on predetermined themes. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2021) defined this type of analysis as presenting the findings in a summarized and interpreted form. In this research, the data frame was determined based on the items in the checklist, and the data were processed by watching cartoons and using cartoon-related documents. The findings obtained were then analysed in terms of frequency and percentage and transformed into tables. The findings were then interpreted and supported with direct quotations. The data

was quantified using the SPSS 21 statistical package program, with frequency and percentage values calculated separately for each item on the checklist.

The research findings included direct quotations to ensure the validity of the study. The researchers watched the cartoons determined as data sources three times and interacted with the cartoons for a long time. The researchers transcribed the cartoons into written documents and in this way, the effect of subjective judgments on data sources was reduced (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). The Checklist, which was used as a data collection tool in the study, was created by submitting it to expert opinion (Karasar, 2012).

In this study, the reliability criterion was used to determine inter-observer consistency. In the reliability criterion, the researcher and multiple observers independently evaluate the data with the same instrument (Karakoç & Dönmez, 2014). The inter-observer reliability criterion was used in this study, so two independent researchers were designated as observers. Before beginning the reliability study, a researcher trained two observers on the content of the checklist and how to evaluate cartoons based on the checklist using an online program. During training, the researcher and the observers watched two different cartoon episodes, which were then evaluated together using the checklist. During the observers' evaluations on the checklist, different opinions were discussed, and a consensus was reached. Then, the researcher and the observers independently watched 10 different cartoon episodes and evaluated the cartoons according to the checklist. The researcher and observers met for three days through the online program to compare the evaluations on the checklist.

For the reliability study, three researchers independently monitored 20 different sections. The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient was used to assess three independent researchers' evaluations. This coefficient calculates the agreement of continuous measurements made by different raters in homogeneous measurements (Bi & Kuesten, 2012). The agreement between observers 1 and 2 was very high (ICC=0.885), between observers 1 and 3 was high (ICC=0.766), and between observers 2 and 3 was high (ICC=0.712).

## Research Results

In the cartoons, child-led participation was found to be the most common level of participation, while collaborative participation was the least common.

**Table 2**  
*Levels of Participation*

Participation	Yes		No		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Consultative	159	79.5	41	20.5	200	100
Child-led	56	28	144	72	200	100
Collaborative	199	99.5	1	.5	200	100

Table 2 shows that child-led (99.5%), consultative (79.5%), and collaborative (28%) participation are represented in the cartoons. In the cartoons, consultative participation was used in situations such as a family member assisting children with a subject they did not understand at school, resolving problems they encountered while playing games, and preparing an environment for adults to play tennis when the child was unable to play with his or her friends. Collaborative participation was observed in situations where children and adults made decisions together in social activities, such as going fishing together, as well as in events and situations where children's decisions were supported by adults, such as when the children shared

their wish to attend a scout camp with their friends with their family, and the family respected the children's desire. Child-led participation was observed when children were playing with their friends in public places or at the park, doing schoolwork with their friends, or completing a task.

**Table 3**  
*Participation in Different Settings*

Settings	Yes		No		Total	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Family	105	52.5	95	47.5	200	100
School	35	17.5	165	82.5	200	100
Health care	-	-	200	100	200	100
Local community	15	7.5	185	92.5	200	100
Social life	184	92	16	8	200	100
Official institutions	13	6.5	187	93.5	200	100

It was found that participation in various settings in cartoons was most common in social life and least common in official institutions. Table 3 shows that participation in cartoons occurs in social life (92%), families (52.5%), school (17.5%), local community (7.5%), and official institutions (6.5%). It is seen that participation in health care is not included in cartoons.

**Table 4**  
*Consultative Participation in Different Settings*

Settings		<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
		Yes	74	46.5	2
Family	No	85	53.5	39	95.1
	Total	159	100	41	100
	Yes	17	10.7	1	2.4
School	No	142	89.3	40	97.6
	Total	159	100	41	100
	Yes	-	-	-	-
Health care	No	159	100	41	100
	Total	159	100	41	100
	Yes	8	5	-	-
Local community	No	151	95	41	100
	Total	159	100	41	100
	Yes	6	3.8	0	0
Official institutions	No	153	96.2	41	100
	Total	159	100	41	100
	Yes	104	65.4	-	-
Social life	No	55	34.6	41	100
	Total	159	100	41	100

Table 4 shows that consultative participation was most common in social life (65.4%), the least common in official institutions (3.8%), and not practised at all in health care. Sections such as children consulting adults about environmental cleanliness, getting help and support from adults about social activities, and organizing activities related to the subjects they are interested in and curious about can be given as examples of consultative participation in social life. In the cartoons, children receiving support from their teachers in academic and social issues at school, teachers supporting children so that they can participate in different activities were seen as consultative participation at school. In social life, adults meeting children's basic needs, and in official institutions, order and obeying rules were seen as consultative participation.

**Table 5**  
*Collaborative Participation in Different Settings*

Settings		N	%	N	%
Family	Yes	19	33.9	5	3.5
	No	37	66.1	139	96.5
	Total	56	100	144	100
School	Yes	2	3.6	-	-
	No	54	96.4	144	100
	Total	56	100	144	100
Health care	Yes	-	-	-	-
	No	56	100	144	100
	Total	56	100	144	100
Local community	Yes	3	5.4	-	-
	No	53	94.6	144	100
	Total	56	100	144	100
Official institutions	Yes	2	3.6	-	-
	No	54	96.4	144	100
	Total	56	100	144	100
Social life	Yes	28	50	2	1.4
	No	28	50	142	98.6
	Total	56	100	144	100

According to Table 5, it is seen that collaborative participation in cartoons takes place in social life (50%), family (33.9%), local community (5.4%), school and official institutions (3.6%), and not in health care, respectively. Table 5 shows that collaborative participation occurred mostly in social life and least in school and official institutions. In social life, collaborative participation occurred in events and situations such as children and adults coming up with an idea together about children's play in the garden. Collaborative participation in the family was identified as decisions about social activities, sharing the work done in cleaning the house, and in social life was identified as children and adults selling at the market, farming, and adults organizing a fairy tale activity in the garden. In cartoons, collaborative participation at school was identified as children and teachers making decisions together about homework and in official institutions was identified as bringing a new classroom to school in cooperation with the school principal and children.



**Table 6**  
*Child led Participation in Different Settings*

Settings		N	%	N	%
Family	Yes	86	43.2	1	100
	No	113	56.8	-	-
	Total	199	100	1	100
School	Yes	34	17.1	-	-
	No	165	82.9	1	100
	Total	199	100	1	100
Health care	Yes	-	-	-	-
	No	199	100	1	100
	Total	199	100	1	100
Local community	Yes	9	4.5	-	-
	No	190	95.5	1	100
	Total	199	100	1	100
Official institutions	Yes	8	4	-	-
	No	191	96	1	100
	Total	199	100	1	100
Social life	Yes	184	92.5	1	100
	No	15	7.5	-	-
	Total	199	100	1	100

According to Table 6, child-led participation is seen in social life (92.5%), family (43.2%), school (17.1%), local community (4.5%) and official institutions (4%). According to Table 6, child-led participation was mostly seen in social life and least in official institutions. In social life, child-led participation was seen in situations such as children initiating and participating in playground activities whenever they want, preparing breakfast in a social activity without the help of their parents, presenting their ideas to family members in difficult situations and being accepted. In the family, examples include children's choice of clothes, their preferences for games at home, their desire to spend time with friends and in school, sharing their feelings and thoughts and being supported by adults.

**Table 7**  
*Requirements of Participation*

Requirements	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Transparent and informative	67	33.5	133	66.5	200	100
Voluntary	197	98.5	3	1.5	200	100
Respectful	196	98	4	2	200	100
Relevant	196	98	4	2	200	100
Child-friendly	195	97.5	5	2.5	200	100
Inclusive	173	86.5	27	13.5	200	100
Supported by education	72	36	128	64	200	100
Safe and risk-sensitive	5	2.5	195	97.5	200	100
Accountable	-	-	200	100	200	100

Table 7 shows that participation in cartoons is voluntary (98.5%), respectful and relevant (98%), child-friendly (97.5%), inclusive (86.5%), supported by education (36%), transparent and informative (33.5%), and safe and risk-sensitive (2.5%). It was determined that the principle of accountability was not included in the cartoons. In the cartoons, voluntary and relevant were included in situations such as children being able to say a food they do not like for breakfast, expressing their wishes without being influenced by the opinions of adults while playing games, expressing their ideas about the lesson in the classroom, and respectful was included in situations such as children's participation in activities, sharing warnings about traffic rules with adults. Transparent and informative was defined as children being informed about the activity by teachers, and explanations being made by adults to ensure children's participation in social activities. Supported by education was defined as children bringing new solutions by getting help from adults when they were curious, and safe and risk-sensitive was defined as adults warning the child protagonists who embarked on an adventure against possible dangers and taking precautions under conditions that could jeopardize children's health.

## Discussion

In the cartoons analysed in this study, it was determined that child-led participation was the most common level of participation, followed by consultative participation, and collaborative participation was the least common. Child-led participation refers to the ability of children to freely express their wishes and thoughts in situations that concern them and to provide the necessary environment for this. It is thought that the increasing importance of child-centred practices today and the consideration of the experiences and experiences of child characters in cartoons may have an impact on this result. In Turkey, media content may reflect the Ministry of National Education's determination of school student councils through elections, the legalization of processes involving children in governance, and the regulations on children's right to participate in the 2023-2028 Turkey Child Rights Strategy Document and Action Plan (The Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2023) (Öztürk et al., 2023).

In the study conducted by Urfalıoğlu (2019), it was determined that in primary schools with high democratic attitudes, child participation in issues related to child leadership such as the election of class representatives and determination of the curriculum was provided effectively, and the regulations regarding the right to participate were at a good level. It can be

argued that, while adults attempt to incorporate children's opinions into cartoons, they fall short in terms of cooperation with children. Considering that taking children's views into account and the way adults benefit from children's views and make decisions together are also included in the participation process (Alderson, 2008), consultative and collaborative participation should also be included. Cartoons have positive effects on participation processes, including primary school children's ability to express their opinions (Kogler et al., 2021), social behaviors (Lulciuc et al., 2020), and social values (Şentürk & Şimşek, 2021). It is important to include all levels of participation in cartoons in a balanced manner to emphasize and put into practice child participation.

It was found that child participation in cartoons is mostly practised in social life and least in official institutions. In the cartoons prepared for primary school children, it was observed that children's participation in social life generally took place in situations such as games, sports and social activities, project and homework activities. This result can be associated with the fact that children's decision-making related to play activities is included in cartoons. It is thought that child participation in cartoons is also included in family and school, but the level of inclusion should be increased. Although positive family-child relationships are emphasized in the cartoons examined and children's opinions are considered important in family decisions, initiatives should be taken to raise social awareness about the right to participation in the family in order to increase this rate even more. Article 18 of the Convention states that parents should fulfill their responsibilities in order to realize the right to participation in the family environment (Adhikari, 2016), where children start to acquire the right to participate (Council of Europe, 2012). According to research (Kosher, 2018), supporting children's participation in the family helps them develop socially, and parents' attitudes influence children's participation. In the cartoons, it was determined that participation in schools takes place when teachers and children make decisions about the program together and children's interests and abilities are taken into consideration. According to the cartoons, participation in schools occurs when teachers and students collaborate to make program decisions, with children's interests and abilities taken into consideration. In order to ensure child participation in schools, child-centred learning should take place, opportunities to inform children should be developed, decisions about education should be taken together with children (Venninen & Leinonen, 2013), and teachers' views on child participation (Križ & Skivenes, 2017) affect children's participation. Research suggests that teachers have a positive attitude towards participation (Danner & Jonynienė, 2013; Kozikoğlu, 2019), but also that their knowledge and practices regarding child participation are insufficient (Tozduman Yaralı & Güngör Aytar, 2017; Turnšek, 2016; Horgan, et al., 2017). Although there are legal regulations on child participation in Turkey, it is seen that the right to participate is limited in practice. Therefore, there is a need for changes in current education policies and curricula to emphasize child participation (Öztürk et al., 2023).

The fact that participation is least seen in local community and official institutions in the cartoons analysed revealed the idea that children's participation should be taken into account by local governments in order for children to have a say in their lives (Potuk Pekküçükşen & Oktay, 2017) and that children's participation should be ensured so that they can understand their immediate environment, the form of government and local cultures. In particular, children's assemblies established in municipalities should be activated (Erbay, 2013), and organizations and initiatives capable of carrying out children's representation activities should be supported (UNICEF, 2018). In addition, it was observed that participation in health care was not included in cartoons. In parallel with this situation, it is known that there is no regulation in Turkey regarding children's decision-making in relation to treatment while benefiting from health services (Erbay, 2016). Similar to this result, in another study (Quaye et al., 2019), it was stated that parents and healthcare professionals affect the treatment stages and decision-making process of children between the ages of 2-17 with acute and chronic conditions in the hospital,

so pediatric healthcare professionals should adopt a child-centred care approach and support children's active participation at the level they choose. In this direction, taking into account the views of children in determining patient rights in health services (Erbay, 2016) and providing age-appropriate opportunities for children to take part in joint decision-making processes in the hospital (Foster et al., 2022) can be an example of participation practice.

In the current study, it was determined that consultative participation in cartoons was most common in social life and least common in official institutions. Participation in social settings during primary school can be viewed as a positive development, as peer relationships and social skills become increasingly important. Studies (English et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2021) have concluded that cartoons have a positive effect on the social behaviours of primary school children, which supports the findings of this study. It can be said that the reason why consultative participation is least common in official institutions is that the cartoons rarely include messages and events related to official institutions, and only certain institutions such as schools, libraries, and police. Considering that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should take part in society as active participants (Pecnik et al., 2016), it can be said that children's opinions should be given importance in official institutions. It has been observed that collaborative participation in cartoons is mostly practised in social life and least in official institutions and school. In collaborative participation, children cooperate with adults in social, play, and friend activities, and decision-making is carried out collaboratively. It was determined that child-led participation was most common in social life and least common in official institutions. Based on this, it can be concluded that children express themselves best in social settings. The fact that this is less common in official institutions could be due to the belief that there are no situations where children can have a say.

In the cartoons examined in this study, voluntary, respectful and relevant were most prevalent, while safe and risk-sensitive qualities were least prevalent. It was concluded that accountability was not included at all in cartoons for primary school children. The accountability deals with the evaluation of children's opinions and ideas by adults (UNICEF, 2009). In the cartoons, adults listened to children's opinions, wishes, and ideas about a situation but made no evaluations or suggestions. Furthermore, it was observed that adults generally exhibited a supportive attitude towards children's opinions, especially towards play activities in cartoons. Gündoğdu Ayar (2018) found that children's picture books for ages 4-6 have the most relevant, voluntary, respectful, transparent, and informative, while the least include safe, risk-sensitive, and inclusive qualities. Tozduman Yaralı and Güngör Aytar (2017) found that teachers define child participation based on respectful, transparent, and informative qualities at the highest level, and accountability with safe and risk-sensitive qualities at the lowest. It is seen that the results of this research are similar to the results of the current study. This research has some limitations. The first limitation is that this research is limited to 200 episodes of cartoons prepared for primary school children broadcasted on the TRT *Çocuk* channel. The second limitation is that the data obtained from the research is limited to the items related to child participation in the Checklist.

## Conclusions and Implications

It was found that child-led participation was the most common type of participation in cartoons designed for primary school children, while collaborative participation was the least common. In the cartoons, children's participation was most common in social life, least common in official institutions, and not at all in health care. While consultative and collaborative participation was most common in social settings and least common in official institutions, child-led participation was most common in social settings and least common in official and educational institutions. In addition, in the cartoons analysed, it was determined that

the requirements of participation were mostly related, voluntary and respectful, and the safe and risk-sensitive were the least, while the accountability was not included at all.

Based on these results, screenwriters, producers and psychologists who prepare content for cartoons and children's programs can work together to produce media content that addresses child participation and cartoons can be prepared in which participation processes are balanced and integrated. The Ministry of National Education, non-governmental organizations working on children and children's channels can develop joint projects to include child participation in cartoons and media. Furthermore, in order to ensure the right to participate in the formation of the content and animation design of cartoons, the opinions of children in the target group and experts working in this field can be taken. The right to participate in domestic and foreign cartoons broadcast on various channels can be compared.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interest.

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