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Evaluation of Peer Bullying in Cartoons: The Case of *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*

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Abstract

Our research aimed to determine in a multiperspective way how peer bullying is addressed in animated cartoons. The basic data source of the research was 51 episodes of the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon. We used the Bullying Checklist in the document analysis design of the research. We analyzed the research data by determining the repetition of the items involved in the control list within the episodes. Our findings indicated that bullying was included in all of the cartoon's episodes. The results of our research in the episodes investigated showed that bullying was mostly indirect, followed by emotional bullying. In terms of gender, most bullies were female, followed by males. Those who were exposed to bullying were also mostly females, followed by males. In addition, victims usually used the strategy of ignoring or doing nothing to get rid of the bullying, the victims often did not share their bullying experiences with anybody, and the bystanders often preferred to keep silent regarding the bullying experiences. Thus, children are exposed to bullying through these cartoons and can be affected by it.

Recommended Citation

Introduction

Even when people are at home, they can be observers of violent incidents (Vatandaş, 2021). Numerous elements of violence are present in news, social media, television channels, the internet, and video games. Individuals exposed to violent content on screens in various forms can internalize and reflect these violent behaviors that they observe and encode in their minds on their peers, friends, and social relationships (Sekmen & Biricik, 2018). While the level of impact of violence varies for each individual, children, in particular, are vulnerable when confronted with violent content. Vulnerable children, regardless of whether

they love, model, or observe certain individuals/characters, tend to be influenced by violent content, irrespective of their positive or negative attributes (Üstündağ, 2019). When growing up in a world saturated with violent content, children may internalize and normalize violent behaviors, potentially displaying them in their own actions (Sekmen & Biricik, 2018).

Children's television programs, including cartoons, transport kids to a different world with their colorful, animated, and entertaining nature (İşliyen, 2020). Children can be influenced by the characters in the cartoons they watch; they often feel a connection to them and can develop behaviors and speech patterns similar to these characters among their peer groups at school (Fedorov, 2018). Children, however, while modeling behaviors they see in cartoons, often cannot distinguish between good and bad, and simply replicate and sometimes even amplify the behaviors (Yılmaz & Destegüloğlu, 2021). These modeled negative behaviors can come from various factors, including exposure to violence within the family and environment and/or through screens or literature; the behavior patterns that children observe and the consequences of behavior can vary significantly (Yelboğa & Koçak, 2019).

Violence, aggression, and bullying are universal concepts that closely intertwine. Peer bullying, a form of violence, has been briefly defined as any negative behaviors that children exhibit toward each other (Polat, 2016). Peer bullying can be subdivided into several categories: verbal, physical, cyber, indirect, and sexual, and these dimensions are addressed in the study by Yılmaz & Destegüloğlu (2021). Peer bullying can occur among children of all age groups worldwide. Specifically, studies conducted in Turkey have shown that a significant portion of school-age children are regularly exposed to peer bullying (Üstündağ, 2021; Yılmaz & Destegüloğlu, 2021). Moreover, all aggressive behaviors, including peer bullying, can have destructive effects on the victims (Beşer & Kartal, 2020; Violence Prevention Works, 2022).

Yılmaz and Destegüloğlu (2021) conducted research on children's books and found that regardless of the type of bullying, both bullies and victims have specific characteristics. Bullies have been described as powerful, aggressive, angry, lacking consideration of the consequences of their actions, lacking empathy, having low academic achievement and shame, having an incompatible personality, displaying uncontrollable behaviors, being impulsive, being argumentative and hostile from a very young age, and having high self-esteem and extroverted tendencies. Victims, on the other hand, have been characterized as having high anxiety levels, low self-esteem, and introverted tendencies. Furthermore, the same study found that those engaging in bullying behaviors were predominantly male. Çağrı (2010) also discovered that age and gender were influential factors in displaying bullying behavior or being subjected to bullying.

Today, with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the presence of multiple media devices in households, children spend a significant portion of their leisure time in front of the television, tablet, or phone. Research has shown that these media devices can have negative effects, such as passivating and teaching rigid judgments, providing aggressive and violent role models, representing unrealistic lives, causing obesity, harming eye health, promoting a sedentary lifestyle, and reducing interest in reading and research due to easy and superficial information acquisition. The media devices, however, can also have positive effects, such as supporting children's developmental processes through effective educational programs, increasing geographical and cultural knowledge about different locations, distant countries, and the world, and presenting positive role models (Temizyürek & Acar, 2014; Üstündağ & Doğan, 2019). According to a study by the Radio and Television Supreme Council, the most-watched program types among primary school students in Turkey include cartoons (72.1%), local series (70.1%), game shows (49.3%), movies (45.8%), and children's programs (44.6%) (Aral & Doğan Keskin, 2018; İşliyen, 2020). Children who are exposed to bullying behaviors in cartoons may internalize and model these behaviors in their daily lives, games, drawings, and peer relationships (Çetin Hakyemez et al., 2019). Children can model the habits and perspectives of those with whom they spend a long time or characters from a TV show (Temizyürek & Acar, 2014). In this context, Özgür and Kartelli (2017) observed that children who were exposed to violent cartoon content later hit each other with toys and imitated characters from the

cartoons in their conversations and activities. The ban on the Korean-produced Squid Game series in the United Kingdom was also a result of this observation (BBC News–Turkey, 2021).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The majority of media content children watch is cartoons. Therefore, examining peer bullying in cartoons is important because of the bullying behaviors exhibited in these cartoons. A review of the literature showed that research on peer bullying has mostly focused on children's books. Studies on cartoons have mainly concentrated on violence, fear, and religious and social values. No research was found that specifically examined the peer bullying behaviors of characters in cartoons. Therefore, our research was original and can contribute to the field. In our study, we examined the content of the popular cartoon *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*, which has become particularly popular among primary school-aged children and is broadcast on the Disney Channel, targeting ages 7 and above, in terms of peer bullying behaviors. Within this context, we addressed the following questions:

1. What types of bullying behaviors are present in the content of the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
2. What is the gender of the heroes/characters exhibiting peer bullying behaviors in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
3. What is the gender of the heroes/characters who are subjected to peer bullying in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
4. What are the personality traits of the heroes/characters exhibiting peer bullying behaviors in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
5. What are the personality traits of the heroes/characters who are subjected to peer bullying in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
6. Where/what are the locations/places where peer bullying behaviors occur in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
7. What are the reactions of the heroes/characters who are subjected to peer bullying in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
8. What are the strategies of the heroes/characters who are subjected to peer bullying in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
9. What are the reactions of the viewers who witness peer bullying behaviors in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon?
10. Are there individuals with whom the heroes/characters who are subjected to peer bullying in the *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* cartoon share their experiences of bullying?

Methods

Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir (*Miraculous: Les Aventures de Ladybug et Chat Noir*) is a French-produced animated series that falls within the genres of adventure, action, and romantic comedy. The protagonists of the series are Marinette Dupain-Cheng and Adrien Agreste. Marinette and Adrien are two high school students with extraordinary powers who have been chosen to save the city of Paris. In the first season, which aired in 2015, when Paris is in danger, Marinette becomes Ladybug, and Adrien becomes Cat Noir. Their mission is to capture the dark butterfly (akuma) within individuals who have been transformed into

villains by Hawk Moth. Marinette, however, knows very little; she is unaware that Adrien, her crush at school, is also a city savior. In real life, they know each other, but when they transform, they become strangers.

In the second season, which aired in 2016, Marinette tries to find ways to approach Adrien. However, Ladybug and Cat Noir find themselves overwhelmed by the akumatized havoc caused by Hawk Moth. In the second part of the second season, which was released in 2018, Ladybug and Cat Noir must protect the citizens of Paris from a giant spider, their own dreams, and a grand sinister plan orchestrated by Hawk Moth.

Research Model

Our research used a qualitative approach and was conducted using the document analysis method. Document analysis included the following stages: accessing the document, verifying its authenticity, comprehending the document, conducting an analysis, and utilizing the data. Document analysis, which encompasses both printed and electronic materials, is a systematic method employed for data collection (Kıral, 2020).

Research Sample

Our research sample comprised a total of 51 episodes of the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir,* which aired between 2015 and 2018. Our research sample was determined using the systematic sampling method, a nonrandom (probability) sampling technique. The starting point for the sample selection was chosen by lottery. Therefore, the initial chances of selection for the episodes were equal. *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* had five seasons, with a total of 77 episodes. However, for our research, 51 episodes were included in the sample. This is because not all episodes had been released at the beginning of our research. Because the sample consisted of a prime number, the sample size was calculated to be 17 for ease of calculation. The sample interval, determined by the formula $N/n = k$, was calculated to be 3. The sample interval, denoted by k, was defined by dividing the population by the sample size ($N/n = k$). The systematic sampling method involved selecting every kth unit after the initial k units had been chosen from the sample. The episodes included in the sample using this method are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Examined Episodes of the Animated Series*

Sample	Season	Episode	Name of episode	Time
1.	Season 1	3	Stormy Weather	22 min
2.	Season 1	6	The Pharaoh	22 min
3.	Season 1	9	Rogercop	22 min
4.	Season 1	12	Darkblade	22 min
5.	Season 1	15	Ladybug & Cat Noir: Origins: Pt. 1	22 min
6.	Season 1	18	Simon Says	22 min
7.	Season 1	21	Kung Food	22 min
8.	Season 1	24	The Puppeteer	22 min
9.	Season2: Part 1	1	The Collector	22 min
10.	Season2: Part 1	4	Riposte	22 min
11.	Season2: Part 1	7	The Dark Owl	22 min
12.	Season2: Part 1	10	The Sapotis	22 min
13	Season 2:	1	Frightningale	22 min
14.	Part 2	4	Frozer	22 min
15.	Season 2:	7	Queen Wasp: The Queen's Battle: Part 2	22 min
16.	Part 2	10	Malediktator	22 min
17.	Season 2:	13	Mayura: Heroes' Day: Part 2	22 min

Data Collection Tools

To determine the frequency of peer bullying behaviors in the animated series under investigation, we used the Bullying Checklist developed by Beşer and Kartal (2020).

The Bullying Checklist was developed by Beşer and Kartal (2020) to investigate the phenomenon of bullying; this checklist consists of 10 fundamental subitems. Beşer and Kartal (2020) obtained expert opinions for the checklist they prepared and used this checklist in their own study as well.

Data Collection and Analysis

All episodes included in the sample group were examined using the items in the Bullying Checklist. In cases where the examined animated series episodes did not contain any bullying, it was stated that there were no bullying elements. If bullying elements were present in the animated series episodes, the specific episodes in which the bullying elements were found, the time within those episodes when the bullying occurred, and how it occurred were recorded. We evaluated the data using content analysis. The frequencies related to the items in the checklist were transformed into tables and are presented in the findings section. Data analysis was performed by counting frequencies and presenting the results in frequency tables.

Results

Table 2 presents the findings obtained in the context of the variable types of bullying in the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*.

Table 2. *Findings in the Context of Types of Bullying*

Types of bullying	Children bullying children	Bullying by adults to children
Physical bullying	298	340
Verbal bullying	79	67
Indirect bullying	163	89
Cyberbullying	24	12
Emotional bullying	351	63

Table 2 reveals that there are five different types of peer bullying behaviors among children in the content of the animated series: emotional bullying content was the most prevalent (f = 351). Following emotional bullying, physical bullying (f = 298), indirect bullying (f = 163), verbal bullying (f = 79), and cyberbullying were less commonly present (f = 24). Emotional bullying included behaviors such as teasing/mocking, showing off, imitating, laughing, shouting, glaring angrily/fearfully/menacingly, finger-pointing, applying pressure to do something forcibly, intimidating, banging on a table, and suddenly approaching someone. Physical bullying consisted of behaviors like hitting, causing harm using supernatural powers, jumping on someone, dragging by the arm, pushing, pulling, holding by the leg, throwing objects, and exploiting others. Indirect bullying encompassed actions such as taking someone's belongings without permission, deceiving, lying, instigating, making decisions without consent, using goodwill for personal gain, leaving someone in a difficult situation, ignoring/not noticing, looking down on others, giving orders, following someone, and making others do their work. Verbal bullying consisted of content related to insulting. Cyberbullying, on the other hand, involved content such as taking unauthorized videos/photos and sharing them on the internet. Examples of indirect bullying in the animated series are provided below:

Darkblade Episode: Chloé said, "Okay. Since you're suspicious, there's no problem with me searching your bag."

Origins Episode: Sabrina said, "It's not your turn anymore. New school year, new seating."

Rogercop Episode: Marinette said, "Since you're so rich, you don't need a free croissant."

As shown in Table 2, the animated series *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* also included elements of bullying perpetrated by adult characters against child characters. We observed that adults most often applied physical bullying to children (f = 340). Following physical bullying, indirect bullying (f = 89), verbal bullying (f = 67), emotional bullying (f = 63), and cyberbullying (f = 12) behaviors were evident. Physical bullying included actions such as chasing, attacking, forcibly holding in one place, hostage-taking, causing harm using supernatural powers (akuma/kwami), jumping on someone, throwing objects, and shooting. Indirect bullying included emotional bullying as well and encompassed observed behaviors such as taking someone's belongings without permission, deceiving, lying, leaving someone in a difficult situation, looking down on others, giving orders, following someone, teasing/mocking, shouting, glaring angrily/fearfully/menacingly, clenching fists, intimidating, suddenly approaching someone, fighting in front of children, ignoring/not noticing, neglecting, and applying pressure to do something forcibly. Verbal bullying included content related to insulting. Emotional bullying included behaviors such as teasing/mocking, showing off, imitation, laughing, shouting, glaring angrily/fearfully/menacingly, finger-pointing, applying pressure to do something forcibly, intimidating, banging on a table, and suddenly approaching someone. Cyberbullying encompassed content such as taking unauthorized videos/photos and using them for blackmail, as well as sharing content related to children on television. Examples of indirect and verbal bullying elements identified in the animated series are provided below:

Stormy Weather Episode: The announcer said, "She really crushed you, didn't she?"

Rogercop Episode: Rogercop said, "If you don't speak up, I'll arrest all of you."

Origins Episode: Mr. Damocles said, "Excuse me, young man. Haven't they taught you to knock? Come out. Let's go. You can't go anywhere in that dangerous world."

Origins Episode: Gabriel Agreste said, "You're not going to school, I've already told you. You can't go out to that dangerous world."

Kung Food Episode: Wang Cheng said, "You foolish girl! You won't drink the soup; you are the soup!"

Riposte Episode: Mr. D'Argencourt stated, "Only the best can enter, you nincompoop!"

When examining Table 3, it is evident that girls were the ones who engaged in bullying behaviors the most, and the victims were also predominantly girls. However, male adult characters engaged in bullying more frequently than female adult characters.

Table 3. *Findings in the Context of Gender Variable*

Variables	Female	Male
Gender of bully, child characters	382	133
Gender of child characters who are bullied by child characters	393	180
Gender of bully, adult characters	31	127
Gender of child characters bullied by adult characters	116	88

The variable of personality traits of characters in the animated series was also analyzed in the context of bullies, victims, and adults who engaged in bullying behavior. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Findings in the Context of Personality Traits Variable*

Identified personality traits	f
Personality traits of bully, child characters	
Aggressive	341
Lack of empathy	291
Being physically strong	157
Sad	19
High self-confidence	424
Kind	58
Physically weak	98
Personality traits of child characters who are bullied by child characters	
Sad	71
Anxious	251
Physically weak	214
High self-confidence	307
Shy	111
Attacker	265
Physically strong	79
Kind	89
Personality traits of bully, adult characters	
Attacker	123
Lack of empathy	129
Physically strong	92
High self-confidence	138
Furious	107
Personality traits of child characters who are bullied by adult characters	
Attacker	120
Anxious	122
Physically weak	81
High self-confidence	130
Physically strong	21

According to the information in Table 4, all characters involved in bullying behaviors predominantly had the personality trait of "high self-confidence" ($f = 424, f = 307, f = 138, f = 130$).

Looking into the personality traits of bullying characters, the personality traits included, in descending order, being aggressive ($f = 341$), lacking empathy ($f = 291$), being physically strong ($f = 157$), and being physically weak ($f = 98$). To a lesser extent, characters also exhibited the personality traits of being gentle ($f = 58$) and being unhappy ($f = 19$).

When the personality traits of characters who are bullied were examined, the dominant traits included being aggressive ($f = 265$), anxious ($f = 251$), physically weak ($f = 214$), and shy ($f = 111$). To a lesser extent, these characters also exhibited the personality traits of being gentle ($f = 89$), physically strong ($f = 79$), and unhappy (f = 71).

When examining the personality traits of adult characters who engaged in bullying behavior, the dominant trait was lacking empathy ($f = 129$), followed by being aggressive ($f = 123$), being angry ($f = 107$), and being

physically strong (f = 92).

When the personality traits of child characters who experienced bullying behavior from adult characters were examined, the dominant traits included being anxious (f = 122), aggressive (f = 120), and physically weak (f = 81). To a lesser extent, these characters also exhibited the personality trait of being physically strong (f = 21). The physical strength trait in child characters compared to adult characters was attributed to superhuman abilities.

We examined the responses given by characters in the context of bully, bullied, and bullying adult characters, and the findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Findings in the Context of Given Responses Variable*

Responses given by characters	f
Responses of child characters to being bullied by child characters	
Physically resisting	119
Behaving passively and obediently	95
Verbally reacting	114
Doing nothing	184
Responses of viewers who witness child bullying against child characters	
Remaining silent	277
Helping the victim	71
Escaping	14
Using gestures/facial expressions	23
Verbally reacting	40
Bullying the victim	65
Responses of child characters being bullied by adult characters	
Physically resisting	82
Behaving passively and obediently	56
Verbally reacting	42
Doing nothing	34
Responses of viewers who witness adult bullying of children	
Remaining silent	85
Escaping	5
Using gestures/facial expressions	11
Warning the bully	13
Not reacting verbally	9
Helping the victim	22
Bullying the victim	30

According to Table 5, the most common response given by characters who were bullied was doing nothing (f = 184). Following that, the responses included physically resisting (f = 119), verbally reacting (f = 114), and behaving passively and obediently (f = 95). Physically resisting included trying to catch or harm the bully and staying away from the bully. Verbally reacting included seeking help, sharing the experience of being bullied, speaking out, and explaining. Among the viewers who witnessed bullying behavior, the most common response was remaining silent (f = 277), followed by helping the victim (f = 71), bullying the victim (f = 65), verbally reacting (f = 40), using gestures/facial expressions (f = 23), and escaping (f = 14).

In the face of bullying by adult characters, child characters predominantly responded by physically resisting (f

= 82). Following that, the responses included passive and obedient behavior ($f = 56$), verbally reacting ($f = 42$), and doing nothing ($f = 34$). Physical resistance involved trying to harm the bully or avoiding the bully, while verbally reacting included seeking help and sharing the experience of being bullied. Among the viewers who witnessed the bullying of a child by an adult, the most common response was remaining silent ($f = 85$), followed by bullying the victim ($f = 30$), helping the victim ($f = 22$), warning the bully ($f = 13$), using gestures/facial expressions ($f = 11$), verbally reacting ($f = 9$), and fleeing ($f = 5$).

The variable regarding the places/locations where bullying behaviors occurred in the analyzed animated series is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. *Findings in the Context of Places/Locations Variable*

Places/locations where children were bullying children	f
Outdoor/open areas	155
School	70
Attic	39
Park	31
Museum	75
Studio	24
House	54
Elevator	7
Car	1
Town hall	22
Hotel	7
Places/locations where adults were bullying children	
Outdoor/open areas	71
School	20
Studio	16
Elevator	3
House	61
Penthouse	14
Museum	9
Town hall	6
Park	8
Hotel	4

According to Table 6, both peer bullying and bullying by adults against children mostly occurred in outdoor/open areas ($f = 155$ and $f = 71$). Following outdoors, the locations where bullying occurred included the museum ($f = 75$), school ($f = 70$), house ($f = 54$), attic ($f = 39$), park ($f = 31$), studio ($f = 24$), town hall ($f = 22$), elevator ($f = 7$), hotel ($f = 7$), and car (f 1). In the case of adults bullying children, the locations were as follows after outdoors: house ($f = 61$), school ($f = 20$), studio ($f = 16$), attic ($f = 14$), museum ($f = 9$), park ($f = 8$), town hall ($f = 6$), hotel ($f = 4$), and elevator ($f = 3$).

Table 7 presents findings related to the individuals/places with whom/where the victim shared their experience of being bullied.

Table 7. *Findings Related to the Individuals/Places With Whom/Where the Victim Shares Their Experience of Being Bullied*

Children bullying children	*f*
Friends or family	9
Do not share with anyone	432
Other contexts	7
Adults bullying children	
Do not share with anyone	168
Friends	1

As seen in Table 7, the majority of animated characters who were subjected to bullying in the cartoon did not share their situation with anyone ($f = 432, f = 168$). In addition to not telling anyone, they also occasionally shared this situation with friends, family ($f = 9, f = 1$), or in other contexts ($f = 7$; frequencies provided). However, in the Season 2: Part 1 (Collector) section, a child character who was bullied by an adult character shared it with a friend.

Discussion

Our research results demonstrated that peer bullying behaviors existed in all examined parts of the cartoon. When looking at the types of bullying, indirect bullying behaviors (such as taking someone's belongings without permission, deceiving, lying, provoking, and making decisions without asking for opinions) were the most frequently observed in the examined sections. Humans are social beings. From a young age, a child's exposure to bullying behaviors by peers through indirect means, such as exclusion from social circles and being ignored, can seriously harm their health and well-being during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, as well as their academic success and physical and psychological health (Arslan & Savaşer, 2009; Beşer & Kartal, 2020). In some cases, these negative effects can persist throughout life (TÜRGEV, 2020). Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2020) found that being a victim of cyberbullying among 7th grade children in Canada was associated with mental health issues, psychological stress, suicidal thoughts and attempts, and substance use (tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol). Moreover, a cross-sectional study involving Swedish adolescents aged 13–16 years indicated that both boys and girls showed depression symptoms in response to all types of bullying, with girls having an increased likelihood of developing somatic complaints in the face of these bullying behaviors (Landstedt & Persson, 2014). Another study with Chinese university students found a direct impact of experiencing bullying in school during childhood on adult suicidal thoughts (Lu et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that bullying incidents, regardless of whether one is a bully or a victim, can lead to suicidal thoughts and attempts and posttraumatic stress disorder (Kurtça et al., 2020). In addition, a study with university students aged 18–25 years in Istanbul revealed that exposure to peer bullying led to subsequent experiences of cyberbullying, and those who were victims of cyberbullying also tended to engage in cyberbullying. The researchers also found that bullies and victims were stuck in a vicious cycle and that bullies lacked empathy and had deficient moral emotions and values (Kocatürk & Kurtça, 2021). Similarly, the victims mentioned that they isolated themselves from social environments, did not share their experiences with anyone, reduced social communication, and felt excluded (Sak & Bayar, 2018). Çağrı (2010) showed that certain personality traits could play a role in bullying and being bullied by children. Children's personalities are shaped by genetic and environmental factors. In addition to innate traits, children learn by modeling their environment. Observations begin with parents and continue with teachers at school, friends, neighbors, books they read, and movies they watch. Therefore, the extent, quality, and nature of interaction with the environment affect individuals throughout their lives (Oruç et al., 2011).

When it came to the gender of the characters involved in bullying behaviors, the analysis revealed that female

characters were often the bullies, and victims were also frequently female. In the cartoon, there are 8 male characters and 17 female characters. Furthermore, there were 15 female and 23 male adult characters. Therefore, female child characters and male adult characters were predominant. The finding about the gender of the bullying characters was not strongly supported by the study results. When examining the literature, we found studies supporting both genders being bullies or victims, but some studies suggested that males were more frequently subjected to bullying behaviors. For instance, Uysal and Dinçer (2012) determined that both aggressive and bullying behaviors were mostly exhibited by males. Moreover, Karataş and Ünalmış (2019) proposed that bullies were male, but victims were female. Research on bullying characters in children's books also revealed that most or all bullying behaviors were exhibited by male characters (Beşer & Kartal, 2020; Pişkin, 2002; Yılmaz & Destegüloğlu, 2021). However, when evaluated in terms of indirect bullying behaviors, these behaviors have been found to be more often directed toward females (Arslan & Savaşer, 2009; Beşer & Kartal, 2020). In addition to these research results, Çalık et al. (2009) found that being male decreased the likelihood of being classified as a bully.

The analysis of the personality traits of bully and victim characters revealed that both victims and bullies had similar personality traits. In the cartoon, we often observed that individuals involved in bullying behaviors had high self-confidence and personality traits such as aggression and a lack of empathy. The personality traits of bully characters included self-confidence, aggression, lack of empathy, physical strength, and occasionally, physical weakness. The personality traits of victim characters included self-confidence, aggression, anxiety, physical weakness, and shyness. Various factors played a role in bullying, such as individual characteristics (personality traits and propensity for violence), peers (peer group relationships), family, school (school type, school size, class size, school environment, and teacher behavior), and cultural factors (Arslan & Savaşer, 2009; Uysal & Dinçer, 2012). Longitudinal studies have associated childhood bullying with antisocial behaviors such as criminality in adulthood (Yelboğa & Koçak, 2019). However, it should be noted that not all adolescents who experience childhood bullying exhibit the same behavioral problems, and the development of self-confidence has also been associated with individual differences. The development of self-confidence has been related to risky behaviors and mental health problems. Some adolescents who experienced childhood bullying managed to overcome it and develop high self-confidence, displaying healthy behaviors and forming social relationships (Lee & Feng, 2021).

In the cartoon, the bully character was male, and the victim character was female. However, the opposite situation was also encountered, where the bully character was female, and the victim character was male. It can be concluded that the relationship between bully and victim characters in the cartoon was not influenced by gender. In this case, the bullies exhibited a more dominant personality and were arrogant and fearless (Çalık et al., 2009). The literature stated that bullies have high self-esteem and low empathy. Despite their aggressive behaviors, bullies often perceive themselves as popular, but their peer relationships are negative (Yelboğa & Koçak, 2019). Many studies have agreed that bullies are more likely to have behavioral and emotional problems compared with their peers. Some studies have claimed that these problems can manifest themselves as depression, anxiety, and a low sense of well-being. However, other studies have emphasized that bullies do not experience negative psychological problems due to their high self-esteem and self-confidence (Yelboğa & Koçak, 2019). Peer relationships played a significant role in bullying in the cartoon. Victims of bullying often experienced serious difficulties in peer relationships, and bully characters were frequently rejected by their peers. On the other hand, bystanders in the cartoon played an important role in increasing the bullying behavior. In this sense, the findings support the literature. Bullying behaviors are increasing due to the negative attitude of the bystanders toward the victims and their approval of the bully's behaviors. Bystanders are individuals who are indirectly involved in bullying and witness bullying behaviors. In most cases, bystanders play a critical role in maintaining bullying behaviors (Beşer & Kartal, 2020; Çalık et al., 2009). Peer rejection is common among victim children, and they experience loneliness. Moreover, they often use aggression as a way to cope with peer problems. The fact that bullies are also rejected by their peers suggests that they may experience difficulties in socializing. However, some studies have shown that bullies are more popular among their peers. While their

peer relationships are negative, they are more likely to have their own peer group (Arslan & Savaşer, 2009; Yelboğa & Koçak, 2019). In addition to increasing physical aggression, they also exhibited relational aggression, such as ignoring others, starting rumors, and excluding others. In the episode, two male child characters were involved in bullying behaviors. The first child character was bullied by his peers, and the second child character bullied him. In the cartoon, the bullies appeared to enjoy bullying behaviors and were arrogant. Thus, bullying behaviors are clearly observed in the cartoon. Indirect bullying behaviors were more frequently encountered in the examined parts of the cartoon. Female characters were more likely to engage in bullying behaviors, and victims were also often female. Moreover, in the cartoon, both victim and bully characters had similar personality traits, including self-confidence, aggression, and a lack of empathy. Bystanders play a significant role in increasing bullying behaviors. In the cartoon, bystanders had a negative attitude toward the victim, and they approved of the bully's behavior. Overall, the cartoon depicts situations where bullying behaviors are frequently observed, and the characters involved in these behaviors have specific personality traits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we addressed the results of our research study on the content of an animated series and its effects on children. Our research results provided some important findings and discussions, including the types of bullying behaviors observed, the gender of the characters involved in bullying, and the personality traits of bully and victim characters. Additionally, we highlighted the role of bystanders in perpetuating bullying behaviors. Overall, our research findings suggested that the animated series frequently portrays bullying behaviors and that characters involved in these behaviors exhibit specific personality traits.

In this research, we examined the content of peer bullying in the cartoon *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir*. According to our research results, peer bullying was prevalent in the cartoon. We recommend that children tell an adult when they encounter bullying behavior and seek solutions together to protect themselves from bullying. The dominant theme in the cartoon was the use of tactics of evil and war against evil while going toward goodness. Our findings indicated that peer bullying behaviors are intensively depicted in this cartoon, and both young children and teenagers follow the content on television, thus exposing them to bullying or victim behaviors related to peer bullying. What is watched on television has an impact that does not immediately appear, but it continuously shapes a person's life and behaviors over time (Üstündağ & Doğan, 2021). Moreover, even in the episode descriptions, negative content and elements of violence are included. Therefore, the content that children watch should be carefully examined by adults. Additionally, content that reinforces positive behaviors should be produced. Because the increase in private channels compared with state channels since the invention of television has led to diversification of content and weakening of content controls, these controls cannot be carried out by the state and should instead be performed by parents. Considering that children often do not tell anyone about the negative situations they experience, one of the most important factors shaping children's behavior is cartoons. Therefore, the content of cartoons should be suitable for children and should present appropriate behavioral models.

Cartoons should be suitable for the healthy development of children and serve as a positive example. There is a need for cartoons that emphasize positive content and explain that negative content is wrong. Awareness campaigns about the elements of bullying that children see on screens from a very young age should be considered as part of bullying prevention. Moreover, the time children spend in front of screens should be limited as much as possible, and they should be encouraged to engage in more social, sport, and hobby activities. In addition, parents should be educated about this issue. The later children are introduced to screens, the more protected they will be from negative content, such as bullying. Parents should determine what their children will watch and control the content. Furthermore, children should be educated about reporting any negative situation they encounter, especially peer bullying, to their parents or a trusted adult. In conclusion, open communication should be maintained with children, and a secure bond should be established.

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