

The Portrayal of Sibling Relationships in Digital Media Platforms Addressing Early Childhood: Niloya and Murat

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Abstract

Children can reflect on the sibling relationships they observe in cartoons and their sibling relationships through the behavioral patterns and expressions they learn. This study examines sibling relationships in the most watched episodes of the cartoon Niloya, which children frequently watch. A case study from qualitative research models was used for this purpose. To collect the data, the YouTube page of the cartoon "Niloya" was examined, and the most watched episodes were determined to be 1-52 and 66-78. The sibling relationships in Niloya were thematized under three headings: siblings' interaction characteristics with each other, parents' expressions and behaviors towards sibling relationships, and siblings' reflections on their relationships with their parents. It was concluded that while doing activities together, playing, supporting each other, encouraging each other, appreciating, hugging, and using words of affection were frequently included, the conflict between siblings and parental involvement in siblings' conflicts and relationships were rarely covered.

Keywords: Close relationships, conflict, family, sibling, support

Erken Çocukluk Dönemine Hitap Eden Dijital Medya Araçlarında Kardeş İlişkilerinin İşlenmesi: Niloya ve Murat

Öz

Çocuklar çizgi filmlerde gözlemledikleri kardeş ilişkilerini, kendi kardeş ilişkilerinde davranış kalıpları ve ifadeler aracılığıyla yansıtabilirler. Halen yayında olan Türkiye'de geniş bir izleyici kitlesine sahip, dünya çapında farklı dillere çevrilmiş, halen devam etmekte olan, 5,77 milyon YouTube kanalı aboneli bulunan, Youtube Kids'te de yayınlanan ve kardeş rollerine yer veren Niloya çizgi filmi analiz edilmek üzere seçilmiştir. Bu çalışmada çocukların sıklıkla izlediği Niloya çizgi filminin en çok izlenen bölümlerindeki kardeş ilişkileri incelenmiştir. Bu araştırma nitel araştırma modellerinden durum çalışması şeklinde yürütülmüştür. Verilerin toplanması için "Niloya" çizgi filminin YouTube sayfası incelenmiş ve en çok izlenen bölümler 1-52 ve 66-78 olarak belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Niloya ve kardeşi Murat'ın bölümlerdeki davranış ve ifadeleri iki araştırmacı tarafından eş zamanlı olarak incelenmiş ve kodlanmıştır. Daha sonra meslektaş teyidi ile kodlara ve temalara son hali verilmiştir. Niloya'daki kardeş ilişkileri; kardeşlerin birbirleriyle etkileşim özellikleri, ebeveynlerin kardeş ilişkilerine yönelik ifade ve davranışları ve kardeşlerin ebeveynleriyle ilişkilerine yönelik yansımaları olmak üzere üç başlık altında temalaştırılmıştır. Birlikte etkinlik yapma, oyun oynama, birbirini destekleme, cesaretlendirme, takdir etme, sarılma ve sevgi sözcükleri kullanma davranış ve ifadeleri çizgi filmde sıklıkla yer alırken, kardeşler arası çatışma ve ebeveynin kardeşlerin çatışmalarına ve ilişkilerine müdahalesine nadiren yer verildiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Aile, çatışma, destek, kardeş, yakın ilişkiler

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INTRODUCTION

Sibship is one of the longest-lasting and often one of the most complex relationships within the family. Sibling relationships, which exhibit different roles and dynamics at different stages of human life, play an essential role in the lives of individuals. These relationships influence individuals' identity formation, social skill development, and emotional needs (Edwards et al., 2005; Graham & Coplan, 2012; Roychan et al., 2024). Siblings are not only the first friends in the family but also essential bonds that share experiences such as love, conflict, cooperation, support, and competition (Stocker & McHale, 1992). Examining the initial process of sibling relationships can help to understand how children's first social encounters take shape and how these interactions deepen over time (Quesada-Zeljkovic et al., 2024). In the early years, the sibling relationship is a training ground where skills such as learning to get along with others, cooperating, and resolving conflicts are developed. These relationships provide a safe context for understanding others' perspectives and emotional states. In this context, the sibling relationship is a natural laboratory for children to explore the social and cognitive world (Howe & Recchia, 2014). Patterns of sibling relationships (conflictual, affect-intensive, congruent) are also associated with competence or problem behaviors (Buist & Vermande, 2014). From the second year of life, siblings display cognitive skills such as teasing, deception, predicting intentions, managing conflict, and sharing imaginary worlds in their daily interactions. Such interactions shape early socio-cognitive development, reflecting an increasing complexity of internal states and social behaviors (Dunn, 2002).

The effects of sibling relationships on the psychosocial development of children and adults have been addressed in a large body of literature. Research shows that positive sibling relationships help children cope with stress by increasing their psychological resilience (Gass et al., 2007). Social support and self-regulation skills provided by older siblings are essential in developing positive sibling relationships (Su-Russell et al., 2022). However, siblings' aggressive behaviors may lead to the emergence of similar tendencies in younger siblings (Ostrov et al., 2006). While negative sibling relationships in early life increase the risk of major depression in adulthood, strong sibling bonds support psychological well-being (Waldinger et al., 2007). Sibling relationships are also a critical learning area for empathy and emotional development (Gungordu & Hernandez-Reif, 2022).

Moreover, sibling relationship quality is directly related to personality traits, and especially agreeableness contributes to the positive course of these relationships (Gözü & Newman, 2019). Positive sibling relationships promote prosocial behaviors, while negative relationships may cause behavioral problems in children (Pike & Oliver, 2017). The quality of sibling relationships in adulthood may also positively affect individuals' friendships (Alıcı, 2022). In addition, children growing up with siblings with anxiety disorders may experience difficulties such as role confusion within the family while developing patience and understanding (DiTomaso, 2018). In this context, there are also studies that examine the quality of sibling relationships together with parent-child relationships. In Pike et al.'s (2005) study of 101 parents with two children aged 4-8 years, the findings showed that sibling relationship quality was associated with older siblings' adjustment, controlling for children's relationship with their parents. Positivity in the sibling relationship was found to be more strongly linked to child adjustment than sibling conflict.

Cartoons and fantastic animated characters, which are among children's favorite programs, are content they have constantly experienced from an early age because children are interested in fictional worlds, and such content is attractive to them. This situation leads children to enjoy activities such as watching fairy tales and cartoons (Sarman & Sarman, 2022). Some studies conducted in Türkiye have revealed that the most popular cartoons watched by children are Pepee, Rafadan Tayfa, Harika Kanatlar, Niloya, and Frozen (Akça & Çilekçiler, 2019). A study conducted by Duman et al. (2020) found that the cartoons broadcast on the TRT Çocuk channel were the most popular. In another study, it was determined that most children watch cartoons. They generally prefer television; their favorite cartoon is "Rafadan Tayfa," and their most famous character is "Hayri" (Yazıcı et al., 2019).

Studies on cartoons, which are thought to be influential in shaping children's relationships, have shown that adult-child relationships (Yakar & Yazar, 2021), family relationships, and behaviors (Kaşka & Erem, 2018; Yağlı, 2013) are covered in cartoons. In Yılmaz & Özdemir Erem's (2018) study on cartoons, it was found that domestic and foreign productions were similar in terms of universal themes and values such as friendship and brotherhood. Similarly, in Hafizoğlu & Bıçakcı's (2019) study, it was determined that in Niloya, one of the three cartoons examined in the study, coping with adverse events, exhibiting positive behavior, problem-solving skills in relationships were mentioned, but the categories of coping with aggressive behaviors, cooperation, empathy, initiating and maintaining relationships, respecting the feelings of others and friendship relationships were not explicitly mentioned. A study has shown that Turkish-made cartoons increasingly incorporate local cultural

elements and folkloric features. For example, in the production ‘Canım Kardeşim Benim - Uzaylılar Burada’, sibling relationships and adventures are depicted while simultaneously showcasing Turkish cultural elements (Demir, 2021). Erem and Yılmaz (2017) examined some foreign cartoons for middle school students regarding sibling relationships and found that siblings generally have good relationships in cartoons; factors such as gender, age, and interests affect sibling relationships. It was concluded that characters/behaviors representing reason are always affirmed in cartoons; on the other hand, characters who act with their emotions, values, and beliefs remain in the background.

Cartoons have both positive and negative effects on children's development. Cartoons also provide contexts that children can observe and model. As Smith (2003) states, children can learn by observing behaviors from their environment, especially from their families or media content (e.g., characters in television series or movies). If these observations include negative, aggressive behaviors and if these behaviors are rewarded, children may be more likely to exhibit similar behaviors. In Bandura's (1986) theory, indirect reinforcement is significant when describing how the model's behaviors will affect others. For example, a model's behaviors may evoke specific emotional responses in the observer, increasing their desire to engage in the same behaviors. Research shows that cartoons can improve children's creativity, language skills, and cognitive abilities (Prithviraj et al., 2024). However, with overexposure, children may exhibit aggressive behaviors and antisocial tendencies (Rai et al., 2016). Ghilzai et al. (2017) concluded that cartoons positively affect children's language acquisition and cognitive development. However, in the same study, it was found that in some cases, children watching cartoons exhibited some violent behaviors against their siblings while trying to be funny. Similarly, in the study conducted by Darga et al. (2021), it was found that 61.6% of parents reported that cartoons affect children's language development, and 64.60% of parents reported that cartoons affect children's social development. Therefore, cartoons play a dual role in children's development, functioning both as a supportive and as a risk factor; the quality of the content, the frequency of exposure, and the ways in which children internalize these experiences emerge as key determinants shaping developmental outcomes. For this reason, cartoons, which are so effective, should support children in learning the skills and knowledge that children may need in daily life. Children can reflect on the sibling relationships they observe in cartoons to their sibling relationships through the behavioral patterns and expressions they learn. From this point of view, this study aims to examine sibling relationships in the most popular episodes of the cartoon Niloya, which children frequently watch. The research questions for the research planned to be carried out for this purpose are given below:

- 1.How do the Niloya character and his brother interact with each other?
- 2.What are the interventions and reactions of the parents of the Niloya character and his/her brother-to-sibling relationships?
- 3.How does the Niloya character or his/her brother reflect situations related to sibling relationships with their parents?

METHOD

Research Design and Documents

This research was conducted using a case study design, one of the qualitative research methods. In this study, a case study design, which is among the qualitative research methods, was employed. A case study involves the comprehensive and in-depth analysis of an individual, institution, community, or setting in line with a specific objective (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this study, documents identified through criterion sampling were analyzed. Criterion sampling involves the researcher determining the criteria to explain the problem and then selecting the situations/individuals that meet these criteria (Mertens, 2010). The Niloya cartoon, which children in Türkiye widely watch, is translated into different languages for children worldwide to access. Its ongoing YouTube channel has 5.77 million subscribers and was analyzed in terms of the patterns of sibling relationships it conveys to children. The criterion for the episodes of the Niloya cartoon to be analyzed is that they are the episodes in the title of popular episodes on the YouTube channel with more than 50 million views in October 1, 2024. Information about the main character in the cartoon is as Table 1.

Table 1. Characters and Features in The Niloya Cartoon (Niloya Official Website, 2024)

Characters and Features	
 Niloya: She has big eyes, short hair, and a small nose. She lives in a cozy village by the river. Her best friends are her turtle, Tospik, and her brother, Murat.	 Murat: He is Niloya's older brother. He has dark hair and is a very curious boy. He likes to play ball and enjoys spending time with his brother, Niloya.
 Mother: She is a tall, vigorous, and beautiful woman. She is very fond of her family and loves to cook.	 Father: He is friendly, a family man, and enjoys being in nature and spending time with his children.
 Mete: He is a close friend of Niloya and Murat. He likes to play with his toys, dislikes losing things, and can be whiny.	

Data Collection

To investigate how sibling relationships are reflected in children, cartoons that reach children through digital media with or without internet access (YouTube channel) were analyzed. The Niloya cartoon, which has a large audience in Turkey, has been translated into different languages worldwide, is still ongoing, has 5.77 million YouTube channel subscribers, is also broadcast on Youtube Kids, and includes sibling roles, was selected to be analyzed. After examining the official website of the Niloya cartoon and getting information about the characters and context of the cartoon, the YouTube channel was examined. It was observed that the viewing rates of the episodes under the title of "popular videos" on the YouTube channel of the Niloya cartoon were very high compared to other episodes. It was decided to analyze these episodes, which children watched at high rates, in the context of reflecting on sibling relationships. As of October 1, 2024, the most-watched episodes of the cartoon, numbered 1-52 and 66-78, were identified; a total of 65 episodes were downloaded, viewed, and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using the content analysis method. The primary purpose of content analysis is to identify the concepts and the relationships among them in order to explain the data. Through this method, it is possible to derive detailed codes and themes from the data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Two researchers simultaneously examined and coded Niloya and her brother Murat's behaviors and expressions in the episodes. Then, the codes and themes were finalized through peer confirmation. The codes were grouped under themes, and behaviors, expressions, and visuals related to the codes were included.

Research Ethics

As the authors of the article, we declare in this form that scientific and ethical rules are followed in this article and that the article does not require ethics committee permission since it is a study based on document review (cartoon review).

FINDINGS

In 22 of the 65 episodes of Niloya Cartoon, no interaction and behaviors defining the sibling relationship were encountered. The sibling relationships in the remaining 43 episodes of Niloya were thematized under three headings: siblings' interaction characteristics with each other, parents' expressions and behaviors towards sibling relationships, and siblings' reflections on their relationships with their parents. Sample statements related to the themes and screenshots of the relevant scenes (Niloya YouTube Channel, 2024) were presented in the findings.

1.Characteristics of Siblings' Interaction with Each Other

Doing Activities Together

Niloya and Murat engaged in activities such as asking them to tell a story, accompanying them to an activity, conversing, helping their parents, and playing together. Sample expressions and visuals for the activities are given. A sample about the scene related to conversing is shown in Figure 1.



Niloya: *"Brother, look how beautiful."*
 Murat: *"They just built a basketball hoop."*
 Niloya: *"I like to play basketball very much."*
 Murat: *"Do you even know how to play basketball?"*
 Niloya: *"Of course I do. Look how I am going to play basketball now. Why?"*
 (Episode 16)

Figure 1. *The scene related to the conversing*

A sample related to the scene accompanying the activity is shown in Figure 2.



Niloya went to get eggs from the chickens and was accompanied by her brother Murat, who said, *"I am coming too."*
 (Episode 23)

Figure 2. *The scene related to accompanying the activity*

A sample related to the scene about helping their parents is shown in Figure 3.



After her mom's radio broke down:
 Niloya: *"I've got it; I've come up with a great idea. Brother, you play the drums, and I play the kemençe. Mete has a tulum. We can make beautiful music for my mom all together."*
 Murat: *"Yes, let's start right away then."* (Episode 45)

Figure 3. *The scene about helping their parents*

A sample related to the scene about playing together is shown in Figure 4.



Niloya: *"We can play together."*

They have cycled, rollerbladed, and skateboarded together.

(Episode 31)

Figure 4. *The scene about playing together*

Play Behaviors

Niloya and Murat engaged in play behaviors such as directing to the game's purpose, refusing the request to play together, inviting others to play, giving up playing because of embarrassment, and being a model for the game. Sample expressions and visuals for play behaviors are given below. A sample related to the scene about refusing the request to play together is shown in Figure 5.



Niloya: *"Brother, I want to play with you too."*

Murat: *"Niloya, but you are too young; you can't play this game."*

(Episode 4)

Figure 5. *The scene about refusing the request to play together*

A sample related to the scene about an invitation to play is shown in Figure 6.



Murat playing ball: *"Niloya, come on, you play too."*

(Episode 22)

Figure 6. *The scene related to an invitation to play*

A sample related to the scene about being a model is shown in Figure 7.



When Niloya failed at skipping stones, Murat laughed and said, “*Throw harder, Niloya. Look, like this.*”

(Episode 34)

Figure 7. Scene about being a model

Close Relationships and Physical Contact

Niloya and Murat established close relationships through joking, showing sensitivity to their sibling's situation, using words of affection, making surprises, giving gifts, kissing, and hugging. Expressions and visuals related to close relationships and physical contact are given below. A sample related to the hugging scene is shown in Figure 8.



Niloya reads a poem to Murat, and then they hug. (Episode 22)

Figure 8. Hugging scene

A sample related to the scene showing sensitivity to your brother's situation is shown in Figure 9.



Niloya felt sorry for her brother, who was sick. She showed sensitivity to his illness and supported him by milking the cow and making honey milk for his recovery.

Niloya: “*Brother, please get well soon, let's play a game together.*”

Murat: “*We will play Niloya.*”

Niloya: “*I want my brother to get well soon.*”

(Episode 27)

Figure 9. The scene about showing sensitivity to your brother's situation

Guiding a Sibling

Niloya and Murat guided each other by trying to change their opinion/behavior, reporting, warning, correcting erroneous information, providing information, and reminding others of the rules. Statements and visuals related to guiding a sibling are given below. A sample related to the scene about giving information is shown in Figure 10.



Murat, who witnessed Niloya and Mete's conversation, laughed and said:

Murat: *"You are just like Hacivat and Karagöz."*

Then he added:

Murat: *"Karagöz and Hacivat are a shadow play. Like you, they have funny discussions and tell the audience something."*

(Episode 70)

Figure 10. *The scene about giving information*

A sample related to the scene about correcting erroneous information is shown in Figure 11.



Murat: *"Niloya was just a proverb my mother told me. My mother actually said that if you take care of your flower and give it water, it will grow. If you don't take care of it, if you don't water it, it will wither away."*

(Episode 2)

Figure 11. *The scene on correcting erroneous information*

A sample related to the scene about the warning is shown in Figure 12.



When Niloya fell to the ground again, Murat said:

Murat: *"Niloya, I think you should tie your shoelaces. We can't play with you like this."*

(Episode 78)

Figure 12. *The scene related to the warning*

Sibling Relatedness

Niloya and Murat demonstrated interdependence by expressing concern, blaming themselves, accepting their sibling's request, being bored in their sibling's absence, keeping promises, and making promises. Expressions and visuals related to sibling attachment are given below. A sample related to the scene about expressing concern is shown in Figure 13.



Murat: *"You worked all night to do my homework; you are exhausted. There was no need for that Niloya. We could have done it together during the day. I was terrified when I couldn't find you."*
(Episode 25)

Figure 13. *The scene about expressing concern*

A sample related to scene about keeping promises is shown in Figure 14.



Niloya: *"So are we going to play together now?"*
Murat: He kept his promise by saying, *"I promised, we would play, but what will we play?"*
(Episode 4)

Figure 14. *The scene about keeping promises*

A sample related to scene about being bored in their sibling's absence is shown in Figure 15.



Niloya: *"Oh it's so boring, my brother is also at school"*, expressing that she was bored in her brother's absence.
(Episode 41)

Figure 15. *The scene about being bored in their sibling's absence*

Sibling Support

Niloya and Murat supported each other by engaging in behaviors related to sibling support: solving problems with their siblings, asking for help, helping, respecting their decisions, protecting their siblings, encouraging them, solving their siblings' problems by stating conditions, approving their ideas, sharing their excitement, giving ideas, and sharing. Statements and visuals related to sibling support are given below. A sample related to the scene about protecting your brother is shown in Figure 16.



Niloya: *"I'm going ice skating on the river."*
Niloya says as he puts his foot in the river,
Murat: *"Niloya, have you forgotten what my mom said? It is very dangerous now."*
and protected his brother.
(Episode 21)

Figure 16. *The scene about protecting your brother*

A sample related to the scene about problem-solving with her brother is shown in Figure 17.



Niloya: *"Let us take him."*
Murat: *"But we don't have a car."*
Niloya: *"We have a sled."*
Murat: *"Let's get on the sleds, we'll go faster."*
and they set off together on the sled and bought the corn flour from Uncle Hasan and took the flour to the bakery.
(Episode 14)

Figure 17. *The scene of problem-solving with her brother*

A sample related to the scene about giving ideas is shown in Figure 18.



To save the squirrel on the broken ice floes, Murat says: *"We need to do something."*
Niloya brings a twig and says, *"We can save him with this tree branch."*
(Episode 21)

Figure 18. *The scene about giving ideas*

A sample related to the scene about asking for help and helping is shown in Figure 19.



Murat: "Niloya, Mete, where did you get these balls?"
 Mete: "We got them from the kids."
 Murat: "Why?"
 Niloya: "For storage, brother."
 Murat: "For safekeeping? But why?"
 Niloya: "Brother, we have to hurry. Otherwise, they will blow up our balls."
 Murat: "Who will blow up the balls, Niloya?"
 Niloya: "Elders, come on, help us. Let's take the balls to the garden. Come on, brother, help us."
 Murat: "Okay, I will."
 and helped his brother. (Episode 15)

Figure 19. The scene about asking for help and helping

Samples related to the scenes about encouragement is shown in Figure 20.



To your brother who is afraid to skate
 Murat: "Come on Niloya, don't be afraid, I will hold you. You skate very well, Niloya, come here." and encouraged her.
 (Episode 51)



Figure 20. Scenes about encouragement

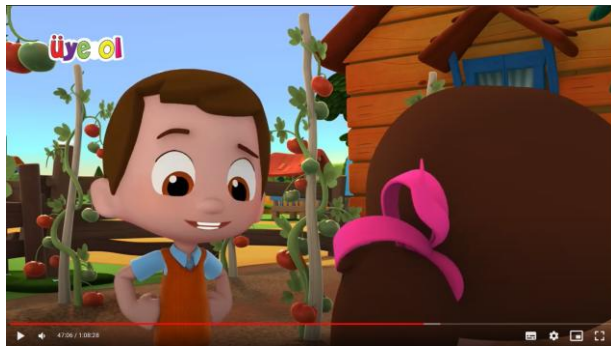
Conflict between Siblings

Niloya and Murat experienced inter-sibling conflict by engaging in behaviors such as envying, competing, reminding him of his mistake, belittling, fudging, getting angry, making fun of his brother's situation, and sulking. Expressions and visuals related to sibling conflict are given below. Samples related to the scenes about getting angry is shown in Figure 21.



Figure 21. *Scenes about getting angry*

A sample related to the scene about making fun of your brother's situation is shown in Figure 22.



Niloya, who was waiting for the tomatoes to fry and trying to talk to the tomatoes, was approached by her brother and the following dialog took place between them:

Murat: "Niloya, what are you doing?"

Niloya: "*I am telling the tomatoes to fry.*"

Murat: "*Does it work?*" (laughs)

(Episode 10)

Figure 22. *The scene about making fun of your brother's situation*

A sample related to the scene about fudging is shown in Figure 23.



Murat, who did not want Niloya, who did not know how to play the violin well enough, to play the violin with him, used the following expressions:

Murat: "*Niloyacım dear sister, look, Tospik is there, play for him.*" she said and sneaked away.

(Episode 7)

Figure 23. *The scene of fudging*

A sample related to the scene about sulking is shown in Figure 24.



Figure 24. *The scene of sulking*

A sample related to the belittling scene is shown in Figure 25.



Figure 25. *The scene about belittling*

Murat: *"You're small, you can't play this game."*
 Niloya: *"Little, are you too big, huh? Come on Tospik, we're leaving. Why am I small, has he ever seen me playing ball? He says I am small without even seeing me."* She resents her brother.
 (Episode 4)

While her mother was explaining to Niloya that she would not fry by waiting next to the tomatoes, Murat joined the conversation and the following dialog took place between him and Niloya:
 Mom: *"Niloya, my daughter, you can't just wait by the tomatoes. Tomatoes don't fry right away. You need a little patience."*
 Niloya: *"Patience?"*
 Murat: *"Niloya can't be patient."*
 Niloya: *"I will."* (angry) (Episode 10)

Using Expressions of Kindness Towards Each Other

It was found that Niloya and Murat displayed politeness expressions such as good morning, apologizing, good health, congratulating, bon appetit, asking, and thanking. Sample expressions and visuals for the expressions of politeness used by siblings towards each other are given below.

Niloya knocked Murat's shoe off the tree with a stick and the following dialog took place between her and Murat:

Murat: *"Thank you, Niloya."*

Niloya: *"You're welcome, brother."* (Episode 4)

Samples related to the scenes about congratulating is shown in Figure 26.



When Murat scored a goal, Niloya said: *“Congratulations, brother, you're great, you scored a beautiful goal.”* (Episode 4)

Figure 26. Scenes related to congratulating

2. Parents' Statements and Behaviors Regarding Sibling Relationships

Niloya and Murat's parents exhibited expressions and behaviors regarding their children's relationships such as the parent confirming the sibling's speech, watching the siblings' activities together from a distance, directing the siblings to do activities together, and reinforcing the sibling relationship.

A sample related to the scene about the parent confirming the sibling's speech is shown in Figure 27.

When Niloya thought that the tomatoes looked red because he painted them, Murat told her that the tomatoes were red because they were ripe and the following dialog took place between them:



Murat: *“The tomatoes are red because they are ripe, Niloya.”*
 Niloya: *“But brother, I really went out at night, I painted them.”*
 Murat: *“Sure, sure.”*
 Mom: *“Niloya is telling the truth, son. He got up in the night and dyed the tomatoes. I saw it.”*
 (Episode10)

Figure 27. The scene of the parent confirming the sibling's speech

A sample related to the scene about a parent watching siblings at a distance during an activity together is shown in Figure 28.



Seeing the drummer, Niloya and Murat wanted to play the drums and asked their parents for permission:

Murat: *"We can go, right Mom?"*

Mom: *"You can go, but your father should go with you."*

Father: *"Don't worry, I won't interfere with your work."* and follows Niloya and Murat without interfering. (Episode 11)

Figure 28. *The scene of a parent watching siblings at a distance during an activity together*

A sample related to the scene about reinforcing sibling relationship is shown in Figure 29.

Niloya and Murat collaborated on a plan to get eggs from the hen, entered the coop, got the eggs, and started to eat breakfast. Meanwhile, the one who started eating the egg started talking:



Niloya: *"This egg is delicious."*

Mom: *"Bon appetit, my daughter."*

Dad: *"How did you get the eggs?"*

Niloya: *"My brother and I bought them together."*

Dad: *"Well done my sweet children."*

Figure 29. *The scene on reinforcing sibling relationship*

3. Siblings Reflecting their Relationship to their Parents

Niloya and Murat told their parents about their cooperation with his brother. A sample related to the scene about telling parents about their cooperation with his brother is shown in Figure 30.

Niloya and Murat cooperated in their plan to get eggs from the hen, went into the house, got the eggs, and started eating breakfast. Meanwhile, the one who started eating the egg started talking:



Niloya: *"This egg is delicious."*

Mom: *"Bon appetit, my daughter."*

Dad: *"How did you get the eggs?"*

Niloya: *"My brother and I bought them together."*

Dad: *"Well done my sweet children."*

Niloya: *"We covered Tospiş with feathers like a chicken."*

Murat: *"I pretended to be a chicken, too. Gıtgıtdak gıtgıtdak..."* (Episode 23)

Figure 30. *The scene about telling parents about their cooperation with his brother*

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

When the study's results were analyzed, it was observed that the most prominent sibling interaction characteristics of Niloya and her brother were found in the category of doing activities together. Especially playing games together constituted an essential part of these interactions. Niloya and her brother generally accompanied each other in different activities. It was observed that sometimes their friends also participated in these interactions. Another finding was that the siblings frequently invited each other to play and rarely rejected one another's requests. In addition, in the videos analyzed in this study, the conflict rate in Niloya and Murat's sibling interactions was found to be low, and they generally responded positively to each other's suggestions. Since this finding does not cover all episodes of the cartoon, it may also be considered as a limitation of the present study. These findings suggest that spending time together with siblings is essential for the development of social skills and the strengthening of bonds. This finding supports the studies on sibling relationships in the literature. As stated in previous studies, positive interactions between siblings are shaped by spending time together and everyday interests (Dunn, 1983; McHale & Crouter, 2003). Go et al. (2012) observed eight sibling pairs between the ages of 6 and 10 during play and found that game design influenced sibling play dynamics and provided scaffolding opportunities for each other. These findings emphasize the importance of sibling interactions in children's development and suggest that older siblings can be influential play facilitators for younger children. Another study finding was that Niloya and her brother showed sensitivity to each other and were sensitive to each other's needs. The siblings are sensitive to each other's situations and express this sensitivity through various behaviors. In particular, behaviors involving close relationships and contact, such as hugging each other and using words of affection, reveal that they have established a strong bond and are emotionally close to each other. Such interactions reinforce the trust and bonds between siblings and contribute to the development of empathy. This positive emotional closeness between Niloya and her brother shows that their relationship is strengthened through physical activities and emotional sharing. Similarly, Kaşka & Erem (2018) found that the cartoons *Rafadan Tayfa* and *Esrarengiz Kasaba* contained messages about cooperation between siblings. A study by Graham and Coplan (2012) reported that positive sibling relationships help children cope with social anxieties such as shyness. The strong bond between siblings can shape not only the relationships within the family but also children's relationships in the outside world. Alıcı (2022) also reported that the quality of sibling relationships was positively correlated with friendship relationships, especially among girls.

In the episodes analyzed, it was observed that Niloya's older brother, Murat, assumed an active role of guidance towards his sister, Niloya. Murat frequently informs Niloya about different events and situations, guiding her and persuading her to change her mind on various issues. According to Hughes et al. (2018), when children acquire the necessary socio-cognitive skills, older siblings often enjoy taking on the role of educator, caregiver, and playmate. It is thought that Murat's attitude towards Niloya while guiding her will also enable him to build a stronger relationship with his brother. It is understood that Niloya is generally open to her brother's suggestions and makes some decisions by considering his opinions. In daily life, such interactions between siblings in the cartoon may reinforce essential elements such as trust and communication between siblings. Children often model and imitate the behaviors they see in cartoons, which can positively and negatively affect their language, behavior, and social development (Ghilzai et al., 2017). From this point of view, it can be considered that children who watch the Niloya cartoon can also take guidance roles in sibling interactions.

According to the study's findings, Niloya and her brother made encouraging statements and supported each other in various situations. While her brother encouraged Niloya in the face of difficulties, Niloya supported her brother with uplifting words. In addition, it was found that Murat exhibited protective behavior towards his sister Niloya in the face of some events. Such protective behaviors show that the bond between siblings is strengthened, and the sense of trust is reinforced. These interactions reveal that sibling relationships are meaningful for emotional and social development and protective and supportive roles. This finding aligns with Pike et al.'s (2005) results. In their study, when children's relationships with their parents were analyzed, they found that sibling relationship quality was directly related to the adjustment of older siblings. This result shows that older siblings' emotional support and guidance play an essential role in developing younger siblings. Gillies and Lucey's (2006) interviews with 44 children and young people on sibling relationships revealed that younger siblings rely on older siblings to cope with the demands of growing up and becoming adults.

In the episodes analyzed, conflict behavior was rarely observed between Niloya and her brother. Instead, it was determined that most conflicts were caused by the brother's behavior of making fun of his brother's situation and supporting him. In such situations, Niloya rarely displayed anger and resentment behaviors. Even though Niloya occasionally feels envious of her brother, there is almost no competition between the siblings. This situation

shows that the relationship between siblings is positive and supportive. However, it is thought that presenting conflicts and, eventually, reconciliation through cartoons will contribute to the audience's problem-solving skills. Similarly, in Hafizoğlu & Bıçakcı's (2019) study, cartoons were examined in terms of social-emotional development. It was determined that the categories of coping with adverse events, exhibiting positive behavior, and problem-solving skills in relationships were mentioned in the Niloya cartoon. However, the categories of coping with aggressive behaviors, cooperation, empathy, initiating and maintaining relationships, respecting the feelings of others, and friendship relationships were not explicitly mentioned. In the study conducted by Erem and Yılmaz (2017), it was determined that in the Gumball cartoon, Gumball and Darwin get along well, enjoy spending time together and playing games together and that the central conflict between the two brothers in the cartoon stems from the idea of being a leader. The cartoon shows that siblings who get along well can conflict due to their sense of self and differences in their interests, and valuable messages are given by not drawing an ideal world in this regard.

When the findings were analyzed, it was observed that in the interaction between Niloya and her brother, courtesy expressions such as congratulating and thanking each other were frequently used. This behavior indicates respect and understanding between siblings and reinforces positive communication. However, the interactions of Fineas and Förb characters in the cartoon examined in Erem and Yılmaz's (2017) study differ from the dynamics between Niloya and her brother. The fact that Fineas sees Förb as an "essential brother" and appreciates him and that Förb accepts Fineas' leadership and does not worry about it even though he is usually not appreciated reflects a different sibling relationship. Here, the fact that Fineas assumes the leadership role and Förb continues his relationship peacefully even though he is appreciated less visibly shows the different role distributions between the siblings and how these roles continue with respect and understanding. This study has a mutual appreciation process between Niloya and her brother. It is thought that such expressions of kindness will also strengthen the emotional bonds between siblings and create a healthier, supportive communication environment.

When the role of parents in sibling relationships in the Niloya cartoon was examined, it was determined that parents occasionally directed their children to do activities together, reinforced sibling relationships, confirmed the siblings' discourse, and watched them from a distance. Such parental interventions play a role in strengthening the bonds between siblings and supporting healthy interactions. Encouraging siblings to spend time together will help increase their communication and cooperation. However, in the episodes analyzed, it was observed that the number of scenes involving parents' involvement in sibling relationships was quite limited. This suggests that parents take a passive role in the interaction between siblings. It is thought that more active parental involvement may contribute to the deepening and positive development of sibling relationships. However, it is thought that parents can exhibit a more active involvement, which may contribute to the deepening of siblings' relationships. Moreover, understanding sibling relationships requires considering both sibling status variables and the mutual influence of parental and sibling relationships (Dunn, 1983). On the other hand, how parents intervene in conflicts between children is also essential. Research shows that child-centered strategies promote closeness between siblings and help reduce conflict. This suggests that parents' solution-oriented and supportive approach when intervening in problems that arise between children can make sibling relationships healthier. On the other hand, excessive controlling attitudes of parents may increase sibling conflicts and negatively affect the quality of relationships (Szymańska & Poraj-Weder, 2021; Yue, 2024).

As a result of the study, it was observed that siblings' experiences in their relationships were rarely shared with parents in the episodes analyzed. While the interactions between siblings are usually limited to each other, the fact that these experiences are not shared with parents points to an independent relationship dynamic within the children themselves. In contrast to this result, in Erem and Yılmaz's (2017) study, Candes, who has an opposite personality in terms of Fineas and Förb in the cartoon, is a jealous sibling. It was observed that he did not want his siblings to be the center of attention, so he tried to provoke them by telling his mother that everything they did was something negative. The situation in the Niloya cartoon suggests a model of a relationship in which siblings develop bonds and the ability to solve problems among themselves while at the same time having low levels of parental intervention. However, in some cases, the lack of parental involvement in these experiences may also make it possible for children to find solutions only among themselves and further reinforce their emotional bond. In the 65 episodes of the Niloya cartoon examined in the study, it was concluded that the interactions between siblings, doing activities together, playing, supporting each other, encouraging, appreciating, hugging, and using words of affection were frequently included. In addition, the relationship between Niloya and her brother exhibits a less conflicted and less competitive relationship structure. Considering the behaviors and discourses related to sibling relationships in the Niloya cartoon, cartoons that offer characters that children can take as models in regulating sibling relationships in children's microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1976) gain importance. Bandura

(1977; 1986) argues that learning is shaped not only by individuals' personal experiences but also by observing the behaviors of others and making inferences from these behaviors. He states that children can model the behaviors they observe and exhibit what they learn from the model through indirect reinforcement. In terms of modeling for children, the characters and plot lines in the cartoons they watch should present positive relationships, supportive interactions, and advanced content on conflicts between siblings and ways to resolve them. In this way, children adopt a more balanced approach that provides the necessary knowledge and skills to cope with their problems and develop a healthy compromise. The observations made on Niloya and his brother do not cover sibling relationships in different age groups or cultural contexts. In future studies, in-depth examinations of sibling interactions in different age groups and cultural environments may expand the body of knowledge in this area. On the other hand, conflicts between siblings and parental involvement in siblings' conflicts and relationships were rarely addressed, indicating that the focus was more on positive relationships. In this context, the results of the study suggest that a more supportive role of parents in their children's relationships can strengthen not only children's individual development but also their bonds with their siblings; therefore, the supportive role of parents' involvement in sibling relationships can be given more space in the cartoon.

Limitations

This study is limited to 65 episodes of the Niloya cartoon. This limitation restricts the generalizability of the findings. The actual effects of the behaviors observed in the cartoon on children were not directly measured; instead, the evaluation was based solely on their potential to serve as models. Therefore, the study does not provide direct data on the extent to which children are influenced by these contents or which behaviors they model.

Statements of Publication Ethics

As the author of the article, I declare in this form that scientific and ethical rules are followed in this article and that the article does not require ethics committee permission since it is a study based on document review (cartoon review).

Researchers' Contribution Rate

If there is one author, please delete this sub-section. Otherwise, please specify the contribution rate of each author in the manuscript. Do not write any names. You may add new columns.

Authors	Literature review	Method	Data Collection	Data Analysis	Results	Conclusion
Author 1	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Author 2	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest between the researchers.

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