The influence of animated cartoons on primary children's views of social reality: an ethnographic study in a Maltese primary school

# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

10 children between 9-10 years

## Implications For Parents About

Other

## Other Parent Implication

Use of different modes of learning to consolidate what was learnt at school

## Implications For Educators About

Other

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Other

## Other Stakeholder Implication

Curriculum developers

# Abstract

This paper presents ways in which animated cartoons influence primary school children’s views of social reality based on students’ relationships with these characters and their perception of these characters as being ‘real’. For this purpose, a mixed methods approach was adopted, in which 9/10-year-old Maltese primary school children were provided with an opportunity to participate in activities related to cartoon characters. In these activities the children (n = 10) provided their interpretations of animated cartoon characters through drawings, writings and verbally during semi-structured interviews and cartoon watching. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the children’s verbal expressions and interpretations. From the outcomes of the analysis, educational implications and cross-curricular pedagogical suggestions were then derived through the use of the MIRROR multimodal framework. These educational implications indicate that children can be taught critical thinking skills through the integration of animated cartoons in different curricular subjects. Moreover, the results indicate that students need to be offered the possibility to express themselves through various modes as exemplified in the pedagogical suggestions proposed. These pedagogical suggestions can be used by primary school educators, parents and guardians in order to teach creativity, expressive skills and literacy skills to primary school children.

# Outcome

"The data collected from the activities seem to indicate that the students were able to form both positive and negative parasocial relationships... The results also indicate that boys form positive parasocial relationships with only male characters whereas girls form positive parasocial relationships with both male and female characters... Students who formed a positive parasocial relationship indicated that these characters exist in reality which suggests that affection and love towards a particular character can render it to be perceived as more ‘real’." (Attard Cremona, 2021; p. 5).
"The students indicated that animated cartoons contain portrayals of social phenomena and that such portrayals may influence the way that children understand and construct their views of social reality... The students’ interpretations and descriptions also suggest that through educational activities similar to those used for collecting data, children can develop critical thinking skills as well as feel empowered to share their thoughts and feelings about their views on socio-cultural practices, social phenomena and social reality." (Attard Cremona, 2021; p. 6).