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# **An Analysis of Television Programmes for Children broadcast in Hungary and Turkey**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper provides a comparative study of children's television programmes broadcast in Hungary and Turkey. We recorded and analysed Saturday morning TV programmes, with a special emphasis on various factors that may affect children's socialisation (behavioural patterns, attitudes, conflicts, tolerance etc. seen in programmes). We compared those TV programmes with cultural similarities and differences. We make suggestions about how such television programmes might or hinder developing social skills. Children spend many hours watching television. Advertisements suggest desirable patterns of behaviour for them, and introduce them to the consumer society.*

## **Introduction**

In our digital age we need to consider that modern instruments of communication may be harmful to those who use them, and this suggests a societal problem: that these instruments create a virtual world that may alienate humans from personal relationships and contacts. Those well used to the virtual world may tend to neglect their problems and tasks, and may even have their personalities, personality traits or development influenced. Special attention must be given to children, because they spend many hours watching television. In a cartoon or a tale everything is possible, and what is impossible becomes reality for the children. Also, there are advertisements for children, which suggest some 'desirable' patterns of behaviour for them, and introduce them to the consumer society. In this paper we present a preliminary study of television programmes, focusing on programmes for children. We examine what is broadcast for them in the period when they most likely watch television, and discuss cultural differences between Hungarian and Turkish television programmes.

## **Purpose and Methodology**

The paper aims to give an overview of the European Union countries' media problems regarding the child audience. In this respect, the main problem was just finding out what the children watch during their prime time throughout the week.

When the literature review is considered, the most striking thing is that in almost all cultures throughout Europe and other parts of the world, television is seen as the main socialisation medium. In most cases it is even seen as the medium of education, in most of the cases it provides distance education and life-long learning opportunities. These facilities provided through the media are seen as the main factor to make it closer to the children starting from the early ages of their education. The tendency of millions of

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working parents leaving their children to the television programs as the baby sitters shows the great positioning of television in the life of children.

Today, how children spend their time is a research area for many interdisciplinary studies. This data involves useful facts about the psychological, sociological, linguistic, educational and many other perspectives of child development. Managers of large companies use such research, as in many countries children are seen as one of the main target audiences for advertisements. This brings in the issue of emphasising products for future consumers during the television programs.

For the present study we conducted a simple preliminary research. The aims included:

1. To identify the types of television programmes broadcast on Saturday mornings,
2. To identify the cultural contents, i.e. global or local (traditional) of the programmes seen, and
3. To observe similarities and differences between the results obtained in Hungary and Turkey.

We focussed on Saturday morning programmes because, as Gerbner (1998) says, this is the time when children most likely watch television. It is expected that in this period commercial television channels broadcast cartoons, youth programmes and advertisements for children. It was also believed that both local and global contents would be found in those programmes, and more traditional programmes would be found in Turkey than in Hungary. For the purpose of our research, we recorded the Saturday morning programmes from the most popular Hungarian commercial channel, RTL Klub, and from the Atelevision, Channel D and Star channels in Turkey, from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. on the same Saturday mornings in May, 2007. We then measured the length of each programme and recorded this. Using simple content analysis, the genre of each programme, and, if it were an advertisement, the type of the advertised product and the local or global nature of the programme was also recorded.

### **Findings and Interpretation**

Children, once having established a certain life-style, tend to follow it almost for a lifetime. The way they spend their time, the things they choose to do and the things they buy become more and more important for the adults. What children do, other than eating and sleeping, is becoming more and more important. As they grow up, the things they do change through the impact of the media and peer-pressure. Children tend to sleep and eat less as they grow up and spend the rest of the time just like adults (Robinson & Bianchi, 1997: 20-24). A research study in 1993-1995 at the University of Maryland studied how each age group spent their time. The research shows they also have time for shopping, spare time activities, reading, socialising, etc. Watching television could be seen as more a female activity and it tended to cover a larger amount of time as they grow up (American Demographics, 1997:32).

The average number of children in each family in Turkey is 2.14 by HUNEE in 1988 (HUNEE, 1987-1989:65). However, this has fallen from 3.03 in 1978 and 2.7 in 1983.

The decrease shows us that the number of children is getting lower, but the opportunities provided to each child is getting higher and higher. More recent research shows that 59.8% of the married females prefer two children as the ideal, whereas 17.4% of them would rather have three children, and some 9% prefer not to have any (Türkiye Aile Yılığ, 1991:24). The effectiveness of these preferences could be seen as the birth rate represented as 6.3 in the 1960s lowering down to 2.99 in the 1990s. In 1998 it was 2.38 (1989 DIE).

Of course, the amount of time devoted to television viewing is highly related to access to the television set and the television channels. Accessibility of television to children has never been as a problem until very recent years. The issue of children's choice of certain television programs and the increasing hours of watching is being seen as more problematic in recent years, not only in Turkey, but throughout the whole world. The statistics show that the average child is watching five films a day, mostly having inappropriate content. Pecora claims that in 2000 children's pocket money reached up to a sum of 155 billion dollars, and that they also had a rather different way of spending it, because children now are facing the media and they also have a media shaped life (Pecora, 1998).

When there were almost 100,000 television sets all over USA in 1948, nobody was aware of the risk for the children regarding the physical, intellectual and emotional impact this could have throughout the time. When there was a television set in seven houses out of eight by 1959, around 50 million children met the television for the first time (Öcel, 2007: 211). Television started to shape the lives of the children. They are the main medium to modernity and accessibility to knowledge: television shapes culture, language and thinking styles of children as well as adults. Before television, the flow of information could be under control of the adults and the educationalists, and with the impact of television parents and teachers lost control over the children.

An average student of the 6th grade was spending three hours for television and 15 minutes for the radio in 1950s. A decade later, was four hours of television and two hours for the radio. Now we estimate an average six hours for television and five hours for radio. When the time with other media is considered, children now are spending more than eight to ten hours with the mass media (Roberts & Foerh, 2004: 11).

Considering media availability, an average American child between 2-7, has three televisions, three cassette players, three radios, two video players, two CD players, one video-game console and one computer (Roberts & Foerh, 2004: 31). By the age of 8-12, the media availability gets higher. According to 2001 data, 67% of school children have access to the internet at home, and 83% 15-17 year old youth. Media availability is not affected by economic income, social status, being white or black or Hispanic, etc. In some cities the lower income groups have less overall media availability at home, yet they are still available and accessible to children (Roberts & Foerh, 2004:37). The children between 2-7 and 8-18 having media access in their room could be seen in the following table.

	2-7 age %	8-18 age %
Television	32	65
Video Cassette Player	16	36
Radio	43	86
Cassette / CD Player	38	88
Video-Game Console	13	45
Computer	6	21

To Roberts and Foerh, gender shows meaningful differences in access only in video game consoles (Roberts & Foerh, 2004: 38). However, the percentage of girls (69%) having television sets in their rooms is higher than boys (61%). It is the same for the radio (88% for girls and 85% for boys) as well as for CD players (90% for girls and 86% for boys), yet when the video-game consoles were considered this is just the opposite (girls 30% and boys 58%). Of course there are family factors regarding the children's access to the media in the overall household and having individual access.

Media is growing to higher levels in the dreams of children as well. The computers, digital channels, thematic channels seem to be too challenging for the successful students. The parents are encouraged to buy these products for their children and the children were encouraged to ask for these from their parents. Even if the promotions seem to be higher, the statistical data shows that the individual pc availability reaches up to 1.8% in all around Turkey whereas individual internet access is only 1.2%. Of course, the percentage goes higher in big cities (Yeni Yüzyıl, 8 August: 10). Kubey, Shifflet, Weerakkody and Ukeiley worked on the assessment of children's use of cable television and internet. They found that children between 5-12 ages were using more independent and thematic channels. The rate of the children having a high frequency of internet usage is 1.5% among all adults (Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 1995:467).

In view of these figures, it is inevitable to have laws of protection in almost all countries. Each country is having its own schedule of programs and regulations, that's why it is possible to see the changes from one country to another. Yet, we all know that in its nature, the children have no possibility of protecting themselves from the impact of the media. Specifically, the media impact gets heavier when the commercials were considered. Thus, the media law has special sentences for the commercials regarding the rights of the children. When we consider the children's preferences regarding the Turkish media, what they choose to watch could be summarised as below. (Öcel, 2007: 341)

Program Types	5-11 ages %	12-19 ages %
Turkish Serials	24	27
Turkish Films	17	16
Humour	5	4
Foreign Film	10	13
Foreign Serials	8	5
Children Programs	1	
News	11	14
Sports, sport related news & magazine	5	4
Religious	1	1
television plays	4	4
Cartoons	8	1
Musical Entertainments	5	3
Talk shows	1	2
Documentaries		1
Theatre shows		1
Weekly Magazines		3
Reality Show		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The choice of content is related to the availability of spare time. Regarding the education schedule of children, the weekends might be thought to be more accessible, but this is not the case. Weekdays are considered to have a cumulative effect on children, and specifically, concentrating on the television serials occurs on the weekdays. They follow specific serials on the television channels and these are given more importance than the individual choices made at the weekend, since the content of what's being watched is usually discussed with the peers during the class time or other spare time. Having the socialising effect of these serials, make the children of certain age groups become fans of certain television serials.

Time	5-11 age %	12-19 age %
Week Days	60	65
Weekend	40	35

(Öcel, 2007:343)

## Discussion and Conclusion

On the chosen day, there were only cartoons and advertisements for children between 7.00 and 9.53 a.m. on the Hungarian television channel. There were eight cartoons, each lasting for about 20 minutes and between them were five spots of advertisements. The cartoons were the following: Kid Paddle, The Smurfs, Ghostbusters, Pokémon, Phantom, 101 Dalmatians, Winnie the Pooh, and Lilo the Stitch. From this list, it is obvious that no Hungarian cartoons were broadcasted on this channel, suggesting that local cartoon

heroes, who potentially reflect or transmit elements of local culture, or are or have themselves become parts of the local culture are completely missing. The international cartoons, however, represent a fairly broad selection. While Winnie the Pooh can be treated as a classical piece, and, to a certain extent, The Smurfs and the 101 Dalmatians too, Pokémon or the Lilo the Stitch are definitely typical and characteristic cartoons of our days. This suggests that while no piece of the local culture is conveyed by the cartoons, although it could be, since there are still very popular Hungarian cartoons, the viewers will be much more aware of the global culture of cartoons.

On the examined day, there were 18 advertisements on the Hungarian commercial channel. Ten of them advertised sweets (chocolate or ice cream), four showed food for children (cornflakes or hamburgers) and another four advertised services (mobile phone ringtones or background image downloading). Of the 18 advertisements, only three included local products, i.e. products that are not only manufactured in the country, but traditionally are Hungarian. Even the ringtone downloading advertisement did not play a song from any popular Hungarian pop groups. As a general result, the Hungarian RTL Klub channel's programme showed a highly globalised world with little room for the local culture.

When the Hungarian and Turkish television channels were compared and contrasted, it could easily be seen that children's programs seem to be very similar in each country. They all start very early and they have similar contents. The commercials inserted in the cartoons and the programs seem to be similar as well. This may be explained as stereotyping children all over the world, making them the same with similar lifestyles, tastes and choices. The big companies actively taking part all around the world, aim for such a global citizen and consumer type.

When we have a look at the case in Turkey we see that it is a country having about 200 television channels nationally, internationally and locally broadcasting. Atelevision, Cine 5, CNNTurk, Digiturk, Flash television, Fox television, Channel 6, Channel 7, Channel D, Channel E and CNBC-e, Kral television, Meltme television, Ntelevision, Samanyolu television, Show television, Sky Turk, Star television, TRT and television8 are the well known ones. One of them, Ntelevision starts the new day by 9:00. It seems that there are no specific programs for children, yet, the documentary called 'Bam Teli' starting at 10:10 welcomes the guests from a village, the children who would like to continue their education. Atelevision is another example, starting broadcasting for children by 7:30 with Flintstones and other cartoons, and continues with a film usually classified as G for parents and children to be watched together. Actually, just after some documentaries in the middle of day, it again continues broadcasting for children, with a well-known sitcom 'Don't let the children hear about it' and another sitcom having a magical character in it called 'Selena'. Thus, their full program is almost designed only for children.

The Saturday competition continues in the other channels as well. Another channel, Flash television starts the day at 7:00 with a film nostalgia, usually chosen for the parents and children to be watched together, which is followed by cartoons by 10:00. Afterwards, it gives place to a comedy show called 'Pardon Yani'. In the afternoon

program, there is the American 'Pankreas' which the children, especially the boys are in love with.

A rather traditional television channel, Channel 7 starts the day by 7:30 and afterwards gives place to the 'life lessons' in which they concentrate on traditions and child education. Another sitcom, 'Good Family Robot' starts by 11:15. It is interesting to see that even if this is a rather traditional one, almost all the channels give place to programs for children and some kind of magical characters in them. This time, it is a robot for a rather traditional family, learning to live in this family and of course having many educational messages in it. The story starts with an average traditional Turkish family welcoming a Japanese couple for a few days, and on their return, this couple sends a little present to the Turkish family: A Robot. The program continues with economical information for the general audience, in the most simplified way, followed by a cartoon by 15:00. The documentary called 'Şoray Uzun Yolda' could be accepted as another educational program. The cartoons broadcasted in this channel, could be counted as the most beloved ones by the children, such as Scooby-Doo, Flying Goose, and Pokemon.

As a channel giving place mostly to the English spoken and subtitled serials, CNBC-e starts the day by 7:00 with Avatar. Then, it continues at 7:30 with the sitcom called 'My Life as a Teenage Robot'. 8:00 is the starting time for 'Dora the Explorer'. At 10:00 'The Fairly Oddparents' and at 10:30 'Spongebob & Squarepants' are followed by the 'Simpsons' at 11:00. A sitcom rather for teenagers and adults 'According to Jim' follows at 11:30.

A rather traditional channel Stelevision or Samanyolu television starts the day at 10:00 with cartoons as well. The other sitcoms rather have traditional and educational messages in them. The children's programs range from cartoons to animations and films for children in this channel. The program 'Little Cooks' teach children how to cook for example. Having many animals as the guests, another program called 'Little Anecdotes' is another program challenging not only the children but also the adults. In the sitcoms like 'Nobody Is There?' is a type of documentary visiting different cities and villages every week and reflecting different voices, faces and life-styles. The other sitcoms like 'Büyük Buluşma', 'Beşinci Boyut' and 'Tarık ve Diğerleri' are the ones also welcomed by children, since they have either child characters in them or some kind of magic.

Show television starts the day at 7:30 with the serial called 'Thomas & Friends' followed by 'Bamey & Friends' and a famous start leads the program 'Yoncimik The Wonderland' till 9:30 when the competition between the schools take place. The serial called 'My Best Friend' is also a sitcom having a genie as the main character and of course many types of magic, usually followed by a magazin and a Turkish film still capturing the attention of children.

television 8 doesn't start with cartoons or similar children programs, however, it has a very unique program for children in which a famous footballer gives football tips. 13:40 is the beginning time.

Turkish Radio Television has many channels, aiming at different types of target groups. TRT 1 aims at the general audience across the country and concentrates more on



entertainment and information programs. For children the Saturday mornings start at 8:00 with the 'Disney-Mickey Mouse' films and 9:00 is the starting time for a magazine for children teaching different plays for children. The program continues till noon-time, with a film usually challenging the whole family. TRT2 provides a somewhat better program, the documentary called 'Big Cat Diary' which is challenging for the kids. The magazine and news program are again prepared in the same challenging way, followed by the programs referring to the information age and info technologies, which are equally challenging to the children and teenagers. The cartoons and a serial about the sea and sea creatures is followed by the Turkish Cinema, usually broadcasting the comedy films for families. Yet, none of these programs are specifically prepared or targeted at the child audience. TRT 3 on the other hand gives much more time for the sports events and is only challenging for those who are keen of sports and sports events. TRT4 provides mostly educational programs for open and distance education, which is followed by the students enthusiastically. TRT INT gives much more importance to the cultural programs. Thus, the only program to be classified as a children's program is called 'Pabucu Yarım' and apart from it there is no children's program in TRT 2-3- and 4.

Having such an audience, the television programs could not resist the idea of having more commercials in between the programs. Thus, the impact of the programs could be doubled through the impact of the commercials as well. Regarding the rate of this impact it could be valuable to keep the following information in mind: children in Turkey come across with 78 different types of commercials in between the children's programs. During their watching period their programs were interrupted 1,073 times and they are made to watch commercials reaching up to 33,048 seconds in total. Yet, worse than that, only 27 of these commercials out of 78 were dealing with products for children. At the end, the children watch the whole commercials for 33,048 seconds and were targeted for 4862 seconds of them only. This covers only 14.71% of what they watched totally (Öcel, 2007: 346).

The commercials targeting food products took 2796 seconds (46.6 minutes) of children's viewing time, breaking their programs 156 times. The commercials about notebooks, etc. occurred 27 times having 696 seconds of their watching time. Contrary to the belief, it's been found out that the commercials for toys or such stuff does not take that much time. They only break through two times and capture 39 seconds of children. The cleaning issues targeting the children were limited somehow to toothbrushes and toothpaste. These appeared 43 times and took 1186 seconds. The other media is advertised through different serials, films, books, etc, appearing 10 times and taking 145 seconds of children. However, the children were interrupted 420 times for 15349 seconds for broadcasting commercials, 101 times for 3334 seconds for other cleaning materials, 13 times for 247 seconds for cars and fairs. The food commercials which were not exactly related to children were inserted 12 times for 378 seconds and banking commercials given place 32 times for 1005 seconds.

Apart from the commercials, the content of the watched material should be considered. In USA a research study performed by 'Christian Science Monitor' found out that the prime time television serials of 85.5 hours covers 84 killings or violent events. The same research shows that during the prime time for 26 million children between 2-7 ages a

violent event takes place every 16.3 minutes (Ersin, 1980:21). This is somehow related with the other research for example done in 1978 showing that every month around 282,000 children were physically abused in American schools and 8% of the students reflect that they are afraid of going to school at least one day of the week. During the 1985-1986 academic years the criminal children reports reaching to the police offices were 433,000 and the number of the children coming to school with outlaw guns were around 1,500. Of course, the number of these students means the increase of all type of violent actions (Elkind, 1989:16).

Europe on the other hand, is a bit lucky in this sense. They have lower rates of violence and less dangerous content regarding the television serials mostly watched by children. In families where the parents do not control children's watching television, they can also watch programmes with violent actions and they may consider those actions as examples to follow. A study by Judit Kiss (Kiss, 2004) examines television watching habits of children between 8 and 11 years of age. This research revealed that children of 12 years watch the most television. Most of the children do not only watch programmes with age limitation with their parents, but also alone. The favourite genre of those children who watch films for people over 18 is thrillers (horror). In general however, parents do determine what programmes children may watch (Mihály, 1999).

Violence is not missing from the classical tales (e.g. Snowwhite, Little Red Riding Hood) either. In the written tales, children imagine the negative (e.g. violent) events using their fantasy, but if they watch television, those events are shown to them. At the age of 8-9, they prefer tales, which are realistic and can be imagined in everyday life. At the age of 10-12, children consider cartoon protagonists as their ideals. Most of the children prefer action cartoon heroes because those heroes are strong and invincible. At the second place, actors of classical cartoons are placed, while at the third place, heroes of the funny cartoons were.

The data obtained by the AGB Nielsen Hungary in March 2007 show that children between 4 and 12 spend slightly more time watching television (3 hrs 13 minutes) a day than those between 13 and 17 (2 hrs 58 minutes) on the average. As to the daily average time in the age group 4-17 years, those who receive 1-6 channels watch more television (3 hrs 29 minutes) than those with 7+ channels (3 hrs 01 minutes). Also, in families where they have no computer, children watch television for 3 hrs 51 minutes a day, while, where they have a computer, it is only 2 hours 46 minutes. Comparing this data with that obtained in March 2006, it can be stated that now, children between 4 and 12 years watch slightly more, and those between 13 and 17 years watch slightly less television than a year before. However, there is a drastic increment of time in families with no computer, in March 2006, it was only 3 hrs 33 minutes and this increased by 19 minutes by 2007. In families, where they do have a computer, children watched television for 2 hrs and 55 minutes in March 2006, and this decreased by 9 minutes in 2007.

To Lieberg, as the idea of having a private individual life became the norm in the 1990s, bringing up the idea of living at home and spending more time alone isolated the youth of 11-18 ages from social settings, leaving more time and space for media availability (Lieberg, 1995: 720- 744). Thus, this age group has no more possibilities than 'home' to

be socialised and 'school' to be educated. Since these young people have no 'place' to share social life, consciously or unconsciously they were either sent to the street or to the places where mainly adults attend (Lieberg, 1995:720-744). Consequently, they happen to use more adult places and share their time with older people, and cannot find enough opportunity to be themselves to reflect their speech or find their own voice.

Of course it is a matter of choice for the children to choose their own playmates, their peers or adults to share their time and interests. Even if this choice could change from one period to another, certain choices were shaped through the communication within the group or the dynamics of the society.

The impact of the television programs on children may change depending upon the amount watched and the age of the child. The same film for example watched by different age groups, could be understood by 66% when they are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 80% for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 92% for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Usually, the children's evaluation is somewhat action based, that means they do not consider the previous or later circumstances, they only concentrate on behaviours (Öktem, 1980:15).

The children's use of time with peers or parents brings along different types of choices. Even the parents who are after the most qualitative time have no choice other than relying upon their children. The rate of the children both for girls and boys does not exceed 2% (Öcel, 2007:398-399). It is also interesting that for the girls reaching up to 31% wishing to share their time with their mothers doing things in the household, watching television reaches only to 2%. On the other hand, the boys staying only at a level of 3% wishing to share time with their fathers at home, the activity of watching television stays only at 2%. This could be interpreted as not only the wish of children to watch television alone but also the reluctance of the adults to share their time with their kids. When we have a look the choices of the children, a rather recent research study shows us the results as in the following table. (Öcel, 2007:114)

Public Agenda, a New York research office in the reach in 1996 proved that modern tendencies show us that the parents do not consider parenthood as one of their primary duties (Crispell, 1997: 39-40). According to the results of the survey, only 37% of the adults believe that they are good parents and a modern and sustainable world could be created for the children. Apart from that only 22% of the parents believe that they are positive role models for their children. More than half of the adults think that the children are abused by adults and suppressed by parents. The families do not see themselves as effective parents as their own ones. The research of Russel proves that 56% of modern mothers see themselves as less effective mothers than their own mothers.

The percentage of the parents who believe that they lack the necessary communication skills to establish a good rapport with their children reaches up to the level of 51%. 32% of the children think in the same way, stating that their parents lack the necessary communication skills. However, 50% of the parents believe that they're communicating with their kids when they buy something new for them. However, 28% of the children between 12-17 ages think that their parents do not communicate with them when they buy presents, toys, etc. for them. 11% of the kids believe that their parents give prior

importance to their jobs rather than their children. Adults think that 27% of the mothers and 35% of the fathers neglect their children due to their work. The lifesaver at this point comes into mind as the media and mainly the television. It is widely accepted that the television provides the necessary medium to make the children feel more relaxed and valued. The programs targeting them give the impression that they are cared for and valued as much as they are communicated.

In 1999, a research study done with the students of three primary schools in Turkey, Istanbul, made it obvious that the majority of the children are not happy with their parent-children relationships and they feel that they lack some communication between the two ends (Öcel, 2007:114).

Children feel that the time spent with the parents is not of quality or enough. Children also believe that this parent-child relationship tries to emphasise the rules of the adults. When there is a shared time with parents and children, most of the children believe that they are doing the things the adults choose but not the things they want. 41.7% of the children believe that they want to do nothing with their mothers and rather to be alone. When looked at the chosen activities to be shared with the mothers, it is interesting to see that the percentage of the indoor and outdoor activities is almost equal to each other. However, it is also important to see that the children might prefer to share their time in outdoor activities such as playing football, board games, etc. Of course wishes and how much they were performed are two different ends, yet, even the planning or tendency is something important in this case (Öcel, 2007: 398-399). Consequently, it is usually the traditional case that children tend to choose their fathers (37%) to be accompanied for the outdoor activities and their mother (31%) for the indoor activities.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Mother %</b>	<b>Father %</b>
Indoor activity	32	37
Holiday	19	11
Outdoor activity	31	3
Play / Enjoyment	13	27
Other	12	9

Having a certain amount of access to television and commercials, the children could become the consumers of certain brands starting in the very early days of childhood. The research shows us that even a child of 3 could differentiate between around 600 brands and they choose consciously. Some of them could become so addicted that the concept of identifying themselves through the brands could become a main problem in their development process. One of the kings of the marketing world, Siegel, states that the children rely more upon the commercials depending upon the word of mouth. Thus, the children buying a brand and having their own impression is very important. That's why before they become the loyal customers they tend to buy many different ones but once they decide this loyalty could go for a lifetime. At this point, having a visual access to the brands and products is very important. The online technologies as well contribute to it. The average internet users among children were reaching up to 4 million of children even in 1998 and for the 2000s this number was estimated to reach up to 15 million children.

One of the main research studies in the field, A.B.C. Global Kids Study, performed a research in six countries with 2,400 7-12 aged kids and their mothers (Kate, 1997a: 35-36). One of the most striking points figured out with this research is that the children all around these countries, ranging from the poorest ones to the richest ones, share the same fears, concerns and hopes. When they are asked their favourite activity, 55% of the children in USA, Germany, UK, Japan, China and France replied 'to get together with their friends' (Kate, 1997a: 35-36). Among these countries, except Germany, where playing in the street is much more common, the most favoured activity is watching television. 90% of the kids report that they watch television more than three days of the week, as the most popular activity. It is also very striking to see that in almost all the countries television is watched in similar amounts of time: In USA 3.7 hours is the highest degree, where in Germany, 2.6 hours is the lowest one during the weekend. In almost all the countries the rate is reaching about an average of 1.6 hours during the schooldays (Kate, 1997a: 35).

The study found that 55% of the children love shopping and this rate is 47% in Japan, 46% in China and 37% in Germany and France. Thus, loving shopping and spending money has a lot to do with their television watching activity. The extravagant USA children save only 21% of their pocket money and spend the rest for the things they see in television commercials. The most economical Japanese children save 62% and Chinese children save 62% of their pocket money (Kate, 1997a: 36). Regarding the schooling activity, the children think that going to school is something enjoyable and they like it at school; they also like spending time for doing homework: 75%. This rate is lower in China, as 42%. When it comes to USA, Germany and UK, only 1% of the children like doing their homework every day (Kate, 1997b: 34).

The media in the last 50 years has developed a lot and the trend is towards interactive media as well as local media including so many thematic channels, etc. They all developed after cable television and more individualised channels were available. Children were also affected through these changes. Now, they not only have better access to the media but also have a richer access to numerous channels. This new media has a different impact on children. In the past the educationalists were trying to find out if the content and the discourse of the fairytales were appropriate for the kids. Now the ingredients of the media have changed so quickly that they have almost no control or power on what the children are watching. Even if these new type of kids are referred to as the 'children of the information age', to Kate, these are the knowledgeable and pioneering kids because they have a better access to knowledge and information. The adults are also doing their best to let the kids grow up with high dignity and the children between 9-17 define themselves as 'happy' and 'self-esteemed' ones (Kate, 1997b: 34). As children get more responsibility in the household work (1/3 of them take responsibility of high quality, the rate was about 28% in 1988) they also get better conditions for themselves as a reward. 1/3 of the children takes care of their little brothers or sisters (the rate was 25% in 1988) and it is inevitable for them not to sit together and watch a cartoon or a children's program. 35% of the children between 6-17 ages prepare their own food alone most of the time – this rate was 29% in 1995. Of course they prepare their food having most of their initiations and intuitions from the

commercials. The rate of children between the ages 9-17 who are cooking for themselves reach up to 27% in nowadays, whereas it was 23% just a couple of years ago, in 1995.

Apart from all the increasing responsibilities, the children between 9-17 ages reflect themselves as 'happy' (83%) and 'secure' (62%). Many children and many adults are keen on the super powered heroes they see in the commercials, that's why most of the channels are full of such heroes. Even if there are the escapism theories of all types, due to life conditions becoming more and more difficult, McLuhan believes that it's all the children's creativity, since the most well-known hero of all times, Superman, was created by two little kids in 1935 (McLuhan, 1968:102). This suggestion provides us enough clues to claim that it's not the adults cultivating the superpowers into the children but it's the children's creativity to rely more upon these super-powered heroes in both the children's programs as well as the adults' programs.

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