

Television Commercial Preferences of Children Aged 3–6 Years

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Abstract

Problem Statement: When children watch television, they are exposed to commercial advertisements whose general purpose is to make a positive impression on viewers about a commodity or service in order to drive the sales of that commodity or service. Due to their voiced and moving images, their setup and characters, and their being short and recurrent, television commercials attract the attention of children, who are influenced by ads for both products targeting them and products that concern family consumption. As such, television commercials can influence children's purchasing behaviors, which thereby makes children a strong target group of consumers that should be listened to, informed, and persuaded with respect to such behaviors. For that reason, the characteristics of television commercials that children prefer to watch have become important.

Purpose of the Study: In this study, I aimed to investigate the expression, message, character, and sector-related details of the commercials watched by children according to their age and gender.

Method: Following a survey-based research model, I used individual interviews and television advertising images during data collection with a sample of 339 children. I examined the characteristics of advertisements according to their type of expression, message type, characters used, and sector of the product or service advertised, as well as examined descriptive data in terms of frequency and percentage. I also analyzed the properties of the differences between children's age and gender with chi-square analysis.

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Findings: In response to 74 different television commercials, children revealed significant differences by age and gender in terms of the type of expression, message type, and product or service sector of the commercials that they liked. Although no significant difference emerged between the children's gender and the types of characters in the commercials that they liked, a significant difference did emerge between their age and the types of characters in those commercials.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The results show that features of television commercials favored by children aged 3–6 years can have different characteristics according to the children's age and gender. By extension, the results are important to advertisers as well as parents and educators, and longitudinal follow-up studies are possible that examine the effect of different variables of children and their families. In that way, researchers can investigate whether and, if so, then how the characteristics of commercials favored by children affect their future consumption preferences.

Keywords: Childhood, advertising preferences, properties of television commercials, age and gender.

Introduction

As the most powerful communication tool of mass media, television exerts well-known, well-studied effects on children. Since television provides information in various fields to children, who generally have a lot to learn (Ozel, 2012; Panic et al., 2013), ideally children can encounter such information via children's programs prepared to suit their age level. For example, children are frequently exposed to advertising during broadcasts and influenced by commercials both for products that directly target them and products meant for family consumption (Elden & Ulukok, 2006). As such, television commercials can influence children's purchasing behaviors, which has made children a strong target group that should be listened to, informed, and persuaded in regard to such behavior (Desrochers, 2015). For that reason, the characteristics of commercials that children prefer to watch have become important.

The television-watching habits of children differ from those of adults. For one, children enjoy watching television commercials twice as much as adults. Moreover, they remember more than adults the details of commercials, even those that do not target them (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003). As a target group that needs to be listened to, informed, and persuaded in terms of purchasing behavior, children are especially influential in purchasing goods and services that target them and those that target their parents (Aktas et al., 2011). Research conducted on the influence of children on their families' purchasing decisions revealed that children significantly influenced those decisions in more than 100 product categories. In explanation, Lindstrom and Seybold (2003) posited that children quickly pass from the position in which their parents buy things for them to one in which they have things bought both for them

and even for the household. Since children are highly active in the decision-making process of their families' purchasing behavior, they involve themselves in their families' shopping activity and can influence product purchases made together. Beyond seeking to fulfill their own consumer needs, however, children can also interfere with the fulfillment of household needs (Aktas et al., 2011). As Kirdar (2007) found earlier, a significant relationship exists between the television-watching frequency of children aged 3–6 years and their choice of products that they would use when they shop with their parents. Furthermore, as Rosenberg (2001) discovered, as children grow older, their influence on their families' purchasing decisions increased.

Although the consumer preferences of families with children are significantly affected by the television commercials that children prefer, commercials differ in the extent to which they influence children. Commercials with a clear, direct message that involves no uncertainty differ from those that convey their messages in indirect ways (Demir, 2009). Moses and Baldwin (2005) have argued that the use of different expressions in commercials significantly affects how those commercials are understood. In commercials that use direct expression, the features and promises linked to products are conveyed directly to consumers; the words and images are in harmony with each other, and simple language is used. In commercials that use indirect expression, however, the brand name of the product is stressed, not the product itself. The goal in such commercials is to establish a lasting emotional tie with the brand, usually by using humorous or exaggerated language.

The most crucial point of any advertisement is its message strategy – that is, the strategy of conveying what it intends to convey. For a television commercial to achieve its goal with children, it needs to be interesting and believable to children (Demir, 2009). According to Uckun (2006), the messages of power, freedom, entertainment, and belongingness most significantly affect children's purchasing behavior.

Figures used in advertising typically involve animated human, animals, objects, or cartoon characters, if not a combination of those elements. Such characters have easy-to-remember aspects (Mizerski, 1998) that when associated with aspects of the product or brand make it easier to remember the product or brand (Derbaix & Pecheux, 1999). In that sense, characters in advertising create an association of the image in the minds of audiences and awareness about the product or brand (Franzen, 2005). As recognition of the product or brand becomes activated for consumers via characters in an advertisement, a symbolic narrative tie is established with the product or brand on cultural grounds. In that way, characters create brand awareness and are shaped to attract attention, activate selective perception, and create awareness about important advantages of the product or brand that they represent, all tailored to the level of audience that the advertisement hopes to be recognized and remembered by. According to Neeley and Schumann (2004), characters in advertisements exert serious effects, especially on children, and play an important role in determining purchasing directions.

Advertisements also influence children's consumption habits. In particular, they affect children's preferences for play activities, toys, clothing, food, and drink (Karaman, 2010). Later, Nazari et al. (2011) concluded that television commercials bear considerable influence on children's food preferences and that commercials attract children to the products or services being advertised and encourage them to purchase those products or services. Warren et al. (2008) even found that 73% of food and beverages commercials use cartoon or animated elements, while Kelly et al. (2008) observed that 25.5% of commercials for food used cartoon or animated characters and that most of those commercials were broadcast during time slots of programs for children.

The persuasive and directive power of advertisements on the purchasing behaviors of children is well acknowledged. Today, numerous marketing studies are conducted to prompt children to buy goods and services designed for them and to increase their influence on their parents' purchasing behaviors. According to Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980), children are considered profitable by marketers on three major points: their own expenditures (i.e., as primary consumers), their influence on their families' expenditure decisions (i.e., as influencers of consumers), and their comprising the future market (i.e., as future consumers). For that reason, marketers prefer designs that please both families and children in their product categories (Odabasi & Baris, 2003). For marketing studies to succeed on that point, it seems critical to understand to what extent children as consumers influence their families' decision-making processes and the purchases made in product and service categories (Kaur & Singh, 1996).

To gauge the effectiveness of television commercials are on the purchasing behaviors of children, characteristics of commercials that children prefer to watch need to be identified. To that end, I examined the characteristics of commercials watched by children in the 3–6-year age group with respect to their age and gender, for findings that should be of interest to advertisers as well as parents and educators. To do so, I sought answers to two questions:

1. Are there any gender-based differences in the type of expression, message, characters, and industry features of commercials that children prefer to watch?
2. Are there any age-based differences in the type of expression, message, characters, and industry features of commercials that children prefer to watch?

Method

Research Design

In this study the characteristics of commercials favored by children in the 3–6-year age group with respect to their age and gender was examined. In order to

achieve this, the study was organized as a survey model and cross-sectional data are collected in order to identify commercials that children in the sample preferred.

Research Sample

The researcher formed the sample by randomly selecting children in the 3–6-year age group who were attending preschools of the Ministry of Education in Erzincan, Turkey. The sample consisted of 339 children: 151 girls (44.5%) and 188 boys (55.5%). In all, 64 (18.9%) of the children were aged 3 years, 86 (25.4%) 4 years, 98 (28.9%) 5 years, and 91 (26.8%) 6 years.

Research Instrumentations and Procedures

The researcher I used individual interviews and commercial images during data collection. I first collected data during individual, 15–20-min conversations with each child, during which I initially asked three questions: “What are the commercials that you mostly watch on television?” “Which commercials do you like to watch?” and “Why do you like those commercials?” I then asked each child to draw a picture themed “The Commercial That I Like the Most” and to talk about what they had drawn. Second, I identified the commercials that children had drawn in the pictures and had the child watch the commercial online to note the type of expression, the message, the character(s) used, and the sector types.

Validity and Reliability

The researcher analyzed the characteristics of commercials according to expression, type of messages, characters, and sector. I grouped the types of expression in two categories—direct and indirect (Moses and Baldwin, 2005)—and the message type in five categories—creative, promising, possessive, entertaining, and informative (Uckun, 2006). I next grouped the character types of commercials in six categories: children only, parents or adults with children, only cartoon characters or robots or animals, cartoon characters or robots or animals with children, adults only, cartoon characters or robots or animals with adults, and famous people (Derbaix& Pecheux, 1999). Lastly, I grouped the sector types of commercials in 13 categories: clothing, toys and stationery, food, printing–publishing, cleaning, healthcare, finance, white appliances, automotive, communication and information technologies, furniture, and energy (MTM, 2012).

Data Analysis

The SPSS was used to analyse the data gathered by research instrument. First of all descriptive analysis was conducted by frequency (f) and percentage (%), as well as properties of differences of children by age and gender with chi-square analysis.

Results

Pictures drawn by children with the theme “The Commercial That I Like the Most” represented 74 different commercials, with the following descriptive information in terms of their expression, message, characters, and sector:

- 44.0% exhibited direct expression and 56.0% indirect expression;
- 5.6% exhibited informative messages, 13.9% creative messages, 17.7% promising messages, 24.2% possessive messages, and 38.6% entertaining messages;
- 26.3% exhibited only cartoon characters or robot or animals, 21.2% only children, 16.5% only famous people, 12.1% only cartoon characters or robots or animals with children, 11.8% parents or adults with children, 6.8% cartoon characters or robots or animals with adults, and 5.3% only adults; and
- 35.1% of commercials advertised products or services in the food sector, 15.0% in the toys and stationery sector, 10.6% in the cleaning sector, 9.4% in the finance sector, 8.2% in the communication and information technologies sector, 6.2% in the white appliances sector, 3.0% in the printing–publishing sector, 2.7% in the furniture sector, 2.3% in the clothing sector, 2.1% in the automotive sector, 1.8% in the healthcare sector, 1.8% in the energy sector, and 1.8% in the housing sector.

Table 1.

Results of Chi-Square Analysis between Children's Gender and the Characteristics of Commercials That They Like

Characteristics of commercials	Gender				X^2	Df	p
	Girl		Boy				
	n	%	n	%			
Type of expression							
- Direct	93	27.4	56	16.6	34.38	1	.00
- Indirect	58	17.1	132	38.9			
Type of message							
- Promising	41	12.1	19	5.6	69.63	4	.00
- Possessive	58	17.1	24	7.1			
- Creative	14	4.1	33	9.7			
- Entertaining	28	8.3	103	30.4			
- Informative	10	2.9	9	2.7			
Type of character							
- Only children	36	10.6	36	10.6	4.60	6	.60
- Parents or adults with children	13	3.8	27	8.0			
- Cartoon characters or robots or animals with children	18	5.3	23	6.8			
- Only cartoon characters or robots or animals	44	13.0	45	13.3			
- Only adults	7	2.1	11	3.2			
- Cartoon characters or robots or animals with children	10	2.9	13	3.8			
- Famous people	23	6.8	33	9.7			

Table 1 Continue

Characteristics of commercials	Gender				X^2	Df	p
	Girl		Boy				
	n	%	n	%			
Type of industry							
- Clothing	6	1.8	2	0.6	25.14	8	.00
- Toys and stationery	27	8.0	24	7.1			
- Food	53	15.6	66	19.5			
- Printing-publishing	7	2.1	3	0.9			
- Cleaning and healthcare*	25	7.4	17	5.0			
- Finance and housing*	10	2.9	28	8.3			
- White appliances and furniture*	14	4.1	16	4.7			
- Communication and informative technologies	5	1.5	23	6.8			
- Energy and automotive*	4	1.2	9	2.7			

*Some lines are combined because values <5 were calculated in 42.3% of the boxes.

Table 1 shows that girls like commercials that use direct (27.4%) expression and that boys like commercials with indirect (38.9%) expression. According to the results of chi-square analysis, there is a significant difference of .01 between the children by gender and the type of expression in the commercials that they like (Pearson's chi-square = 34.38, $p = .00$). By message types of commercials children liked, girls preferred commercials with a possessive type of message (17.1%) and boys an entertaining one (30.4%). In fact, the results of chi-square analysis reveal a significant difference of .01 between the genders of children and the message types of the commercials that they like (Pearson's chi-square = 69.63, $p = .00$) (Table 1). At the same time, by gender and the character types used in commercials that they liked, both girls and boys preferred commercials with only cartoon characters or robots or animals, only children, or famous people. According to the results of chi-square analysis, however, no significant difference emerged between the genders of the children and the types of characters used in the commercials that they like (Pearson's chi-square = 4.60, $p = .60$), as shown in Table 1. From another perspective, in terms of the difference of genders of the children and the sector types of the commercials that they liked, girls preferred commercials in the food (15.6%), toys and stationery (8.0%), cleaning and healthcare (7.4%), and white appliances and furniture (4.1%) sectors, whereas boys preferred ones in food (19.5%), finance and housing (8.3%), toys and stationery (7.1%), and communication and information technologies (6.8%) sectors. Per the results of chi-square analysis, there is a significant difference of .01 between the genders of the children and the sector types of the commercials that they liked (Pearson's chi-square = 25.14, $p = .00$), as shown in Table 1.

Table 2.

Results of Chi-Square Analysis between Children's Ages and Characteristics of Commercials That They Like

Characteristics of commercials	Age (in years)								X ²	df	p
	3		4		5		6				
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Type of expression											
- Direct	47	13.9	45	13.3	31	9.1	26	7.7	39.81	3	.00
- Indirect	17	5.0	41	12.1	67	19.8	65	19.2			
Type of message											
- Promising	16	4.7	25	7.4	13	3.8	6	1.8	36.05	12	.00
- Possessive	18	5.3	25	7.4	18	5.3	21	6.2			
- Creative	5	1.5	9	2.7	19	5.6	14	4.1			
- Entertaining	22	6.5	23	6.8	46	13.6	40	11.8			
- Informative	3	0.9	4	1.2	2	0.6	10	2.9			
Type of character											
- Only children	9	2.7	10	2.9	32	9.4	21	6.2	70.13	18	.00
- Parents or adults with children	15	4.4	17	5.0	4	1.2	4	1.2			
- Cartoon characters or robots or animals with children	13	3.8	13	3.8	9	2.7	6	1.8			
- Only cartoon characters or robots or animals	19	5.6	30	8.8	20	5.9	20	5.9			
- Only adults	4	1.2	4	1.2	6	1.8	4	1.2			
- Cartoon characters or robots or animals with children	2	0.6	6	1.8	6	1.8	9	2.7			
- Famous people	2	0.6	6	1.8	21	6.2	27	8.0			
Type of industry											
- Food	14	4.1	28	8.3	36	10.6	31	9.1	48.51	18	.00
- Toys and stationery	17	5.0	12	3.5	14	4.1	6	1.8			
- Cleaning, healthcare, and clothing*	17	5.0	20	5.9	10	2.9	7	2.1			
- Finance and housing*	4	1.2	4	1.2	16	4.7	15	4.4			
- Printing-publishing and communication and informative technologies*	4	1.2	7	2.1	9	2.7	20	5.9			
- White appliances and furniture*	4	1.2	9	2.7	9	2.7	8	2.4			
- Energy and automotive*	4	1.2	6	1.8	4	1.2	4	1.2			

*Some lines are combined because values <5 were calculated in 55.8% of the boxes.

As Table 2 shows, children aged 3 and 4 years liked commercials with direct expression, whereas children aged 5 and 6 years liked ones with indirect expression. According to the results of chi-square analysis, there is a significant difference of .01 between the ages of children and the types of expression of the commercials that they liked (Pearson's chi-square = 39.81, $p = 0.00$). Regarding the difference between the children's ages and the types of message of commercials that they liked, children aged 3 and 4 years liked commercials with an entertaining, possessive, or promising message, while children aged 5 and 6 liked commercials with an entertaining, creative, or possessive message. Per the results of chi-square analysis, a significant difference of .01 characterizes the relationship of children's ages and commercials that they like by message type (Pearson's chi-square = 36.05, $p = .00$), as illustrated in Table 2. At the same time, concerning the difference between the children's ages and the character types in the commercials that they liked, children aged 3 and 4 years preferred commercials with cartoon characters or robots or animals only, parents or adults with children, or cartoon characters or robots or animals with children, whereas children aged 5 and 6 years liked commercials with children only, famous people, or cartoon characters or robots or animals only. According to the results of chi-square analysis, there is a significant difference of .01 between the ages of children and the types of characters used in the commercials that they like (Pearson's chi-square = 70.13, $p = .00$), as shown in Table 2. In regard to the difference between the ages of the children and the sector types of the commercials that they liked, children aged 3 and 4 years liked commercials in the toys and stationery, food, cleaning and healthcare, and clothing sectors; children aged 5 years liked commercials in the food, toys and stationery, and housing and finance sectors; and children aged 6 years liked commercials in the food, communication and information technologies, printing-publishing, and housing and finance sectors. Per the results of chi-square analysis, there is a significant difference of .01 between the ages of the children and the sector types of the commercials that they liked (Pearson's chi-square = 48.51, $p = .00$), as shown in Table 2.

Discussion and Conclusion

By type of expression in commercials that children liked in respect to their gender, girls liked commercials with direct expression and boys ones with indirect expression (Table 1). That result suggests that girls focus more on products in commercials and boys focus more on brand names. Additionally, by type of expression in commercials that children liked in terms of their age, children aged 3 and 4 years liked commercials with direct expression and children aged 5 and 6 years ones with indirect expression (Table 2). That result suggests that as children age, the brand name of a product becomes more important. According to Chan and McNeal (2006) and Joseph and Ahmad (2015), age is indeed an important criterion of children's comprehension of commercials.

By message type of commercials that children liked with respect to gender, girls liked commercials with a possessive type of message and boys ones with an

entertaining type (Table 1). Commercials with informative messages were not favored by either girls or boys. According to Chan (2000), commercials with entertaining aspects are crucial to brand recognition, even among very young children. Commercials activate various impulses in human nature (e.g., possessiveness and appeal to music) and thereby spur motivation for buying (Fransen et al., 2015; Hee et al., 2014). As the results showed, the message type of commercials favored by children can change according to the child's gender. In fact, concerning those message types in respect to children's age, children aged 3 and 4 years liked commercials with an entertaining, possessive, or promising message, whereas children aged 5 and 6 years preferred commercials with an entertaining, possessive, or creative message (Table 2). As Pine and Nash (2002) have pointed out, commercials help small children to have more fun and gather information.

Concerning the character types used in the commercials that children liked with respect to their gender, both girls and boys liked commercials with cartoon characters or robots or animals only, with children only, or with famous people (Table 1). When the characters represented personalities known and favored by children in commercials targeting children, children felt closer to the product, accepted it more easily, and had a greater desire to buy it. Commercials that use such characters in interesting scenes usually have the desired effect on children. Promoting goods or services in commercials to prime child consumers by using characters known and favored by them is a common sales-enhancing effort in marketing. Using cartoon or animated characters liked by children when promoting a product in commercials targeting children is also a common practice. Ocel (2002) reports that using the animated characters that have been played with as toys is also an important marketing strategy. Asci (2006) showed that television cartoon and animated characters affected the consumer behaviors of children living in various districts by making them want to buy or have their parents buy the products promoted by the characters in commercials. Later, Karaca et al. (2007) stated that children watch mostly commercials that include cartoon or animated characters. Regarding the character types in the commercials that children liked with respect to their genders, children aged 3–4 years liked commercials with cartoon characters or robots or animals only, parents or adults with children, and cartoon characters or robots or animals with children, whereas children aged 5–6 liked commercials with children only, famous people, and cartoon characters or robots or animals only (Table 2). In an earlier study, Ocel (2002) found that children are most influenced by child characters. Using celebrities that children like in commercials is another factor that makes commercials enjoyable to children, and employing famous people in ads creates a sense of admiration in child consumers. Commercials that use a famous person liked by children also affects children's consumption behavior (Temel & Yeygel, 2005), and in general, the influence of advertising on children affects their later purchasing behavior (Calvert, 2008; Hameed et al., 2014).

Regarding the sector types of commercials that children liked with respect to their gender, girls preferred commercials in the food, toys and stationery, cleaning, and white appliances and furniture sectors, whereas boys preferred commercials in

the food, finance and housing, toys and stationery, and communication and information technologies sectors (Table 1). Both boys and girls liked commercials in the food and toys and stationery sectors; however, that girls liked commercials in the cleaning and white appliances and furniture sectors and boys those in the finance and housing and communication and information technologies sectors suggests a possible difference between the genders. At the same time, concerning the sector types of commercials that children liked with respect to their age, children aged 3–4 years liked commercials in the toys and stationery, food and cleaning, healthcare, and clothing sectors; children aged 5 years liked commercials in the food, finance and housing, and toys and stationery sectors; and children aged 6 years liked commercials in the food, communication and information technologies, printing–publishing, and the finance and housing sectors (Table 2). Such results underscore that when children’s interests and needs change as they grow, the sector type of the commercials that they like is also liable to change. Similarly, Karaca et al. (2007) stated that children aged 4–13 years are influenced mostly by food and toy commercials. Moreover, Mittal et al. (2010) found that according to their families, the commercials that their children liked most were chocolate and chips commercials.

All results show that the expression, message, character, and sector aspects of commercials favored by children aged 3–6 years can have different characteristics according to their age and gender. Considering that commercials have effects first on children’s own expenditure, then on their families’ expenditure decisions, and later, on their future consumption behaviors, I believe that the results can inform advertisers, as well as parents and educators. Moreover, a longitudinal study of this research could be developed that examines the effects of different variables concerning children and their families (e.g., by socioeconomic level) on various groups (e.g., rural residents versus city dwellers). In that way, researchers can explore whether the commercials that children like will affect their future consumption preferences.

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3-6 Yaş Çocukların Reklam İzleme Tercihleri

Atf:

- Kilicgun Yurtsever, M. (2016). Television commercial preferences of children aged 3-6 years. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 65, 165-180. doi:10.14689/ejer.2016.65.10

Özet

Problem Durumu: Çocuklar televizyon izlerken, genel amacı bir mal ya da hizmetle ilgili bir izlenim yaratmak ve satış sağlamak olan televizyon reklamlarına maruz kalmaktadırlar. Sesli ve hareketli görüntüleri, kurgu ve karakterleri, kısa süreli ve tekrarlı oluşları nedeniyle televizyon reklamları; çok küçük yaşlardan itibaren çocukların ilgisini çekmektedir. Yapılan araştırmalar çocukların televizyon izleme özelliklerinin yetişkinlerden farklı olduğunu göstermektedir. Örneğin çocuklar yetişkinlere göre reklamları izlemekten iki kat daha fazla keyif almakta ve kendilerine yönelik olmayan reklamlarda bile daha fazla ayrıntıyı anımsamaktadır.

Çocuklar kendi harcamaları, ailelerinin harcama kararları üzerindeki etkileri ve geleceğin tüketicileri olmaları sebebiyle; pazarlamacılar için önemli bir hedef kitledir. Televizyon reklamlarının pek çoğunda çocukların ilgisini çekebilecek unsurlara yer verilerek, çocukların satın alma davranışları etkilenmeye çalışılmaktadır. Günümüzde çocukların gerek kendilerine yönelik ürünleri/hizmetleri satın almaya yönlendirilmesi, gerekse ebeveynlerinin satın alma davranışlarında etkinliklerinin

artması için sayısız pazarlama çalışması yapılmaktadır. Bu noktada yapılan pazarlama çalışmalarının başarılı olabilmesi için tüketici olarak çocukların, ailelerin karar mekanizmalarını üzerinde ve hangi ürün/hizmet kategorisinin satın alınmasında ne oranda etkili olduklarının anlaşılması zorunlu görünmektedir. Televizyon reklamlarının çocukların satın alma davranışında ne oranda etkili olduklarını belirleyebilmek için çocukların izlemeyi tercih ettikleri reklamların özelliklerinin belirlenmesi gerekmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmada yaş ve cinsiyetlerine göre çocukların izledikleri reklamların; anlatım, mesaj, karakter ve sektör özelliklerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırma tarama modelinde uygun olarak düzenlenmiştir. Araştırma verileri, araştırmacı tarafından her bir çocuk ile ayrı ayrı 15-20 dakika süren görüşmeler sonucunda toplanmıştır. Görüşme sırasında çocuklara ilk olarak "Televizyonda en çok izlediğin reklam/reklamlar hangisi?" sorusu sorulmuş ve ardından "Hangi reklam/reklamları izlemekten hoşlanıyorsun?" ve "Neden en çok bu reklam/reklamları seviyorsun?" sorularını yanıtlamaları istenmiştir. Daha sonra çocuklardan "En Sevdiğim Reklam" konulu bir resim çizmeleri ve çizdikleri resimdeki reklamı anlatmaları istenmiştir. Çocuklarla yapılan görüşmeler sonrasında çocukların resimlerdeki reklamlar internet ortamından izlenilerek reklamların anlatım, mesaj, karakter ve sektör özellikleri belirlenmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında reklamların anlatım türleri; "doğrudan" ve "dolaylı" anlatım olmak üzere 2 alt başlıkta toplanmıştır. Reklamların mesaj türleri; "vaatte bulunma", "sahip olma", "yaratıcı olma", "eğlendirme" ve "bilgilendirme" olmak üzere 5 alt başlıkta toplanmıştır. Reklamların karakter türleri; "sadece çocuk", "çocukla birlikte ebeveyn/yetişkin", "çocukla birlikte çizgi karakter/robot/hayvan", "sadece çizgi karakter/robot/hayvan", "sadece yetişkin", "yetişkinle birlikte çizgi kahraman/robot/hayvan" ve "ünlü kişiler" olmak üzere 6 alt başlıkta toplanmıştır. Reklamların sektör türleri ise; "giyim", "oyuncak ve kırtasiye", "gıda", "basım-yayım", "temizlik", "sağlık", "konut", "finans", "beyaz eşya", "otomotiv", "iletişim ve bilişim teknolojileri", "mobilya" ve "enerji" olmak üzere 13 alt başlıkta toplanmıştır.

Araştırmanın örnekleme 151 kız ve 188 erkek olmak üzere 339 çocuk yer almıştır. Bu çocukların 64'ü üç, 86'sı dört, 98'i beş ve 91'i altı yaş grubu çocuklardır. Çocukların yaşına ve cinsiyetine göre reklam özellikleri arasında anlamlı bir farkın olup olmadığının belirlenmesinde ki-kare analizi kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Çocukların "En sevdiğim reklam" konulu resimleri incelendiğinde, 74 farklı reklamın yer aldığı görülmüştür. Bu reklamların %44.0'ü "doğrudan", %56.0'sı ise "dolaylı" anlatım türünde hazırlanmıştır. Reklamların %5.6'sında "bilgilendirme", %13.9'unda "yaratıcı olma", %17.7'sinde "vaatte bulunma", %24.2'sinde "sahip olma" ve %38.6'sında "eğlendirme" türünde mesajlar verilmektedir. Reklamların %26.3'ünde "sadece çizgi karakter/robot/hayvan", %21.2'sinde "sadece çocuk", %16.5'inde "ünlü kişiler", %12.1'inde "çocukla birlikte çizgi karakter/robot/hayvan", %11.8'inde "çocukla birlikte ebeveyn/yetişkin",

%6.8'inde "yetişkinle birlikte çizgi kahraman/robot/hayvan" ve %5.3'ünde "sadece yetişkin" karakterleri yer almaktadır. Reklamların %35.1'i "gıda", %15.0'i "oyuncak ve kırtasiye", %10.6'sı "temizlik", %9.4'ü "finans", %8.2'si "iletişim ve bilişim teknolojileri", %6.2'si beyaz eşya", %3.0'ü "basım-yayım", %2.7'si "mobilya", %2.3'ü "giyim", %2.1'i "otomotiv", %1.8'i "sağlık", %1.8'i "enerji" ve %1.8'i "konut" sektörlerinde hazırlanmıştır. Çocukların cinsiyetleri ve yaşları ile sevdikleri reklamların anlatım, mesaj ve sektör türleri arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğu görülmüştür. Çocukların cinsiyetleri ile sevdikleri reklamların karakter türleri arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmazken; çocukların yaşları ile sevdikleri reklamların karakter türleri arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın diğer önemli bulguları ise şöyledir: (1) Kız çocukları en çok doğrudan, erkek çocukları en çok dolaylı anlatımın kullanıldığı reklamları tercih etmektedir. (2) Sahip olma türünde mesajlar içeren reklamlar en çok kız çocukları; eğlendirme türünde mesajlar içeren reklamlar en çok erkek çocukları tarafından tercih edilmektedir. (3) Gıda sektörüne yönelik reklamlar ise hem kız hem de erkek çocukları tarafından tercih edilmektedir. (4) Hem kız hem de erkek çocukları ilk üç sırada çizgi karakter/robot/hayvan, çocuk ve ünlü kişilerin yer aldığı reklamları tercih etmektedirler. (5) 3 ve 4 yaş çocukları doğrudan, 5 ve 6 yaş çocukların ise dolaylı anlatımın kullanıldığı reklamları tercih etmektedirler. (6) 3 ve 4 yaş çocukları ilk üç sırada en çok eğlendirme, sahip olma ve vaatte bulunma; 5 ve 6 yaş çocukların eğlendirme, yaratıcı olma ve sahip olma mesajlarını içeren reklamları tercih etmektedir. (7) 3 çocukları en çok oyuncak, kırtasiye, temizlik, sağlık ve giyim; 4, 5 ve 6 yaş çocukları en çok gıda sektöründeki reklamları tercih etmektedir. (8) 3 ve 4 yaş çocukları en çok çizgi karakter/robot/hayvan, 5 ve 6 yaş çocukları ise en çok çocuk figürünün kullanıldığı reklamları tercih etmektedir.

Araştırmanın Sonuç ve Önerileri: Araştırmadan elde edilen tüm bu bulgular, 3-6 yaş çocukların sevdikleri reklamların anlatım, mesaj, karakter ve sektör özelliklerinin çocukların yaş ve cinsiyetlerine göre farklı özelliklere sahip olabileceğini göstermektedir. Televizyon reklamlarının başlangıçta çocukların kendi harcamaları ve ailelerinin harcama kararları üzerinde etkileri olduğu düşünüldüğünde; bu bulguların ebeveynler ve eğitimciler kadar reklamcılarının da ilgisini çekeceğini düşünülmektedir. Benzer şekilde televizyon reklamlarının gelecekte çocukların tüketim davranışlarını şekillendirebileceği düşünüldüğünde; araştırma boyamsal planlanabilir. Böylece çocukların sevdikleri reklamların özelliklerine bağlı olarak onların gelecekteki tüketim tercihleri üzerinde etkisi olup olmadığı incelenebilir. Ayrıca araştırma farklı örneklem grupları üzerinde (örneğin kırsal - kentsel yaşam) çocuğa ve aileye ait farklı değişkenlerin (örneğin sosyo-ekonomik düzey gibi) etkisine bakılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocukluk, reklam tercihleri, reklam özellikleri, yaş, cinsiyet.