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Abstract

Child is the little citizen who is accepted under age (Yörükoğlu, 2007, s.13). According to Greenberg, many children are the audience who cannot differentiate between whether the programs they watch are suitable for them or not (Ertürk, Gül, 2006,s.24). 20th century called the Children Century changed the fate of children by scientific findings and technological developments. Therefore, the relation between media and the children along with the responsibilities of parents have changed. Because the mass media is a part of life, it is one of the important factors binding the common communication areas of children as with adults'. Children not only have nutritional and sleeping needs but also they have intellectual needs (Dadson, 1990, s.36-38). The emergence of digital broadcasting and the appearance of TV channels aimed at various hobbies and tastes paved the way for some TV channels to broadcast towards children (and babyhood period). In these channels, norms, judgements gender roles and models according to the culture of society are usually repeated. Popular cultural products for consumption do not take into account the personal differences but they target common people. In this respect, as knowing the child well is crucial, a main responsibility faces the parents.

Child is the little citizen who is accepted under age; however, the upper limit of childhood is an uncertain period. Laws define the end of childhood in a different way. According to the punishment age, children under 12 are not responsible for the crimes they commit. The upper limit of childhood which is a period covering the time of playing and education can be 12 or 25. Children under 12 are forbidden to work in Turkey. The legal adulthood age is 18. In the light of this information, working and marriage regardless of age are the factors that end childhood. Considering the physical standards, one can step into maturity with the beginning of signs of adolescence. The development process of female and male children is different from each other. Because growing and maturity differ from person to person, this development can be between the age of 11 and 15. For this reason, determining the upper limit of childhood as 15 may be more accurate. This age has been determined as the age of crime responsibility and starting to work in western countries (Yörükoğlu, 2007, s.13-14). According to the first article of convention on the rights of children; "Every person is a child



until 18 and has all the rights in the Convention on the Rights of Children." (Quoter; Atay, 2007).

20th century called the children century has changed the fate of children by scientific findings and technological developments. Primary education has become common and even compulsory and technical developments enriched the educational tools. Educational age has fallen gradually and accordingly the childhood age has extended. Piaget's studies have proven that every child has distinctive styles of perception, thinking and assessment (Yörükoğlu, 2007, s.238). Children adopt to the environment and develop concepts by uniting and trying their intelligence and received input. In other words, the input received by an adult and a child are not perceived in the same way. Today's children are born into a world in which they express themselves freely and a world which has many stimulants activating the cognitive process. They are in contact with their parents and other adults more than their peers. They can use verbal and non-verbal statements by imitating them. They can speak out the mistakes they see fearlessly and also they may try to make the others admit what they want.

With the development of technology, media in other words mass media is diversified and the access to mass media has become easier. Thus, the field which mass media occupy in our lives has become beyond time and space. General functions of mass media are like as below:

- 1-Informing,
- 2-Answering the effects of environment, relating with the segments of society, adopting to the environment,
- 3-Passing down the public legacy from generation to generation, providing the initiates get socialized,
 - 4-Consolidating the social norms,
 - 5-Being a means of recreation in an entertaining and relaxing way,
 - 6-Molding public opinion, creating a unity of thoughts about the politics followed,
 - 7-Accelerating and expanding (helping) domestic and foreign trade,
 - 8-Giving skills and developing appropriate attitudes,
 - 9-Developing a mental attitude for the economic growth,
 - 10-Motivating people as being liable to enterprise,
- 11-Making the public administration easier and helping democracy by letting the citizens know about the political activities (Tezcan, 1995, s.126).



Every society is liable to impose their categories about social, cultural and political world according to their culture and cultural standards. They may not be monodical but they build up a dominant and cultural order (Compiler; Yavuz, 2005, s.93). One of the most important functions of television according to communication theorists is that it is a tool for socializing. Television which is a tool for socializing is something which can give the experiences children have not gained and it can make them perceive them as their own experiences (Ertürk, Gül, 2006, s.23). Children who are not at an age of primary education have answered the benefits of television in a way like that it informs, entertains and expands their imaginary worlds (Tönel, 2007, s.75). Socializing, in other words the process of adopting to society lived, is a process including the whole life of an individual from the beginning of their lives. Social roles are thought in the broadcasts towards children in childhood period. Mass media informs a society at any age about the written and unwritten rules of the society even when they have fun, rest and spend their leisure time.

Fleming Mouristen states that socializing is a process and argues that children culture has three main kinds. 1-The culture adults produce for children, 2-The culture produced with children, 3-The culture children produce on their own. In socializing process when the thoughts, values and judgements of the society is being transferred to the individual by way of culture, family get affected by the codes received from mass media because of its technological and temporal superiority according to the other socialization agents. Music, games for children, television, videos and the activities including movies in leisure times change the established culture of the child. However, children's individual interests, abilities and worries are in a certain way, they are limited to the environmental factors and the things their families give them. Even if television is not at the centre of development, it affects the development process by way of child culture (Ertürk, Gül, 2006, s.23-24).

In the seventeenth article of the Convention on the Rights of Children; the states in favour of the convention accept the importance of mass media and provide the acquisition of information and documents from national and international sources aimed at improving social, spiritual, physical and mental health. Accordingly, the states in favour of the convention have to act in a way like;

a. Mass media is promoted to spread information and documents in keeping with the twenty-ninth article which has social and cultural benefits in terms of child.



- b. They promote the international cooperation for producing, distributing and sharing this information and documents from various cultural, national and international sources.
- c. Mass media promote caring the language needs of children, members of minority groups or the locals.
- d. They promote improving guidelines about protecting children from threatening information and documents.

In the twenty-ninth article of the convention, the states in favour admit the aims of child education in a way like;

- a. Improving the child's personality, ability, mental and the physical abilities mostly,
- b. Improving the respect for human rights, main freedom and for the principles accepted by United Nations.
- c. Improving the child' respect for the parents, cultural identity, linguistic skills, national values in the country in which the child lives and the other civilizations.
- d. Child's preparing for the responsibilities, the equality between races, ethnic or national, religions or the locals in a free society in a friendly way.
- e. It must be in a way which can improve the respect for the natural environment (Quoter, Doğan, 2000, s.220-221).

Winn described the concept of addiction to television in 1997. Addiction to television is not being addicted to a certain television context. Everybody watch the programmes which they like and deal. Addiction to television means watching television irrespective of the context. Supposedly, television compels us to watch it more from the moment we start to watch it. American Psychology Association (APA) gathered the psychologists like McIlwraith, Smith, Jacobvitz and Kubey in 1990 and made suggestions of four models to the question of how and who the television makes addiction.

1. Television and imaginary world; McLuhan, says that television is responsible for meditation, mediumship and mysticism among the young in his time and causes to be busy with the imaginary inner world. And Singer says that the striking factors of television prevent dreaming because they show the things which will attract the attention of the audience and support the creative power of playing and dreaming. As a result of this, children grow with the lack of ability



for dreaming and they are prepared for being addicted to the dreams produced commercially forever.

- 2. Television and the Level of Arousal; because of the television's many exciting stimulants, it can be an addiction for the people who gets bored and who wants to increase the level of stimulation extrovertly.
- 3. Television and Orality; addicts of oral habits like cigarette, alcohol and snacks can also be addicted to television.
- 4. Television and Usage-Satisfaction; the requirements of using television of the audience under the title of usage and saturation are like;

Preventing bad moods or reducing the effects, getting rid of boredom, watching television when there is nothing to do, favouring television, in other words watching the programmes one can find nonsense or accepting children to watch television as normal, watching television when using a personal computer or playing video games which have interactive media property (Çakır, 2010, 2.132-135). In USA, a student until 18 spends 12 thousands hours at school but 15 thousands hours in front of television. When he watches it for 3 hours on average, a Japan child watches it for 5 hours a day. An American child watches 2500 advertisements on average in a year. 60% of these advertisements is about candies and chocolate. A research in Turkey shows that 95% of the mothers buy those foods and drinks for their children. According to Kopferer, television is the first gate opened to the outer world. Children are important customers and they have a great potential as consumers in the future for the advertisers. When children watch a commercial they remember more details about it than the adults do. They can remember even the commercials which are not aimed at them. Television enriches the messages in commercials with various visual elements like music and sound by devising them in fitting with the inner worlds of children. Television commercials have taken over the function of informing children about the outer world form tales. They detect the way to the objects in their inner worlds. Children like seeing the fantastic aspects of the games in commercials. As children have limited discernment in comparison with the adults, they can get more affected by commercials. This can cause them to believe what they see in commercials because their levels of perception are low and they cannot think analytically. They believe the things they see without doubt by not resisting. Level of perception increases when they get older and this resisting brings about doubt (Şirin, 2011, s.328-330)



It is not recommended by the experts to buy expensive toys for children every evening when going back home. The child who gets happy in the first days of this situation will not get happy in the following days. But he will just accept the gift and we will keep expecting. When there is no gift for him, he will get angry with disappointment as he thinks the parents have to buy something for him. Children between the ages of 0-5 do not know the value of money. For this reason, it is recommended to buy toys like puzzles for children (Can, 2010, s.76). For instance, as a true-to life example a child may prefer an enormous red car just for the size and colour and may not use the feature of remote control.

Various studies about television have showed that some children's imagination and creativity get restricted according to their personal characteristics but some can improve their imagination and creativity. Some children get uninterested about violence and they see the world worse than it is. In the period between the ages of 0-3 which is a stage of dependency to parents or the others television plays the role of a babysitter. Child can see the television as a dependency object and this may pose unfavourable results. The period between 3-7 ages are the years in which games and creative activities are detailed.

With the language development, one can be competent in a language. There are some studies about television's increasing the language development of a child. But a child may have some problems with communicating with the people whom he has just met and he can become aggressive if he gets exposed to television uncontrollably. He may get affected in an adverse way by a tale or a movie. The children between 7-12 ages are the period in which the feeling of ego develops and children get affected by television to the extent of adults'. Too much exposure to television in the early period has bad effects on attention span and attention selectivity. Especially in infancy, brain does not function like the adults'. In this period, children need to learn the perception of the still and three-dimensional world. Animated images make the brain function earlier and accordingly, it causes attention disorder (Ertürk, Gül, 2006, s.27-32). For this reason, channels like Baby TV and Baby First for the infants between 0-3 broadcast in a different way than the other channels broadcasting cartoon. These channels broadcast in a way that colours are softer, shapes and characters move slowly. There is music like lullaby, fairy tales are told and animal figures even the predatory ones (like a lion and a tiger) are visualized as unaggressive. However, the images and the music grow on



hypnotizing effect after a while. And this can make parents hesitate about the benefits of it for the child.

Dr. Jerom Singer a psychologist, explains the situation of television as such; "You come across with a stranger when you are back home. This stranger teaches your child fighting, sexuality and beating. What would be your reaction towards this person? Would not you kick him out of your house by using violence? Yet, you keep the television doing all of these as the honour guest of your house." Television causes to speech disorders on the child. His muscles cannot develop enough because of sitting dormant in front of television. He does not want to go out due to watching it and he gets introverted. He may have difficulty in communicating and he may become addicted to it. When it is time to start school, he may not even want to go to school. He may get bored while reading a book and thus he cannot have a reading habit (Taştan, 2011, s.175-179).

Channels for children like Jetix, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and TRT Çocuk usually repeat the same programmes. As all the TV channels admit the agreement of continuous broadcasting, the cheapest and the least demanding cultural productions cover them (Quoter; Şirin, 2011, s.188). Even if children between 2-4 ages like watching or reading the same things, it makes children internalize and adopt the messages as they understand. It causes them not to learn the right sides of the things they learned or misunderstood. When an adult takes a seat and turns on the lampshade to read, he knows that the seat, the lampshade and the book are not "themselves". However, a child cannot differentiate between itself and the opposite (Dadson, 1990, s.36). For example, when the children are asked if the characters of Ninja Turtles are real or not in a survey, 7 year-old children in comparison with the 5 year-old ones are at upper level in understanding that they are imaginary characters. In another survey, it has been shown that 58% of 15 year-old children and 29% of 8 year-old children cannot realize that the actors are imaginary characters (Ersoy, Avcı, Turla, 2008, s.104-105).

According to Greenberg, many children are the audience who cannot differentiate between whether the programmes they watch are suitable for them or not. Theory of Usage and Satisfaction shows that adults are aware of what effects the chosen communication way will have in their lives and which aims it will serve for. In this occasion, authority is responsible for determining the suitable communication ways for children. At the same time, what the



adults watch serves as models for children. This behaviour discipline is explained with "social behaviour theory." In a child's learning period, social environment, family and school are of importance. But today, television and computers which are the important parts of children's lives have a great role in consisting and changing their attitudes. Mass media in their learning periods have started to impose what to think besides being a model and what to think about (Ertürk, Gül, 2006, s.24-26). A male child does not imitate a scene in a cartoon but he feels relaxed to behave in a way he has seen before (Ersoy, Avcı, Turla, 2008, s.109).

Child development stages differ in terms of age, cognition (mental-perceptual), psychosocial (sensorial) and physical (behavioural). Cognitive domain includes all the mentation, thought organization, perception, recollection, causation, creativity, memory and language development. Psychosocial domain includes personal characteristics and social abilities. It includes the feelings, reactions and behaviours peculiar to the child. Physical domain deals with motor skills, muscles, physical characteristics like height and weight (Ertürk, Gül, 2006, s.19). It is searched and indicated that in which months and years and what the children can do and what can be expected from them in these fields. However, development properties can be rooted in the genetic factors from their ancestors who lived long years ago and the environmental factors and every child has his own characteristics. Female children's language developments start earlier than the male ones. Although male children think faster than female children, they can speak later than the female ones do. When you buy a book on which it is written suitable for 3 year-old children from a bookstore, they may have interest in it when they are four or they may not. A child when he is in a toy store may have difficulty in choosing. Besides development features, he can be decisive or indecisive because of all these personal differences or he can make his choices according to these differences. But popular cultural products aimed at consumption do not consider the personal differences and target an average mass. In this respect, as knowing the child well is crucial, a main responsibility faces the parents.

Children not only have nutritional and sleeping needs but also they have intellectual needs. It takes months for a baby to have a sense of self. It is very important to recognize this slowly developing sense in the child's world. Parents can help intellectually to make the child understand his world. Piaget says "The more a child sees and hears, the more he wants to see and hear." Recent studies refute the thesis that babies born with a certain level of intelligence.



New findings show that every child will get a certain level of intelligence as they grow. But his getting this potential limit is determined by the degree of intellectual and sensory stimulus in the first five years of life (Dadson, 1990, s.36-38). The importance of this process is usually handled in internet interviews and in television programmes aimed at women about the health of mother and child by podiatrists. Recognizing the importance of this process is crucial information for the parents but it also causes stress. In this process, parent and child should always be together by playing with the toys improving the five senses or with the tools at home, using scissors, pens or paints, talking continually and doing the housework (like cleaning and playing with dough) together with the child. While doing all these things with the child is important for the intellectual development, leaving him alone to play with his toys and letting him set a play for himself, providing him to find out, having fun without a parent are important for the child's individual and physical development.

Children between 0-3 ages become acquainted with books. These books in this process are the ones with sound, made of soft materials and the ones with dominant images rather than writings. Because figures, schemas, big and colourful things are interesting for these ages. Illustrated encyclopaedias, colourful magazines and shopping brochures are attractive for them. However, a child nearing 3 year-old can listen to the whole book read. He may want the same book to be read many times. He does not like any change in the story, he gains trust when the plot is repeated till the end. He even memorizes the book and as he knows when the pages will be turned, he wants to turn them himself. After a book is read once to a 4 year-old child, it should be read in the same way in the later readings. As he wants to find the ending he knows, especially the end of the story must not be changed. A different book can be selected of course to make the child learn different words. In this case, a book which has different words from the former ones read should be chosen. The books including animals talking like humans entertain the children at 5 years old. After the story ends, he may make up a totally new story as a whole. A child at 6 years old can be the heroin stories. If parents read books for them until this age, a child can easily learn how to read. But it should not be asked for without child's will. Whether he learns reading or not, magazines become important for 6 year-old children. 7 is the age of reading stories. At this age, he himself starts to become a reader. 8 is the age of dealing with the books about nature. At the age of 9, they become inclined to researching books. They can be influenced by dreams and exciting adventures. It is the year in which children begin to have information exchange with each other. Age of 10 is



the year of great changes and news, voting and surveys happen to be interesting for them. He has an idea and he forwards it. He wants to tell what he read to the others he loves. He may have complaints and praises and he may comment about them. Age of 11 is the age in which he likes every kind of books and he knows what kind of information he can get from any kind of books (Tosyalı, 2010, s.125-134). And of course this process may differ according to gender and personal differences. Nevertheless, being an avid reader at an early age continues with this process.

Computers and accordingly internet are the important mass media in both the adults' and children's lives. A survey among the ones who spend two hours or more using internet shows that they have some problems. They need to connect interest everyday besides becoming indifferent to the environment, having lack of relation in family and society, not being productive and creative in daily works, getting depressed, having sexual incompatibility between spouses, indulgence in fantasia, letting the things ride instead of solving them and failure in academic and mental processing (Taştan, 2011, s.182-183). Previously parents used to ask for the opinions of the seniors to protect them against the outside or bad friends. Now internet cafes have been replaced with outside and bad friends (Taştan, 2011, s.181). Parents knowing how to use a computer or not and the ones who can use it at a minimum or maximum level buy computers connected to internet for their children in order not to fall behind the modern time to provide their children to be cosmopolitan, contribute to their language education and support them with knowledge and writing for their lessons at school. Internet besides being a digital platform for playing games and watching movies for children is something which should be checked by parents while their children using it. Because children may face with inappropriate contents, emotional attacks in chatting rooms, danger of security, a virus attacks and entering the websites with money consciously or not as well as the messages towards them. Although parents think about all the hazardous sides of the internet, how can they protect especially the children at school age? Not having internet connection at home is not a solution as they will have to follow their children outside not to let them go to an internet cafe.

In addition to the words matriarchy and patriarchy used for indicating the social structure of a culture, the word "child-centred" is also added as it is seen in Dr. Kenan Taştan's book. What is meant with the child-centred term is that parents organize the family order considering



child development, basic care, expectations and wishes. It is a word telling that working parents pass their spare time with their children in order to improve their mental, physical and spiritual structures by spending time with them or directing them to the activities which will provide it. The effect and the content of this word on today's parents are like pressure. Because it poses a pressure especially on the mother rather than a father dealing with children, boy or girl, at pre-school period. This causes the feeling that what I can do in favour of my child, what I can do more and what I can do more and more. Parents think about not to occur the wrong directions which they cannot change in their children. They have continuous questions on their minds during the day like how long their child can watch the channels for children, which programmes they can watch, which books are suitable for their development of intelligence and whether to buy a set produced for teaching a foreign language on a computer.

Parents may comment on the subjects which they think are harmful by watching television with them and not leaving them defenceless against the messages from television. Instead of watching television together after supper, they should play games with their children. In order not to make them watch television, they may not watch it. They may direct them to read a book and they should not have a television in their children's room (Taştan, 2011, s.179-180).

Despite the disadvantages, television can take the child to a wonderland he can never find anywhere. The utmost benefit with the least risk can be provided in a few ways. The child does not need a television before reaching one and half a year. It may get harder to restrict him on this subject at school age. Watching television for half an hour after reaching one and half a year and an hour after two years is permissible. As well as establishing this rule, applying it is important. There should be certain times for watching television. It can be limited to watch television at meal times and when the all family is together. It should be watched together with a parent and it should not be used in place of the time to have special care for them. It should not be used as a reward and a punishment. Establishing a connection with the well behaviours or threatening them to deprive them of watching television makes it attractive for the child. It can be useful to turn on television at certain times determined by the parents instead of keeping it open all the time, listen to radio or music if they want a noisy environment, select the programmes (suitable for the age) deliberately, turn the television off and draw the characters by painting and making up stories, dance and sing with the child and



learn the feelings of the child. Distracting the whole family from television and having some other activities all together even when the television is on may prevent all the attention to be just on television (Eisenberg, Murkoff, Hathaway, 2005, s.146-148).

No matter how logical or appropriate explanations the parents make today, it may not deter them from watching television as every child has his own characteristics. To what extent it is normal to watch television together with the child and translate everything although the messages are in the mother tongue by exposing him too many messages. Is it possible not to turn television or a computer on when children are awake? Child psychologists have advanced this situation to an upper level and they make such an explanation that "The messages from television are imbedded in his subconscious when the child is sleeping even if he hears them as whisper. In this situation, while there are so many stimulants in the environment and how healthy it will be to raise a child totally isolated from these messages is not certain. Parents feel themselves to be careful in every step they take and they have not only the stress of over conscious but also the subconscious. Thus "What can I do more or what kind of mistakes do I do?"

The emergence of digital broadcasting and the appearance of TV channels aimed at various hobbies and tests paved the way for some TV channels to broadcast towards children (and babyhood period). In these channels, norms, judgements, gender roles and models according to the culture of society are usually repeated. Universal humanitarian values like loving animals, caring physical health (like brushing teeth and having a bath), respecting others and fulfilling responsibilities are often seen in these channels. Moreover, various scenario like having toilet training, eating by himself, picking up toys, loving the siblings, quitting dummy and accepting his parents to go to work to provide the child learn what is expected take place suitable for the age periods. As children learn by observing, they can learn easily in this way rather than getting changed by their parents. But this situating brings along some troubles. A child learning loving the animals may attempt to love a wild animal as real life experience, a baby younger than him wets itself and as the mother becomes happy he may say "But the baby does, I will wet myself." (See also, Pepe; Bebe gets the toilet training, TRTCocuk).

A scenario emphasized delicately may not have the same effect on every child. It may not be enough to make a sensible explanation for the children under 4. It may be the only way to





make him not to watch unfavourable broadcasts including negative cases by distracting him to some other sides. He can grow up without watching television, however, in a world with such technological developments television, tablet computers and accordingly media are all one within the other. Because the mass media are the part of life, it is one of the most important factors binding the common communication areas of children as with adults'. Under the circumstances, the most important responsibility falls to the parents, teachers or the caretakers dealing with the child. The benefits of mass media can be determined by melting the child's family structure with the cultural values in the same pot.



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