Chapter 7
Digital Media Using Habits of Children in Their Leisure Time

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ABSTRACT

Along with the developments in mass media, communication tools are increasingly in our lives. Especially with the developing technology, children's interest in these tools is increasing day by day. Children use digital media tools not only in leisure activities, but also in school and homework. This study aims to determine the habits of digital media usage in leisure activities of children. As a basis for research, the authors determine the habits of digital media consumption during leisure time of children in the 6-14 age group. In-depth interviewing method with 31 children will be applied in the research.

INTRODUCTION

The place of communication tools in our lives has been wider with the developments of the mass communication. According to Ulusoy and Bostancı (2014) our habits of communicating with other people, connecting, learning, working and spending free hours have changed a lot since some digital Technologies took part in our lives fast. New communication Technologies and media with social media strengthen and wide their place in our lives gradually. While our necessity of what kind of place does our connection with media have to be is a very big question, television, internet, social media, computer games etc. catch the children's attention and the necessity for the parents to manage the relation of their children with media is a very important situation (Ulusoy & Bostancı, 2014: 560). Especially the interest of the children to this developing technology has been becoming wide gradually. Children use digital media devices not only in their free time but also they use them at school and at home while they are doing their homework.

This study is to determine the habits of using digital media of the children on their free time. As a basis for the study the children between 6 and 14 years old in Istanbul, Turkey have been studied about their digital media consuming habits. As method the parents of 31 children have been deeply interviewed verbally.

Research questions have been tried to be answered in the study.

1.   How do the children spend their free time?
2.   How much place so the technological devices have in the children's free time?

The study has been restricted with 31 children between 6 and 14 years old living in Istanbul, Turkey (the children who are still going to elementary school and middle school). Because the subject of the book children's consumption of digital media, students studying in primary schools in Turkey was preferred. The age range of these students is 6-14.

BACKGROUND

Leisure Time and Children

In World Youth Report, leisure time is defined as "the waking hours during which a young person is not in school and not at work. School-related activities such as homework, Saturday classes and summer school are often counted as extensions of school. Chores and required family responsibilities such as childcare are often counted as extensions of work" (World Youth Report, 2003: 215).

According to Aydoğan's statement free time activities can be divided into two groups. The first group is "at home free time activities" which are some activities like spending time on social media, watching TV, reading newspaper or magazine and using personal computers. The second group is "out of home free time activities" which are some activities such as tourism which allows people to go distant places. Because out of home activities are related to income level, owning a car, it can be seen that people spend more time to at home activities than out of home activities today (Aydoğan, 2017: 604). Kuo and Tang also point out that "people have used their leisure time for various leisure activities, and some researchers have considered internet usage including social networking sites as one type of leisure activities. They add that leisure activities are activities that individuals participate during free time. Researchers have been trying to classify leisure activities in various patterns" (Kuo & Tang, 2011: 1, 2).

Žumárová points out that "leisure time raises very pleasant feelings and thoughts of a time spent according to our interest, mood and possibilities. Žumárová adds that our lifestyle and ways of spending free time are determined by our activities and the environment in which we grow up and live. On one hand, we are gaining possibilities such as mass communication, access to information or new technologies; however, the staggering pace of the technological revolution has its darker side as well" (Žumárová, 2015: 779).

According to 2005 World Youth Report, "between 1995 and 2005 was seen a shift in perceptions regarding the role of leisure-time activities in a young person's development. In the traditional view, leisure time is simply seen as "free time", but there has been a growing awareness of the vital contribution discretionary time can make to a young person's social inclusion, access to opportunities and overall development. Terms such as "leisure", "informal activities" and "free time" imply a casualness of purpose and practice that does not do justice to the way a majority of young people use their unrestricted hours. In many cases, young people's leisure time and activities relate directly to important issues affecting them, including education and employment. Out of both necessity and interest, they are increasingly seeking and finding new ways to spend their free time" (World Youth Report, 2005: 71).

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