

Chapter 15

The Habit of Watching Television and Using Computer in Primary School Children

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ABSTRACT

The study is limited with I. and II. grade students studying at public elementary schools in İzmir province Güzelbahçe district. While the target population of the study consists of students attending elementary schools in the district, the sample consists of 4. and 8. grade students. The reason for selecting students from two different grades was to determine the preferences of students from different age groups. The study also investigated the relationship between the preferences of girls and boys. The reason for selecting Güzelbahçe in this study was that the district was distant from the city center and was generally inhabited by middle-income families. A questionnaire was applied to students in the study and the data of the questionnaire were explained by associating the general features of female and male students regarding the aforementioned age groups and their answers to the question.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood is the most important stage of the socialization process. Many different factors, primarily family and school play a role in this process. Today, as well as family and school, mass media is among the most important factors fulfilling the function of socialization. It is known that favorite television programs have negative and positive effects on the socialization process of children in the present day where watching television has become a lifestyle.

Socialization is a learning process for children. In this process, children learn the roles and expectations attributed to them by society via family, school, social circle and mass media. Sociologists suggest that socialization usually occurs in two stages. Primary socialization occurs in the first period of infancy

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and childhood. This process starts in family, which is the primary group. In the second stage, on the other hand, a part of responsibility is taken from the family which is the first means of socialization and transferred to schools, social groups and communication instruments.

Today, television greatly affects the interaction between adults and children and gradually weakens the communication of children with their friends compared to previous periods. In our country where television is on for 1-18 hours a day at home, the mental world and culture of children are built by television to a large extent. (Sönmez & Uysal, 2005).

Postman suggests that children are exposed to financial and social relations of the adult world, fights, conflicts and violence, secrets about diseases and death via television, which consequently destroys childhood. According to Postman; childhood, unlike infancy, is a social construction rather than biological and protecting this social fact and pursuing the happiness of children add up to defending a healthy social view. (Postman, 1995).

Television is a unidirectional means of socialization for children. They can not ask questions, demand explanations and object while watching TV. But above all, today's kids do not play games sufficiently. The modern life has dispossessed children of games with both urbanization and education. In the modern life equipped with advanced technology of the twenty first century, children grow up in apartment houses without seeing the green and soil lacking a space where they can play traditional children's games. The energy which is tried to be locked up in home environment is generally used in electronic devices like TV, computer, tablet and even cell phone.

On the other hand, games have an important place in child development. Games make children move their body, jump, run, throw ball and also support their motor development. Children socialize with their friends through games. They learn to await their turn, obey the rules, respect the rights of others, express themselves in a group and become a member of the group through games. Games also support children's cognitive development as they require the skill of thinking. Children plan for winning in games. They consider how to play and how to cope with the opponent's moves. They make cognitive calculations of which they are not aware, such as finding secret hiding places, throwing the stone within hopscotch squares and arranging the speed and angle of the ball while throwing it. Games also support children's emotional development. Children learn to win, lose, worry and get excited, disappointed, desperate and happy in games. In other words, they rehearse life with games. They become mother, father and teacher in their games. Children also find healing in games. They express their anger, sorrow and anxiety through games and toys. Games become their tongue and the toys their words. By this way, they cope with difficulties and scary things by including them in their games. Games are effective on healing the spiritual wounds of children ('Child and Game', n.d.).

CHILD AND TELEVISION

Humans are social beings and they maintain their lives interacting with other people and forming groups/communities on the basis of common needs and within behavioral patterns according to their basic needs and goals. Individuals also learn the culture of their society or group while socializing. Common beliefs, attitudes and values that are shared by society and group members form the culture of that society or group.

Television may easily reach the masses and affect them due to its structure and operation. That effect may be encountered in many areas and various forms. Today, television is considered an important factor

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