

Chapter 6

How Do Cartoon Movies Construct Children's Consumption Habits for "Special Days"?

Elif Esiyok
Atilim University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Cartoons, which are widely watched in childhood, are not only a means of entertainment but also a means of spreading certain ideologies, cultures, or habits. Cartoons, a product of popular culture, are also effective in determining consumption habits. From this point, a certain cartoon is analyzed in this study to see how consumption habits for special days are constructed. The sample of the study consists of a series created by Disney, Mickey Mouse's Clubhouse, and through purposeful sampling "Valentine's Day" chapter is chosen. The selected cartoon is examined through using semiotics analysis method. The findings of the current study indicated that the importance of Valentine's Day is emphasized through the use of feelings. The action of giving and getting a present is showed as a reason to become happy and the opposite situation is shown as a reason to be upset.

BACKGROUND

Consumption defined as "the action of using up a resource" (Oxford Dictionary, 2019), as humans we consume both tangible and intangible sources. But in the marketing field consumption is defined as "the act of buying or using goods or services" (Ivanovic and Collin, 2003: 56). Roberta Sassatelli (2007: 3) says that "our daily life is typically organized as alternating between times/space of work and times/spaces of consumption: we wake up and 'consume' breakfast at home or in a coffee-shop, we go to work in a factory or office where we spend most of the day, taking a 'break' from 'work' only to 'consume' a sandwich in a pub, in a canteen, we return home where a series of instruments help us complete our diverse acts". In all areas of our lives, we make purchases and consume commodities. However, these

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8491-9.ch006

How Do Cartoon Movies Construct Children's Consumption Habits for "Special Days"?

purchasing decisions are affected through different factors. In order to obtain knowledge and to decide what to buy or to use, consumers use many channels. Friends or family members could affect a purchasing decision, but also there is another important source which is media. Consumers use media to gain a depth knowledge to identify the differences between two or three similar products/ services that they need. So for the consumers, media could be one of the tools that they use to achieve an information. Whereas brands/ companies use media to distinguish their products or services from their competitors and to communicate with their target audience.

Media, in general, is one of the most important sources that affect purchase decisions and consumption habits. Through advertisements or television programs the audience is exposed to variety of messages. Different tactics were used by the advertisers in order to reach their target audience. Brand placements, advertisements and public relations activities are generally used to affect the decisions.

In today's world, not only adults but also children are exposed to different medium, especially to television programs. Frequently before the age of six, majority of the children could not read. Therefore in the first years of their lives, they spend their time while watching television or listening to the radio. Among these television programs, the child audience generally watch cartoon movies, and for this reason, specific channels started to broadcast only for children. These channels publish cartoons or children soap series 7/24 a day.

Since children are known as an important audience as consumers, and different television channels were used to reach them, this chapter aimed to explore how cartoons construct purchasing habits for special days. This study takes Valentine's Day as the representative of the special days among all. To achieve this aim, one of the most popular series created by Disney "Mickey Mouse's Clubhouse" is chosen as a sample. Through purposeful sampling "Valentine's Day" themed cartoon is selected and examined through using semiotics analysis method.

CHILDREN AS CONSUMERS

Today children are one of the most important target audience for marketers. 1930s known as the first years that efforts started to direct to understand the child's perspective and preferences against products and services to tailor specific products to children (Cook, 2000). Today also there are many different types of products which aim to attract children. Some of these tailored products could be listed as kid's meals, kids TV channels, toy shops, kids clothing shops, hairdressers for kids, movies for kids and etc. The investment to attract the kids as a consumer is a reason of the increase of children's power in the market as consumers. This child market is comprising the young people up to the age of 12 (Furnham and Gunter, 2008:1).

Gunter and Furnham (1998: 2) mention that "given the size of the teenage market, especially, in terms of spending power, considerable attention has been directed towards understanding the types of products and services they purchase and the extent to which they influence family purchase decisions". From this proposition, it could be concluded that children both have purchasing power by their own and at the same time influence their families' decisions during the purchasing process.

The children's aptitude to influence their parents' purchasing decisions either by nagging or pestering is called *pester power* in the consumer behavior discourse (Gregory et. al., 2017). In literature, it is said that pester power is increased after the children started to socialized. There are some channels which help

9 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/how-do-cartoon-movies-construct-childrens-consumption-habits-for-special-days/227467

Related Content

The Challenges of Public Administration, Good Governance and Service Delivery in the 21st Century

Essien D. Essien (2015). *International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change* (pp. 53-66).
www.irma-international.org/article/the-challenges-of-public-administration-good-governance-and-service-delivery-in-the-21st-century/142487

Fostering Daily Life Skills in Young and Older Adults With Neurodegenerative Diseases Through Technological Supports

Fabrizio Stasolla and Sara Bottiroli (2022). *Research Anthology on Physical and Intellectual Disabilities in an Inclusive Society* (pp. 1102-1118).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/fostering-daily-life-skills-in-young-and-older-adults-with-neurodegenerative-diseases-through-technological-supports/289111

Assertiveness and Self-Esteem Among Nurses in a Tertiary Hospital in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Leika Santiago (2022). *International Journal of Public Sociology and Socioterapy* (pp. 1-17).
www.irma-international.org/article/assertiveness-and-self-esteem-among-nurses-in-a-tertiary-hospital-in-abu-dhabi-united-arab-emirates/310938

English-Medium Instruction for the Tertiary Level in a Multilingual and Multicultural Context

Duc Huu Pham (2022). *Handbook of Research on Multilingual and Multicultural Perspectives on Higher Education and Implications for Teaching* (pp. 171-189).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/english-medium-instruction-for-the-tertiary-level-in-a-multilingual-and-multicultural-context/297944

Public Policy and Ethics in Marketing Research for Organizations: Concerns, Strategies, and Initiatives

Pratap Chandra Mandal (2023). *International Journal of Public Sociology and Socioterapy* (pp. 1-12).
www.irma-international.org/article/public-policy-and-ethics-in-marketing-research-for-organizations/322016