

Family and socio-emotional relations in advertising of toys in the Christmas period

Un estudio de las representaciones familiares y socioafectivas en la publicidad de juguetes en Navidad



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Abstract:

This study analyses toy advertising broadcast in Spain over the 2014/15 Christmas period. The goal is to begin a quantitative review of how family is represented in commercials. Initially, it reviews the concepts of childhood, relates them to the concept of socialisation and offers a short analysis of the advertising phenomenon. The results evaluate the presence of types of emotions, values and actions associated with the gender of the characters featured, and the frequency of parent– and grandparent–character appearances in toy ads targeting children is quantified. The limited presence of these characters establishes a basis for discussion about the role of said characters as necessary figures of reference and authority in child development. A final reflection is also proposed regarding the homogeneity of the representations of gender associated with the characters' roles, for both adults and children. Lastly, this paper justifies interest in widening the study to international level, to make it possible to check the degree of similarity and of contrast in said representations as a way to contribute to understanding and viewing the family in advertising discourses.

Keywords:

Advertising, family, toys, children, socioemotional relationship.

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Resumen:

Este estudio analiza la publicidad de juguetes emitida en España durante el periodo de Navidad 2014/15 con la finalidad de iniciar una revisión cuantitativa de la representación de la familia en los anuncios. En su primera parte revisa los conceptos de infancia y niñez, los relaciona con el concepto de socialización y presenta un breve análisis del fenómeno publicitario. Los resultados evalúan la presencia de los tipos de emociones, valores y acciones asociados al género de los personajes y cuantifica la frecuencia de aparición de padres y abuelos en los anuncios de juguetes dirigidos a niños. La baja presencia de estos establece una discusión acerca del rol de dichos personajes como figuras de referencia y autoridad necesarias en el desarrollo infantil. También se plantea una reflexión final sobre la homogeneidad de las representaciones de los géneros asociadas a los roles de los personajes, tanto de adultos como niños. Finalmente se justifica el interés por ampliar el estudio hacia un escenario internacional que permita comprobar los grados de similitud y contraste en dichas representaciones como forma de contribuir a la comprensión y visualización de la familia en los discursos publicitarios.

Palabras clave:

Publicidad, familia, juguetes, niños, relaciones socioafectivas

1. Introduction

Among other ways of understanding childhood, this study starts from a position which defines childhood as a social condition defined by a cultural and historical construction which is dependent on power relationships (Gaitán, 2006). In it, boys and girls are social actors who move in the social space which constitutes childhood. From a eurocentric perspective, which can be extended to North America, recognising that each culture, society and time has constructed childhood in a social space tailored to their interests and needs (Pavez, 2012), and without debating the concept of childhood with the historic depth it deserves (Rice, 1991; Moscoso, 2008; Goody, 1986; DeMause, 1982), we consider it to be important to remember that it was not until after industrialisation, the establishment of civil rights and the demise of the old regime that the need to “look after” future citizen began to develop (Foucault, 2005). Biopolitical technologies were incorporated, such as education and schooling, which became an adroit means to shape and forge the ideas and ideologies of a future population; hygiene, health, care and diet, which materialised in medical and pharmaceutical developments; religion as a technology for control, ethics, submission and a guide of non-“standard” behaviour; supervision and safety, represented by police, penitentiary and psychiatric technology and many other technologies which were to be developed over those centuries and would make children a entirely new social construct, far removed from the idea of the “savage child”.

In a very general sense, we understand socialization to be the learning process through which subjects are absorbed by their reference culture/society (the society and culture surrounding that individual), and learn by imitation, interiorisation,

empathy, reiteration and replication of values, rules, behaviours, ideas, ideologies and attitudes inherent in the reference socio-cultural context. This never-ending process (Berger & Luckmann, 1984) is decisive in the initial periods in the life of the social subject as it incorporates the individual into society, into “the subject’s society”. It is at this prime moment when the institution of the family participates in the process as leading player and the transmitter of the future values, ideals, behaviours and rules of the future citizen.

In the case of primary socialisation - socialization during childhood - the main social institutions which act are, together with the family: the reference group, peer groups, school and the mass media (Ferrés, 2010). In non-secular societies, religion is another of the institutions to be taken into consideration. At the instant at which the child goes to school or to nursery, his or her immediate reference culture is mixed with the external culture and reality, represented in peer groups, friends and school (Vásquez & Martínez, 2005). The children note that their family members are not the only ones with authority, but instead there are more rules, values, ideas and worldviews that those acknowledged in the children’s family environment. It is at school where the child will learn to coexist with peer groups and with other structures of authority and power, materialising in the teacher figure and in that of the other children.

In the last 60 years, the family in Spain has altered in structure, shifting from a traditional extended-family model, based on numerous progeny, and with strong religious values and a patriarchal nature, to a highly diverse nuclear-family model: homosexual couples, couples deciding not to have children, single-parent families, single-person homes and multicultural families, due to the growth of the immigrant population starting in the late 1980s. All this means families today are very different in structure, culture, customs and means of socialisation to the families of the Franco regime and earlier (Chacón & Bestard, 2011). In this vein, Gómez and Blanco (2005), in line with Bourdieu (1977), state that families are represented as social bodies perpetuating the “social being”.

As regards the socialisation process and in relation to the subject matter of this paper (that is, advertising), we find how since the 1970s onwards, the mass media has been gaining momentum in Spain as a social actor. Radio and television, in leading position, and the Internet, as today’s great medium, are also deemed to be leading players in contemporary socialization. These media channels are no longer the simple elements for highly intermittent leisure and distraction they were (especially in the origins of Spanish television) and have become essential for the configuration of children’s lifestyles, especially if we include mobile telephones, which are currently considered to be a format for continual, uninterrupted and omnipresent entertainment in their daily activities for many children (Moyer-Gusé, 2010).

Why does this paper focus on studying how families are represented in toy ads? As has been stated, children learn, comprehend and understand reality from the standpoint of the other, not only on their own initiative but also due to outside initiative, in which primary socialization social institutions participate, where the family is one of the institutions with the most influence over the child in the initial stage. The reality, culture, religion, values, worldview and rules of the family are instilled within the boys and girls of this initial reference family or society (Schaffer, 1989). Later other subjects enter the stage who, although not belonging to the children’s most immediate family, are part of their immediate environment, such as peer groups or other relatives (beyond the nuclear family model) such as grandparents, cousins, neighbours, etc. Other factors which influence the contemporary socialization process are informative factors (deriving from the universality of

the media and mass information), advertising, the democratization of information technologies, changes in lifestyle and styles of consumption, the new understanding of family and family structuring, and the prevailing individualism as a social value. Boys and girls are exposed to other socialization agents from outside their reference society, and access other cultural features and other discourses and worldviews that can influence them.

From this perspective, we consider that advertising and, especially, toy adverts are part of this process of the overall socialization of the child and that they contribute to perpetuating social constructions and values and generating models for socio-emotional relationships between its family members (Arconada, 1998). Specifically, this article focuses on studying toy adverts whose target audience consists of children (Johnson & Young, 2002; Martínez, Nicolás & Salas, 2013).

Among studies prior to the present one, with similar objectives, we find those that investigate the discursive construction of identity and social representation of parents in advertising discourses (Nichols, Nixon and Rowsell, 2009) to recognise in the environment of the child and its sociability, both in commercial advertising and in government-promoted institutional adverts. These authors note that parents are not represented in adverts for educational and other types of toys, whereas they are in institutional advertising. Thus, in toy advertising it is not unusual to find adverts in which just the child appears with the toy, without interacting with any children or adults, and even in which just a toy appears without any children being shown. The social context and spacial context tend to disappear, situating the child and the toy in a featureless space, in which context interactiveness means how the child interacts with the toy, and the non-social interaction between the other participant in the human activity and the child (Nichols, Nixon and Rowsell, 2009). Other research, such as that of Millei and Lee (2007) and Sunderland (2000), considers that in toy adverts aimed at children, the family is constructed and reconstructed around the youngsters, but that this is done in relation to themes such as care, education and, by extension, fun and leisure. These modes of representing the family have also been addressed in other studies which focus on the stereotyped gender relationships present in advertising discourses. In this vein, Arconada (1998) categorised the family stereotypes represented in the adverts: the mother/daughter, mother/son, father/son, father/daughter relationships and those with grandparents. In these studies, it is asserted that gender relationships among the female sex can fall into reinforcing stereotypes of beauty, affective-nutritional relationships and occupations such as housewife. The gender relationships among the male sex are based on stereotypes of success, bravery or skill. These representations reconstruct, in turn, the identity of the family as a cohesive body that consumes in unison in a domestic setting, as is shown in adverts for board games.

The work by Carter and Levy (1988) and by Martin, Eisenbud and Rose (1995) is included in this line of research into stereotypes and gender. The aforementioned authors analysed the uses and preferences in toy selection according to gender to measure the influence of social stereotypes on toy selection. Their results stated that children preferred toys which had previously been classified as being for their gender and rejected those categorised differently, and that the children selected toys based on their tastes if these lacked a sexist stereotype. Other research which investigated toy selection preferences includes that of Cherney (2005), Martin, Eisenbud and Rose (1995), Bradbard and Parkman (1983), Bradbard (1985) and Miller (1987). The work by Owen Blakemore and Centers (2005) proposed a circumstance where adults categorised toys by gender, obtaining results in which girls' toys were associated with physical attractiveness, caring and domestic skills, whereas boys' preferred toys were violent, competitive, exciting and a bit dangerous. Martínez, Nicolás and Salas (2013) drew similar conclusions when they studied representations of gender in advertising, as did Johnson and Young (2002), who

concluded that the use of an aggressive and over-the-top male voice was prevalent in adverts aimed at boys, as opposed to the use of female voices. Other studies of interest have focused on the way in which parents choose toys for their children (Eisenberg, Wolchik, Hernández & Pasternack, 1985) or on understanding how children select the toys for their letters to Santa (Pine & Nash, 2009), whether emotionally or cognitively.

2. Methods

2.1. Objectives of the study

The main purpose is to understand how family socio-emotional relationships are represented in toy ads subject to the situations and actions represented and associated with the characters. To this end, the differences in representation of the characters in each of the ads are identified and described, as regards age, gender, phenotype, role and the actions performed. A sample of toy ads broadcast prior to and over the Christmas period 2014/2015 was analysed, as this is the period of the year where there is an increase in the commercials of this type broadcast on television. We understand that advertising shows a particular vision, an intentional reflection of social reality, an imitation of reality. Therefore, it is important to observe and analyse the ways in which children and adults represent themselves and relate to each other and what type of behaviours, attitudes, emotions, values, acts and messages they are associated with in the commercials.

Due to the complexity involved in defining advertising, which is both a social and a socialising phenomenon, this paper articulates the following set of objectives for studying the relationship between the concepts of advertising and family. The first objective is to offer a structure for analysis of the representation of the family in the toy ads which enables this line of research to be continued in future academic studies. This structure is based on the following study variables: Presence of characters; gender of the characters; phenotype of the characters; presence and classification of family characters; presence of adult characters and role; presence of influencers; identification and classification of the advertised toy according to toy category; actions of the characters; identification of emotions and values. The second objective is to identify positive and negative trends and improvements in how the family is represented in toy ads.

2.2. Analysis criteria: methodology and study techniques

The analysis universe is made up of the toy commercials broadcast during the weeks defined as being part of the Christmas period for 2014/15: the months of November and December 2014 up until 5 January 2015 (the night when, according to Spanish tradition, the Three Kings or Three Wise Men bring presents to children to celebrate Epiphany on 6 January).

Christmas is the period in the year with the highest selling figures for the toy market in Spain, together with the period close to the summer holidays. Due to the tradition of Christmas presents – reflected in the cultural figures of Father Christmas or Santa Claus, *tió de Nadal* (Catalonia), *Olentzero* (the Basque Country), and other figures from traditional folklore depending on the autonomous region, culture or town – the dates of 24 and 25 December are gaining momentum in the toy market. Although “commercial” Christmas customs in Spain have changed markedly since the 1980s, the apex and key date in this area for Spain is 6 January, the date of Epiphany or the adoration of the Magi, a very widespread tradition in Spain and

deriving from its deep roots in Catholic culture. Both dates are of vital importance in this study, thus setting the time frame for gathering the data for our study as 1 November 2014 to 5 January 2015. This is why the period selected for analysis is the period leading up to and over Christmas, as it is justified by quantitative criteria and those of the advertising logic of the toy sector. It is during this period of the year when there is a greater presence and an increase in toy commercials targeting a children's and pre-adolescent audience. This increase in ads broadcast on television provides us with a high number of cases, and we can determine their level of compliance as regards the regulations and any self-regulation codes.

The criteria for making up the commercial sample were: toy commercials targeting a children's and pre-adolescent audience broadcast in children's time slots, which depend on the specific day of the week. Weekdays, when children have fewer leisure hours at home, are not the same as weekends, when their television viewing can be longer as they do not have to go to school. Following this logic, the time slots and days of the week used to select the sample were established in the following manner: Monday to Friday, from 08:00 to 09:00 and from 17:00 to 20:00, while on Saturdays and Sundays, the time slot focused on the period between 09:00 and 12:00. Another aspect that delimits the sample is the television channels selected, comprising generalist channels (Antena 3, Telecinco, Cuatro and La Sexta) and specific channels targeting a pre-adolescent and adolescent children's audience –that is, minors– (Boing, Disney Channel and Neox Kids). To define the toy ad sample more precisely, the study excluded video game commercials because the application code is set according to PEGI criteria. In addition, repetition of commercials was eliminated as one of the selection criteria in calculating the sample; that is, the number of times each advert was broadcast (the OPS, or opportunity to see, measure) was not taken into account.

In the end, the sample analysed is made up of 140 toy commercials broadcast during the selected season (Christmas 2014/2015). Table 1 gives the study variables of the analysis file created to analyse the adverts.

Table 1: Features of the sample and study variables.

Selected media:	Antena 3, Telecinco, Cuatro, La Sexta, Boing, Disney Channel and Neox Kids.
Sample:	140 adverts.
Time slot:	Monday to Friday: 08:00 to 09:00 and 17:00 to 20:00; Saturday and Sunday: 09:00 to 12:00.
Period:	From 1 November 2014 to 5 January 2015.
Variables analysed:	Presence of characters; gender of the characters; phenotype of the characters; presence and classification of family characters; presence of adult characters and role; presence of influencers; identification and classification of the advertised toy according to toy category; actions of the characters; identification of emotions and values.

Source: Own compilation.

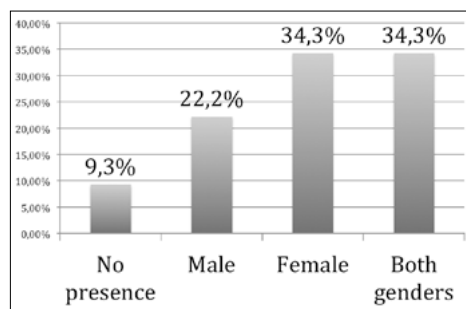
3. Results

3.1. Presence, profile and role of the children and the family in the adverts.

The study detects a trend towards parity in gender representation (Table 2) of the characters, whether these are minor children or adults, as can be seen in the data on the simultaneous presence of characters of both genders in the same commercial. However, this statement must be clarified upon analysing the adverts containing characters of just one gender. In these,

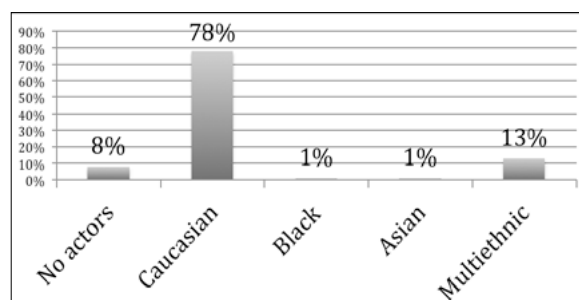
the number of adverts with exclusively male characters is lower (22.2%) than the number of adverts with female characters (34%). There is also inequality as regards the presence of phenotypes (Table 3), as the most common representation is the Caucasian phenotype (77.8%), with a significant number of adverts containing multiethnic characters (13%).

Table 2. Representation of gender



Source: Own compilation.

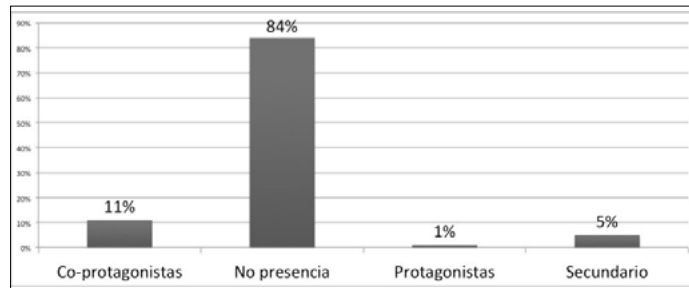
Table 3. Phenotype of the characters



Source: Own compilation

The data relating to the representation of adult characters in the adverts (Table 4) show that it is very limited. Commercials using exclusively characters representing minors and lacking any characters representing adults make up 84% of the sample. Therefore, adults are present in the adverts in just 16% of the sample and in these their role is almost never that of a main character; only two of the adverts in the sample had this feature.

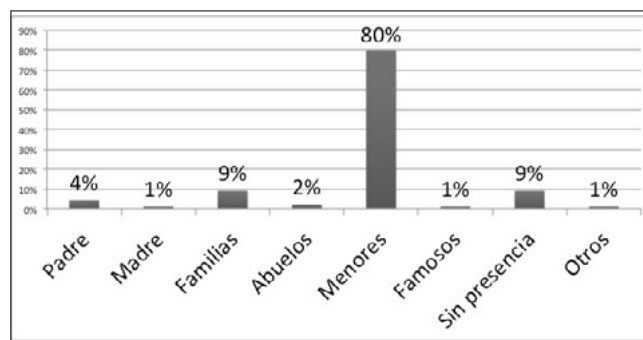
Table 4. Presence of adults in the adverts.



Source: Own compilation

The results regarding the diversity of family-member characters and their presence in the commercials have been classified in this paper according to the following representation categories (Table 5): father, mother, families, grandparents, children, famous people, other adults and without any characters present. The data indicate that just 9.3% of the adverts incorporate people who represent a family arrangement with more than one individual. If we add to this category the adverts with the individual presence of family members accompanying a child, that is, adverts which feature child characters accompanied just by their father (4.3%), those featuring child characters accompanied just by their mother (0.8%) and adverts containing child characters accompanied just by their grandparents (1.5%), the resulting data reflect that just 16% of the sample analysed represents a family situation in their toy advertising. We also note that nearly 10% of the adverts feature adult characters who do not play the role of a family member in the commercial and act as part of the narrative playing other, specific roles.

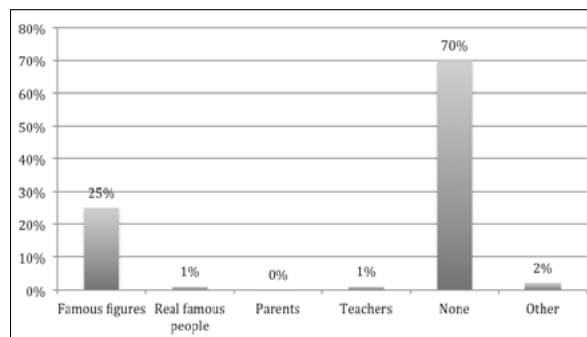
Table 5. Presence of family characters in the adverts.



Source: Own compilation.

To assess the characters most often acting as influencers of consumer choice for the toy, the data obtained regarding the presence of adults and family have been compared to the data on the presence of influencers of consumer choice who give information about or promote the toy in the advertisement (Table 6). According to this comparison, the influencers most used are famous characters, usually fictional characters, who are connected to the advertised toy. The parents or family members never act as influencers of consumer choice and only interact as part of the action featured (see Table 11).

Table 6. Presence of influencers



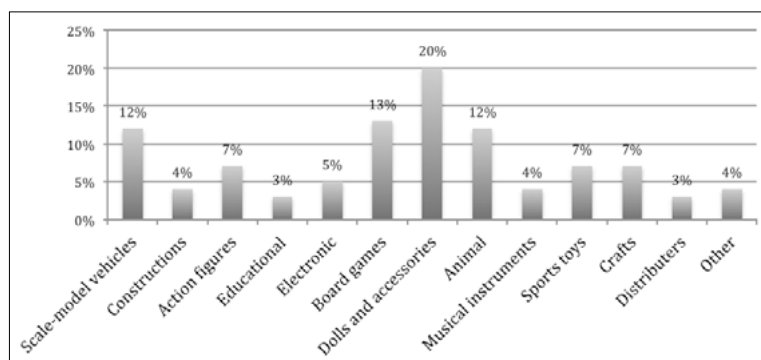
Source: Own compilation

3.2. Toy categories and actions performed by the characters

The four most advertised toy categories during the time period studied (Table 7) were as follows:

- Dolls and accessories: these represent 20% of the adverts in the sample.
- Board games: these represent 13.2% of the adverts in the sample.
- Animal: these represent 12% of the adverts in the sample.
- Scale-model vehicles: these represent 12% of the adverts in the sample.

Table 7. Distribution of the advert sample according to toy category.

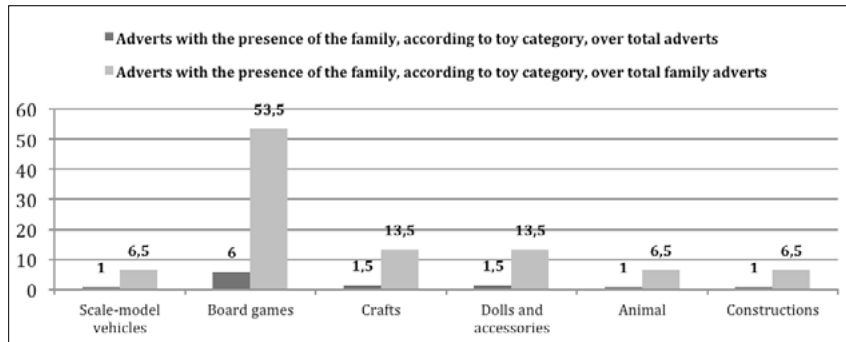


Source: Own compilation

The cross-referring of data obtained from analysing the presence of each toy category and the presence of the different types of family character (Table 8) shows that the board-game category offers the greatest number of adverts featuring the presence of family characters and represents 6% of the total number of adverts in the sample. The study also reflects that family characters have only been detected in six toy categories: board games, crafts, dolls and accessories, animal, constructions and scale-model vehicles.

The data compared (in Table 8) between “Adverts with the presence of the family, according to toy category, over total adverts” and “Adverts with the presence of the family, according to toy category, over total family adverts” show that the three toy categories with the greatest number of adverts feature family characters are board games, crafts, and dolls and accessories. These data reveal that these categories are scarcely represented with regard to the total number of adverts in the sample. Thus, the category most featuring the presence of family characters is board games; however, adverts with family characters in this category only represent 6% of the total number of adverts and represent over half (53.5%) of the total number of adverts featuring family characters.

Table 8. Presence of family characters by category.

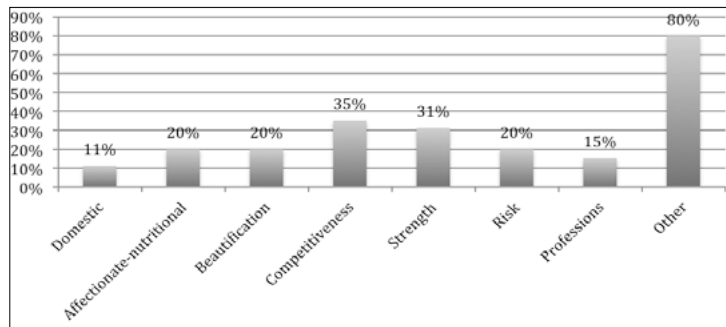


Source: Own compilation

In order to identify and analyse the actions performed by the characters (Table 9), it was decided to record a maximum of three actions per advert and not just the main action which made it possible to increase the frequency of activities recognised per category. The results show a diverse range of actions, which have been recorded in the “other” category, such as specific actions associated with the progress of the game (dancing, fighting, building, jumping, etc.). When these actions share common features, they have been grouped together inside a set of general actions at a higher level, named as: domestic actions, affectionate-nutritional actions, beautification actions, actions competitiveness, involving strength, actions involving risk and actions related to professional activities.

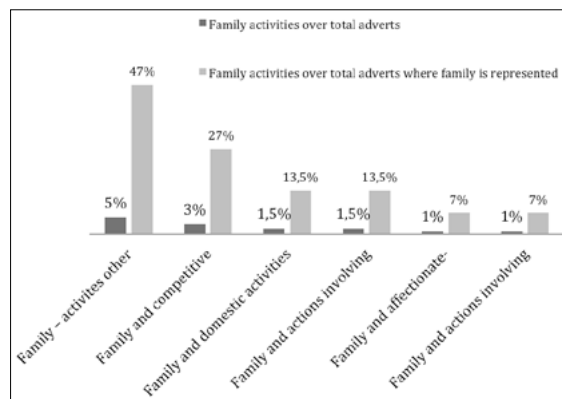
From this perspective, competitive actions are present in 35% of the adverts analysed, followed by actions involving strength, then risk, beautification, affectionate-nutritional and, finally, domestic actions, the latter being present in just 11% of the adverts. We consider that the fact the board-game toy category (Table 8) is the category featuring the greatest presence of family characters may influence the set of most representative actions identified in these commercials (Table 10). Thus, competitive actions are present in 26.5% of the total number of family adverts, whereas domestic actions are only in 13.5% of the family advert total.

Table 9. Actions performed by the characters



Source: Own compilation.

Table 10. Actions performed by the family characters.

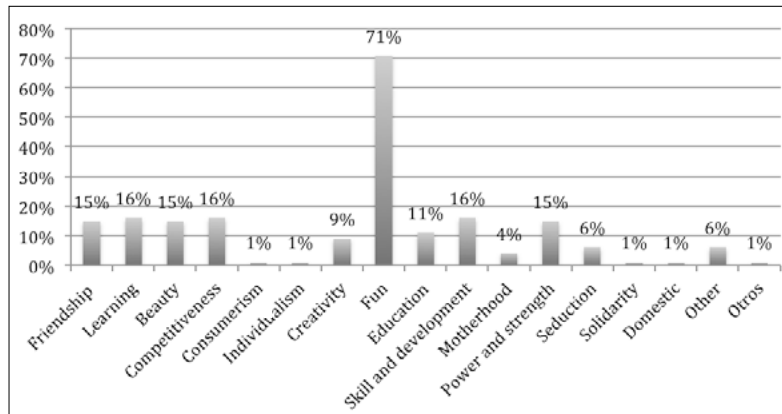


Source: Own compilation.

3.3. List of values present in adverts with family characters

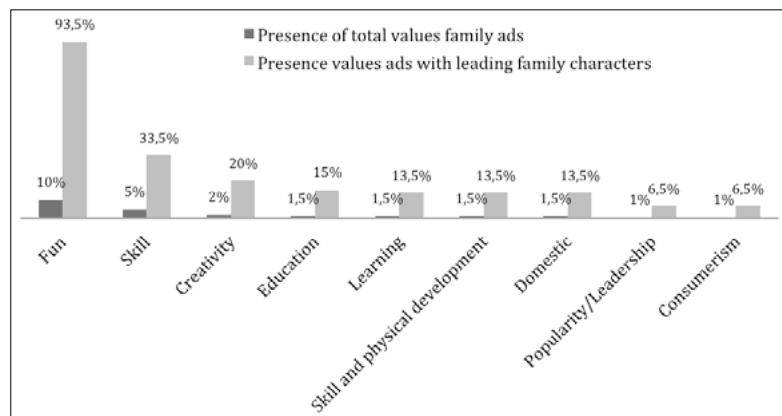
The pinpointing of the values present in the adverts shows that fun is the value appearing most frequently, both in the total number of adverts (Table 11) and in the adverts featuring the presence of family characters (Table 12). In turn, fun is present in 71% of the total number of adverts and in 93.5% of the adverts featuring the presence of family characters, which means that adverts featuring family characters and containing this value represent 10% of the total number of the adverts analysed. The comparison between the data of tables 12 and 13 do show differences between the rest of the values used. Thus, learning, ability, skill, beauty, friendship and strength are represented in numbers that are very similar to each other and much less than fun in the total number of adverts, where as in commercials containing family characters, skill (33.5%), creativity (20%) and education (15%) are present in significant numbers inside this set of adverts.

Table 11. Presence of values measured as a percentage of the total sample.



Source: Own compilation

Table 12. Presence of values in the family adverts.



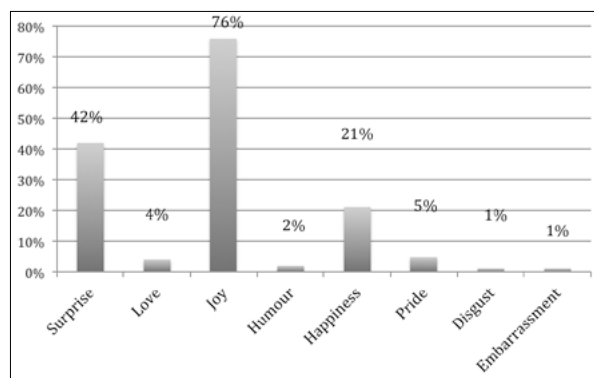
Source: Own compilation

3.4. List of emotions present in the adverts

Finally, analysis of the presence of emotions shows a clear majority of positive emotions compared to negative emotions (Table 13). As with the case of cataloguing values, when identifying the emotions, it was limited to a maximum of three per advert. The results discover that joy is the most used emotion and is present in 76.5% of the adverts in the sample. Other positive emotions with significant percentages are surprise (42%), happiness and pride. The use of negative emotions is

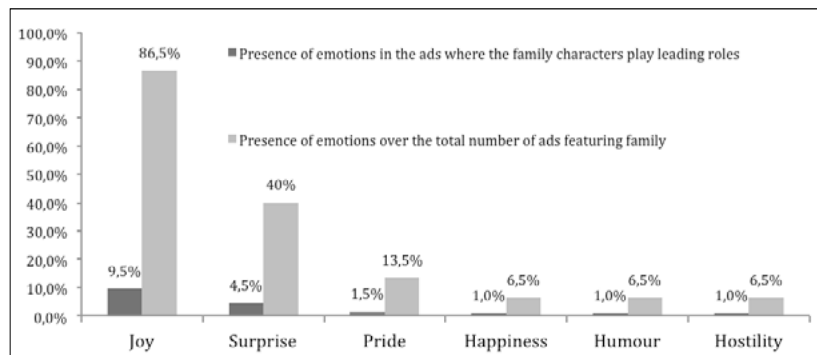
immaterial, and only two adverts include disgust and embarrassment. In the case of adverts featuring the presence of family characters (Table 14), the emotion of joy is the most common and is present in almost 90% of the family adverts, which represents 10% of the total sample, followed by surprise and pride, although in this case their presence with respect to the total number of adverts is highly immaterial and negligible, at 4.5% and 1.5% respectively.

Table 13. Presence of emotions in the adverts.



Source: Own compilation

Table 14. Presence of emotions in the adverts whose main characters are relatives compared to the total number of adverts featuring the presence of the family.



Source: Own compilation

4. Discussion

The data highlight that very few toy categories include characters related to the family. Just 9.4% of the total number of characters identified in the analysis clearly represent relatives or are associated with some type of socio-emotional relationship inherent in the family. When we analyse the data that measure family presence, by toy category advertised, it is noted that in the most advertised category, dolls and accessories, only two adverts include characters that refer to the family.

Although the category of board games is that with the most significant data on the use of family characters, the adverts in this category featuring family characters only represent 6% of the total sample. The rest of the categories depict insignificant percentages of family characters being featured, which enables us to state that for the rest of the categories of products, the family is not a primary reference when creating their advertising. The conclusion is therefore drawn that the representation of the family in toy advertising is negligible and that its most significant rate of representation is in the board-game category. This determines the creation of the advertising discourse on family relationships and the game, given that these relationships are only being projected in advertising for one form of specific game, mainly in a domestic setting.

As regards the categories of characters identified, the roles of the father, mother and grandparents are negligible in most of the adverts. The most frequent recourse is to the use of children interacting with the toy, without the presence of adults, as can be seen in the data of tables 7 and 8. Although, as evidenced by the data given thus far, the board-game category is the category with the greatest number of activities between family characters, this reality must be contrasted with the adverts identified in which the child characters play roles typical of adults, as is seen in the crafts and the dolls and accessories categories. These situations determine the interactions between the family characters, on the one hand with the idea of a meeting and interaction (crafts and board games) and on the other with the representation of nutritional-maternal actions associated with toys belonging to the dolls category, where the interactions are made visible through a double reality: either the mother supports her daughter in her game of looking after the baby doll, or the girl plays the role of the mother in her game with the baby doll. In the rest of the adverts and categories, the child's leisure time is represented mainly in an individual form or in connection with her or his peers, other children.

There is a significant balance as regards gender and diversity in representing the two genders, as the adverts which include characters of both genders are the most common (see Table 2, on representation of gender). However, the data in Table 8, 9 and 10 show, in actual fact, that the female gender is the most represented gender in the total number of adverts. In addition, it can be seen that for a large part of the toys advertised the figure of femininity represents a traditional and binary conventional concept associated mainly with nutritional duties, beauty, caring for pets and children, cooking and crafts. These data allow us to state that the representation of children's femininity continues to project an image of adult female gender that is stereotyped and traditional, generating an idea of what one has or should be (Nash, 2014).

In relation to the representations of children, it is noted that ethnic diversity is practically non-existent or very insignificant, which is remarkable if we compare it to Spain's current demographic composition. The data of Table 3 do not reflect that Spain was and continues to be a country receiving migrants from diverse origins. At the beginning of the migratory boom, the migrants were of Latin American origin (Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, among others), and

of North African origin and from the Sub-Saharan region. In the early 2000s, these were joined by people from Eastern European countries and from the former Soviet Union, and, lastly, people from China (Garrido, 2014). Upon analysing the data described in Table 3, we cannot state that this type of advert shows a proportional relationship to multidiversity pertaining to origins through representation by phenotype. Only an approximate 13% of the commercials analysed show multiracial diversity or diversity of origin. We consider this to be one of the tasks which social research should continue and increase the volume of work, together with the issue of gender and representation of the family.

Joy is the emotion most represented and characterised in the adverts (76%), followed by surprise (40%) and happiness (20%). These three emotions project the desired advertising-based response in the children when they receive a gift or toy. These emotions are associated with the value of fun (71%) which is the main advertising promise associated with the majority of the products advertised. However, we must also take into account that, beyond this reality inherent to the advertising purposes by constructing the discourse of each of the products, some of the emotions and values most represented in the adverts (see Table 11, 12 and 13) are emotions, attitudes and values which are more common in adult people. These emotions are interspersed in the toy commercials and are equally or more present than values such as friendship, solidarity and education. Competitiveness is a value gaining ground in the job market and in the productive and education system, as are skills and ability to develop, power and strength, leadership, beauty and learning (Illouz, 2007).

From the set of data analysed, a set of conclusions and reflections has been drawn in order to generate and have a useful, active academic discussion on the ways in which adverts produce representations that influence children's understanding and socialisation processes. As regards the subject matter that concerns us in this paper – the family – we consider it to be necessary for the industry to consider designing toy advertising which is a closer reflection of children's reality, thus encouraging the creation of more diverse advertising scenarios that are closer to the current reality of children as regards their relationship with the family and their socio-emotional relationships. We have observed that in toy adverts there is an almost total lack of the diversity of current families, such as lack of representations of homosexual families, multiracial and multi-ethnic families, single parent families (Pichardo, 2009) and the absence of characters that represent the role of grandparents.

Children determine domestic consumption and are a group of highly interesting consumers for companies and institutions belonging to different sectors which constantly direct advertising towards them. This reason leads to the conclusion of this paper, defending the interest of its object of study. If socio-emotion is essential in the positive growth of boys and girls, we believe it is necessary to maintain active research interest in evaluating how the family is expressed in advertising targeting children, as it is absent in most toy commercials. In the same way, it has been noted that feelings and emotions are represented in a very limited manner, an area reserved almost exclusively for the feelings of surprise and happinessfulness. The low representation of family characters in the majority of toy categories, except in the case of the board-games category, leads us to come to conclusions as to actions, values and emotions referring to the entirety of the family adverts and not to each of the categories, given that the representiveness over each of these cannot be taken into account. Competitive actions are the most present among the most common actions that influence socio-emotional relationships between children and their family members in the adverts; however, these are always subject to the values of fun, creativity and skill, and

the emotions of joy and surprise. There is, therefore, a homogenisation of how family is represented, related, as stated by Wallerstein (2012), to a consumer culture that generates homogeneities in life styles and styles of consumption typical of adults.

We understand that both the advertising industry and the toy advertisers and media entrusted with storing and disseminating the adverts aimed at children must take into consideration – in addition to the legal aspects that should safeguard them in relation to child protection – other, equally important considerations such as representation of social, family, cultural, sexual, ethnic and racial diversity. This must be a formula to contribute to the elimination of sexist and excessively stereotyped gender bias which keeps intact the dual identity of gender, giving rise to a difference and inequality in the sharing of power since childhood (Pichardo, 2009).

It is also important to stress the need to continue to carry out academic work that evaluates the stereotypes and traditional roles of gender and sex in the advertising aimed at children and that appraises how these roles alter, change or are replaced in relation to the nature of the products. But not only observing how the child is represented, but also how the child's family environment is depicted. The limited presence of characters representing the figure of the mother and of the father is an invitation to continue research that measures the evolution of their appearance in advertising and looks deeper into the thematic diversity of the roles of father and mother in advertising targeting children's audiences. This will help to ascertain how advertising, through its messages, reproduces or modifies classic models, such as, for example, the figure of the father as the leading family actor, as protector and head of the family, as compared to the roles of the mother associated with nutritional and caring duties (Chacón & Baestard, 2011) or whether the idea of inequality is maintained or modified compared to that of different in terms of gender (Martín-Alegre, 2011).

When we analyse the presence of adults, their roles and their actions in the adverts, we observe that the presence of school, through the figure of the teacher, is almost non-existent. If we accept that school is one of the most important social institutions in the first socialisation of children, which together with the family exports the values, rules, behavioural guidelines, attitudes, idea of authority and worldviews inherent in the child's immediate social context, we consider it to be advisable to invite the advertising, toy and media industries to integrate these types of references into the adverts, or make them more present.

As regards the method applied in this research, this paper shows its validity and the goal of continuing work which performs a deeper analysis of the presence of adults and the family, as has been expressed in this discussion. However, we do deem a review of some of the sections of the method to be necessary. It would be advisable to increase the selected advert sample to different periods (not merely Christmas) to make it possible to measure the presence and frequency of the appearance of the family in all toy advertising. In turn, a section should be included that measures its development, taking into account periods from different years. Furthermore, future studies should broaden the analysis in each of the toy categories and establish significant relationships with the variables of gender, character typology, values and emotions.

Finally, we deem it necessary for research work to be undertaken in collaboration with other, international research groups, to make it possible to continue and broaden the perspectives on research into advertising aimed at children, in general, and into the presence of families in toy advertising, in particular. For example, this could consist of encouraging the

performance of and academic interest in work that evaluates studying possible homogenisation of the representation of the family in advertising based on comparison of the different forms of representations in adverts created and broadcast in countries with different cultural contexts to each other; or of starting off from a hypothesis that defends the homogenised presence of family characters according to categories of advertised toys, as compared to the inherent diversity of the culture of each country.

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