Processes and effects of targeted online advertising among children

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## Sample

A total of 231 children with mixed socio-cultural backgrounds participated in the study.
The participants were aged 9-13 years (M = 10.82, SD = 0.80, nage 9 = 5, nage 10 = 81,
nage 11 = 100, nage 12 = 43, nage 13 = 3; 51.7% female).

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Creating a safe environment for children online

# Abstract

Increasingly, information from children’s profile pages on social network sites is being
used to target online advertising, a phenomenon known as profile targeting. This
practice has raised concerns in society and academia; however, its effects among
children remain unstudied. Therefore, we investigated the effects of profile targeting
on children’s brand responses (i.e., brand attitude and purchase intention). We
examined two types of targeting: targeting of product and of form (i.e., color). In
addition, we tested three underlying mechanisms: liking the advertisement, perceived
personal relevance of the advertisement, and recognizing the targeting aspect of the
advertisement (targeting recognition). A between-subjects experiment among 231
children aged 9\_x0001\_13 years showed that targeting the product leads to more positive
brand attitudes and purchase intentions. In addition, the effects were explained by ad
liking and not by perceived personal relevance or targeting recognition. These
findings suggest that, unlike adults, children do not process profile targeting on an
elaborate critical level. Rather, the processing seems to be less elaborate.

# Outcome

"The results indicate that online advertisements that target products based on children’s favorite hobbies evoke positive brand attitudes and consequently increase purchase intentions. In addition, these effects are mediated by ad liking, but not by perceived personal relevance or targeting recognition, indicating - in agreement with the PCMC model - that children show affect-based, low elaborate levels of processing of targeted online advertisements. Moreover, form targeting based on children’s favorite colors had no effect and did not interact with product targeting." (van Reijmersdal et al., 2017, p. 407)