

Children exposure to advertising of food and beverages in the Mexican broadcast television, and its relationship with the formation of eating habits.

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Background

The National Health and Nutrition Surveys in Mexico show that between 1999 and 2012, the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity in children between 5-11 years of age, increased from 26.9% to 34.4%. Childhood obesity has been linked to several factors, advertising, as one of them. Evidence supports that advertising has potential implications on children development habits, social, emotional and cognitive behaviors, and it influence children identity.

Objective

To identify and characterize food and non-alcoholic beverage advertisements on Mexican television and its relationship with children habits and consumption.

Methodology

We recorded 780 hours of Mexican TV on four free and public channels with the highest national ratings from December 2014 and April 2015 (Channel 2, Channel 5, Channel 7 and Channel 13). The data were classified in two periods (holidays and business days) and content of food and beverages (F&B) advertisements were analyzed. To identify TV related habits, consumption, purchase, and knowledge of the advertised products, 115 surveys were applied to children during the same period.

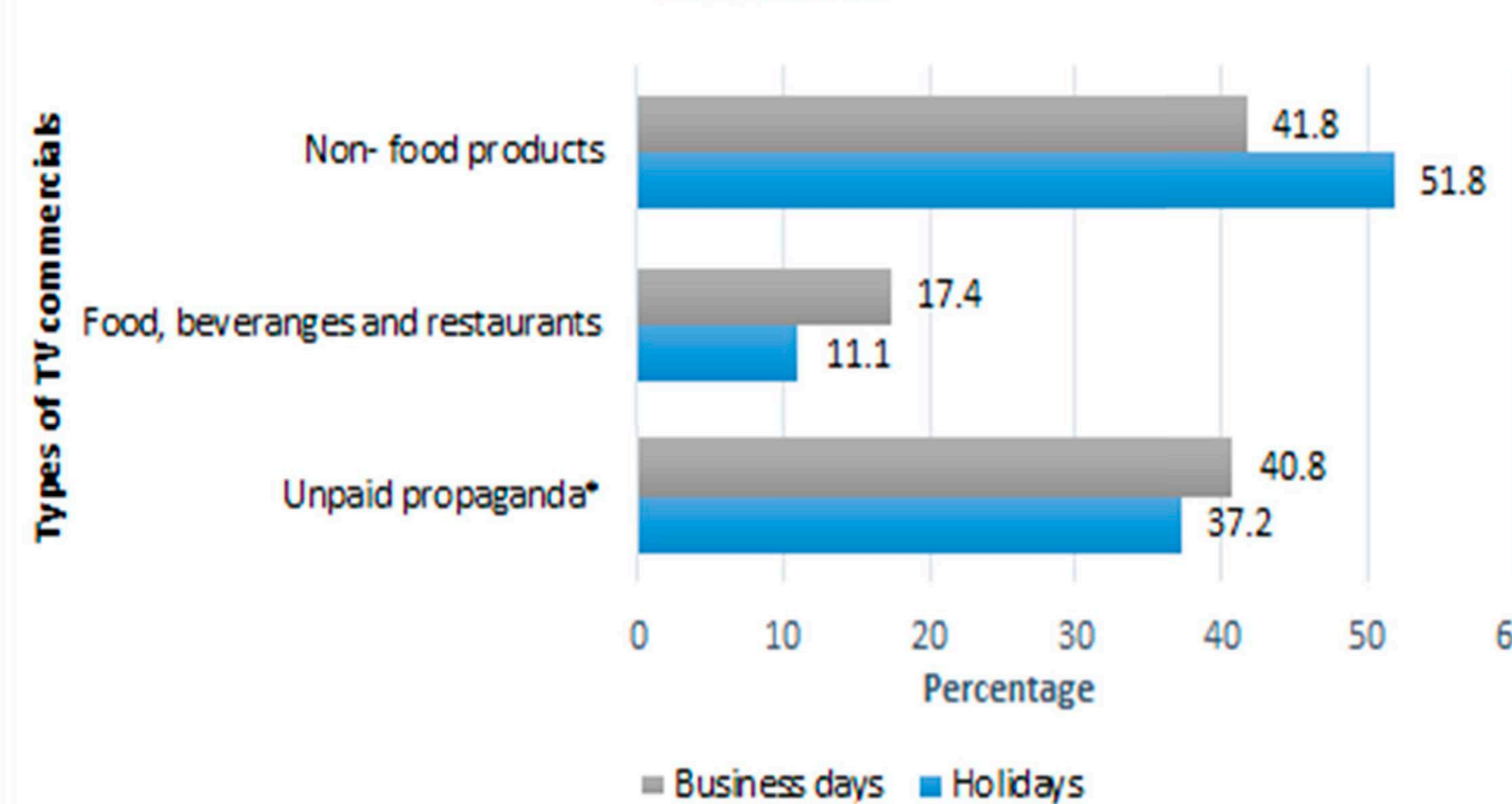
Results advertising

- During the 780 hours of TV recorded, 23.7% (185 hours of advertising) belonged to advertising. On average, 23.5 ads per hour of advertising were for F&B (Figure 1).
- The channels that showed more F&B advertising were 2 and 13 with 38% and 30.3%, respectively (Figure 3).
- F&B ads advertised were higher during soap operas and movies programs (Figure 2).
- The most five F&B categories advertised were dairy products with added sugar (8.6%), followed by alcoholic beverages (8.5%), breakfast cereals (7.8%), pastries and cookies (7.4%), and sweet snacks (6.9%).

Results children's and advertising

- 97.4% of the students reported that they do watch television, within this percentage 40.3% watch TV with their grandparents and 37.6% alone.
- Children showed high knowledge of the characteristics of the advertised products on TV, such as the relationship between character and product (95%) and slogan of product (77%).
- Students who showed high knowledge between character-product and slogan-product had a positive association of watching Channel 5 and Discovery Channel.
- Children that reported watching TV, 41% stated buying and consuming pastries and cookies, followed by dairy with added sugars (Figure 4).
- Students reported buying the product to try a new product and to acquire the toy inside the product. These behaviors generated happiness, entertainment, security and confidence.

Figure 1. Types of advertised products by periods on Mexican TV



* It includes government and television networks propaganda

Figure 4. Students TV exposure and the relationship between the consumption of advertised food products

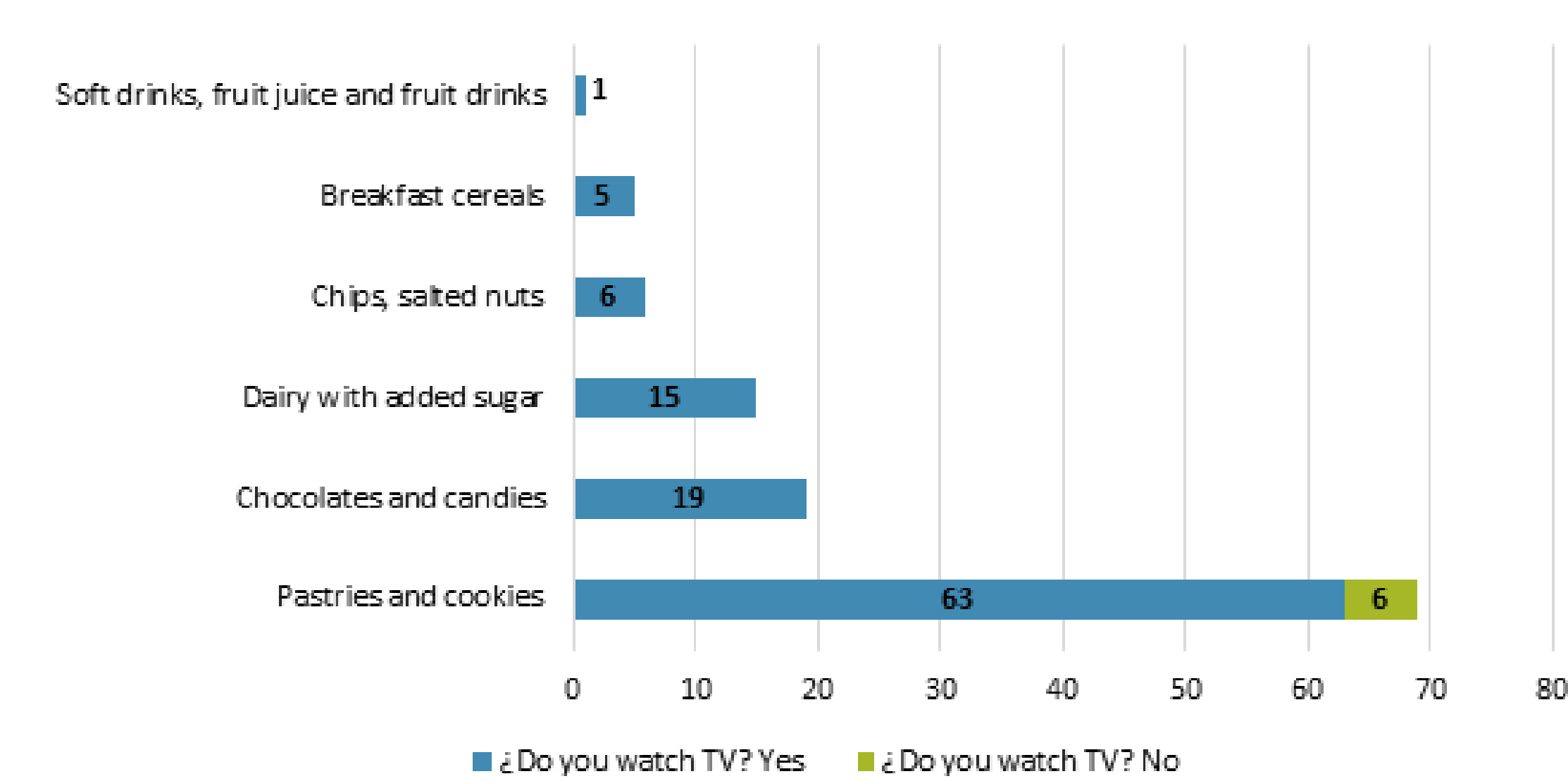


Figure 2. Advertised products by broadcast television programs on Mexican TV

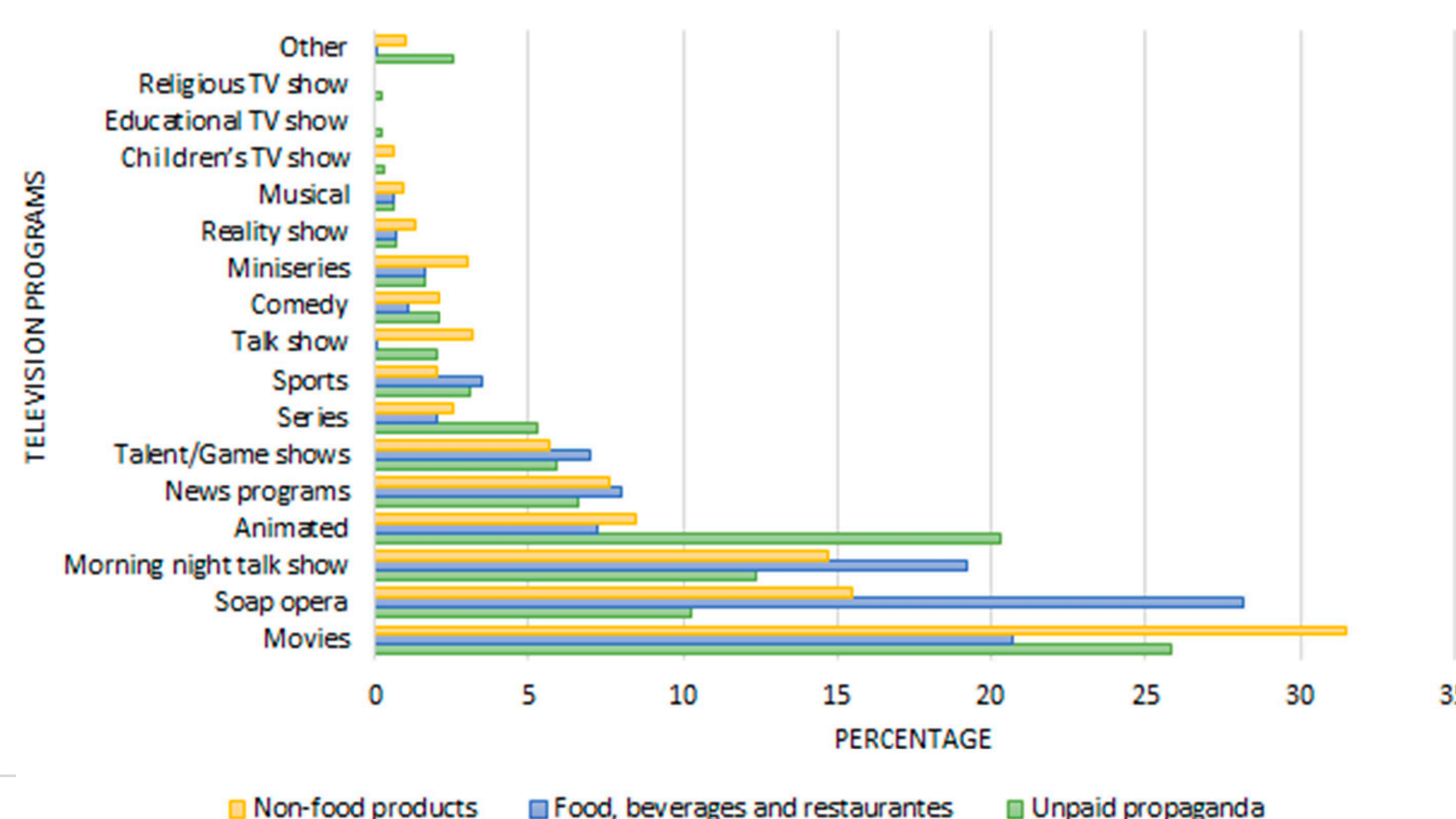


Figure 3. Advertised products by TV Networks on broadcast television in Mexico

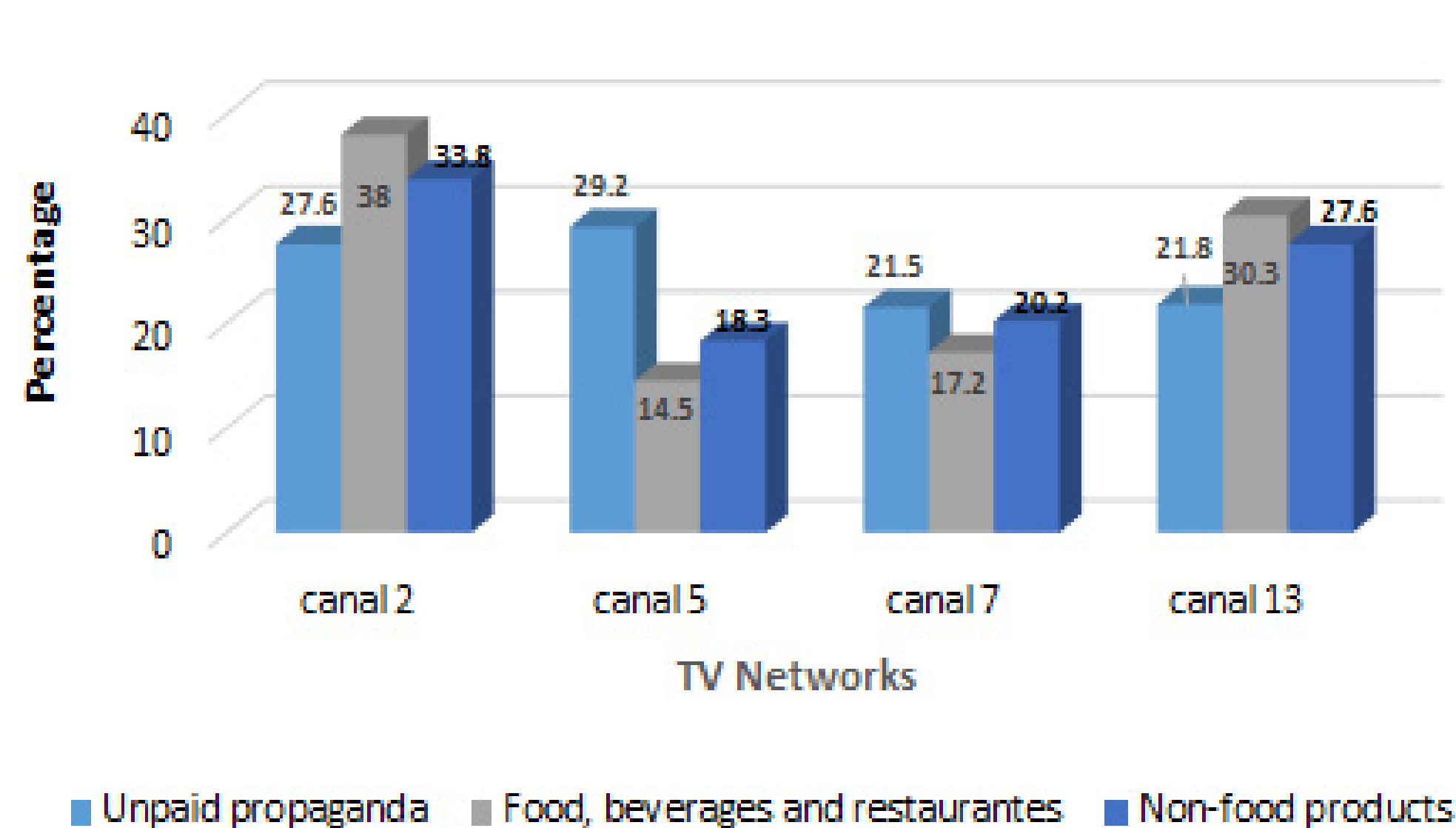
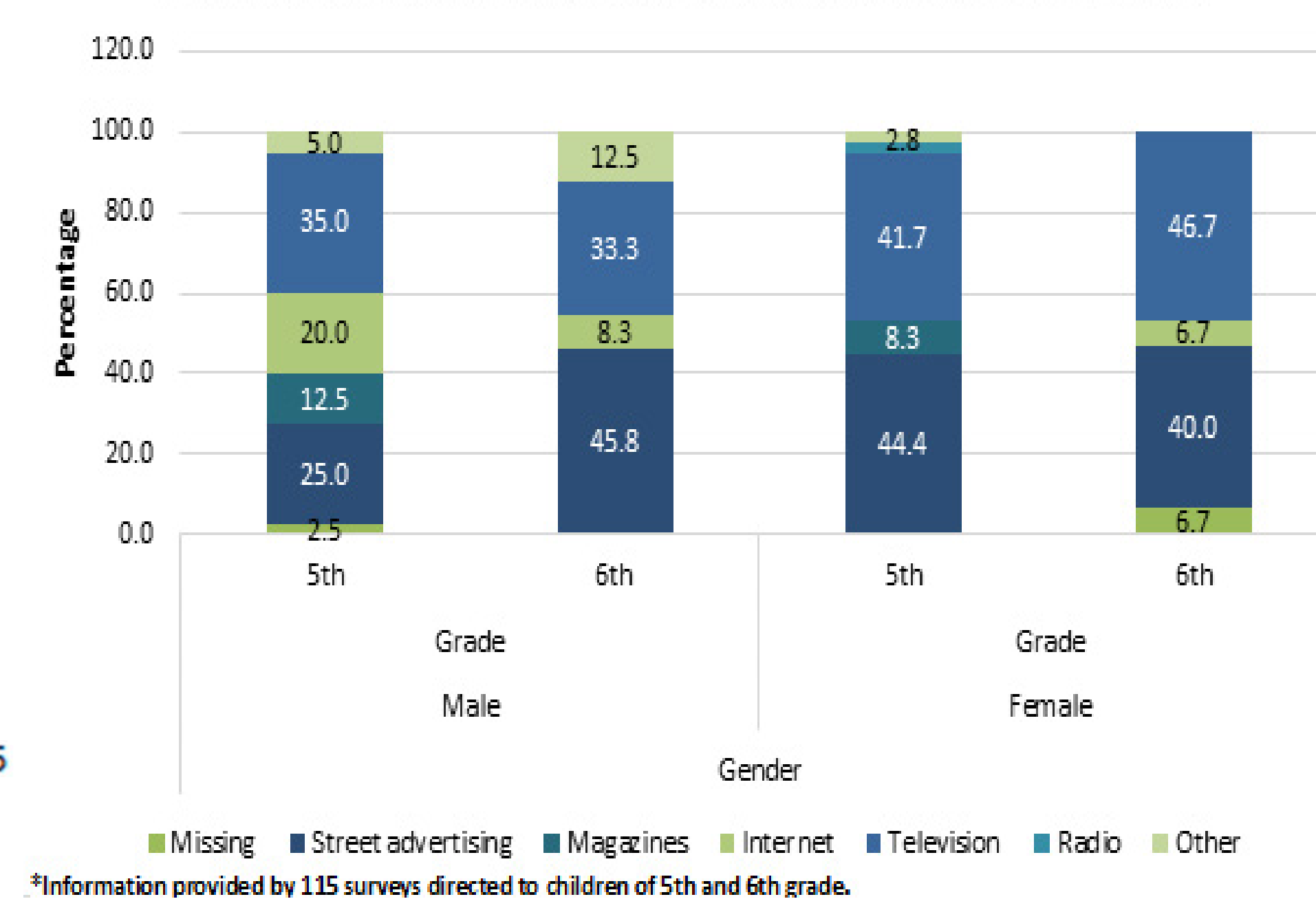


Figure 5. Student exposure by different types of mass media



*Information provided by 115 surveys directed to children of 5th and 6th grade.

Conclusions

The results show that children were highly exposed to F&B ads within their preferred TV channels, besides they reported being exposed to different types of mass media who reinforced their knowledge about advertised products (Figure 5), which were those mostly consumed by children. The most advertised products were the ones that children consumed more often such as, sweet bread, cakes and cookies (41%), followed by yoghurt and flavored milk. In addition, over 90% of food and beverage advertised contains a children's marketing strategy. More than 95% of the children identified the advertised products with their character and slogan.