

WOMEN'S RECEPTIONS OF FEMALE CHARACTERS ON
TELEVISION, 2010-2011

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Thesis Abstract

Zehra Bahadır, “Women’s Receptions of Female Characters on Television, 2010-2011”

This was an exploratory research study where qualitative data collection method was used. It aimed to explore how women who watch television at least two hours a day and lived in a metropolis received what was presented to them through television programs, and if they thought there was an influence of those receptions on their daily lives or not. Furthermore, it aimed to discover their opinions about this influence and what kinds of changes occurred in their lives. In the light of the criteria mentioned above, fifteen women with different demographic characteristics were interviewed in this study, and the data was evaluated within case and cross case analysis to find major and salient common themes.

The findings first indicated that women regarded television as a relaxation tool that they spent their free time; that they watched in order to relax or follow certain programs. Secondly, it was found out that television was a socialization tool for women as they stated that they socialized through watching television and also they socialized with the people around by discussing the content of the programs. In terms of the reception of female characters on television, it was found that women built empathy and identification with their favorite characters while they did not like the characters they could not empathize with or the characters that lived just in an opposite way when compared to their own life styles. In addition, in terms of reception of the effect of character on personal life and character as a role model, all the participants remarked that they certainly believed that women on television had an effect on the lives of viewers; however, whereas twelve participants stated that the characters had a direct effect on their lives or they always did comparisons with the characters or took them as role models, three of them said that they could not say they took any character as a role model in their own personal lives. Lastly, about women representation on television, all of the participants stated that they thought women in general were represented both positively and negatively and these both-sided representations might affect women who watched these female characters.

In conclusion, all these receptions could be regarded as informal learning as all the participants agreed that things on television certainly had an influence on the viewers to some extent. This influence could be seen in different areas leading to a change in the end.

Tez Özeti

Zehra Bahadır, “Kadınların Televizyondaki Kadın Karakterleri Alımlamaları, 2010-2011”

Bu çalışma niteliksel veri toplama metodunun kullanıldığı keşifçi bir araştırmadır. Günde en az iki saat televizyon izleyen ve metropolde yaşayan kadınların televizyon programları yoluyla kendilerine sunulanları nasıl alımladıklarını ve bu alımlamaların günlük hayatlarına bir etkisi olduğunu düşünüp düşünmediklerini araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Dahası, bu etki hakkındaki düşüncelerini ve hayatlarında ne tür değişiklikler olduğunu keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bahsedilen kriterler ışığında farklı demografik özelliklere sahip on beş kadınla görüşmeler yapılmış ve veri başlıca ve belirgin ortak temalar bulunabilmesi için vaka içi ve vakalar arası analizlerle değerlendirilmiştir.

Bulgular ilk olarak kadınların televizyonu boş zamanlarını geçirdikleri, rahatlamak ya da belli programları takip etmek için izledikleri bir rahatlama aracı olarak gördüklerini gösterdi. İkinci olarak, kadınlar televizyon izleyerek sosyalleştiklerini ve ayrıca programların içeriklerini tartışarak etraflarındaki insanlarla da sosyalleştiklerini belirttikleri için televizyonun kadınlar için bir sosyalleşme aracı olduğu ortaya çıktı. Televizyondaki kadın karakterlerin alımlanması konusunda ise, kadınların favori karakterleriyle empati kurdukları ve kişiselleştirme yaptıkları bulunurken, diğer yandan empati kuramadıkları ya da kendi yaşam stilleriyle karşılaştırıldığında zıt bir hayat süren karakterlerdense hoşlanmadıkları ortaya çıktı. Ek olarak, karakterin kişisel yaşama etkisi ve karakterin rol model alınmasının alımlanması konusunda, bütün katılımcılar televizyonda yer alan kadınların izleyicilerin hayatlarına bir etkisi olduğuna kesinlikle inandıklarını belirttiler. Fakat on iki katılımcı karakterlerin kendi yaşamlarına doğrudan bir etkisi olduğunu veya karakterlerle karşılaştırmalar yaptıklarını ya da rol model olarak aldıklarını ifade ederken, üç tanesi kendi kişisel yaşamlarında herhangi bir karakteri örnek olarak almadıklarını söyledi. Son olarak, televizyonda kadın temsili konusunda bütün katılımcılar genel olarak kadınların hem pozitif hem de negatif şekilde yansıtıldıklarını ve bu iki türlü yansıtmanın bu kadın karakterleri izleyen kadınları etkileyebileceğini düşündüklerini ifade ettiler.

Sonuç olarak, bütün bu alımlamalar bütün katılımcılar televizyondakilerin izleyiciler üzerinde bir noktaya kadar kesinlikle bir etkisinin olduğu konusunda hem fikir olmaları dolayısıyla enformel öğrenme olarak algılanabilir. Bu etki sonuçta değişime yol açarak farklı alanlarda görülebilir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Adults get in touch with their environment through various ways. They talk to their friends, colleagues, family members, they read newspapers, magazines or books, they watch television programs or listen to radio or they interact with their environment through social networks on the Internet. All these help them socialize and catch up with the updates. While socializing through these various ways, adults are exposed to many images and various messages which they may internalize consciously or unconsciously. In this internalization process they learn many things informally as well. The way they communicate with their environment, the messages they get consciously or unconsciously, and the things they learn informally affect their daily lives, life styles and values.

Among these various ways of socialization, mass media tools such as television, radio, newspapers, or the Internet play an important role in shaping the daily lives of adults. Although all of the mass media tools have an influence on configuring adults' everyday lives, this study mainly focuses on the effect of television on shaping the daily lives of adults. This section continues with background of the problem, statement of the purpose and significance of the study.

Background of the Problem

Learning has always been one of the key concepts in the area of education as it starts with the birth and goes on throughout the lifetime. Among the concepts which are education, learning, training, teaching; learning is the broadest term as children, youngsters and adults all continue learning new things during their lives, not only in

institutions or arranged settings. Tight (2002) describes learning as an umbrella term that overlaps education and training although some learning activities may be termed either education or training. Moreover, Jarvis thinks that learning is a very broad term as he claims “all learning begins with experience” (1987, p. 16) and asserts that experience happens to every person and all kind of experience may result in learning.

As learning is a change in itself, adults who are engaged in learning will change and adapt themselves to the new situation, and furthermore, this will affect their daily lives and way of receiving the world and their environment as well.

There are different areas in learning. Adult learning which is one of the areas of it has been studied since the first quarter of the twentieth century when it started to take the attention of researchers and scholars from different fields by revealing some evidence that led educators to think that adults learn differently from children.

Knowles developed a new theory which he named “andragogy” in 1968 to differentiate adult learning “pedagogy” which dealt with pre-adult schooling. Andragogy was defined as “the art and science of helping adults to learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). Following, Knowles offered five assumptions to describe the adult learner, which led the start of a discussion about the validity of andragogy, and the question whether these assumptions were characteristics of adults only was tried to be answered.

While the characteristics of adult learning have been trying to find out, the forms of adult learning have also emerged as adults learn continually, formally and informally in many different settings such as in schools, workplaces, families, religious groups or through media, friendship, etc. Marsick and Watkins (1990) grouped three sites of learning as formal, informal and incidental learning. Livingstone (1999) grouped them as formal schooling, further education and

informal learning. Schugurensky (2006) used the terms formal education, nonformal education and informal learning to categorize the forms of learning. Although the categories of learning are named differently by different researchers, three main categories of learning are commonly accepted by researchers, which are formal, nonformal and informal learning, and this study will use this terminology.

Formal learning for adults covers the adult years with university and postgraduate schooling. It is a formally constituted system with its rules and regulations. Nonformal learning refers to all other organized educational activities outside the formal education system. It is not compulsory as it occurs when people feel a need for some sort of systematical instruction. Other than these two types of learning, adults are also engaged in various other learning activities, which refer to informal learning (Livingstone, 1999).

Marsick and Watkins (1990) define informal learning by its contrast to formal learning. They state that “formal learning is typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. Informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner” (p. 12). Therefore, informal learning can be shortly described as the rest of learning people experience in their lives. It is not formal or non-formal and it occurs out of a curriculum or educational institution. Informal learning occurs in many different aspects of life and various settings. Actually, informal learning is a very broad term that cannot be restricted to just some settings because it can occur not only outside of educational institutions but also in formal and non-formal educational sites (Livingstone, 1999).

In brief, informal learning can take place in any setting which vary from workplace, family, religious places to political parties. In any setting individuals are in interaction with the community members such as with friends, family members, colleagues, and etc. In the scope of this study, adults' experiences of informal learning outside of educational institutions will be studied in general terms. These experiences vary from talking to acquaintances to talking to people they have first seen or from reading newspapers to watching television. People are always in a form of relationship in their daily lives and experience many different things. In addition to formal learning and nonformal learning in educational institutions, adults also learn through these means of communication by watching television, listening to the radio, chatting on the Internet or reading newspapers in their daily lives. With these in mind, the focus of this study will be adults' incidental according to Marsick and Watkins's (1990) and Schugurensky's (2000) terminology, tacit learning to Livingstone's (1999) terminology, or implicit learning according to Eraut (2004) through mass media means.

Taking all these into account, it is possible to claim that communication tools which we are all in interaction with in daily life transmit many messages and signs to the audience. Images and messages presented by mass media play an important role in the transformation of daily life. There are various communication means which people interact, yet this study will focus on television and its effect on transforming adults. The reason to choose television among others is that it is believed television has always been the most popular means that almost everyone in the world interacts in daily life; it is still one of the most popular leisure time activities. In Turkey, the studies done by the Higher Council of Radio and Television (RTUK) present some important results to verify this claim. According to the results of the watching survey

(RTUK) in 2006, Turkey has the television watching rate of 5.15 hours per day during the weekends, and 5.09 hours during the week days. According to another study with the same aim done in 2009, women watch television 4.5 hours a day during weekdays while men watch television 4.1 hours (RTUK, 2009). Furthermore, women watch television 4.5 hours a day during weekends. Although there is a decrease in the ratings when compared with 2006 results, average people in Turkey still spend at least 4 hours of their time in front of television.

According to the studies mentioned above, adults spend a very important part of their time watching television programs. They get in touch with their environment with television mostly. While watching television, they learn many different things informally; they sometimes internalize the messages they come across unconsciously and shape their values. As informal learning is described as a loose category that encompasses anything else that is not included in formal and non-formal learning, many aspects of it is still an unknown to us (Schugurensky, 2006). This study aims to develop a deeper understanding of informal learning processes of adults while watching television programs and the influence of these learning processes on their daily lives.

The results of studies done by RTUK also indicate that women in Turkey spend time watching television more than men. Although the reasons of this could be related to the time women spend at home and their employment rate, it does not eliminate the effects of television on women viewers. The more exposure will bring the more influence on the lives of viewers. In relation to this, there are more female characters appearing in television programs that could be the result of the number of women viewers. In addition, the most popular soap operas broadcasted in this year all have women as leading roles, namely all present the stories of women. Women

viewers who all differ from each other in terms of education level, social backgrounds, and age may receive what is presented to them differently although they watch the same programs. As women watch more and as female characters appear more, and the reception of each woman will depend on the background of each women viewer, the focus of this study is how women receive female characters in television programs.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to find out how women from different social and educational backgrounds receive what is presented to them through television programs and if they think there is an influence of those receptions on their lives or not. Furthermore, it aims to discover their opinions about this influence and what kinds of changes occur in their lives.

Significance of the Study

Sandlin (2007) views the mass media in general, and soap operas, television, and popular magazines in specific as forms of adult education and thinks that these sides of informal adult education are often neglected by adult educators although they are gaining popularity. Sandlin also emphasizes that as adult educators “We need to recognize the important learning that is happening outside formal adult education spaces in the realms of popular culture” (2007, p. 80). According to Sandlin, examining adults’ informal learning experiences will show how adults as learners are shaped by and actively re-create popular culture.

Tisdell (2008) states that

Thus far, there has been much discussion of the role of media and popular culture in education among critical media literacy scholars in the K-12 arena; however, there has been relatively little among adult education scholars. This is beginning to change, and there’s been more consideration of popular

culture and media in adult education in recent publications and at conferences (p. 49).

What Sandlin and Tisdell argue is all about the existing world literature in the area of both adult education and the media literature. They think that adult educators should start discovering informal learning experiences of adults in the realms of popular culture. Sandlin specifically emphasizes that adults are shaped by popular culture and they re-create popular culture in the end.

Additionally, although research about informal learning has been in increase since the foundation of adult education as a separate professional area, there is still a lot to study in order to enlighten adult learning processes and styles, and the effects of those learning experiences on their lives. While there are many studies that define informal learning forms and informal learning settings around the world from the researchers in education field and there are some that reveal the effects of mass media on people from the scholars in the area of mass media, there are not many researches that try to find out the relationship between adults receptions of the messages around them and how these receptions affect their daily lives.

Most people gain some values and behaviors unconsciously and shape their or others' lives in the light of those values gained unintentionally. Although self-directed learning forms have been main focuses of many studies, implicit and unintentional learning is a neglected area when compared with two. The values, behaviors and beliefs that are gained through socialization are as important as self-directed learning processes as people transform their lives with their transformed values. In addition to studies around the world, in Turkey there is not enough research about the role of the media on shaping daily lives of adults. This study aims to discover the role of the media on shaping lives of adults and add to the existing

literature both in Turkey and in the world. In the light of these, this study may contribute to the literature about implicit informal learning and the effects of adults' receptions of messages transmitted via mass media on their daily lives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to deeply understand the background of the problem, learning, adult learning and the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal learning, with a specific focus on the forms of it, will be discussed in the first part of this chapter. The second part of the literature review will mention the role and functions of mass media in informal learning, and the effect of television on shaping daily lives of adults.

Learning

Learning is a very broad term which covers many aspects of life. Each moment people interact with their environment, they add something new to their knowledge bank. While learning has always drawn the attention educational researchers, the efforts to study learning processes systematically started at the end of the 19th century. Starting from those days, many theories on learning have been developed and lots of research has been done to reveal their reflections on educational activities.

Learning is one of the basic needs of human beings and it is central to human life. As a very broad concept, learning cannot be limited to one definition whereas some characteristics of it may be determined. Kolb (1984, p. 31) states that “To learn is not the special province of a single specialized realm of human functioning such as cognition or perception. It involves the integrated functioning of the total organism – thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving”. Learning is a never ending process in human life and it involves lots of skills. Kolb (1984, p. 32) also points out that “learning is the major process of human adaptation”, if we don’t learn we may not survive. Accordingly, people always learn new things and there is a learning

dimension of all human activity and experience.

The importance of experience has been emphasized by many researchers. Dewey (1995) takes experience as a starting point to learning in order to compare children and adults. The model he proposed involves acting according to ideas, observing the results and reflecting on the results. Accordingly, learning is the reconstruction of experience for Dewey. Jarvis (1987) mentions the close relationship between learning and experience as well. However, Jarvis (1987) compares his point of view with Dewey by saying

Dewey (1938) recognized that: ‘... all genuine education comes about through experience, [although this] does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative ... For some experiences are miseducative.’ It is this insight to which return will be made several times in the ensuing pages, since it is claimed here that even miseducative experiences may be regarded as learning experiences (p. 16).

Thus, Jarvis claims that all the experiences may lead to learning regardless of their educative insight and “all learning begins with experience” (1987, p. 16). Jarvis regards experience as “something that happens to a person, in which the person is involved usually as a result of conscious living and the reaction to such may result in learning” (1987, p. 16). Kolb (1984) also emphasizes the importance of experience for learning and defines learning with six characteristics. Kolb (1984) regards learning as a process not an outcome, grounded in experience, a holistic adaptation to the world, creation of knowledge, a resolution of conflicts, and involves transaction between people and their environment. Based on these characteristics, according to Kolb (1984), learning is the process which leads to knowledge through transformation of practice. In brief, experience and practice are key elements of learning for these researchers.

Mezirow has suggested that “learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (2000, p. 5). Okçabol (1996) also defines learning as a process in which individuals gain permanent behaviors and change the old ones through the experience and interaction with the environment. According to this definition, learning leads to a change in behaviors and this change needs to be permanent and learning occurs in interaction with the environment.

Change is one of the key factors for learning in addition to experience and practice, and there is the need for outcome to appear to complete the process. Throughout his book Freire (2003) talks about the transformative function of learning and its influence on the lives of the oppressed. Knox (1977) discusses the importance of learning and experience in problem solving. Mezirow (2000, 1991) also mentions the transformative dimensions of learning for adults in his books. Although this outcome-based definition of learning may bring out some other questions and is debatable, change seems to be an important factor to define adult learning as well.

Adult Learning

Even though the history of adult learning and learning cannot be considered as two different aspects and the history of adult education can be regarded as started with the history of human beings, the study of adult education and learning under another major area of study has been initiated after World War I. Following the war, Adult Education Committee of British Ministry of Reconstruction published a report (1919) called “1919 Report” and stated that adult education should not be regarded as a luxury or specific to a very short time of history; adult education is everlasting and a citizen’s right. For this reason, it has to be international and lifelong. After

World War II a rapid increase in the numbers of studies done for this area was observed. Starting with the acceptance of being a citizen's right and as a necessity for people to improve: adult education has gained different roles today. Different concepts have been developed under its title. There are two basic components of education, which are teaching and learning. These two are basic elements of adult education, as well. The questions related to teaching and learning have always been in the centre of all the studies in the area of education. Throughout the history, many theories have been developed and discussed in the literature of adult learning.

In the area of adult learning, before the central question of how adults learn was studied, "early research on adult learning was whether or not adults could learn" (Merriam, 2001, p. 3). After the developments following 1919 Report in Europe, an institution named American Adult Education Institution was founded in the USA (Merriam, 2001). Two trends analyzing adult learning was emerged: one of them emphasized scientific approach and the other focused on intuition and spirit.

Thorndike, Bregman, Tilton and Woodyard (1928) published the book called *Adult Learning* and studied the ability of adults to learn rather than the processes of adult learning. By approaching adult learning from a behavioral psychological perspective, Thorndike et al. (1928) tested adults on various learning and memory tasks. These tests showed that young people learn easier than older adults. However, Lorge (1947) later proved that adults' doing badly in these tests was related to their background and previous education. Lorge (1947) claimed that older adults had less formal education and less-capable in test-taking skills, and as they had less opportunity to develop those skills, they could not perform as well as youngsters. Lorge (1947) proved that when they were given enough time, adults could learn as well as youngsters. After these behaviorist approaches on this issue, the new focus was what

was different about adult learning (Merriam, 2001).

Before the World War II, researchers and adult educators noticed that adults could learn yet they had different interests and abilities when compared to children. While these behaviorist approaches on adult learning were studied, the question related to the processes of adult learning, which is “How do adults learn?” was also on the focus of many researchers. The second trend related to adult learning studied this question after the publication of the book *The Meaning of Adult Education* by Eduard C. Lindeman. Lindeman (1926) adopted Dewey’s philosophy which emphasizes the importance of experience and the difference between adult learning and child learning due to the complexity of experience, and claims that the most valuable resource of adult education is the experience of learners. Learning occurs with the transmission of experience to learners.

After the discussions about whether adults could learn or what the processes of adult learning are, Knowles (1980) developed a new theory which he named “andragogy” in 1968 to differentiate adult learning “pedagogy” which dealt with pre-adult schooling. Andragogy was defined as “the art and science of helping adults to learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). It was regarded as the antithesis of pedagogy (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). There are six assumptions Knowles developed to differentiate andragogy from pedagogy. The first assumption featured in andragogy is named as the need for learning. Adults should know why they need to learn and the results or benefits of learning in order to accelerate the process. The second one is self-conception of adults as learners in which Knowles claims that adults have the self-conception as they are responsible for their own decisions. The role of experience follows the self-conception and emphasizes that adults attend an educational activity with an accumulation of experience greater and more different than youngsters. This

could affect them positively or negatively while acquiring knowledge. Number four is about readiness to learn. Adults are ready for learning and applying what they have learned in order to cope with real life. The fifth one is the tendency to learn which claims adults tend to learn things by putting their life conditions in the centre. If they really need it in their daily lives, adults tend to learn things quickly. The last assumption is motivation. Knowles claims that the most motivating factor for adults to learn is the inner pressure and most adults are motivated to improve themselves (Knowles, 1996, p. 56).

Knowles took the discussions on adult learning a step further and proposed valuable suggestions for the future studies on adult learning. Although the discussions about the validity of andragogy and if andragogy should be regarded as a separate area of study were going on, Knowles provoked many researchers to focus on the characteristics of adult learning processes and to categorize the forms of adult learning. Adults learn formally, non-formally, informally in different settings, throughout their lives, from birth to grave. They come across many different situations at school, at work, at courses, and in their family environment, and through media, social relationships, etc. If grouped there are three sites of adult learning: formal learning, nonformal learning and informal learning.

Formal, Non-formal, Informal learning

Learning as a very broad term covers many areas of life. Not just adults, children or youngsters learn continually in different places and contexts as well. These three sites of learning are described by many researchers. As the first site, formal learning can be associated with learning at formal institutions. Marsick and Watkins (1990) define formal learning as “typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured” (p. 12). Whereas formal learning for children is the period that

they study from pre-schooling to university, formal learning for adults covers the adult years with university and postgraduate schooling. According to Livingstone (1999) formal education is “an age-graded, hierarchically organized, formally constituted system; it often includes compulsory attendance” and “it provides the major credentialing programs” (p. 1). Formal education is hierarchically structured in special subjects and institutions. European Commission (2008) glossary defines formal learning for adults as “learning that occurs in an organized and structured environment (i.e. in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time and resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification” (2008, p. 85).

Nonformal learning covers learning through “all other organized educational activities, including further courses, training programs, and workshops offered by any social institution” (Livingstone, 1999, p. 1). Nonformal learning covers most of the time graduate studies or individual courses offered to adults and also in-service training. This sort of learning occurs when people feel a need for some sort of systematic instruction. While comparing formal learning and nonformal learning, Livingstone (1999) claims that “An important feature of both types of organized education is that participation is pyramidal: those who have more schooling continue to get more adult education. This expanding educational pyramid is what academics and policy makers now usually refer to when they discuss “lifelong learning”, the “knowledge society” and the like” (p. 1).

According to European Commission glossary nonformal learning is “embedded in planned activities not explicitly designed as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is

intentional from the learner's point of view (2008, p. 93). Nonformal learning covers all the planned and intentional learning activities outside the schooling system but in a systematical context.

Formal learning and non-formal learning have always been regarded as the most influential time period of one's education life. Many theories have been developed in order to distinguish adult formal and non-formal learning from other age groups, and educators are still trying to find the best ways to increase the effectiveness of classroom based learning. However, Tough (1999), in his talk at the 3rd New Approaches to Lifelong Learning Conference, presents some very interesting results from a survey done by David Livingstone and his colleagues. Tough (1999, p. 3) says that 20% of all learning activities of adults are institutionally organized and 80% of them are informal. These finding shows that informal learning occupies four fifth of adult learning, yet formal education and further education involving non-formal learning activities cover only one fifth of adult learning period. Tough (1999) states that the idea of iceberg as a metaphor as much of adult learning is invisible and occurs under the surface, and out of the formal schooling came up with this study. This metaphor also shows that the bigger part of iceberg that is under the water affects the surface a lot as Livingstone (1999) said "If the hidden part of the iceberg of adult learning is so wide and deep, surely it must have important connections with the visible pyramid of participation in education that appears to float above" (p. 13). All these are very important indicators for educators to pay more attention to the hidden part of iceberg as it also has an influence on the visible part.

Informal learning which can be defined as a category including all learning that occurs outside the curriculum of formal and non-formal educational institutions

and programs is one of the processes of adult learning. By definition it is clear that informal learning occurs in many different aspects of life and various settings.

Marsick and Watkins describes informal learning which contains incidental learning as follows

Informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. Incidental learning is defined as a byproduct of some other activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or even formal learning. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning. Incidental learning, on the other hand, almost always takes place although people are not always conscious of it (1990, p. 12).

One important characteristics of informal learning according to Marsick and Watkins is that it is occurs not only outside of the formal institutions but also inside them as well. This is an important point to show how broad borders informal learning has. In another study, Marsick and Volpe (1999) describe informal learning as “learning that is predominantly unstructured, experiential, and noninstitutional. Informal learning takes place as people go about their daily activities at work or in other spheres of life. It is driven by people’s choices, preferences, and intentions” (p. 4). In the same study, Marsick and Volpe (1999) revised many other studies related to informal learning processes and laid out several key conclusions about the nature of informal learning and what implies for how it can be enhanced. The following table shows their inferences.

Table 1. What We Have Learned about Informal Learning

Informal Learning	What Enhances or Improves Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is integrated with work and daily routines • Is triggered by an internal or external jolt • Is not highly conscious • Is haphazard and influenced by chance • Is an inductive process of reflection and action • Is linked to learning of others 	<p>Making time and space for learning</p> <p>Scan of external and internal environment</p> <p>Heightened consciousness or awareness</p> <p>Attention to goals and turning points</p> <p>Inductive mindset and reflective skills</p> <p>Dependent on collaboration and trust</p>

Source: Watkins & Volpe, 1999, p. 5

Marsick and Volpe (1999) analyzed informal learning in organizations in this table and found out that it is integrated into people’s daily work and routines. It occurs when people encounter a challenge, problem or need. It is not fully programmed so people “have the freedom to follow interests as they arise” (p. 5). When informal learning is enhanced, it is usually triggered by an internal or external jolt. People sometimes have the internal awareness and learning is anticipatory. Here, Marsick and Volpe summarize the informal learning processes in the workplace, by including incidental learning which may occur unconsciously and unexpectedly.

Marsick and Watkins developed a model for enhancing informal and incidental learning in 1990, and in collaboration with Cseh, they modified the model. Cseh et al. (1999) claimed that they rooted the model in the thinking of John Dewey, Argyris and Schön, and Mezirow. The model they developed is as shown:

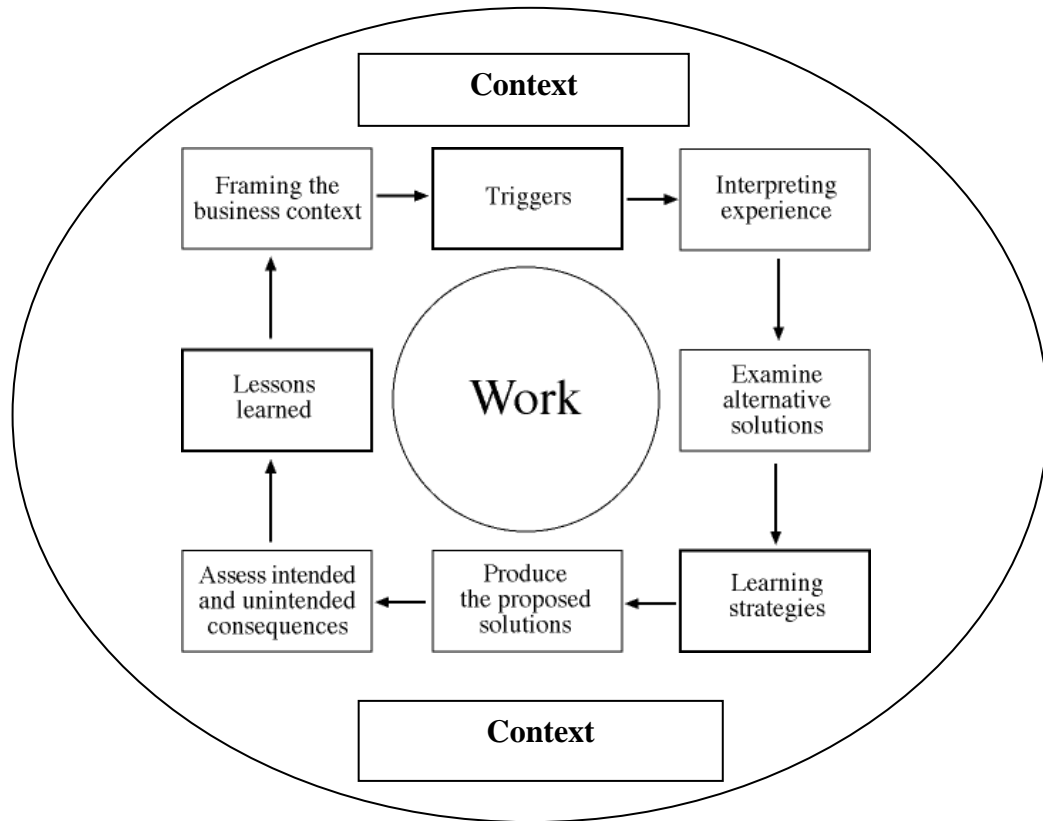


Figure 1. Re-Conceptualized informal and incidental learning model (1999)
 Source: Marsick, Watkins, Callahan and Volpe (2006)

Marsick and Watkins (1990) are interested in individual learning in the workplace and they argue that learning in the workplace grows from a social contract to achieve higher collective goals. They think that learning is informal and incidental as it is not subject to design and control. They are less concerned with who organizes teaching process. However, together with Callahan and Volpe (2006), Marsick and Watkins claim that in practice, workers may not have intentional and explicit ends. Workers' choices evolve from the interaction with others in the workplace: while workers are sometimes aware of their choices, sometimes they become completely unaware. As a result, Marsick et al. (2006) decided that context was critical for learning, "that is knowledge acquired through conscious and unconscious efforts to enhance empathic understanding of the other person's meaning" (2006, p. 795).

Informal learning in the workplace is an important component of the research on informal learning. However, as there is human interaction everywhere, informal learning is a social phenomenon (Tough, 1999, p. 4). Actually, informal learning is a very broad term that cannot be restricted just some settings because it can occur not only outside of educational institutions but also in formal and non-formal educational sites. Eraut (2004, p. 250) defines informal learning as “learning that comes closer to the informal end than the formal end of a continuum”. Among the characteristics of the informal end of the continuum of formality, Eraut (2004, p. 250) includes “implicit, unintended, opportunistic and unstructured learning and the absence of a teacher”. Eraut (2004) also states that informal learning

[...] provides a simple contrast to formal learning or training that suggests greater flexibility or freedom for learners. It recognizes the social significance of learning from other people, but implies greater scope for individual agency than socialization. It draws attention to the learning that takes place in the spaces surrounding activities and events with a more overt formal purpose, and takes place in a much wider variety of settings than formal education or training (p. 247).

As explained above, informal learning activities play a non-negligible role in adults’ learning processes. As most adults are outside the formal schooling, they get most of their knowledge through experience and informal settings. As adults learn in different settings and with various intentions, informal learning processes can be divided into different categories.

The Forms of Informal Learning

There are different forms of informal learning. Although the names of forms vary from a researcher to another, basically there are three groups and they refer to more or less same points. In this part, the different typologies of informal learning will be

discussed in addition to the ones mentioned above. Eraut (2004, p. 250) developed a typology of informal learning in 2000 as shown in Table 2:

Table 2: A typology of informal learning

Time of focus	Implicit learning	Reactive learning	Deliberative learning
Past episode(s)	Implicit linkage of past memories with current experience	Brief near-spontaneous <i>reflection</i> on past episodes, events, incidents, experiences	<i>Discussion and review</i> of past actions, communications, events, experiences
Current experience	A selection from experience enters episodic memory	<i>Noting</i> facts, ideas, opinions, impressions; <i>asking</i> questions; <i>observing</i> effects of actions	<i>Engagement</i> in decision making, problem solving, planned informal learning
Future behaviour	Unconscious expectations	<i>Recognition of</i> possible future learning opportunities	<i>Planning</i> learning opportunities; <i>rehearsing</i> for future events

Source: Eraut, 2004, p. 250

In Eraut's typology there are three forms of informal learning which are implicit, reactive, and deliberative learning. Whereas implicit learning represents unconscious, unplanned learning, deliberative learning is for goal-based, time-set learning.

Reactive learning is intentional, it occurs in the middle of the action, when there is little time to think. While there is clear linkage of past memories with current experience in implicit learning, people discuss or review past actions or events and engage in decision making, problem solving or planned informal activities in deliberative learning. Whereas in deliberative learning, people plan learning activities for future and recognize possible future learning opportunities in reactive learning, they have unconscious expectations in implicit learning.

Livingstone (1999) gives a particular importance to explicit informal learning compared to all other forms of tacit learning.

Explicit informal learning is distinguished from everyday perceptions, general socialization and other tacit learning by peoples' conscious identification of the activity as significant learning. The important criteria that distinguish explicit informal learning are the retrospective recognition of both a new significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill acquired on one's own initiative and also recognition of the process of acquisition (p. 2).

Like Eraut, Livingstone (1999) distinguishes informal learning by taking awareness of the learner into account. In explicit learning, people are conscious and identify the activity as learning and recognize the process of acquisition. Livingstone (1999) further sorts informal learning as explicit learning, tacit learning or socialization. For tacit learning or socialization, he gives examples of experiences of people who are exposed to many forms of socialization that are not recognized as learning.

According to Livingstone,

Examples of tacit learning include experiences of young people or adults when their elders or peers engage with them in many forms of socialization that are not recognized as learning because they are so incorporated in other activities, such as ceremonial occasions or the various ad hoc day-to-day interrelationships through which people are inducted into the cultural life of their society. In basic socialization, learning and acting constitute a seamless web in which it is impossible to distinguish informal learning activities in any discrete way. This provides a diffuse boundary on the informal side of the continuum of learning. Self-reported estimates of informal learning are used to identify what is recognized as discrete informal learning by individuals (1999, p. 2).

In addition to Eraut and Livingstone, by taking intentionality and consciousness into account, Schugurensky (2000) also developed taxonomy of informal learning.

Schugurensky divided informal learning into three forms as presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Three forms of informal learning

Form	Intentionality	Awareness (at the time of learning experience)
Self-directed	Yes	Yes
Incidental	no	yes
Socialization	no	no

Source: Schurungensky, 2000, p. 3

Schugurensky (2000) divides informal learning into three as self-directed, incidental and socialization process by taking intention and awareness into account. In self-directed learning individuals try to learn intentionally and with awareness; they are motivated to learn whereas in incidental learning people are aware of their learning process but they do not have an intention to learn at first. Furthermore, in socialization process adults are neither intentioned to learn nor aware of their learning experiences.

By putting the important characteristics together, Roberson and Merriam (2005) describe self-directed learning as intentional and self-planned; the individual is responsible for and in control of the learning. Self-directed learning encompasses “‘learning projects’ undertaken by individuals (alone or as part of a group) without the assistance of an ‘educator’ (teacher, instructor, facilitator), but it can include the presence of a ‘resource person’ who does not regard herself or himself as an educator” (Schurungensky, 2000, p. 3). In self-directed learning there is intentionality and awareness. Individuals who want to learn more about a topic may read some books, documents and may search on the Internet or talk to people to get some information about it. Self-directed learners plan, initiate and end their own learning activities on their own or with the help of others. Although self-directed learning is most of the time self-directed and individual, people can also try to learn collectively in a setting that needs collective steps such as political groups mobilizing for the same purpose.

Marsick and Watkins define incidental learning as “a byproduct of some other activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or even formal learning” (1990, p. 12). Foley says, “As people live and work they continually learn. Most of

this learning is unplanned, and it is often tacit; but it is very powerful” (2001, p. 72). Incidental learning refers to learning activities that learners do not have an intention of learning. Learning occurs following experience but the learner becomes aware of learning something after the experience (Schurungensky, 2000). Jubas (2010) states that incidental learning can be described as tacit learning which is unanticipated, unorganized, and often unacknowledged, even by the learner and it can be considered one form of informal learning. People who watch the news or documentaries about a topic may not have a previous intention of learning when started, yet may get aware of the information after the program. Learning is often unplanned and incidental.

Described by some implicit or unintentional learning, socialization covers “the internalization of values, attitudes, behaviors, skills, etc. that occur during everyday life” (Schurungensky, 2000, p. 3). It is both unintentional and unconscious but learning occurs in the end. Individuals get those values, attitudes or behaviors unconsciously and shape their lives according to those values and gained knowledge. In socialization learners may get the awareness that learning takes place immediately after the experience or many years after it, or even they may not get aware of their learning. Livingstone (1999 p. 2) claims that people are engaged in many forms of socialization “that are not recognized as learning because they are so incorporated in other activities” which “people are inducted into the cultural life of their society”. Adults talking to friends, family members or colleagues; reading newspaper, using the Internet, watching movies, television programs share many ideas, or exchange information, or are exposed to many ideas, messages and images. In this process they internalize those ideas, messages or images consciously or unconsciously and construct their values. These values help determine the roles of women and men in

society and mass media has an effect in this process. The second part of the literature review will focus more on the effect of mass media on society and the researches done in this area aiming to see the influence of media, especially television, on the transformation of daily lives of individuals.

The Role of Mass Media in Informal Learning Processes of Adults

People learn continuously from birth to grave. Informal learning process never ends in both structural, formal settings or outside of these settings throughout the life time. Learning informally “provides a simple contrast to formal learning” as it “suggests greater flexibility or freedom for learners” (Eraut, 2004, p. 247). Eraut states informal learning “draws attention to the learning that takes place in the spaces surrounding activities and events with a more overt formal purpose, and takes place in a much wider variety of settings than formal education or training. It can also be considered as a complementary partner to learning from experience, which is usually construed more in terms of personal than interpersonal learning” (p. 247).

As Eraut states individuals learn new things informally in different settings. Namely, people get in touch with their environment through various ways. They communicate face-to-face with people around them every day or they are also exposed to many messages without talking to anybody rather by just listening, watching or seeing and they are exposed to many messages through interacting with people around them or with the interaction of mass media means. The exposure to mass media images and messages is a form of communication as well. Communication might be regarded as two sided as it has the mutual characteristic in itself. However, according to Fiske, communication is “social interaction through messages” (1990, p. 2). To make his point clear Fiske (1990) mentions some underlying assumptions. According to these assumptions, as Fiske (1990) claims,

communication needs to be studied by benefiting a number of disciplinary approaches; all communication involves signs and codes which signify codes. More importantly, Fiske says transmitting signs and codes to others and receiving them is the practice of social relationships and “communication is central to the life of our culture: without it culture of any kind must die. Consequently the study of communication involves the study of the culture with which it is integrated” (1990, p. 2).

While Fiske talks about the determining effect of communication on culture, Adorno (2009) presents how culture industry is created and the influence of mass media on the creation of culture. Adorno (2009) always brings culture industry into question in the framework of social transformation probability and he claims that cultural production which is mostly created by mass media is an integral part of capitalist economy as it helps to legitimize the ideology of the system. In addition, he proposes that culture industry is able to do whatever it wants with the needs of consumers; it can produce, guide, control and even stop entertaining. Similarly, in his book, *Media Culture: cultural studies, identity, and politics between the modern and the post modern*, Kellner (1995) argues “media culture is now the dominant form of culture which socializes us and provides materials for identity in terms of both social reproduction and change”. Kellner summarizes what media culture enforces us as follows

A media culture has emerged in which images, sounds, and spectacles help produce the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities. Radio, television, film, and the other products of the culture industries provide the models of what it means to be male or female, successful or a failure, powerful or powerless. Media culture also provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality, of “us” and “them.” Media culture helps shape the prevalent

view of the world and deepest values: it defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories and images provide the symbols, myths, and resources which help constitute a common culture for the majority of individuals in many parts of the world today. Media culture provides the materials to create identities whereby individuals insert themselves into contemporary techno-capitalist societies and which is producing a new form of global culture (1995, p.1).

As Kellner mentions above media has many influences on people from shaping the everyday life, political views, and social behaviors to creating identities. There are different tools of media such as radio, films, television, print media and there are images and messages which are “organized on the model of mass production and is produced for a mass audience” (Kellner, 1995, p. 1). All forms of media culture are regarded as learning socially and informally in the scope of this study.

Many things presented by media are criticized or appraised by critics and viewers continuously. Although the characters are fictional, they may “become real in our own individual and collective experience of them through the process of popular culture” (Tisdell, 2008, p. 52). These fictional characters may have a real presence in our lives. In brief, people have a relationship with mass media means, which is not very different from the relationship they have with people around them. This relationship has an effect to our constructions of our own and others’ identity as it also has a role in shaping the culture as it raises viewers’ consciousness about issues (Tisdell, 2008).

Among all mass media means television plays an important role as it is still one of the most popular leisure time activity of many people around the world. Television viewers interpret the content of television programs in various ways. Gunter (1988) suggested the two most important factors of audience engagement which are necessary to determine how viewers receive television content. These are (1) television portrayals and their reflection on real-life experiences and (2) the

ability of viewers to “identify how different plot elements link together to form a coherent story” (Gunter, 1988, p.37). In addition to this, Fiske (1989) also emphasizes that meanings in television programs are not just content driven, they are produced and shaped with the interaction of the audience as well. Due to the polysemic nature of the medium there is a relationship between the viewers and television programs. The audience can get the messages and interpret them in their own culture, so it is necessary to underline that messages presented on TV, namely content of television programs, invigorate with the help of audience and affect their behaviors or change their receptions as well.

In order to clarify if the viewing of television content affects the attitudes and beliefs of viewers, Shrum (1999) conducted a study with students from an introductory class at a large state university. In this research, Shrum tried to investigate the relationship of television viewing level with attitude strength and attitude extremity. Shrum describes ‘attitude’ by referring to Fazio’s definition as the "association in memory between a given object and a given summary evaluation of the object" and claims that for an attitude to have an influence on an individual’s judgment, it must be activated from memory. As an indicator of attitude strength, Shrum used attitude accessibility which is the likelihood of activation when an individual encounters the attitude object. Shrum alleged that the more viewers associate between the attitude object and its evaluation, the more accessibility will occur and more stable and persistent attitudes will be observed, and as a result, a greater likelihood that attitude will influence behavior. Shrum analyzed attitude judgments of participants pertaining to marital problems, owning expensive products and distrust of people. Shrum first administered a screening questionnaire at the beginning of the semester to assess students’ level of viewing of different types of

programs. According to the results, daytime soap operas were the most frequently viewed television program category. Based on these data, Shrum chose the students who were either heavy soap opera viewers (more than 4 hours per week) or students who were light soap opera viewers (less than 1 hour per week) for the study. As a result, a total of 51 students participated in the study. The results showed that “heavy soap opera viewers indicated more distrustful attitudes toward people and a greater belief that they would experience marital problems than did light viewers” (1999, p. 17). The study also proved that television may act as a reinforcer of attitudes. According to Shrum, although viewers encounter many different messages through many different programs, “frequent viewing may serve to activate particular attitudes and provide the viewers with the opportunity to update their attitudes, supply confirming evidence for their feelings, and generally provide the opportunity for repeated expression of their attitudes” (1999, p. 17). About the attitude-behavior relation, Shrum says that the more accessible an attitude is, the more predictable the behavior will be. Therefore, the researcher concludes that soap opera viewing may affect behavior.

Mass media means have some functions that can lead to these reception and behavior changes. Two of them, ideological and pedagogical functions will be analyzed in the following part.

Ideological Function of Mass Media

Mass media has an important role in the transformation of people’s receptions and behaviors. Many things presented every day through mass communication means both reinforce and resist the ideology of the dominant culture. Fiske (1989, p.14) alleges that “Every commodity reproduces the ideology of the system that produced it: a commodity is ideology made material”. Although Fiske refers here to Marxist

definition of “commodity” which explains commodity with its necessary components: use value and exchange value, it is not meaningful to make a connection between the role of commodity as Fiske mentions and the role of the messages presented by mass media in the construction of cultural identities. Correspondingly, Morley (1992) defines commodity as “any thing intended for exchange” (p. 203) and claims that “a commodity is not a certain type of thing” rather it has a potential of all things (p. 203). Morley (1992) regards the consumption of television as a commodity in his book.

In addition, media has the biggest role in marketing the commodities and creating a consumption society. Indeed, mass media uses many different strategies to interfere the lives of public and in shaping the lives of its followers. This is sometimes marketing a commodity which is not deliberately promoting capitalist ideology, rather, “the economic system, which determines mass production and mass consumption, reproduces itself ideologically in its commodities” (Fiske, 1989, p. 14), and sometimes enforcing certain messages through communication tools with the intention of imposing them continuously and making people believe the validness of them or, most of the time, on the purpose of saving the day. As media followers, we encounter many images and messages as consumers of them and either criticize or just watch, read or see what media means serve us.

As an example to the effect of media on consumer behavior, a group of researchers from Japan and Korea (Kim et al., 2009) conducted a study which investigates whether audience perceptions have actual behavioral consequences by analyzing specifically the effect of a famous Korean soap opera, *Winter Sonata*, which was broadcasted in Japan, on purchase of its products. They conducted a study with 164 Japan participants in order to understand if the narrative’s quality and the

reception of it can predict or influence buying behaviors of the viewers. According to the researchers, although there is even a historical and cultural war between the two countries, and Korean products are not welcomed easily in Japan, the popularity of Winter Sonata showed multiple influences “on Japanese culture and economy, the political relationship between Japan and Korea and an alternative reading of the troubled history between the two countries” (p.605). As a result of the study, it is found out that “the more the members of the audience perceive a narrative as being coherent, realistic, emotionally involving and appreciated by their peers, the higher the probability of their purchasing products associated with the drama” (p. 605) and, also the strongest variable affecting audience members’ purchasing behavior is the emotional involvement in the narrative. They also suggest that Winter Sonata “have created not only a new perceptual image of South Korea, but contributed to constructing an Asian solidarity based on popular consumption” (p.607).

The results of this study clearly prove that watching television and exposure to certain content affect the buying behaviors of viewers, which points out a behavior change; moreover this behavior change also affected their perceptions of the neighbor country in a positive way. In addition, the study shows emotional involvement is a substantial element to affect the behavior. Having a strong emotional bond with the content of programs may have a great influence on what you get or how you change your behaviors. Another study which also tries to discover the effect of media on emotional and behavioral state of adults was conducted in 2008 in the USA. The researchers, (Pfau et al., 2008) tried to analyze “the impact of television visual images of combat on viewers’ involvement, emotions, and attitudes about the U.S. military presence in Iraq” (p. 316) and how people respond to television news. Participants of the study were 200 introductory

communication class students at a Mid-western university. After completing a basic demographic questionnaire, the participants were divided into four groups and they were asked to watch different news stories. The groups were as follows: combat operations described by anchors, but without accompanying visuals; combat operations described by an anchor accompanied by 2-plus-minute package of visual; and two conditions of combat operations described by an anchor accompanied by 2-plus-minute package of visual, one preceded by a print-only inoculation message and one preceded by a print-plus-photograph inoculation message. The study found that news stories with visual footage “elicit greater affective responses” but “less pride in U.S. military presence in Iraq” in viewers (p. 313), and “enhance issue involvement levels” (p. 314), and more importantly, visual footage exerts “greater influence on viewers’ attitudes about continued U.S military presence in Iraq” (p. 314). The study also revealed that women in all the groups with or without the visual footage showed “greater fear, sadness, and threat” than men (p. 315). As a result, it indicated that television news footage of combat can undermine support of war. This study proves that the visuals presented on television have an effect on the perception of viewers and it may change their beliefs or thoughts. Change in thoughts will lead to a change in behaviors as well.

Messages that we are exposed through mass media are constructed by media makers with their own experience and consumers of media construct their own meaning of media in light of their own background experience. Media value some ideas or messages. Some people think about them and criticize them whereas some people just read, watch or see them without spending time on their meanings. Viewers internalize many messages unconsciously and they shape themselves and their values, attitudes and behaviors accordingly. Whatever valued or trivialized in

the media could be unconsciously valued or hated by the masses. This process helps ideology formation of adults. Media does not just affect our way of thinking; we also learn many things through mass media means. The following part will discuss the pedagogical function of mass media.

Pedagogical Function of Mass Media

Mass media and popular culture have an enormous influence on everybody.

Individuals consume messages both consciously and unconsciously by spending some time in front of television. As Giroux (2002) argued media have the power both to educate and miseducate. Media can educate when audience critically reflect on the messages they are getting through the mass communication tools, on the other hand media may miseducate when people watch passively and consume the images and messages and do not think about them (Tisdell, 2008). Tisdell (2008) states that “All theoretical strands recognize that people who are “active” consumers of entertainment media engage in it primarily for pleasure. Nevertheless, as noted above people are educated and miseducated even by the entertainment media and form opinions about themselves and others through portrayals of characters and issues” (p. 52).

The power of media in terms of educating or miseducating viewers is valid not only for children but also for adults. Media is a significant arena for adult learning as it can educate or miseducate adults as well. People learn many things through mass media. López-Guimerà et al.’s provides a valuable example of how mass media miseducate people in terms of their perceptions of beauty and how exposure to mass media messages results in change in behaviors. López-Guimerà et al. (2010) in their study, investigated “the effects of television and magazines on body image and on disordered eating attitudes and behaviors in female” (p. 387), and

they claim that mass media is an extremely important source of information and reinforcement in relation to the nature of the thin beauty ideal. They reviewed many studies conducted in order to indicate the role of media on the on body image and on disordered eating attitudes and behaviors and they grouped the studies according to methodology as there were different designs employed. They grouped the studies as cross-sectional which explores the concurrent association between exposure to television and variables related to body image; experimental studies that conducts research in controlled environment; and longitudinal prospective studies which are implemented to predict subsequent changes with some criteria met. As results of review of all three groupings, López-Guimerà et al. (2010) found out that “Mass media are an extremely important source, if not the principal source, of information and reinforcement in relation to the nature of the thin beauty ideal, its importance, and how to attain it” (p. 407). They also concluded that “repeated exposure to media and to both the direct and indirect pressure from media to be thin constitute a risk factor for body dissatisfaction, concerns over weight, and disordered eating behaviors in adolescent girls and young women” (p. 407).

This study exemplifies the pedagogical function of mass media means in value formation of people in terms of the perception of beauty. In another study which organizes the research on health effects of mass media, Brown and Walsh-Childers (2002) tried to make whether media shape how individuals make decisions about their own and others’ health behaviors. They organized the research along three dimensions: “(a) level of influence (personal/public), (b) intention of the message producer (intended/unintended), and (c) outcome (positive/negative)” (p. 453). In addition, they pointed out that mass media can influence health at both a personal and public level: “At the *personal level*, the mass media may provide

information and models that stimulate changes -either positive or negative- in health-related attitudes and behaviors. At the *public level*, the mass media also may raise awareness of health issues among policymakers and, thus, may contribute to changing the context in which people make choices about their health” (p. 454).

According to them, the effects of mass media may be intended by the message producer or they may be unintended when viewers adopt unhealthy behaviors on television programs. After reviewing a great deal of research on this topic, Brown and Walsh-Childers reach some conclusions. First of all, media has an impact on health beliefs and behaviors at both personal and public level. The research they reviewed shows that more people have started to use the Internet as a source of health information. Another result they found is that the effects of media may be positive or negative for both personal and public levels. While many people get informed about many things with the help of mass media means, young adults may develop unhealthy beliefs and behaviors that are only for entertainment value on television programs.

Another study (Harris and Scott, 2002) which shows valuable evidence about the pedagogical function of media reviewed the research on how consuming sexually oriented media impacts sexual arousal, attitudes, and behavior. Harris and Scott (2002), referring to some earlier research, prove that throughout adolescence and early adulthood people continually learn more about sex, with media being a major source of information. While discussing the nature of sex in the media, Harris and Scott say sexual context is not limited to labels like erotic, pornographic but rather may include any representation that implies sexual behavior, interest, or motivation. The researchers claim that consuming sexual media has effects on arousal, attitude change and behavior. There is a distinction between violent and nonviolent sexual

media according to the researchers. They conclude that “sexual violence is arousing to sex offenders, force-oriented men, and sometimes even to ‘normal’ young men if the woman is portrayed as being aroused by the assault” and “repeated exposure to sexual violence may lead to desensitization toward violence against women in general and greater acceptance of rape myths” (p. 325).

The studies mentioned above provide some valuable examples of how mass media can educate and miseducate people and how the reception of the messages on mass media means change attitudes, values, or behaviors. What media does here can be regarded as a transformation process of people. This transformation process starts with some little changes in daily life. Adults without being aware of their acquisition of certain messages continue learning informally and incidentally in their daily lives. In the following parts, television, which is still one of the most popular leisure time activity tool, and its impact on the transformation of daily life will be discussed.

Television as a tool for the Transformation of Daily Life

Television among other communication tools has a remarkable role which helps produce everyday life. Although the number of people using the Internet is increasing day by day, television is still one of the most dominant leisure time activities in Turkey according to the studies done by RTUK (2006, 2009). Television and other communication tools together provide the models of what it means success or failure, beauty or ugliness, power or weakness, being female or male, etc. Like the other communication tools, television has the power to impose everything the dominant power wishes, and to construct identities and culture in the broadest. Culture is created by the masses and media has an influence in the creation of culture. Kellner (1995) says

Culture in the broadest sense is a form of highly participatory activity, in which people create their societies and identities. Culture shapes individuals, drawing out and cultivating their potentialities and capacities for speech, action, and creativity. Media culture is also involved in these processes, yet it is something new in the human adventure. Individuals spend tremendous amounts of time listening to the radio, watching television, going to see films, experiencing music, going shopping, reading magazines and newspapers, and participating in these and other forms of media culture. Thus, media culture has come to dominate everyday life, serving as the ubiquitous background and often the highly seductive foreground of our attention and activity, which many argue is undermining human potentiality and creativity (p.2).

Kellner emphasizes the dominant character of media in human life with a special focus on the human participation in the creation of culture. According to Kellner people create cultures yet media culture is also a very important component of this process. Similarly, Fiske (2003), in his book about how to read television claims that “Television is a human construct, and the job that it does is the result of human choice, cultural decisions and social pressures” (p. 5). According to Fiske, there is a reciprocal relationship between television and society. Television “responds to the conditions within which it exists” (p 5). However, Fiske also emphasizes the role of language in the creation of reality and gives equal importance to these both mediators. Fiske (2003) says

Language is the means by which people enter into society to *produce* reality (one part of which is the fact of their living together in linguistic society). Television extends this ability, and an understanding of the way in which television structures and presents its picture of reality can go a long way towards helping us to understand the way in which our society works (p. 5).

Here, Fiske mentions the determining factor of television discourse in the creation of culture. Fiske thinks that television discourse updates viewers constantly about social relations and cultural perceptions. From day to day, viewers are made aware of ‘preferred’ meanings inherent in every message television gives. Fiske believes that these messages “serve to remind us of our culture’s daily state of play” (p. 5). In the

transformation of culture, transformation of daily life can be regarded as the starting point. As Fiske claims viewers encounter many messages presented through television together with other communication tools during their daily lives. These messages help people shape their lives and values by making them learn many things informally and incidentally. Television, as an important component of daily life for many, has been studied by many researchers as a tool of transformation of daily life. Gerbner et al. (2008) claim that “Television is different from earlier media in its ever-centralizing mass production of a coherent set of images and messages produced for large and diverse populations and in its relatively nonselective, almost ritualistic, use by most viewers” (p. 44). Actually, television with a combination of sounds, images and symbols, should be evaluated in a different way as with all these characteristics together, it has the power of masses that follow its programs on a regular basis. Gerbner et al. (2008) emphasize the distinct characteristic of television when compared to other communication tools with its power to create a shared national culture by saying “We have now reached an unprecedented juncture at which television brings virtually everyone into a shared national culture. Television provides, perhaps for the first time since preindustrial religion, a daily ritual that elites share with many other publics (p. 44).

Furthermore, Gerbner et al. consider television as “the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (usually cloaked in the form of entertainment) of otherwise heterogeneous populations” (2008, p. 44). Likewise, Morley (1992) considers television as part of our socialization in our primary environment and states that people are socialized by television as they “learn from television; television provides the stuff of family talk and neighborhood gossip” (p. 192). Morley (1992) explains the distinct characteristic of television by focusing on

the domestic, which Morley describes as the household and the family being the primary environment. Morley argues that the study of television viewing should be contextualized within the broader context of a range of domestic practices as individuals watch television in their homes, which is their primary environment. He acknowledges viewers as active in a range of ways as they integrate what they watch into their domestic lives.

Television has been studied a lot in different research projects and designs. Gerbner et al. (2008) first designed Cultural Indicators project to study television policies, programs and impacts in 1967. In their project they analyzed television's prime-time and weekend-daytime content and tried to analyze the results of growing up and living in a cultural environment dominated by television. Both in the USA and around the world, they focused on television's contributions to viewers' conceptions of social reality and developed a three-pronged research strategy. The first prong is called 'institutional process analysis' that investigates "the formation and systematization of policies directing the massive flow of media messages" (Gerbner et al., 2008, p. 46). The other two are called 'message system analysis' which involves the systematic examination of week-long samples of television drama to find out what television presents to its viewers and 'cultivation analysis' which examines "the responses given to questions about social reality among those with varying amounts of exposure to the world of television" (Gerbner et al., 2008, p. 47). As Gerbner et al. stated, the research on television can be separated into three dimensions. The first two are interested in mostly the content of television programs and how they are produced whereas the last one involves the research on audience and how the audience receives what is presented to them.

Research on Television

In the following parts, the research on the content of television programs and on audience will be mentioned. Following, the related studies conducted in Turkey will be summarized.

The Content of Television Programs

In television research, the starting point must be what is actually there on the screen (Fiske, 2003, p. 9). The content of television programs is very critical in order to identify the messages in them and what effects they have on viewers. There are lots of television programs on television which meet every viewer's need. The programs shown on television are presented for different purposes and each has different signs or codes. Being exposed to these signs, codes or messages may have different impacts on viewers, by leading to some changes in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Tisdell (2008) believes television programs may "affect our beliefs about ourselves and about others from different race, class, gender, and sexual orientation groups, as well as our beliefs about social issues" (p. 52). The question whether the media makers prepare or design programs in the light of viewers' wishes or they make the viewers watch what they design and control their wishes has been discussed by many researchers and critics.

Gerbner et al. (2002) describes television as a storyteller which generates messages telling cultural stories, myths, and lessons. According to them, television as a message system cultivates attitudes, values and even basic assumptions about the facts of life and judgments and contributes to the socialization of individuals in society. They propose that the relation between television content and the viewers' perception of social reality is not a one-way process, rather an integral and dynamic

process. As a result, television “both mirrors and leads society” (Signorielli and Morgan, 2001, p. 335).

McQuail (2005) overviewed theories regarding media-society relationships and concluded that “neither mass communication nor modern society is conceivable without the other, and each is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for the other. From this point of view, we have to conclude that the media may equally be considered to mould or to mirror society and social change” (p. 80). Accordingly, it is possible to claim that there is a reciprocal relationship and interaction between media means and viewers. By taking this mutual relationship into account, many researchers have studied the content of television programs from different aspects. In one study Emons et al. (2009) examined the relationship between changes regarding religious practices and beliefs in Dutch society and indicators of these social cultural trends as witnessed in drama programs on Dutch television. With a sample of 503 prime-time programs broadcasted between 1980 and 2005 they identified 2,114 main characters for systematic content analysis. They concluded that there has been a decrease in the proportion of main characters with an identifiable religious orientation and in the number of programs with religious minor characters between 1980 and 2005. The decrease in religious themes and religious content in storylines in Dutch drama television was also observed. Emons et al. (2009) deduced that “longitudinal changes in the representation of religion in Dutch television drama seem to precede changes in the role and perception of religion in Dutch society.

In another study that examines gay, lesbians, and bisexual content on television in the USA was applied by Fisher et al. (2007). They implemented two annual content analyses of programming from the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 television seasons and investigated the presence of behaviors and verbal messages

related to the sexuality of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. Of fourteen genres, they found out that only movies and comedy shows had substantial percentages of programs that contained nonheterosexual content and programs on commercial broadcast networks were less likely to have nonheterosexual content.

McComas et al. (2001) conducted another research on environmental content in prime-time non-news entertainment and fictional programs and tried to find out how often environmental topics are incorporated into the programs of television in the USA. The researchers analyzed an annual week-long sample of television programs appearing in either November or December on the local network affiliates of ABC, NBC and CBS from 1991 to 1997 with the exception of 1992 and 1993. After the content analysis of these programs, they concluded that environmental episodes appear relatively infrequently and the percentages during six years decreased. From 510 non-news entertainment and fictional television programs only seventy two environmental episodes were coded and most of these lasted less than one minute.

Brown (2001) also used content analysis to examine fictional television crime programs as compared to actual crime statistics from the FBI Uniform Crime Report by analyzing issues of crime type, gender, age, and socio-economic class. The researcher chose prime time fictional crime programs from episodes of *Law & Order*, *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, and *NYPD Blue* from the 1999-2000 seasons. The results showed that homicide is the number one type of crime portrayed on television, 79% of crime portrayed on television are homicides. In the framework of the study, Brown compared the number of homicides in programs with the Bureau of Justice Statistics for 1999, and found out that homicides were the least frequently occurring violent crimes. In terms of gender, women commit 17% of crimes on

television, while in reality, they only commit 5% of all crimes. Men account for 83% of criminals on television, whereas in actuality they commit 94% of all crimes.

Brown (2001) concluded that “type of crime, gender, age, and socio-economic status on fictional crime television programs does not correspond to actual crime” (p. 197).

In terms of cultivation theory, there is a misrepresentation that creates a pattern of distortion which is the reality. As a result, Brown (2001) says “The misrepresentation of types of crimes that occur may be misleading to some audience viewers, especially heavy viewers of fictional crime programs (p. 197).

As stated above, research on television is both sided as there is an interaction between the perceptions of viewers and what is presented to them, the content of television programs. Although there are many studies that combine the content analysis of programs and how the audience perceive it, the next part will discuss the audience research specifically and the studies that investigate the reflections of television content on viewers.

Audience Research

Gerbner et al. (2008) introduced cultivation analysis as a research strategy to “examine the responses given to questions about social reality among those with varying amounts of exposure to the world of television” (p 47). They use the term ‘cultivation’ to describe the independent contributions television viewing makes to viewer perception of social reality. As a general hypothesis of cultivation analysis, they propose that people who spend more time in front of television are more likely to see the real world in the lens of television. In order to clarify their conceptualization about television’s contribution to social reality, Gerbner et al. (2008) state that

The point is that cultivation is not conceived as a unidirectional but rather more like a gravitational process. The angle and direction of the “pull” depends on where groups of viewers and their styles of life are with reference to the line of gravity, the mainstream of the world of television. Each group may strain in a different direction, but all groups are affected by the same central current. Cultivation is thus a continual, dynamic, ongoing process of interaction among messages, audiences, and contexts (p. 49).

Cultivation analysis starts with message system analysis to identify the patterns of television content by keeping in mind the consistent images, portrayals, and values bombard the regular viewers. Findings from systematic analysis of message system are used to formulate questions for a large-scale survey. In cultivation analysis television viewing is usually assessed by asking the amount of time respondents watch television on an average day. The analysis is done by grouping the heaviest, medium and lightest viewers. Cultivation looks at exposure to massive flows of messages over periods of time regardless of viewers’ thoughts about television texts; it takes the idea that exposure to certain messages for a long time will affect the behavior for granted (Gerbner et al. 2008).

On the other hand, there are many critics of cultivation analysis by claiming that it regards audience as passive viewers. McQuail (1994) sees serious differences between cultivation theory and reception models of mass communication. According to reception models, there could be other variables that intervene and neutralize cultivation process. Viewers select which programs they would like to see and they receive them differently. For reception model how viewers construct the meaning from texts is more important than how much they watch. McQuail (1994) thinks that several methodologies for audience research “fail to take account of the power of the audience in giving meaning to messages. The essence of the ‘reception approach’ is to locate the attribution and construction of meaning (derived from media) with the receiver” (p. 53). According to McQuail (1994), media messages are polysemic and

they are interpreted differently in different contexts and cultures of receivers.

McQuail (1994) shows the theory formulated by Stuart Hall as the forerunner of reception analysis.

Stuart Hall (1980) emphasizes that media messages transform through some stages while travelling from its origin to its reception. Depending on the choices made by an 'encoder', messages are interpreted differently on the basis of semiology. Hall (1980) thinks that the power of encoded text and the location of meaning is embedded in the frame of semiology. Hall (1980) proposes two assumptions for this approach. Firstly, media messages are encoded for ideological and institutional purposes and language is manipulated. Secondly, decoders as receivers are not obliged to accept these messages in the way they are sent, they can read differently according to their own experience and background. For Hall (1980), media provides a meaningful discourse which is encoded according to the meaning structure of the mass media organization but audience decode this discourse according to their experiences and points of views. Based on these, McQuail (1994) emphasizes that "meaning as decoded does not necessarily (or often) correspond with meaning as encoded" (p. 54). Receivers can read the text presented differently, they can focus on various parts of the text, and even they can reverse the intended direction of the message. According to McQuail (1994), the receiver has the primacy role in determining meaning.

Morley (1992) conducted a research in order to investigate audience responses in 1980. The first stage of this project was an analysis of Nationwide, which involved collective reading and discussion of the programme over a period of months with an analysis in detail of the internal structure of one particular edition of the programme. The project tried to relate the analysis of practices of decoding of

media material with the encoded text. Morley attempted to investigate how the messages given were taken up and accepted by its audience. He chose two Nationwide programmes and made people from different backgrounds watch them. After viewing the programmes, Morley video-taped the subsequent discussion and analyzed the transcribed data. The results showed that there were internal differences and divisions within each group and different groups operated different decoding strategies in relation to different kinds of materials and in different contexts. According to what is mentioned above, it will be reasonable to claim that viewers interpret what is presented to them differently and this difference may affect their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in various ways. There are many studies that try to find audience responses to different programs on television or their motives or expectations to watch television programs.

As for the motives to watch television programs, Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007) implemented a study to examine the motives for watching reality television and the reasons to watch those programs. With a sample of 157 students enrolled in an introductory communication class within an urban university, the researchers conducted a survey about their viewing of reality television. The factor analysis of the reality television statements proposed six interpretable factors: reality entertainment, relaxation, habitual pass time, companionship, social interaction, and voyeurism. For the sample they studied, the mode of engagement with reality television was rather passive, and designed to fill time when no other activities are available. The findings suggest that viewers want to watch these programs because they are integrated into the daily life of the individual and they are habitual pass time entertainment.

A study that tried to predict audience exposure to television in today's media environment was conducted by Cooper and Tang (2009). This study analyzed the individual and structural factors that affect audience exposure to television by conducting a web-based survey among students, faculty, and staff at a large Midwestern university. With a sample of 1,488 individuals, they found out that individual motivations, use of newer media, age, and traditional structural factors all play a significant role in explaining overall exposure to television. "The findings also suggest that no single theoretical construct explains the complexities that determine exposure to television." (p. 412).

In addition to studies done to discover the motive that lead people to watch television programs and the factors that affect exposure to television, there are reception studies applied in order to find out how viewers interpret what is presented to them through television programs. One of these studies was conducted by Collier et al. (2009). This qualitative study examines how viewers of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Xena: Warrior Princess* incorporate their experiences as viewers with relation to their sexual identity as lesbians. As a reception study, it analyzes the ways in which participants use these television programs to inform their sexual identity development. The participants of the study were 19 self-identified lesbian viewers of *Buffy* and *Xena*. The researchers developed a survey that included demographic items, Likert scales, checklists, and open-ended questions. Likert scale questions assessed viewing style, the media's influence to disclose sexual identity, and the affects of the series on self and public perception of sexual identity. Checklists were to identify the extent of fan participation and open-ended questions were used to find out as participants' perceptions, experiences, and reactions related to media influence. The findings show that these two television programs portray positive

images of lesbians which may lead to positive perceptions. The participants think that the media has a positive impact on their self-perception as lesbians as it helps clarify their lesbian feelings and better understand their sexual identity as lesbians. This study is a very good example of how media can play a role in identity formation of viewers by presenting models, images, or messages.

Another study by Tisdell and Thompson (2007) explores USA adult educators' consumption of entertainment media and how it affects their thinking about group identities, and how they draw on it in their teaching and learning. They conducted a survey with 215 adult educators from the US and interviewed 15 of them. The survey asked questions related to viewing frequency and preference, main character preference, the amount and type of informal discussion of entertainment media among family, friends, and colleagues, the use of media in teaching, and demographic information. The survey also asked whether or not they were willing to participate in an individual interview. A purposeful group of 15 adult educators was chosen for an individual interview. With various backgrounds and characteristics, participants were asked questions about what types of entertainment media they view and why and what meaning they make of portrayal of characters, and their learning about people of different gender, race, and sexual orientation groups. The findings suggested that all the interviewees watch television and movies for entertainment, and to relax and unwind without consciously analyzing or thinking about the ways they are affected by it, but they also found some kind of meaning in both comedy and drama. The meaning they found is not always particularly profound but they relate to the characters and map their own life experience onto these characters. Both survey and interview participants propose that they choose movies and television programs that they relate to and represent people like them. They also think that the programs

help them alternative narratives on a deeper level and marginalized groups are sometimes represented well, which will affect viewers' perceptions about these issues. The study also indicated that 80% of adult educators are using popular culture in the classrooms. Tisdell and Thompson believe that "human beings do not find knowledge, but rather construct it" (656). With the results of this study, they reemphasize that people are continually constructing knowledge both about themselves and others through media.

Sandlin (2007) as an adult educator who focuses on popular culture as a site of informal learning, view specific forms of mass media such as soap operas, television, and popular magazines as forms of public education. Sandlin thinks that these realms of informal adult education are often neglected by adult educators. In the article that Sandlin talks about the importance of public pedagogy of popular culture and learning happening outside formal adult education spaces in the realms of popular culture. Sandlin (2007) says "As adult educators, we need to recognize this important aspect of identity formation and learning; we must include learners' engagement with popular culture when we draw on and build on their experiences, a hallmark of adult education practice" (p. 80).

Wright and Sandlin (2009) examine adult education literature as it relates to all aspects of popular culture in one of their studies. They applied an integrative literature review, which involved reviewing, critiquing, and synthesizing relevant literature as they say adult educators have only focused on popular culture as a site of education and learning. They examined three peer-reviewed adult education journals (International Journal of Lifelong education, 1982-2007; Adult Education Quarterly, 1980-2007; and Studies in the Education of Adults, 1990-2007), as well as proceedings papers from the Adult Education Research Conference, 1990-2007 and

the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research on the education of Adults, 1995-2007. They searched the sources using the terms popular culture, public pedagogy, television and media. The data they found from these sources included 21 journal articles and 54 proceeding papers. After an additional ERIC search with the descriptors fiction, popular culture and the keywords adult learning, adult education or adult development, they identified 10 other sources. The findings showed that the literature on popular culture has focused on six areas of research within adult education as follows

- (a) representations of adult learning and adult development in popular media,
- (b) self-reflexive practices of adult educators who consume popular culture,
- (c) effective classroom practices involving the popular,
- (d) analyses of popular culture products and processes as adult education curriculum,
- (e) the impact of adults' learning from popular culture,
- (f) community-based "popular" culture as resistance (p. 122)

After analyzing all the studies done in these areas of research, Wright and Sandlin (2009) conclude that the studies that show the intersection between popular culture and informal adult learning have been applied more since 2000, yet there is still a lot to do to indicate the power of popular culture as public pedagogy.

A study that was conducted by Wright (2007) provides valuable inspiration for this study. Wright (2007) investigates the impact of popular culture, especially prime-time television, on women learner-viewers' identity development by specially focusing on 1962-1964 episodes of Cathy Gale episodes of *The Avengers* as a portal to adult learning. It also tries to find out the ways in which television as a form of public pedagogy can help facilitate the formation of a critical or feminist identity among adult learner viewers. Wright (2007) collected the data for this study in various ways. The researcher conducted interviews with the viewers, interviews with the scriptwriters and the actor who played Cathy Gale, collected documents from

statistics obtained at the British Film Institute, fanzines, and newspaper articles of the period. After interviewing 17 women viewers of the Cathy Gale Avengers, the researcher concluded that the avant-garde model of a strong, independent feminist character at that time produced long-term effects on female viewers' lives. The interview notes suggest that Cathy Gale, performing actions intended for a male character changed the expected role of female characters on television and British culture as well. This helped the viewers see the possibilities to break the society rules defined for women and also fight for those possibilities. Cathy has changed the traditional gender roles as changing the viewers' perceptions of a women and defining her again as independent, intelligent, well-educated and athletic according to interview notes. Some of the participants even say that "they would not have gone to university if it had not been for Cathy Gale's example" (p 245). Wright expresses her feelings about the impact of Cathy Gale as follows: "I was fascinated as they revealed the depths of the impact that a fictional television character, remembered for over 40 years, has had on the formation of their identities as professional, competent, and empowered women. A role model they cling to still – with a vengeance" (p. 246).

As a result, the findings of the study indicated that "in particular historical times and situations television viewing can become a form of public pedagogy, facilitating transformational learning in adult viewers that produces lasting, life-changing effects" (Wright, 2007, p. iv).

Another research to show the influence of the content of television programs on the lives of individuals is conducted by Castelló (2010). Castelló (2010) thinks that audiences prefer television fiction according to cultural proximity and examines how attempts to apply this cultural proximity are made from the production level down, how

texts are represented, and how this is interpreted by the audience. Castelló (2010) analyzes the Catalan television context with a close reading of two soap operas, in-depth interviews with producers and focus groups with viewers. Castelló (2010) carries out a transversal reading of the series *El Cor de la Ciutat* (The Heart of the City) and *Ventdelplà*, and interviews the programme directors, and also the scriptwriters, and technical staff. For the analysis of reception, the researcher organizes six focus group discussions with three groups of people from different social spheres and environments. The findings show that the viewers are able to construct their relationship with the story through the characters and reinforce the idea that the soap operas audience participates in creating meaning. It is also found that what the authors intend to show is received differently by the viewers.

Costin (2010) believes that television allows viewers to train themselves and to adjust their way of living to the general request of society and “through television, values, norms and behavior patterns are transmitted, trying to remove the ignorance and the intolerance of the viewer” (p. 56). Costin (2010) regards television as a crucial agent of individual socialization by emphasizing the influence of television can be negative or positive. On the one hand, television can inform, educate, and entertain viewers in a positive way; on the other hand it can affect viewers negatively in identity and personality formation for Costin (2010). As a result, it will be reasonable to claim that television content always has an effect on viewers, either positive or negative.

Research on the content of television programs and the influence of television content on the lives of individuals is an ever-lasting process and both of the research areas need to be studied a lot. The research done in both areas from different parts of the world have been examined so far. There are also studies done in Turkey more or

less in parallel with the research done in different countries. The following part will show some examples of research that was conducted on television in Turkey.

Research on Television in Turkey

There are numerous studies done on the area of content analysis of television programs in Turkey. There is one study conducted by Türkay (2010), which examines how terror events are presented in news. Another study done by Akyüz (2010) analyzes the content of the news of the local television in Konya. The next one done by Kayadelen (2010) analyzes how women are represented in commercials on television from 1980 to 2008. The other which was conducted by Koçak (2010) investigates how gender is presented in different adaptations of soap opera, “Yaprak Dökümü”, with a comparison of Reşat Nuri Güntekin’s novel, Yaprak Dökümü. Another study done by Sarıalioğlu (2010) to compare novel and adaptation of it in soap opera is also an example of content analysis. The other one searches for how poverty is represented in television programs, with a special focus on the program “Kimse Yok mu?” (Akçelik, 2010). The next one which was carried out by Gün (2006), examines how the content of daytime woman talk shows are determined. Another study done by Yıldırım (2010) tries to find out the role of popular television soap operas and their characters on creating brand awareness. The next one conducted by Erdal (2010) analyzes the representation of family in national prime-time television serials through gender roles. Most of these studies mentioned above are carried out just in the year 2010, and there are many other studies which investigate the content of various programs done before the year 2010. However, there are a few studies that were conducted in order to see how the content of television programs are perceived by the viewers, and how television programs can change the lives of the viewers, and even there are not any studies done by adult

educators that try to find out how viewers are affected by the content of television programs and shape their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

As an example of studies that investigate the effects of television programs on viewers was carried out by Yılmaz (2002). Yılmaz (2002) analyzed television watching tendencies of 18-30 aged adults and the effects of television on viewers. Another study done by Yenen (2005) examined the effects of the religious programs on television on the religious attitude and behavior of viewers in Konya and found out that the viewers thought that they got informed about religion but no change in behavior observed. The next one conducted by Mani (2005) investigated how messages were constructed in sit-com “Çocuklar Duymasın” and how these messages are perceived by children and concluded that participant children evaluated these messages in relation with their environment. The last study that was found on the area of reception of television content could be the best example of those types. The study was conducted by Tanrıöver (2008) and examined what the famous series “Kurtlar Vadisi” present and how its content is perceived by teenagers. After the content analysis, Tanrıöver (2008) concluded that middle class teenagers in İstanbul find connections between the content of “Kurtlar Vadisi” with their daily lives, get socialized through the messages presented in it, benefitted from it while coping with their teenage problems, and constructing their gender identities.

The studies mentioned above are the ones that have been found in the area of reception of the content of television programs conducted in Turkey. All of these studies were carried out by media researchers and there are not any studies done by adult educators. Thus, this study aims to open the way for adult educators to study popular culture as a way of public education.

The Focus of the Study

There are not many studies done by adult educators to examine the informal learning practices of adults through mass media in Turkey. Although the participants could vary, this study will specifically focus on the informal learning processes of women who watch television programs as women are found to spend their time in front of television more than men spent. In addition, it is also necessary to underline that women who watch television regularly are included in this study as in order to be familiar enough with the characters on television women should watch television regularly. In order to make it clear, the activity of ‘watching television regularly’ should be defined as it could be regarded differently by each person. In the scope of this study, ‘regularly’ is defined as watching television at least two hours a day. In order to see how the content of television programs is received by women, the researcher will meet women from different social and educational backgrounds.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology of the study is presented. The methodology includes research design, research questions, population and sample selection, data collection instrument, data collection procedures and analysis of data.

Research Design

This is an exploratory research study where qualitative data collection method is used. It aims to explore how women who watch television regularly and live in a metropolis receive what is presented to them through television programs.

Furthermore, it aims to discover women's receptions about the influence of watching television regularly and what kinds of changes occur in their lives related to this influence.

The study is exploratory as it will try to explore the receptions of women on female characters in television programs and will try to reach some results from these receptions. Qualitative data collection method is used in this study after the analysis of appropriate research methods. In order to decide on the most suitable research method for this study, the researcher compared both strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research designs (Creswell, 2002), and it was concluded that a qualitative method would be best as it would help to do an in-depth analysis. A qualitative method would enable exploring and understanding the participants' experiences as it is possible to ask broad, general questions and collect the detailed views of participants in the form of words or images, and analyze the information for description and themes in qualitative method. In addition, qualitative method would

give the opportunity to do an in-depth analysis of the data, and interpret the meaning of it, drawing on personal reflections and past research (Creswell, 2002).

Research Questions

In order to reach the purposes of the study, the answers to the following questions are sought.

1. What are the reasons of women who live in a metropolis to watch television regularly?
2. How do women who live in a metropolis and watch television regularly receive what is presented to them through television programs?
3. What are the receptions of women who live in a metropolis and watch television regularly about the influence of watching television on their daily lives?

Population and Sample Selection

Population of the study is women who live in a metropolis and watch television programs regularly and over the age of eighteen.

Istanbul is chosen as the city to conduct this study. Being the biggest metropolis of Turkey and being cosmopolitan, Istanbul provides the opportunity to find participants with different demographic characteristics. Moreover, it is convenient to conduct the study in Istanbul for the researcher.

Women who watch television regularly are included in the population of this study. In order to make it clear, the activity of ‘watching television regularly’ should be defined as it could be regarded differently by each person. In the scope of this study, ‘regularly’ is defined as watching television at least two hours a day.

Women over the age of eighteen are included in the population since this study aims to explore the receptions of adults.

Data collection procedure continued until data saturation was reached. Thus, sample of the study included fifteen women who lived in Istanbul and watched television regularly and who are over the age of eighteen. In order to have maximum variability, the researcher met women who were different from each other in terms of age, education level, occupation and marital status.

In order to decide on the subjects of this study, two non-probability sampling methods of qualitative research were used together: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was firstly used in reaching and choosing the first participant to interview. In order to reach the participants, first of all, the researcher contacted key informants who would know women in their neighborhood or would suggest women who would fit in the selected criteria. Women who watch television regularly and live in a metropolitan area were tried to be reached with purposive sampling as it “leads to selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth” (Patton, 2002, p. 46). Patton describes information-rich cases as cases “which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research”. With the help of key informants, the researcher tried to access women who could be the best members of the sample. After reaching the first participant, snowball sampling was used to find the next person to interview. Snowball sampling gives the opportunity of building a sample through the participants interviewed (Blaxter et al., 2006). However, while trying to find the next participant, to ensure that certain types of individuals displaying certain attributes were included (Berg, 2001), purposive sampling was used again. As it was believed that the receptions of women would show variety according to their educational and social backgrounds, women with different demographic characteristics were tried to be selected. To

ensure variety, the researcher tried to meet participants unlike each other by taking some variations into account.

The variations that were taken into account were age, educational level, occupation, and marital status. In terms of age, the first variation, women over the age of eighteen were included in the study as the aim was to find out the receptions of adults. The participants were grouped into three groups: young adults, middle aged ones and the elderly. The researcher tried to meet women from different age groups in order to ensure variety. After data collection, the sample included women whose ages ranged from nineteen to sixty two. Five young adults whose ages ranged from nineteen to thirty one, six middle-aged ones whose ages ranged from thirty three to forty five and four elderly between fifty three and sixty two were interviewed.

According to the second variation, which is educational level, three levels were determined at the beginning of the study. These were primary school graduates, high school graduates, and university graduates. The researcher planned to meet five women from each category. However, while meeting the participants, one participant who was illiterate was added to the first group. One participant who was a graduate of Open University was included in the second group, and one participant, a post graduate was included in the third group. The final chart included four primary school graduates, four high school graduates, four university graduates, one illiterate, one open university graduate, and lastly one post-university graduate.

For the third variation, which is occupation, the researcher planned to meet women who all had different jobs. The sample included two cleaners, two unemployed women, two housewives, three managers (but all in different institutions

and from different sectors), one engineer, one teacher, one retired woman, one human resources specialist, one insurer, and one student.

For the fourth variation, which is marital status, two categories were defined before data collection. These were married and single ones. While collecting the data, having children or not was also included as it was regarded that having children might affect the receptions of the participants. After collecting data, the final chart showed that there were six single participants (two of them were divorced), eight married ones with at least one child and one married with no children.

Data Collection Instrument

In order to collect data, a semi-structured interview guide was used in this study. To formulate the questions the researcher examined the similar studies done both in Turkey and in other countries (Cheers, 2010; Sherring, 2010; Buduklu, 2010; Tanrıöver, 2008; Wright, 2007; Yenen, 2005). After examining similar studies, she developed an interview guide that included demographic questions, reasons to watch television programs, how interviewees received what was presented to them, and their ideas related to changes occurred in their daily lives due to watching these programs. A pilot study was implemented with five women with different demographic characteristics and who were not included in sample before the data collection.

Pilot Study

The interview guide was piloted before the actual interviews were conducted by the researcher. The aim was to check the understandability of the questions and whether these targeted questions helped to elicit relevant answers. The guide was piloted with five women from different educational and social backgrounds who live in Istanbul. The demographic characteristics of the participants were shown in the table below.

Table 4. The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Pilot Study

Nickname	Age	Education Status	Occupation	Marital Status
Ahu	28	MA Graduate	Instructor	Single
Senem	31	Primary School Graduate	Cleaner	Married (2 children)
Mary*	24	BA Graduate	Teacher	Single
Zeynep	29	BA Graduate	Engineer	Married
Yeşim	57	High School Graduate	Housewife	Married (2 children)

*Mary is American.

Participants of the pilot study are five women who have different characteristics in terms of age, education level, occupation and marital status. Four of them are working and one is a housewife. In addition, four of them are younger than 31 and one is 57 years old. Their education level ranges from primary school to MA. Three of them are married and two are single. Also, two of them have two children and three do not have any children. Four of them are Turkish and there is one American in the sample.

The feedback I collected from the pilot study helped me to evaluate the validity of the interview guide and to see the implications of the results before conducting the research. In addition, I had a chance to see the comprehensiveness of the questions. Although I thought some questions could be difficult to comprehend because of the words I used, surprisingly none of the participants in the pilot study had difficulty to understand them, and I did not even need to reword them. Furthermore, the pilot study helped me to gain control over the interview guide and develop the ability to use the interviewing method. As the interview guide was semi-structured, I needed to practice what kinds of and how many follow-up questions should be asked. As I did not interview anyone in my life before, I really needed some practice before the actual data collection. Even in the second interview I had, I

was more confident and learnt how to lead the conversation in a natural way without looking at the interview guide a lot. Thus, although my first interview ended only in twenty minutes, my last interview took forty five minutes to conduct in the pilot study. From the first interview to the fifth one, I have learned when I should just let the interviewee to carry on, and when I should ask follow up questions. Moreover, while doing the third interview I realized that some of my follow up questions had a directive effect on the participant although I was just trying to empathize with them. Therefore, during the last two interviews, I had the opportunity to practice asking follow up questions that did not direct the subjects. Lastly, my pilot study helped me to be relaxed while making the interviews as I felt nervous in the first two interviews I had. I realized that the participants felt more relaxed when I was behaving in a relaxing way. All in all, the pilot study I conducted helped me to gain control over the interview questions and the interviewing technique. After the pilot study implemented, as the researcher I have started to collect data.

Data Collection Procedures

The study was based on face-to-face interviews that were applied by me as the researcher. I interpreted and analyzed the receptions of the participants with regard to their backgrounds and experiences. All the interviews were done in Turkish and the researcher translated them into English.

The study was conducted during May and June, 2011. I interviewed 15 women on a voluntary basis. As the researcher, I made the interviews on my own either in women's houses or in their working places, and one of the interviews was conducted in a café. The interview questions were semi-structured so if other questions or topics came up with during the interviews, I did not limit the participants to share their ideas as it created a more sincere environment and gave me

more chance to recognize them more. A recorder was used during the implementation of the interviews with the permission of the subjects. I explained them that just I would listen to the records to transcribe them as it was more practical. I ensured them not to have the recordings listened by anybody else other than me and I ensured to use some anonymous names instead of their real names. Two of the participants did not want recording at first, however, while I was trying to take notes, they felt sorry for me and allowed me to use the recorder. I also preferred to use a recorder as taking notes prevented us from having a natural speech flow. The recorder made all the participants nervous at the first five or ten minutes, however, when we started to talk about their favorite female character in television programs, they all forgot the recorder and just started to keep eye contact with me while talking. I have transcribed all the recordings to keep the confidentiality of them and each interviewee was given anonymous names.

The place of the interviews was determined by the participants. According to their preferences, interviews were made in three different places. Nine of them wanted to make interview in their houses, five of them in their workplaces and one, the youngest one of the participants wanted to meet in a café which was close to her house. Among these three places, women interviewed in their own houses were more relaxed and it was easier to build sincere relationship with them as they did not have any distractions and any time limit. In addition, interviews were made in the evenings while they were all watching television that helped them to answer the questions easily. The interviews were made in a room that just me as the researcher and the interviewee were present. In addition, with the help of snowball technique, I reached the next participant easily and time arrangements were done just before the interview. However, with the participants I met in their workplaces, I had to make an

appointment the day before. We had to arrange a specific time the day before the interview and all the interviews were made at the arranged time without delay. Five participants wanted to meet in their workplaces for the interview as it was easier to reach in terms of distance compared to their houses and they preferred as such. Workplaces and café were not as relaxing as houses since both the participants and the researcher were more focused on the questions because of the pressure environment brought. In the workplaces we had limited time as the participants allocated certain time that the beginning and ending were determined before. All the participants arranged a separate room for the interview. The café was not a very suitable place for the interviews as there were other people around and the participant did not feel comfortable enough while talking.

Analysis of Data

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using the content analysis method. In the first phase of analysis, preliminary exploratory analysis which means “obtaining a general sense of the data, memoing ideas, thinking about the organization of the data” (Creswell, 2002, p. 265) was used for the analysis of given answers. After this initial analysis of the data, within case analysis of the data for each subject was carried out to see the emerging themes in general. Then, themes in answers of each participant were defined for each question with cross-case analysis. Following, major and salient common themes emerged from the answers of participants were grouped and interview data was analyzed again by coding the raw data into dimensions. These themes, dimensions and codes were presented with samples from participants’ quotations. In the next section, the findings were presented around the themes and codes that emerged from the interview data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This section presents the results derived from the analysis of the interviews with women living in Istanbul and watching television programs regularly. In the first part, findings about the demographic characteristics of the sample are provided. The participants are assigned random names to keep the confidentiality. In the second part, main findings that come out from the in-depth analysis of the interviews with the subjects are structured around the major themes based on the research questions and the analysis of the interview transcripts. The emergent themes are organized under the following headings: television as a relaxation tool to occupy free time, television as a socialization tool, informal learning while watching television including reception of the most favorite and least favorite characters, reception of the effect of characters on personal life, and reception of the representation of women on television.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

In the interview guide, there were four questions related to the demographic characteristics of the subjects: age, educational level, occupation and marital status. The participants of the study were fifteen women with different demographic characteristics. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 62. There were four participants below thirty years old. There were five participants in their thirties and six participants above forty years old. The educational backgrounds of the subjects varied as well. The level of education ranged from being illiterate to having graduate degree. There was one illiterate woman, four primary graduates, four high school

graduates, five undergraduates, and one postgraduate. Nine of the participants were married, four of them were single and two of them were divorced. One of the married ones did not have any children; the rest of the married ones had at least one child. The occupations of the participants showed variety from participant to participant. There were two housewives, two unemployed women, two cleaners, one student, one teacher, one retired engineer, one human resources specialist, one retired officer, one insurer, and three managers in different places such as a school, a bank and a company. The information concerning the demographic characteristics of the participants were summarized below in the following table and the details were provided following the table.

Table 5. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Interview Number	Nickname	Age	Occupation	Educational Status	Marital Status	Amount of Television Viewing (per day)
1	Semra	31	Cleaner	Primary School	Married (2 children)	At least 2 hours
2	Fahriye	60	Retired (Officer)	Primary School	Divorced (2 children)	At least 4 hours
3	Funda	29	Human Resources Specialist	Undergraduate	Single	At least 2 hours
4	Ayşen	62	Housewife	High School	Married (1 child)	At least 10 hours
5	Yeliz	53	Housewife	Primary School	Married (2 children)	At least 5 hours
6	Gül	25	Insurer	High School	Single	At least 3 hours
7	Aylin	33	Unemployed	Illiterate	Married (5 children)	4 hours
8	Lale	38	Commercial Customer Manager (at a bank)	Undergraduate (Open University)	Single	3 hours
9	Merve	34	Administrator at a school	Undergraduate	Married (1 child)	At least 2 hours
10	Dilara	45	Manager at a private company	Graduate	Married (1 child)	2 hours
11	Şeyda	26	Teacher	Undergraduate	Married	4 hours
12	Ayla	42	Cleaner	Primary School	Married (2 children)	3 hours
13	Selma	36	Unemployed	High School	Married (1 children)	At least 5-6 hours
14	Sinem	19	University Student	High School	Single	6-7 hours
15	Oya	58	Retired (Forest Engineer)	Undergraduate	Divorced (2 children)	At least 10 hours

Semra is thirty one years old. She has been working at a private university as a cleaner for three years. She is married and has two children. She calls herself a mother before all the other qualifications she has. She says she is working for her

children and their future. She watches television for at least two hours a day. Semra is a very self-confident woman. Although she graduated from primary school, she has very high level of communication skills and she expresses her ideas very clearly and also she knows herself very well. It seems that she likes people's listening to her and showing off. She was one of the participants who talked longest among others.

Fahriye is sixty years old. She is a retired bank officer. She graduated from primary school. She is divorced and has two children. Fahriye gave the impression of a lonely lady to me. She was very happy to talk to me. She was very friendly and tried to answer all of the questions as detailed as possible. She has been suffering from breast cancer for two years. She states that she watches television in order to forget her problems for some time. She watches television at least four hours a day.

Funda is twenty nine years old and she is working as a human resources specialist. She graduated from university and she is single. She watches television for at least two hours a day. I met Funda in the evening and she was watching television when we started. Although she says that she watches television two hours a day and she tried to portrait of a woman who does not spend a lot of time in front of television during the interview, I felt that she watches television more than she stated due to the details she knows about many things on television. She is a successful businesswoman who plans to get married in a few months. In the interview, she gave me the impression of a participant who wanted to give socially acceptable answers.

Ayşen is sixty two years old and she is a housewife. She graduated from high school and has not worked in any places up to now. She is married and has one child. She says that as she is at home most of the time during the day, she turns on television when she wakes up and turns off it just before sleeping. Ayşen says that she does not have any more interesting activities other than watching television.

When I said I was preparing a thesis related to television, she took the interview very seriously and valued her watching television a lot. She was one of the participants who talked longest and gave me lots of details.

Yeliz is fifty three years old and she is a housewife. She graduated from primary school and she is married with two children. She watches television for at least five hours a day. Yeliz is a woman who is just interested in her family. Although both of her children are over twenty five, she says she still takes care of them in many areas of life. As far as I observed, she has a very organized traditional life style which makes her very critical to other people's life styles. She thinks very traditionally in terms of women-men relationship and their positions in the society.

Gül is twenty five years old and is working in an insurance company. She graduated from high school and studies in Open University. She is a young, ambitious woman who wants to be very successful in the future. She is very self-confident as well. She is single and watches television for three hours on average on a day.

Aylin is thirty three years old and unemployed. She did not have the chance of studying in a school and does not know how to read and write, which embarrasses her a lot. She even does not want to go on a bus as she cannot understand where they go and cannot ask people around. She got married at a very early age and has five children now. Although she is very young, she is very hopeless about her life and her future. She says she expects her children to finish their schools and change her life. They have also financial difficulties. Her husband does not earn enough money and she cannot find a job as she does not know how to read and write and also her youngest child needs somebody to look after him, so she is at home most of the time. She watches television for four hours a day. Aylin was the woman who affected me

most among the participants. She impressed me a lot as she was just six years older than me and had many problems up to now in her life.

Lale is thirty eight years old and she is working as a commercial customer manager at a bank. She graduated from Open University. At first sight, she gives an impression of a modern, working woman who stands on her two feet. However, she is actually very different and traditional in her ideas related to women-men relationship. She has not got married yet and even she has not had any boyfriends up to now. She watches television for three hours a day on average.

Merve is thirty four years old and she is an administrator at a school and she graduated from university. She is married and has one child. She gives the impression of a modern, working woman who has a very organized life. She says she is happy with her husband and she is also ambitious to be a very good administrator at her school. She watches television for at least two hours a day.

Dilara is forty five years old and she is a manager at a private company. She describes herself as a modern, successful woman who has a very happy family as well. She is married and has one child. She watches television for two hours a day on average. Other than Funda, she was the second participant who gave me the impression of a subject who tried to give socially acceptable answers during the interview.

Şeyda is twenty six years old and she is a teacher. She graduated from university and she got married after graduation. She has been married for two years. She does not have any children and she does not plan to have one before two years. She says she is a lucky woman who has a very happy marriage. She wants to be very successful in her occupation as well. She wants to be an administrator in the future. Her husband comes home later than her so she says she watches television till he

comes and they also like watching television together. Thus, she says she watches television for four hours a day.

Ayla is forty two years old and she works as a cleaner in a private school. She does not like her job a lot. She says she is working just to earn money. She is married and has two children. She does not want to give details about herself and her life. She seems she is bored of everything around her. She says she watches television for three hours a day on average.

Selma is thirty six years old and she is unemployed. She is usually at home and she does not look for a job but she says she would like to work because she feels bored and useless at home. She graduated from high school and she got married at the age of twenty. She has one child now. She watches television for at least 6 hours a day.

Sinem is nineteen years old and she is a university student. She is single and she graduated from high school. She is from Çanakkale and she came to Istanbul to study at university one year ago. She is studying in foreign language education department. She says she is trying to get used to Istanbul and her new life. She has friends but not a lot so she watches television for six-seven hours a day.

Oya is 58 years old and she is a retired forest engineer. She graduated from university and she is divorced and she has two children, both of them are married. She lives alone and she does not have lots of things to do at home. She says she sometimes meets her neighbors and spends time with them. As she is at home most of the time, she turns on television when she gets up and turns off it before sleeping although she says she does not watch all of the programs.

From the demographic information, it is possible to infer that women who does not work, or who are retired, namely the ones that spend their time usually at

home are the ones who watch television more in the sample. In addition, women in the elderly group in the sample watch television for at least four hours a day. For the younger age groups, it is seen that age does not affect how much they watch television. Moreover, education level and marital status does not seem to influence the length of television viewing. However, it is also observed that women who work in high positions such as managers, experts spend less time in front of television than women who work in low positions.

After the demographic characteristics of the sample, the findings concerning television watching habits and the details about how the subjects receive female characters on television are explained in detail in the following sections.

The findings derived from the interview data are structured by organizing emerging themes, dimensions and codes. Table 6 presents these themes, dimensions and codes of the study. There are three themes emerged from the interview data, which are television as a relaxation tool, television as a socialization tool, and informal learning while watching television. Under these themes, nine dimensions and thirty three codes are found.

Table 6. Emerging Themes, Dimensions and Codes for Women's Receptions of Female Characters in Television Programs

Themes	Dimensions	Codes
Television as a Relaxation Tool to Occupy Free Time	An activity to Spend Free Time	1. No other activity to do at home 2. Turning off TV before sleeping 3. Watching TV together with others 4. Watching TV while doing housework
	An Activity to Relax	5. To relieve stress 6. To forget daily problems 7. To feel like being in a different world 8. To have fun
	Following Certain Programs	9. To follow soap operas 10. To follow news 11. To follow celebrity news
Television as a Socialization Tool	Socialization through Watching Television	12. To be up to date 13. To learn what is going on in Turkey 14. To learn what is going on in the world 15. To learn about health 16. To watch news related to celebrities
	Socialization with the People Around	17. To share experiences with people around 18. To share an interesting event
Informal Learning While Watching Television	Reception of the Most Favorite and Least Favorite Characters	19. Empathy with the character 20. Identification with the character
		21. Antipathy to the character 22. Total Opposition with the character
	Reception of the Effect of Character on Personal Life and Character as a Role Model	23. Direct effect on the lives of audience 24. Comparison with the character 25. Character as a role model
	Reception of Women Representation on Television	26. Self-sacrificing mother as a positive representation of women 27. Successful, modern, working woman as a positive representation of women 28. Women against stereotypes as a positive representation of women 29. Honor killings as a negative representation of women 30. Rapes as a negative representation of women 31. Women participating in marriage programs as a negative representation of women 32. Love affairs of married women as a negative representation of women 33. Women supporting polygamy for men as a negative representation of women

Television as a Relaxation Tool to Occupy Free Time

In the interview form, there were questions concerning the reasons of watching television in general and watching certain programs. From the ideas expressed by the participants, three emerging common dimensions were structured as watching television in order to spend free time, in order to relax, or in order to follow certain programs.

An Activity to Spend Free Time

Six of the participants explained their reasons to watch television as it is an activity for them to spend their free time at home. All these six participants are the ones who are housewives, retired and unemployed ones, which means that for the women who are at home and does not go out much, television viewing is a prominent activity among other spare time activities.

The first code emerged from their statements was women watch television to spend their time as there are not many other activities to do at home. Fahriye is a retired, sixty-year-old woman. She is divorced. She has two children but both of them are married so she lives alone. In addition, she has been suffering from cancer for two years. She states that she just goes out to go to hospital. Thus, she is at home most of her time. She stated her reason to watch television as “There is nothing to do at home. I watch television in order to spend time.”¹ Similarly, Yeliz who is a housewife at the age of fifty three does not go out a lot. Actually she states that she just goes out to go to bazaar, or market, and sometimes she visits her neighbors. As a result, she is another woman who spends her time at home. She explained her reason to watch television as “When I finish the necessary things I have to do at home, I

¹ “Evde yapacak pek bir şey yok. Vakit geçirmek için televizyon izliyorum”

start watching television. I spend my time.”² Fahriye and Yeliz watch television as they do not have anything to do. Fahriye is retired and Yeliz is a housewife. They are both over fifty and they are both primary school graduates.

In addition to Fahriye and Yeliz, two other participants in the elderly group state that television always works from the time they get up to their sleeping time. Both of these women are in the elderly group in the sample. Ayşen is sixty two years old and she is a housewife so she does not go out a lot. She says that if she had some other activities to do, she would not watch television that much. She spends her time doing housework in general and watching television. She said that “When I get up, I turn on television. It is always open. I turn off it before sleeping. If I had another thing to do, I would not watch this much. I spend my time like this at home.”³ Oya shares the same ideas with Ayşen. She is fifty eight and she is another divorced woman from the sample. She lives alone as her children live away from her. She is at home most of her time and feels lonely so she thinks television helps her to forget her being alone. She stated that “As I am alone, the sound of television fills in the house. I am usually at home. There is nothing much to do. I spend my time.”⁴ Ayşen is a high school graduate. Although Oya is a university graduate, she explains her reason to watch television similarly. Thus, the findings presented above indicate that women who are in the elderly group in the sample and who are at home most of their time spend time watching television whatever their education level is. Watching television is not a hobby or they are not addicted to it, yet as they do not have any other activities to spend time, they are kind of forced to watch it.

² “Evde yapmam gereken şeyleri bitirdikten sonra televizyon izlemeye başlıyorum. Vakit geçiriyorum”

³ “Sabah kalktığımda televizyonu açıyorum. Hep açık. Yatarken kapatıyorum. Başka işim olsa bu kadar izlemem tabii. Evde zaman böyle geçiyor.”

⁴ “Yalnız olduğum için televizyonun sesi evi dolduruyor. Genelde evdeyim. Yapacak pek bir şey yok. Zaman geçiriyorum.”

In addition to watching television as there is no other option at home, women also spend time in front of television with their neighbors as a common activity. Aylin who is at the age of thirty three is unemployed and has five children. Four of them are studying at school but she has a little kid so she has to deal with her children, especially the youngest one. She is another woman who is always at home so she spends time watching television after she finishes housework. In addition, she stated that she and her neighbors watched television together as a common activity. She said that “I am always at home. I spend time with my children but when they are at school, and when I finish the jobs at home, I watch television or I meet my neighbors. Sometimes we watch television together as well.”⁵ As a result, we can say that women watch television together when they meet or visit each other.

Another point derived from the interview data was women watch television while doing housework. Selma who is another unemployed woman spends her time at home while doing housework. She is thirty six years old and has one child. She says that she usually cleans the house in the mornings and cooks in the afternoon. As she is at home most of her time, she stated that “I get up in the morning and do housework for some time. Sometimes I watch television while doing housework, sometimes I turn on after I finish.”⁶

As a result, although their ages and education levels show variety, their occupation and the length of time they spend at home depending on their occupations indicates that the more women stay at home, the more they spend time in front of television. In addition, as four of these women are in the elderly group in the sample,

⁵ “Ben hep evdeyim. Çocuklarımla zaman geçiriyorum ama onlar okuldayken, evdeki işlerim de bitince televizyon izliyorum ya da komşulara gidiyorum. Onlar da televizyon izliyoruz bazen oluyor”

⁶ “Sabah kalkıyorum ve biraz ev işi yapıyorum. Bazen iş yaparken televizyon izliyorum, bazen de bitirince açıyorum”

it is possible to infer that women watch television more when they get old as they spend most of their time unavoidably at home.

An Activity to Relax

For the participants who have at least a bachelor degree, television is a relaxation tool. Six of the participants explained their reasons to watch television as it makes them forget their daily problems or relieve the stress they are exposed to in their working life.

Four participants stated their reasons to watch television as to relieve tiredness, stress and to forget their problems. All of these women are well educated and they work in high positions as managers. Funda is a university graduate and works as a human resources specialist. She claims that she is exposed to stress during the day and she needs an activity to relax in the evenings so she watches television. She also says she is always busy and does not have much time to waste so if she is free, she just watches television for two hours a day. She emphasized that “I usually watch television in order to relieve tiredness. After I come from work, I watch television in order to forget my stress.”⁷ Merve is a university graduate who works as an administrator at a school. She also claims that she comes across many problems during the day and television helps her to forget all these problems. She is married and has one child, so she says that she spends some time with her child as well. She stated that “Just in order to relieve the tiredness and stress of the whole day, namely to forget the turmoil and problems of daily life. I watch television just to rest and relax.”⁸ Lale is an Open University graduate who works as a manager at a bank so she comes home late many times. She cannot find time to watch television as she is

⁷ “Genelde yorgunluğumu atmak için izliyorum. Yani işten geldikten sonra stresimi, stresimi unutmak için izliyorum”

⁸ “Sadece bütün günün yorgunluğunu, stresini atmak yani günlük hayatın hengâmesini, problemlerini unutmak için. Sadece dinlenmek ve rahatlamak için televizyon seyrediyorum”

also very busy. She watches television to forget her daily problems. She said that “I watch television to rest and make my mind free of stress.”⁹ Dilara has a master degree and she works as a manager at a company so she is also very busy. She comes home late and as she is married and has one child, she spends time with her family as well. She specified her reason to watch television as “I watch television in order to be away from the problems of daily life for some time. I have a stressful working life. When I go home I watch television to escape from those things. Namely, to relieve my tiredness and forget my stress.”¹⁰ All in all, women who work in high positions and who are well educated watch television to forget their daily problems and to relax. As they are very busy and work for long hours, they also do not have much time to watch television.

In addition to these women, one participant also expressed her reason in a similar way, yet she also mentioned her wish to escape from her reality. Şeyda is a teacher and she also says she has a stressful working life. She wants to be away from all these problems in the evenings and forget them. She explained her reason to watch television as “In order to forget my problems. The whole day I am exposed to stress. I feel like I am in a different world when I watch television.”¹¹

The last point emerged from the data was watching television to have fun. The youngest participant of the sample stated her watching six or seven hours a day as to have fun. Sinem is a university student and it's her first year in Istanbul so she does not know many people in this city. As a result, I think she watches television

⁹ “Dinlenmek ve kafamı stresten uzak tutmak için televizyon izliyorum”

¹⁰ “Günlük hayatın problemlerinden biraz olsun uzaklaşmak için izliyorum. Stresli bir çalışma hayatım var. Eve gittiğimde de bütün bunlardan uzaklaşmak için televizyon izliyorum. Yani biraz olsun yorgunluğumu atmak ve stresimi unutmak için”

¹¹ “Sorunlarımı unutmak için. Bütün gün strese maruz kalıyorum. Televizyon izlediğim zaman farklı bir dünyadaymışım gibi hissediyorum”

more than people of the same age. She said that [I watch television in order to have fun and relax.]¹².

As a result, for the well educated women who work in high positions, television is a relaxing tool. Compared to the women who watch television to spend time, it is possible to say that these women have a purpose to watch television and they want to escape from their daily routine whereas for the women who watch television to spend time, watching television could be regarded as their routine.

Following Certain Programs

In addition to the reasons stated above, some of the working participants explained their reasons to watch television as they want to follow some certain programs so they watch television.

Semra is cleaner at a school and she says that she has two boys that she spends her whole time with after work. She complained about not having enough time for anything in her life and she said she just watched television to follow her favorite soap opera. She said that “I like watching *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* since I watch it as a mother. It is a drama of a mother. She protects her children despite every difficulty. There is a father who is unconcerned. A cheated mother. I like to watch mother’s holding on to the life.”¹³ Likewise, Ayla is a cleaner and she says she has two children so she does not have much time to waste in front of television. She affirmed that “I can’t watch television all the time. There are some programs I like. Other than that I don’t watch television.”¹⁴ Another participant who has different characteristics compared to Semra and Ayla, gave the same reason to watch

¹² “Eğlenmek ve rahatlamak için televizyon izliyorum.”

¹³ “Bir anne olarak *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* dizisini izliyorum. Bir annenin dramı. Çocuklarına her zorluğa rağmen sahip çıkıyor. Umursamaz bir baba var. Aldatılan bir anne. Annenin hayata daha çok bağlanmasını izlemeyi seviyorum”

¹⁴ “Her zaman televizyon izleyemiyorum. Sevdiğim bazı programlar var. Onların dışında televizyon izlemiyorum.

television. Gül is an insurer and she is single. However, she said that she comes home late from work and she is tired most of the time so she does not have much time to watch television. She stated that “Because I like watching some soap operas, news and also celebrity news, I watch television.”¹⁵

These women watch television to follow some programs they like since they do not have much time. Two of them are primary and one is a high school graduate so their education level is also lower than other working ones in the sample. They are also working longer hours than the participants in the sample.

To conclude all the findings related to the reasons to watch television, these following ideas could be mentioned. First of all, women who do not work and spend most of their time at home because they are retired, housewives or unemployed watch television as they do not have any other options. Working women who have at least a bachelor degree watch television in order to relax and forget their daily problems whereas women who are working but with a low education level watch television to follow some certain programs as they do not have much time. Thus, we may infer that the educational backgrounds and the employment status of the participants have an effect on their receptions of the reasons to watch television. When these reasons are compared in terms of age, it is observed that all the elderly women in the sample watch television to spend their free time.

Television as a Socialization Tool

During the interview, the participants of the study were asked questions related to socialization that television brought to their lives. The questions were about if they thought they kept in touch with the world with the help of television in any ways. From their statements, it was deduced that television was regarded to be a

¹⁵ “Bazı dizileri, haber ve magazin programlarını izlemeyi sevdiğim için televizyon izliyorum.”

socialization tool by the participants in two ways. The emergent dimensions regarding to these questions were structured as socialization through watching television and socialization with the people around.

Socialization through Watching Television

Eight participants included newscasts, health programs and celebrity news programs in the lists of programs that they watched continuously. They explained their reasons to follow these programs as they would like to be up to date and learn what is going on in Turkey and around the world.

Watching newscasts was mentioned by seven of them. Şeyda is a teacher and she comes home early and as she does not have time to read newspapers during the day, she watches newscasts. She wants to be up to date. She summarized the situation as

When I first go home I cannot feel relaxed without watching the newscasts. My television watching process starts at 7 o'clock. Even while I am preparing meal, television is always turned on. I watch newscasts to be up to date. We work during the whole day and we can't read the newspapers a lot. Whenever I watch newscasts, I think that I get information from the world and Turkey.¹⁶

Getting information from the world is also important for Lale. She is a manager at a bank and she says she works for long hours. During the day she does not have time to read newspapers. She explained her reason to watch newscasts as "If I catch, I watch newscasts in order to get information from the world."¹⁷

Sinem explained her reason for watching newscasts in a similar way, yet she is in a different situation from Şeyda and Lale. Sinem is a student and she does not work. Different from others she has time to read newspapers, but she says she does

¹⁶ "İlk eve gittiğim zaman haber bültenlerini izlemeden rahat edemiyorum. Saat 7'de başlıyor benim haber izleme sürecim. Yemek yaparken bile televizyon bir yerde açık olur. Haberleri gündemden haberdar olmak için izliyorum. Bütün gün çalışıyoruz hani gazeteleri falan pek okuyamıyoruz. Ne zaman haberleri izlesem dünyadan, Türkiye'den bilgi aldığımı düşünüyorum"

¹⁷ "Yetişebilirim, haberleri izliyorum dünyadan haber almak için"

like reading newspapers a lot. Instead she prefers watching television to learn the news. She stated that “I watch newscasts as well. I want to learn what is going on in Turkey and in the world.”¹⁸

Similar to Sinem, Oya has also time to read newspapers. She is retired and she lives alone. She spends most of her time at home. However, she says she cannot read newspapers because of the problem in her eyes. She prefers watching television instead. She said that “I watch newscasts every day. It is necessary to be up to date all the time. We should know what is happening around us.”¹⁹

Aylin also explains the situation similarly although she is very different from the others mentioned above. Aylin is unemployed and she is illiterate so she does not have a chance to read newspapers. She does not have any other options than watching television to learn the news. She said that “Sometimes I watch newscasts, I learn what happens.”²⁰

Yeliz is a housewife and she is in the elderly group in the sample. She says she sometimes watch television to learn about the world, yet differently she adds health programs to the program list she watches. As she is fifty three, she is sensitive about her health and she stated that “I watch newscasts to get news and I watch Doctors program. Every day they talk about a different illness. Professors talk.”²¹ Similarly, Fahriye who is sixty years old and a retired woman said that “I watch Doctors program every morning. They talk about illnesses. It is very nice. I learn many things. I feel like I go to doctor and talk with the doctor.”²²

¹⁸ “Haberleri de izliyorum. Türkiye’de ve dünyada neler olduğunu öğrenmek istiyorum”

¹⁹ “Her gün haberleri izliyorum. Gündemi takip etmek gerekir. Etrafımızda neler oluyor bilmemiz lazım”

²⁰ “Bazen haberleri izliyorum dünyadan haber almak için”

²¹ “Haberleri izliyorum dünyadan haber almak için ve Doktorlar programı izliyorum. Her gün başka bir hastalık hakkında konuşuyorlar. Profesörler konuşuyor”

²² “Her sabah Doktorlar programını izliyorum. Hastalıkları konuşuyorlar. Çok güzel. Çok öğreniyorum. Doktora gitmiş, doktorla konuşmuş gibi hissediyorum”

Another program that was mentioned in the interviews was celebrity news. Gül is twenty five and she says she likes learning about famous people. She said that “I also watch celebrity news. I like watching news related to celebrities.”²³

According to the results, health programs are watched mostly by housewives who are over the age of 50 as they would like to learn more about health issues. Newscasts are watched by women from different educational levels and ages. However, some educated women in the sample of the study did not refer to the newscasts or any other informational programs as programs they follow. And as a last point, celebrity news is watched by young single women.

Socialization with the People Around

In addition to watching television to socialize, another point emerged from the data is women also socialize with the help of television by talking about television content with the people around. All of the participants stated that they talked about what they had seen on television with at least one person around them. The people they shared their experiences with were family members, friends, neighbors or colleagues. Whereas some of them said that they talked about television programs when there was something interesting happened, some stated that the content of television programs was the only topic they talked about during the day.

Gül gave high importance to television in her socialization process at work. She claimed that the content of television programs was the only topic they talked at work. She is an insurer and she says she and her workmates work in an office without getting in touch with other people. She summarized the situation as “Of

²³ “Magazin haberlerini de izliyorum. Ünlüler hakkındaki haberleri izlemek hoşuma gidiyor”

course we talk about. We always review that soap opera at work. Of course we talk about; even I can say that it is the only topic we talk about.”²⁴

Merve is another woman who talks about what she sees on television with her workmates although she has a different work environment. She is an administrator at a school and she gets in touch many people during the day. However, she said that she always talked about the content of television with her workmates. She said that “Yes, for example I always say that I like the grandmother in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*. Because she is very old but she has a logic that can’t be expected from a person of that age. She is both modern and traditional [...] I always talk about these with my friends.”²⁵

Dilara is another administrator who talks about television programs with her workmates, yet she stated that this sharing is just an enjoyment for them. It has no importance to them. She stated that “Yes we talk about the things happened the day before because we follow certain programs but it is a pleasure of that moment for enjoyment.”²⁶

As a student, Sinem also shares what she has seen on television with her friends at school. She said that “Yes, we talk about what happened to the character in that week, for example.”²⁷

Ayla is another working woman who shares what she sees on television with her workmates although she states that she does not have much chance, she talks about the content of television programs. She is a cleaner so she does not work

²⁴ “ Tabii ki konuşuyoruz. İş yerinde o dizinin kritiğini yapıyoruz. Tabii ki konuşuyoruz, hatta konuştuğumuz tek konu diyebilirim”

²⁵ “Evet mesela *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* dizisindeki babaanneyi sevdiğimi çok söylüyorum. Çünkü çok yaşlı ama o yaştan beklenmeyecek bir mantığı var. Hem modern hem geleneksel, ikisini birleştirmiş [...] Arkadaşlarımla bunları hep konuşuyorum”

²⁶ “Evet bir gün önce olanlar hakkında konuşuyoruz çünkü belli programları takip ediyoruz fakat eğlence için, o anın keyfi”

²⁷ “Evet, o hafta o karaktere ne olmuş, onu konuşuyoruz”

together with other people. She said that she was responsible for one floor at the building she was working and she is alone there. She summarized the situation as “I don’t have lots of chance but we talk sometimes with my workmates. If I watch with somebody, we comment on that character, of course.”²⁸

Selma is another cleaner who shares the content with the people around, yet differently she also talks to her relatives. She stated that “I can’t see lots of people but we talk of course. For example, I got two questions from my mother-in-law and colleague about what I would do if you were Cemile. I said I would definitely do what she did. Most probably it would be like that. Because there are children. It is not possible to neglect them.”²⁹

Other than these working women, women who do not work also stated that they were sharing what they saw on television with the people around. However, they talk to their neighbors or family members, which is different from the working ones. In addition, as a researcher, when I compared these unemployed women with the employed ones, I observed that working women were more enthusiastic while talking about their sharing experiences. They were kind of embarrassed as they felt that they confessed something secret. However, housewives and unemployed women were not as excited as working women while talking about this socialization.

Fahriye who is retired has been suffering from cancer for two years so she does not meet lots of people. She said that “I don't meet lots of people. This illness is

²⁸ “Çok fazla şansım olmuyor ama bazen iş arkadaşlarımla konuşuyorum. Eğer birisiyle birlikte izliyorsam, o karakter üzerine yorum yapıyoruz tabii”

²⁹ “Çok fazla insan göremiyorum ama konuşuyoruz tabii. Mesela bana iki tane soru gelmişti, kayıvalidemden ve iş arkadaşımdan sen Cemile’nin yerinde olsan ne yapardın diye. Ben de kesinlikle Cemile’nin yaptığını yapardım dedim. Çünkü çocuklar var. Onları göz ardı etmek mümkün değil”

difficult. Sometimes I meet my neighbors, we talk. I talk to my daughters. We also talk while we are watching together.”³⁰

Yeliz is a housewife at the age of fifty three and she is a big fan of health programs. She stated that “We talk about Doctors program. I talk to everybody about what is said in that program. Sometimes I talk to my daughter about Feriha's mother. We already talk while watching. Other than that I don't talk to lots of people.”³¹

Ayşen is another housewife who shares the content of television programs with her neighbors. She said that “Well, we talk. With my neighbors, for example. We sometimes talk about what happened in that week but not a lot.”³²

Oya is retired and she does not see lots of people during the day. When she meets her neighbors, she shares the content. She said that “Yes, after that week's episode, we talk to each other, especially with my neighbors. We talk about negative characters more.”³³

Semra is a housewife who also talks about the content but not after watching the programs like the others, she said that they talked while watching. She stated that “Yes, of course, we talk especially while watching.”³⁴

In addition to the participants that claim they usually talk about what they have seen on television, there are other ones that say they just talk when something interesting happens. Funda is a twenty nine years old woman who is ambitious about her career. She wanted to make it clear that she had more important activities in her

³⁰ “Çok fazla insanla görüşmüyorum. Bu hastalık zor. Bazen komşularıyla görüşüyorum, konuşuyoruz. Kızlarımla konuşuyorum. Beraber izlerken de konuşuyoruz.”

³¹ “Doktorlar'ı konuşuyoruz. O programda ne denirse ben herkese söylüyorum. Bazen kızımın Feriha'nın annesini konuşuyoruz. İzlerken zaten konuşuyoruz. Ondan başka çok fazla insanla konuşmuyorum.”

³² “Yani konuşuyoruz. Komşularıyla mesela. İşte o hafta ne olduysa onları konuşuyoruz bazen ama yani o kadar çok değil.”

³³ “Evet o bölüm geçtikten sonra konuşuyoruz, özellikle komşularla. Olumsuz karakterler hakkında daha çok konuşuyoruz.”

³⁴ “Evet tabii konuşuyoruz, özellikle izlerken”

life other than watching television. She talks about television content when something interesting happen. She stated that “No, actually I don’t have time to talk about these. I work hard. If there is something very attractive, we may talk about it.”³⁵

Lale is a manager at a bank, so she is another woman who says that she does not have time to talk about television apart from sharing interesting events. She said that “Not a lot. We don’t have a lot of chance to talk about them. If I see something interesting, I sometimes talk to my nephew or sister.”³⁶

Şeyda is a teacher and she says she has a social environment to share television content since according to her, all her colleagues watch television a lot. Unlike Funda and Lale, she wanted to make it clear that television was important in her life. She accepted that they talked about television but she also added they certainly talked when something interesting happens. And also, she and her husband share their ideas while watching television. She summarized the situation as

Yes, we absolutely talk, especially if something interesting happens, we certainly review that soap opera when we come to work in the morning. My husband also follows a lot. We also talk while watching together. Namely, we talk about the clothes, behaviors of that character. If there is something that we miss, I watch it on the Internet later.³⁷

From the findings presented above, it is possible to deduce that different education levels, ages, or social environments do not affect the socialization process through television. Whether they have a high level of education or not, whether they are young, middle aged or elderly, whether they work or not, women share their

³⁵ “Yok bunları konuşacak vakit olmuyor genelde. Yani yoğun çalışıyorum. Yani ancak çok etkileyici bir olay olacak da ancak konuşuruz sanırım”

³⁶ “Çok fazla değil. Bunlar hakkında konuşma şansım pek yok. Eğer ilginç bir şey görürsem, yeğenimle ya da ablamla konuşuyorum bazen”

³⁷ Evet konuşuyoruz mutlaka. Özellikle ilginç bir şey olduysa sabah işe geldiğimizde bir kritiğini mutlaka yapıyoruz. Benim eşim de çok takip ediyor. Onunla da birlikte izlerken konuşuyoruz. Yani o karakterin kıyafeti, davranışları hakkında konuşuyoruz. Kaçırdığımız bir şey olursa da internetten mutlaka izliyorum.

receptions of television content with the people around them. However, as a researcher, I came up with two striking results after I compared their answers and my observations during the interviews. First of all, women who are employed and women who are housewives, unemployed or retired ones regard this socialization process differently. Women who are working state that they share television content with the people around all the time whereas the others say that they sometimes share it. This could be because of the number of people both groups of women see during the day. Working women come together more people than unemployed ones or housewives. Secondly, among working women, the ones who work in low positions state that they share television content with others less than women in higher positions. This might be a result of time spent with other people at work. Women in high positions may contact their workmates more than women in low positions.

Informal Learning While Watching Television

The main aim of this study which is to find out how women viewers receive female characters on television was analyzed in this section. In the interview form, there were four questions related to most favorite female character and four questions concerning least favorite female character. The answers given to these questions were structured under the following dimensions: reception of the most favorite and least favorite characters, reception of the effect of character on personal life and character as a role model, reception of women representation on television.

Reception of the Most Favorite and Least Favorite Characters

After the analysis of the answers given to the related questions, two common codes emerged from the data: empathy and identification with the character and antipathy and total opposition with the character.

Empathy and Identification with the Character

The answers for the most favorite character showed that all the participants liked a character that they could empathize in terms of living conditions, life style, and how they regarded what was going on around them. All the participants established identification with the character they saw on television.

Six of the participants whose ages range from 31 to 62 and who are married and all have at least 1 child stated that their favorite character was ‘Cemile’ who was a middle-aged woman and tried to go on her life with her four children after she got divorced with her husband in the soap opera *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*.

Semra, a cleaner who is married with two children is thirty one years old. She has a very special relationship with the character Cemile in this soap opera. Like Cemile she has children and she is not very well educated so she claims she builds identification very easily. In that soap opera, Cemile suffers a lot and struggles for her children. Semra likes her a lot as she is a self-sacrificing mother. She compares herself with her. She explained the situation as

I like Cemile. At first, she was a mother, housewife with four children who is waiting her husband at home. Her situation is because of the frustration that love brings. After she was cheated, she woke up to herself. But she is the same Cemile who does not concede herself, does not concede from her being a housewife, works because she has to. If her financial situation was good, for example if she had a house, a car, she would not work and leave her little child Osman. She is a model mother. Her children come before everything else.³⁸

³⁸ “Cemile’yi seviyorum. İlk başlarda kocasını evde bekleyen dört çocuk sahibi anne, ev kadını. O durumu biraz sevginin verdiği eziklikten kaynaklanan bir şey. Aldatıldıktan sonra kendine geliyor. Kendinden ödün vermeyen, ev kadınlığından ödün vermeyen, çalışmak zorunda olduğu için çalışan.

Ayla, a cleaner who is married with two children is also in the similar age group with Cemile, the character. She also likes her as she protects her children. She said that “I like Cemile. She tries to protect her children. Her husband cheated on her. But she did not give up. She started to work to make a living after she got divorced. For example, she did not let her children work. She forced them to go on their schools. Actually she is a very strong woman.”³⁹

Ayşen is older than Cemile but she likes her for the same reasons mentioned by Selma and Ayla. Ayşen, a housewife who is married with one child said that “I like Cemile. She is a combatant woman. She protects her children. She is also very beautiful. I also have a daughter. She is a model for us.”⁴⁰

Fahriye likes the same character but because of another reason. She is a retired officer who is divorced with two children. Both of her children got married so she lives alone and she has been suffering from cancer for two years. She likes Cemile’s struggle against life as she needs to struggle against her illness. She stated that “I like Cemile. Cemile is a lady. She is beautiful. She had lots of trouble but she does not give up. Of course for her children. As I am ill now, she makes me feel good. I should not also give up. Namely she is brave and her being like that impresses me.”⁴¹

Oya who is another divorced women living alone likes the same character with a similar reason. She is a retired engineer who is divorced. She has children like

Maddi durumu iyi olsaydı, atıyorum bir evi, arabası olsaydı yine çalışmaz Osman’ı küçük oğlunu bırakmazdı. Cemile bu konuda örnek bir anne. Çocukları her şeyden önce geliyor.”

³⁹ “Cemile’yi beğeniyorum. Çocuklarını korumaya çalışıyor. Kocasını onu aldattı. Fakat o vazgeçmedi. Boşandıktan sonra hayatını kazanmak için çalışmaya başladı. Mesela çocuklarının çalışmasına izin vermedi. Onları okullarına devam etmeleri için zorladı. Aslında çok güçlü bir kadın.”

⁴⁰ “Cemile’yi seviyorum. Yani mücadeleci bir kadın. Çocuklarına sahip çıkıyor. Çok da güzel. Yani benim de kızım var. Örnek oluyor bize.”

⁴¹ “Cemile’yi seviyorum. Cemile hanımefendi biri. Güzel bir kadın. Başına bir sürü şey geliyor. Ama hiç pes etmiyor. Çocukları için tabi. Yani ben şimdi hasta olduğum için bana iyi geliyor. Ben de pes etmemeliyim. Yani cesur bir kadın ve onun o hali beni etkiliyor.”

all the women who love Cemile in the sample. Being alone is difficult for Oya so she stated that “Actually there are always women characters in the soap operas I watch. I can’t say that all of them are nice but there are some characters I like. I like Cemile most I think. She has a survivor spirit. Although she is alone, she tries to make a living with her four children. She doesn’t swallow her pride.”⁴²

Yeliz, a housewife who is married with two children, likes another character but explains her reasons to like that character in a similar way that Semra, Fahriye, Ayşen, Ayla, Selma, and Oya expressed. Like all the other Cemile fans, she says her children are the most important things in her life. Although they are old enough to take care of themselves, she states that they are always her little babies and she will look after them till she dies. Because she is a mother, she also likes another mother character. She described her favorite character as “I like Feriha’s mother. She is a miserable woman. She is in a struggle of life. She struggles for her children. She works and struggles for her home. To make her daughter climb the ladder in life, she quarrels with her husband if needed. I have a daughter as well. She does not want her daughter to be like her.”⁴³

Other than the participants who like Cemile as a self-sacrificing mother, five of the participants whose ages range from 26 to 45 and who all had at least an undergraduate degree stated that they all like women who are represented as educated and modern on television. Funda, a human resources specialist who is single stated that

⁴² “Aslında seyrettiğim dizilerde hep kadın karakterler var. Hepsi de güzel diyemem ama sevdiğim karakterler var. En çok Cemile’yi seviyorum sanırım. Savaşçı bir ruhu var onun. Tek başına kalmasına rağmen dört çocuğuyla geçinmeye çalışıyor. Gururunu da ayaklar altına sermiyor böyle.”

⁴³ “Feriha’nın annesini seviyorum. Garip kadın. Hayat mücadelesi içinde. Çocukları için çırpınıyor. Evi için yuvası için çalışıyor çabalıyor. Kızı iyi yerlere gelsin diye gerekirse kocasıyla takışıyor. Benim de bir kızım var. Kızı da kendisi gibi olmasın istiyor.

I like Nurgül Yeşilçay. She is a very beautiful woman. I think she is successful. She acts in Aşk ve Ceza soap opera. I like the love affair that they have in that soap opera. Nurgül Yeşilçay does not leave her loved one despite everything, *töre* (all the rules and customs), and difficulties. She is a young, successful, modern woman in that soap opera but she falls in love with a *ağa* (master of a specific community) but that man is also modern of course. He got educated abroad.⁴⁴

Lale is a manager at a bank. She is single at the age of thirty eight. She likes a female character that is represented as a successful woman in her career. In addition to having a successful career, she also likes this character as she has a successful marriage life as well. She thinks having a successful working life and a good marriage are two important things in life for a woman. She said that

There is a soap opera called Çocuklar Duymasın. I like the character Meltem there. I like everything about her such as her way of talking, her attitude and her beauty, her wearing style and clothes, her role in the soap opera. She is a soft and easy-going character. She sometimes quarrels with her husband but they love each other very much. In fact, beyond each argument there is the love issue. And I think this soap opera is educating people. In each episode, it focuses on a different current issue and talks about it and tries to educate people.⁴⁵

Other than single ambitious participants who want to be promoted and be successful in their careers, some married ones also like characters who are represented as modern and successful in television programs. These women are well educated and they are working. Dilara, a manager in a company who is married with one child said that

I like women who are represented powerful in soap operas and television programs. I like Gülse Birsel in Avrupa Yakası as a person and her position in life. Aslı as a character was a funny one but she was a modern townswoman

⁴⁴ “Nurgül Yeşilçayı seviyorum. Çok güzel bir kadın. Başarılı bence. Aşk ve Ceza dizisinde oynuyor. Orada onların yaşadığı aşkı seviyorum. Nurgül Yeşilçay da her şeye rağmen bütün o töre, zorluklara rağmen sevdiğini bırakmıyor. Genç, başarılı, modern bir kadın o dizide ama ağa olan birini seviyor. Ama adam da modern tabi. Yurtdışında eğitimini almış.”

⁴⁵ “Çocuklar Duymasın diye bir dizi var. Oradaki Meltem karakterini seviyorum. Pınar Altuğ oynuyor. O karakterin her şeyini beğeniyorum. Konuşması, davranışı, güzelliği her şeyi hoşuma gidiyor. Kıyafetleri, giyinişi, dizideki rolü her şeyi hoşuma gidiyor. Yumuşak, ılımlı bir kadın. Yani kocasıyla çatışıyorlar ama birbirlerini çok seviyorlar. Hep çatışmaların ardında sevgiden kaynaklanan bir durum var. Ve o dizi çok fazla eğitim veriyor. Her bölümde bir şeyi vurguluyor, bir şey anlatıyor ve insanları eğitmeye çalışıyor.”

who could stand on her feet. If necessary, she can make fun of life. She had a nice circle of friends. And I think she was a very pretty character and I always watched her with admiration. I also like Gülse Birsal. I like her as she makes humor as a woman. I think she is intellectual and I really think that she has a brilliant background. Because of these, I liked that character, both Aslı and Gülse Birsal.⁴⁶

Şeyda, a teacher at the age of twenty six likes a woman who is a university student in a soap opera. She likes that character as she is educated and a strong woman image.

She said that

I like the character Berrin in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* soap opera. I like her because of her love affair with Ahmet. She loves Ahmet so much that she can even leave him for his goodness. She's performing a strong woman role for me. She is strong, smart, knows what to do, and at the same time she protects her mother. She studies law at university. When her father raped her mother, Cemile did not want to file a claim with the prosecutor but she took her mother to the prosecutor and had her file a claim. Because she is educated and knows what to do. Also, there she symbolizes a strong woman image and she is a model for this, I think.⁴⁷

The participants who are all well educated and work in high positions would like to see women characters represented as modern in opposition to the participants who are housewives and unemployed ones. However, although they like different characters, there is a common point between working women and housewives, which is they all like characters that have similar characteristics or that have similar life conditions with them. Nevertheless, there are other points emerged from the data.

Merve, is the first example of this. She loves a character that has a very different life

⁴⁶ “Ben dizilerde ve televizyon programlarında güçlü yansıtılan kadınları seyrediyorum. Kişi olarak, duruş olarak ben Gülse Birsal’i çok beğenmişim Avrupa Yakası dizisinde. Aslı karakteri komik bir karakterdi ama kendi ayakları üzerinde durabilen modern, şehirli bir kadındı. Gerektiğinde tiye alabiliyordu hayatı. Güzel bir arkadaş çevresi vardı. Ve bence çok tatlı bir karakterdi ve ben onu her zaman çok beğenerek izledim. Gülse Birsal’i de ayrıca beğeniyorum. Bir kadın olarak mizah yapabildiği için beğeniyorum. Entelektüel olduğunu düşünüyorum. Gerçekten parlak bir öz geçmişi olduğunu düşünüyorum. O yüzden de o karakteri beğenmişim. Hem Aslı’yı hem de Gülse Birsal’i.”

⁴⁷ “Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki dizisindeki Berrin’i seviyorum. Onu sevmemin nedeni de açıkçası Ahmet’le olan ilişkileri. Yani öyle çok seviyor ki Ahmet’i onun iyiliği için vazgeçebilir. Güçlü bir kadın karakterini canlandırıyor benim için. Güçlü, akli başında, ne yaptığını bilen, aynı zamanda annesine sahip çıkan. Annesinin olaylarında mesela sürekli annesini destekledi. Üniversite hukuk okuyor. Babası annesine tecavüz ettiği zaman, annesi Cemile şikayetçi olmak istemedi ama o annesinin kolundan tuttu savcılığa götürdü, şikayet etmesini sağladı. Çünkü eğitilmiş ve ne yapacağını biliyor. Orada da güçlü bir kadın imajı çiziyor ve buna örnek oluyor bence.”

style than her. Merve is an administrator at a school who is married with one child. She is thirty four years old and she is well educated. She mentions a grandmother in a soap opera as her favorite character. Although the character she likes is very different from her, she actually likes her with similar reasons of working participants of the sample. She finds that grandmother very modern and she thinks that grandmother is a very good model for the women. Merve suffers from looking after her child and going on her career at the same time. As she needs a supporter like that character so she said that

I like the grandmother in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* soap opera. Because I like her protecting the family, helping them. She is a very reasonable grandmother despite that age. She is very old but very reasonable, she has very contemporary thoughts. She always protects her children, finds very sensible solutions and as a grandmother who catches up with the age, I like her.⁴⁸

The other three participants all showed a different character as their favorite female characters but all referred to a character they can make an analogy with themselves. Gül, an insurer who is single mentioned her love story while talking about her favorite character. Gül said that she also loved somebody very much like her favorite character so she felt the same things again. She said that

I loved Bihter. I admire her love affair with Behlül. They loved each other a lot. But Bihter was braver than Behlül. She was fearless. She tried to escape for many times but Behlül did not go with her. It became worse later on. She seems more honest to me. She is also very beautiful. Namely her trying to protect her love impressed me. Once, I also loved somebody a lot like Bihter.⁴⁹

Aylin is another participant who makes analogy with her favorite character. Aylin is Kurdish and she likes a Kurdish character. She is illiterate although she is very

⁴⁸ “Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki dizisindeki babaanneyi çok seviyorum. Çünkü o babaannenin ailesine böyle kol kanat girmesi, onlara yardımcı olması. Çok mantıklı bir babaanne o yaşa göre. Bayağı yaşlı ama çok mantıklı, çok modern görüşleri var. Sürekli çocuklarına sahip çıkıyor, çok mantıklı çözümler buluyor, çağı yakalamış bir babaanne modeli olarak çok hoşuma gidiyor.”

⁴⁹ “Bihter’i sevmiştim. Behlül ile olan aşkına bayılıyorum. Onlar birbirlerine çok aşık oldular. Ama Bihter Behlül’den daha cesurdu. Gözü karaydı. Kaç kere kaçmaya çalıştı ama Behlül onunla gitmedi. Sonra daha kötü oldu. Daha dürüstmüş gibi geliyor bana. Çok da güzel. Yani aşkına sahip çıkması beni etkilemişti. Ben de bir keresinde Bihter gibi birisine çok aşık olmuşum.”

young, just thirty three years old. She feels very embarrassed while talking about her illiteracy. She grew up in the east part of Turkey and her parents did not send her to school. She got married at a very early age and she has five children now. She likes a Kurdish character who tries to change the established rules in the east part of Turkey. She described her favorite character as

In the mornings there is a soap opera related to *töre* (all the rules and customs) in the east. It talks about *töre*. It was a soap opera filmed in Mardin. I like Sıla in that soap opera. She tries to change *töre*. In the east women are behaved badly. That soap opera shows all of these. So I like it. For example, I could not go to school. Sıla tries to establish a school in Mardin and asks people to send their children to school.⁵⁰

Sinem, a university student at the age of nineteen referred to a university student as her most favorite character. She stated that “I like Feriha. She loves Emir very much and he also likes her very much. I like their love. And also she is poor but she studied a lot and won a very good university. She is successful and beautiful so she is my favorite character.”⁵¹

From the findings presented above, it is possible to say that educational level has an effect on women’s reception of the favorite characters. Women with a high level of educational background prefer to see modern and educated female characters on television whereas women with a low level of education prefer to watch women who are represented as good mother, good wives and self-sacrificing themselves for the people around them, namely, women who seem more traditional when compared to the former one. Moreover, all the women make an analogy with themselves with

⁵⁰ “Sabahları törelerle ilgili bir dizi var. Töreleri anlatıyor. Mardin’de çekilmiş bir dizi. Sıla. O dizideki Sıla’yı seviyorum. Töreleri değiştirmeye çalışıyor. Doğuda kadınlara kötü davranılıyor. Bu dizi bunların hepsini gösteriyor. Ondan seviyorum. Mesela ben okula gidemedim. Sıla Mardin’de bir okul yapmaya çalışıyor ve oradaki insanlardan çocuklarını okula göndermelerini istiyor.”

⁵¹ “Ben Feriha’yı seviyorum. O Emir’i çok seviyor ve Emir de onu çok seviyor. Ben onların aşkını çok beğeniyorum. Ve ayrıca o fakir fakat çok çalışmış ve iyi bir üniversiteyi kazanmış. O başarılı ve güzel bu yüzden o benim favori karakterim.”

different reasons. As a result, the researcher concluded that their backgrounds might affect their receptions of favorite characters.

Antipathy and Total Opposition with the Character

In addition to their most favorite characters, the participants of the study were asked questions related to their least favorite characters on television as well. The common codes emerged from their answers showed that all the participants disliked the characters that could not empathize with or the characters that live just in an opposite way when compared to their own life styles.

First of all, seven participants of this study referred to a character that they have similar life conditions but could not empathize with because of their unacceptable behaviors. Ayşen is a housewife who is sixty years old. She has a daughter. She does not like a character who is a mother like her. Although she has very similar characteristics with the character, she does not like her as that character does not behave properly to her daughter in that soap opera. For the character she does not like Ayşen said that

There is a soap opera called ‘Adını Feriha Koydum’. I watch that soap opera. Well there are many wrong things there. There are many things that I don’t like in Feriha. Namely, the behaviors of mother and father. I didn’t do those kinds of things to my daughter, neither her father nor me. I observe many wrong things in Feriha’s mother. I didn’t push too hard my daughter like that mother.⁵²

Semra is another woman who does not like a character that is similar to her because of her inappropriate behaviors. She hates a woman character who behaves badly. She compares her life and relationships with that character and finds her a very bad image for people. For the character she does not like Semra said that

⁵² “Adını Feriha Koydum diye bir dizi var. Yani izliyorum o diziyi. Yani çok yanlış şeyler var orada. Benim beğenmediğim çok şeyler var Feriha’da. Yani annesinin babasının davranışları. Ben onlar gibi yapmadım kızıma. Ne babası yaptı ne ben. Feriha’nın annesinde çok yanlış şeyler görüyorum. Ben kızıma o anne kadar yüklenmedim.”

Yes, again in the same soap opera. There is an uncle. I don't like his wife. She is the sister-in-law of Cemile. I think sister-in-laws should be like sisters. For example, I have sister-in-laws as well. When I have a problem, she immediately comes and helps me. This sister-in-law in the soap opera is a very bad role model for us. She is very irritating.]"⁵³.

Yeliz who is housewife and a high school graduate does not like a woman who has similar characteristics with her. She does not like that character as she behaves improperly. For the woman she does not like, Yeliz said that

Hımm. I don't like. There is a soap opera called Fatmagül. I don't like Fatmagül's sister-in-law. She is ill-minded. She always says something to Fatmagül. Actually she is very honest. And there is her walking style by showing her boobs. I don't like it. Namely, it is understood what kind of person she is from her walking style. She also deceives her poor husband. I hate her."⁵⁴

Aylin mentioned a character she did not like because of her being bad as well. For the character she does not like, Aylin said that "There is this sister-in-law of Cemile in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*. I am really irritated by her. She behaves very badly to that little boy. Sometimes they leave Osman there. She struggles with that little boy. She is jealous of Cemile. She always says something bad. She is ill-minded."⁵⁵

In addition to these women who do not like the characters that are represented as villains of soap operas, one of the participants, Fahriye mentioned women who attended marriage programs as women she did not like who appeared on television. Fahriye is a retired officer. She is divorced and she is sixty years old. She says she does not want to get married again so she thinks it is not suitable for women to go to

⁵³ "Evet yine aynı diziden. Orada bir amca var. Onun eşini sevmiyorum. Cemile'nin eltisi. Bence eltiler kardeş gibi olmalı. Mesela benim de eltilerim var. Benim bir problemim olduğunda, hemen gelir, bana yardım eder. Bu dizideki elti hepimize çok kötü bir örnek. Çok gıcık."

⁵⁴ "Hımm. Sevmediğim. Fatmagül dizisinde var ya. Hani yengesi Fatmagül'ün. Kadının içi fesat. Yani sürekli laf ediyor Fatmagül'e. Halbuki kız çok dürüst aslında. Ona buna sürekli laf atıyor. İşte bir de yürüyüşü var ya hani şöyle göğüslerini göstere göstere. Hiç hoşuma gitmiyor. Yani ne olduğu anlaşılıyor zaten yürüyüşünden. Zavallı kocasını da kandırıyor. Onu sevmiyorum."

⁵⁵ "Cemile'nin eltisi var. Ondan çok gıcık kapıyorum. O ufak çocuğa öyle kötü davranıyor ya. Osman'ı bazen bırakıyorlar ya. Küçük çocukla uğraşılıyor. Cemile'yi çekemiyor. Sürekli laf sokuyor. İçi fesat."

those marriage programs to get married, especially for the women of the same age as her. She stated that

I don't like women who go to these marriage programs. At that age, one of them says 'Oh, my darling', one of them says something else. Shame on them. After a certain age. A woman breaks up her husband, hates him. All of these have children, grandchildren. How come they go there? One husband was enough for me. I don't look for another one. Especially I don't go on television. I feel embarrassed when I see them like that.⁵⁶

Other than women who do not like the characters they could not empathize with, five of the participants stated that they did not like characters that lead a life just opposite to their life styles and represent women image in a bad way according to their beliefs. Three of these women are well educated and they are working in high positions. The first of them, Merve is an administrator at a school. She does not like the character many participants of this study mentioned as their favorite character before. She does like that character as she is very traditional and very self-sacrificing.

For the character she does not like, Merve stated that

There is a woman that I don't like in the same soap opera. She is Cemile because she thinks very traditionally. Whatever he does, he is my husband, I got married once and I got divorced, I can't have another life. Whereas the grandmother thinks in a very positive and modern way, I am angry with her daughter-in-law as she can't think in a very modern way. Namely, I am angry with her since she could not break her taboos and she could not go beyond her templates. For example, one of her daughters studies law, she knows regulations and law. There are people who show Cemile what to do. I think she is a bad role model.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ "Ben bu evlendirme programlarında çıkan kadınları sevmiyorum. Gelmişler kaç yaşlarına. Biri çıkıyor "ah diyor aşkım" diyor, biri çıkıyor başka bir şey söylüyor. Ayıp yahu. Belli bir yaştan sonra. Kadın kocasından ayrılmış, nefret ediyor. Bunların çocukları, torunları olmuş. Ne yüzle çıkıyorlar. Allah korusun. Bir tanesi yetti bana. Başkasını çıkıp da aramam. Hele televizyona hiç çıkmam. Utanıyorum yani ben onları görünce öyle."

⁵⁷ "Kızdığım bir kadın karakter var yine aynı dizide. Cemile çünkü çok geleneksel düşünüyor. Ne yaparsa yapsın kocam benim, bir kere evlendim boşandım, bir daha bir hayatım olamaz. Babaanne bu kadar pozitif ve modern düşünürken, onun gelini o kadar modern düşünemediği için ona kızıyorum. Yani tabularını yıkamamış olduğu için, kalıpların dışına çıkamadığı için ona kızıyorum. Mesela kızının birisi avukatlık okuyor, kanun hukuk biliyor. Ona yol gösteren insanlar var. Onun kötü bir örnek olduğunu düşünüyorum."

Dilara who has similar characteristics with Merve also points out that she does not like characters that are represented as traditional and uneducated. She is a manager in a company. She regards herself as a successful and modern woman. For the character she does not like, Dilara stated that

I don't like women who speak with Anatolian accent, overwhelmed, whose husbands get married with the second wife, uneducated, and comply with the pressure of their husbands and the conditions life brings and actually I think that these should not be shown on television a lot. People can say that this is the reality of life, there are many women like that, we try to educate people but that woman's suffering throughout the television program or soap opera drives me crazy. I don't think it is correct to continuously impose these characters to both men and women to give a lesson in the end. Again on the top of male-dominated family again men are hegemonic, overwhelmed Anatolian women, I can't stand this. I don't watch these kinds of soap operas.⁵⁸

After summarizing female characters she does not like, Dilara gave an example of this kind of characters. Like Merve, she also talked about the same female character, Cemile. Although Cemile is loved by housewives, unemployed or retired women in my sample, women working as managers and regard themselves as modern hate her. Dilara explained her reasons of not liking Cemile as such

As a woman character I don't like, I can say Cemile in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* soap opera because she I think that the reason of all kinds of disasters that happened to her is herself, her actions, behaviors, and decisions. And actually I can't stand her crying, gripe. I think that she is a character that does not take a lesson from what she experienced and she is a character that can't think a lot. Namely, ok her tragedy is a bit heavy and there are things done for the sake of tragedy but actually I would prefer the character of Cemile, by structuring her in a better way, as a character that could stand on her two feet, who does not go through tortures and events full of tragedies. And she is

⁵⁸ "Ben böyle Anadolu şivesiyle konuşan Anadolulu, ezilen, işte üzerine kuma getirilen vs. ve çok fazla bir eğitimi olmayan, kocasının baskısına hayatın getirdiği koşullara boyun eğmiş kadınları sevmiyorum ve aslına bakarsan bunların televizyonda çok fazla gösterilmemesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Diyebilirler ki bu hayatın gerçeği, Anadolu'da bu kadar çok kadın var işte bir ders veriyoruz, vs. ama o kadının televizyon programı boyunca ya da dizi boyunca çektikleri beni çileden çıkarıyor. Sonunda verilecek bir ders için sürekli olarak bu karakterlerin hem erkeklere hem kadınlara empoze edilmesini ben doğru bulmuyorum. Yine ataerkil ailenin üzerinde yine erkek baskın, ezilen Anadolu kadını ben buna tahammül edemiyorum. Bu tür dizileri izlemiyorum."

continuously making the same mistakes and she always makes me crazy while watching.⁵⁹

Funda is another woman who describes herself as a modern, successful woman in the sample. She works as a human resources specialist in a private company. She is engaged and she is planning to get married in a few months. Related to this, she talks about a mother-in-law that participated in a television show. For the woman she does not like Funda said that

There was one woman that I didn't like. Semra Hanım (mother-in-law). I really don't like her. She was terribly despot. She was a bad model for television. She had many bad experiences in the end. I really didn't like her, for example. Women do not have to be like her when they grow up. My mother is not like her at all. There were also people who liked her. She was an exaggerated character. She is a woman who involves herself in everything and talks too much. I mean, of course there might be people like her but that one doesn't seem real to me.⁶⁰

Lale is another participant who is a manager in the sample. She is thirty eight years old and single. She does not have a boyfriend. She talks about a woman who presents a marriage program as women she does not want to see on television. Lale said that "There is a woman who tries to marry people. I don't know her name. In one of the marriage programs. She dances, she seems very artificial. She is not natural namely. I

⁵⁹ "Beğenmediğim karakter olarak Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki dizisindeki Cemile karakterini sevmiyorum. Çünkü başına gelen her türlü talihsizliğin sebebinin kendisi olduğunu düşünüyorum. Yaptığı hareketler, davranışları ve kararları olduğunu düşünüyorum ve artık onun ağlamalarına, sızlanmalarına dayanamıyorum açıkçası. Ders almayan bir karakter olduğunu düşünüyorum yaşadıklarından ve fazlaca da düşünemeyen bir karakter olduğunu düşünüyorum. Yani tamam dramı biraz ağır, dram olsun diye yapılan şeyler onu da biliyorum ama Cemile karakterinin daha güzel yapılandırılarak ayakları üzerinde kendisi durabilen, eziyetlerin ve dramla dolu olayların içine girmeyecek bir karakter olmasını tercih ederdim açıkçası. Ve sürekli olarak aynı hataları yapıyor ve sürekli olarak televizyon karşısında seyrederken beni deli ediyor."

⁶⁰ "Hiç sevmediğim bir tane kadın vardı. Kaynana Semra Hanım. Onu hiç sevmiyorum. O çok despot bir kadındı. Kötü bir örnekti televizyon için. Bir sürü şey geldi sonunda başına. Onu sevmiyordum mesela. Yani kadınlar yaşlanınca ve kaynana olunca öyle olmak zorunda değil. Benim annem hiç öyle değil. Bir de onu sevenler de vardı. Abartı bir karakterdi. Her şeye karışan, çok konuşan kadın. Yani öyle kadınlar da olabilir ama bana o hiç gerçek gelmiyordu."

don't also understand women who want to get married there. I wonder if they become happy. People should not get married in a way like this.”⁶¹

Oya is divorced and she is fifty eight years old. She talks about a woman who is very different from her. She thinks married women who have love affairs are very negative for women in general, so she summarized her ideas as

The character I like least is Bihter in *Aşk-I Memnu*. Although she is very beautiful, she is a very negative character. She cheats on her husband. She has a love affair with her husband's nephew. I never do something like that and I hope my children do not as well. These are very wrong things. In the end, she already got what she deserved actually.”⁶²

In addition to these participants, the youngest three participants of the study referred to the characters that they do not have similar life styles and they do not approve their behaviors. For the character she does not like, Gül who is twenty five years old and single said that “I, again in the soap opera *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki*, don't like Caroline. I think she is a bad woman. She was already a cheater before. She behaves as if she was in love with Ali Kaptan, but she has no idea about love but Ali Kaptan deserved this.”⁶³

Sinem who is nineteen-year-old student talked about the same character Gül does not like. She said that “I don't like Caroline in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* soap opera. She is a woman who could forget everybody around her for her own benefits

⁶¹ “Hani şu var ya insanları evlendiren bir kadın var. İsmi bilmiyorum. Dans ediyor, çok yapmacık geliyor. Yani doğal değil. Orada evlenmek isteyen kadınları da hiç anlamıyorum. Acaba mutlu olan var mıdır öyle merak ediyorum. İnsanlar bu şekilde evlenmemeli.”

⁶² “En az beğendiğim *Aşk-ı Memnu*'daki Bihter. Çok güzel olmasına rağmen negatif bir karakter. Kocasını aldatıyor. Kocasının yeğniyle yasak aşk yaşıyor. Ben asla öyle bir şey yapmam. Umarım çocuklarımın da başına gelmez. Bunlar çok yanlış şeyler. Sonunda zaten hak ettiğini buluyor zaten.”

⁶³ “Ben yine *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* dizisinde Caroline'i sevmiyorum. Bence kötü bir kadın. Zaten önceden dolandırıcıymış. Ali Kaptan'a aşık gibi davranıyor ama aslında aşktan haberi yok. Ama Ali Kaptan da hakketti bunu.”

and she is a character I don't like because she made one woman split up her husband and made everybody suffer.”⁶⁴

Şeyda who is twenty six years old talked about another woman she does not like because of her improper behaviors. She stated that “Again from the same soap opera, I hate Aylin's cousin Mesude. Because she is unbelievably ill-minded, we can see the examples of this character around us. She is a person who always tries to harm everybody. She is a self-seeker person.”⁶⁵

The findings show that women who have at least a high school degree and do not like women who they think have a life opposite to them seem more critical to the female characters they see on television. They do not like the characters that are loved by many viewers and that are presented as good people in the soap operas, whereas the less educated ones dislike the characters that are clearly presented as villains by the producers. As a result, the researcher concluded that education level might have an influence on the reception of the characters in terms of receiving them as they are presented or receiving them after thinking critically. It is also inferred that age is one of the factors that affect women's receptions of the characters. It is observed that women do not like characters of about the same ages. Another factor that influences the reception of women is marital status or having children or not. Most of the participants do not like female characters of their ages and women who have children do not approve the behaviors of mothers. As a result, it is concluded that age affects their receptions even for the least favorite character.

⁶⁴ “Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki dizisindeki Caroline'i sevmiyorum. Kendi çıkarları için etrafındaki herkesi untabilen bir kadın. Bir kadını kocasından ayırdığı ve herkese acı çektirdiği için sevmediğim bir karakter.”

⁶⁵ “Gene aynı diziden bu Aylin'in kuzeni, Mesude'den nefret ediyorum. Çünkü inanılmaz fesat, etrafımızda da bunun örneklerini görüyoruz. Sürekli herkese kötülük yapmaya çalışan bir insan. Çıkarıcı bir insan.”

Reception of the Effect of Character on Personal Life and Character as a Role Model

The participants of the study were asked some questions about what they thought of the effect of character on their personal life or whether they took any character as a role model in their own lives. All of them remarked that they certainly believed that women on television had an effect on the lives of viewers; however, whereas twelve participants stated that the characters had a direct effect on their lives or they always did comparisons with the characters or took them as role models, three of them said that they could not say they took any character as a role model in their own personal lives.

Semra who is a very big fan of Cemile says that the soap opera is a lesson for her. She learns many things while watching it. She explained the effect of her favorite character on her life with these words

Cemile's going to take her daughter impressed me very much. I thought that I would do the same. Although her daughter is old enough, she regards her as a baby, which is a belief that every mother and father has. Her going to take her impressed me so much. She does not forgive her later. I would not forgive as well. She said to her daughter there 'You don't understand now but later you will regret a lot. I am not angry with you. Come back to your house, why do you want to marry?'. I will definitely take her as a role model in this issue. As I told you before, this soap opera is a kind of lesson for me.⁶⁶

Fahriye who has been suffering from cancer talks about hope that her favorite character gives her and also how she would behave if she was in a similar situation with that character. She stated that

I don't know but somehow she gives hope to me. Because of this illness, I sometimes feel bad but then I say to myself, 'Look there are many other problems in life'. All of these things happen in real life. Life brings many things you can't imagine. But if I were Cemile, I would not oppose when her husband came. At the final point, he is her children's father. He made a

⁶⁶ "Cemile'nin kızını almaya gitmesi beni çok etkilemişti. Ben olsam aynıını yapardım dedim. Kızı büyük olduğu halde hala onu bebek gibi görmesi ki bu her annede babada olan bir şey. Onu o anda gidip alması beni çok etkilemişti. Sonra affetmiyor kızını. Ben de olsam affetmezdim. Orada kızına 'Sen şimdi anlamıyorsun ama daha sonra çok pişman olacaksın. Bak ben sana hiç kızmıyorum. Gel evine, neden evlenmek istiyorsun' dedi. Ben kesinlikle bu konuda Cemile'yi örnek alırım."

mistake but he came back. I would not oppose like Cemile. She is a good woman normally but I would take her as a role model in that issue because what happened later? Her husband raped her. She felt bad. But if she had accepted, it would not be like that.⁶⁷

Şeyda who is twenty six years old loves a character of about the same age. She likes her as she is modern and tries to help her mother. She stated that “I can say that I may take her strong character and her struggle as a model for my life. Her helping her mother is impressive for me. I think every daughter should take her as a role model.”⁶⁸

Merve who tries to grow up her child and be successful in her career at the same time likes the grandmother who helps her daughter-in-law a lot. She states that she needs a person like her so she wishes all the grandmothers took her as role models. She explained the effect of this woman on her life with these words. “Yes, that grandmother clearly has an effect on my life because now I have to grow up my child on my own and I have to work at the same time. And also I have to develop myself academically. I need this kind of support a lot. I want a lot my mother-in-law to take her as a role model and help me.”⁶⁹

Yeliz is a housewife and has a daughter who she talks about a lot. She thinks that her favorite character resembles her and she takes her as a role model. She stated that

⁶⁷ “Bilmiyorum ama bazen bana umut veriyor. Bu hastalık yüzünden ben bazen kötü oluyorum ama sonra diyorum ki kendi kendime ‘Bak ne sorunlar var hayatta. Bunların hepsi gerçek hayatta oluyor. Hayat başına aklına gelmeyen şeyler getiriyor. Ama ben Cemile olsaydım, kocası geldiğinde terslemezdim. Sonunda çocuklarının babası. Hata yapmış ama geri gelmiş. Ben Cemile gibi karşı çıkmazdım. Normalde iyi bir kadın ama orada onu örnek almam çünkü sonra ne oldu? Kocası ona tecavüz etti. Kötü hissetti. Kabul etseydi, böyle olmazdı.”

⁶⁸ “Onun o güçlü karakteri ve mücadelesi bana örnek oluyor diyebilirim. Annesine yardım etmesi benim için çok etkileyici. Bence her kız onu örnek almalı.”

⁶⁹ “Evet, o babaannenin kesinlikle hayatıma etkisi var çünkü ben şu anda tek başıma çocuğumu büyütme zorundayım ve aynı zamanda çalışmam gerekiyor. Hem de akademik olarak kendimi geliştirmem lazım. Bu tür bir desteğe çok ihtiyacım var. Benim kayınvalidemin de onu örnek almasını ve bana yardım etmesini çok isterim.”

The woman is like me in terms of being fond of her daughter and sacrificing herself for the young girl. During my life, I have done the same thing for my children. It's always the same after they are born and grow up, you want them to get married and have their own home. This is our life purpose. Feriha's mother is the same. For example, she tries to prevent Feriha from lying, she behaves like a friend. So I'm trying to be like her.⁷⁰

Ayşen who is a housewife also compares herself with her favorite character. She has a daughter so she takes that character as a role model. She stated that

Of course, I have a daughter as well. I say, for example, how well Cemile behaves her children. But sometimes I blame Cemile for the things related to her husband. Her husband asked her to go the ship and she immediately went there. I think she shouldn't have gone. If I were her, I wouldn't go. Then she stabbed Caroline. There was no need. Of course, she went crazy at that time but I wouldn't do.⁷¹

For her least favorite character, she also compares herself with the character and she said that

As I told you, I compare that mother with myself. I haven't done those kinds of things to my daughter. My daughter is quite reasonable. Namely, there is no need to oppress children that much. For example, once she was going to meet her girlfriend. But the woman does not give permission. Of course, she is afraid of the father. Then Feriha has to tell lies. These are wrong. Actually if they trusted their children, it wouldn't be like this.⁷²

Lale who is a manager at the age of thirty eight thinks that her favorite character is a very beautiful and successful woman and she states that she sometimes wants to resemble her. She said that "I wanted to change my hair style and had my hair cut in

⁷⁰ "Kadını kendime benzetiyorum. Kızına olan düşkünlüğü, onun için kendini feda etmesi. Ben de bu yaşıma kadar hep çocuklarım için çabaladım. Ne oluyor ki zaten çocuklar olduktan sonra büyüsün sonra da evlensin, evi olsun. Yani hayat gailemiz bu. Feriha'nın annesi de öyle. Mesela kızı ona yalan söylemesin diye uğraşiyor. Arkadaş gibi davranıyor. Ben de onun gibi olmaya çalışıyorum."

⁷¹ "Tabi işte dediğim gibi benim de kızım var. Diyorum mesela Cemile ne güzel davranıyor çocuklarına. Ama kocasıyla olan şeylerde bazen Cemile'yi suçluyorum. Yani kocası onu çağırdı mesela gemiye. O da hemen gitti. Bence gitmemeliydi. Ben olsam gitmezdim. Sonra Caroline'ı bıçakladı. Yani ne gerek vardı. Tabi o anda birden çıldırdı ama yine de ben yapmazdım."

⁷² "Dediğim gibi kendimle karşılaştırıyorum o anneyi. Ben hiç öyle yapmadım kızıma. Kızım da gayet akli başında bir kız. Yani o kadar sıkıya gerek yok. Bir keresinde mesela kızı arkadaşıyla buluşmaya gidecek. Ama bir türlü izin vermiyor kadın. Tabi babadan korkuyor. Yani sonra da kızı yalan söylemek zorunda kalıyor. Bunlar çok yanlış şeyler. Aslında çocuklarına güvenseler hiç böyle olmaz."

the same style with her. I like her very much. Whatever she wears suits her. She is also married and a very good mother. Of course I may take her as a role model.”⁷³

Gül who likes a character who has a love affair while being married thinks that she could do the same things that her favorite character did if she was in the same situation. She stated that

There are ones I like their behaviors but I can't really say that I take them as a role model. Of course, I sometimes say that I would behave like Bihter but I don't take her as a role model. Of course, I do comparisons. One event that impressed me was Bihter's shooting herself on the day of Behlül's wedding. She risks her life for the sake of her love. I would do the same.⁷⁴

Selma who is unemployed at the age of thirty six thinks that there is no direct effect of those characters on her life but she compares herself with the character as well. She stated that “There is no effect on my life but sometimes I say that she did fairly well. If I were her, I would do the same.”⁷⁵

Aylin who is unemployed at the age of thirty three also compares herself with her favorite characters. She wants to change the society and as she is illiterate, she wants people to reach schools easily. She summarized her ideas like this "If I were Sıla, I would do the same. I would open a school in my hometown because those places are not like İstanbul."⁷⁶ In addition to being illiterate, Aylin is a mother as well so she also likes a character that is represented as a self-sacrificing mother on television. She explained the reason as “I also like Cemile. If I were Cemile, I wouldn't leave my children like her. But certainly I would do what Cemile did. I

⁷³ “Saç şeklimi değiştirmek ve onunla aynı şekilde kestirmek istemişim. Onu çok beğeniyorum. Ne giyse yakışıyor. Hem de evli ve çok iyi bir anne. Tabii ki onu örnek alabilirim.”

⁷⁴ “Davranışını beğendiklerim var ama onu örnek aldığım birisi yok. Hani Bihter gibi yapardım dediğim oluyor ama örnek alıyorum diyemem. Karşılaştırma yapıyorum tabii. Beni etkileyen olay yani Bihter'in Behlül'ün düğün günü kendini vurması beni çok etkilemişti. Aşk için hayatımı riske atıyor. Ben de aynısını yapardım.”

⁷⁵ “Yani öyle benim hayatıma bir etkisi yok ama bazen de iyi yaptı dediğim oluyor. Ben olsam ben de yapardım dediğim oluyor.”

⁷⁶ “Eğer Sıla'nın yerinde olsaydım, aynısını yapardım. Memleketimde bir okul açardım çünkü oralar İstanbul gibi değil.”

would work and look after my children. I would make them dependent on anybody. I have children as well. I compare unavoidably. It is needed to be like her.”⁷⁷

Sinem who is a university student says that she is not affected by the characters on television but her mother sometimes gives advice by using the characters. She said that “I sometimes feel sorry for the characters in the soap operas as if it was real life. I do not take any role model but I guess I am affected sometimes. But my mother, for example, sometimes compares me with Feriha and she gives advice not to do something or to do something.”⁷⁸

In addition to the participants who agree the character affects their lives, three of the participants said that the characters had no effect on them. Two of these participants work in high positions. Dilara is a manager in a company and she was one of the participants who wanted to make clear that she did not watch television a lot and television was not important to them. In parallel to this, she remarked that there is no effect on her own life of the characters on television but they may affect some uneducated viewers. She said that

There is no effect on me, of course. But I think characters on television certainly affect Turkish society. I remember some people organized funeral in real life for a character died in the soap opera. This happened before. Cemile certainly has an effect on women viewers. My house cleaner, for example, likes her very much. When I asked why, she said Cemile was a self-sacrificing woman and she did everything for her children. I think those women find themselves in that character. There are many women who are under the pressure of their husbands, they are cheated but they don't do anything. They may think that if they oppose, they might get the same reactions that Cemile's husband gave in that soap opera. I believe Cemile leads them not to do anything to change their lives.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ “Cemile’yi de seviyorum. Eđer Cemile’nin yerinde olsaydım, çocuklarımı onun gibi asla bırakmazdım. Ama illa ki Cemile’nin yaptığını yapardım. Çocuklarıma çalışıp bakardım. Kimseye muhtaç etmezdim. Benim de çocuklarım var. İster istemez karşılaştırıyorum. Yani onun gibi olmak lazım.”

⁷⁸ “Ben bazen dizilerdeki karakterler için gerçek hayattaymış gibi üzülüyorum. Örnek almıyorum ama bazen etkileniyorum. Ama mesela annem bazen beni Feriha’yla karşılaştırıyor ve bana bir şey yapmamam ya da yapmam için öğüt veriyor.”

⁷⁹ “Tabii ki benim üzerimde bir etkisi yok. Ama bence televizyondaki karakterler Türk toplumunu kesinlikle etkiliyor. Bazı insanların dizide ölen bir karakter için gerçek hayatta cenaze töreni organize

Funda working as a human resources specialist was another participant who emphasized that television did not play a big role in her life as she had more important things to do. Like Dilara, she stated that

I don't think that any woman character has an effect on me. They are only acting. I can't say that I take them as role models. However, Nurgül Yeşilçay's not giving up her love impresses me. There are some implications that we can fight with *töre* (customs). Actually, I am not familiar with this stuff but their effort impresses me as I believe there should not be *töre* at this age. For example, as his brother dies, he's forced to marry his sister-in-law. But when he told the truth, Nurgül understands. Namely, she is being patient to make everything all right and in the end it happens. In other words, things that are thought unchangeable may change. In fact, this soap opera shows this.⁸⁰

About the character she does not like, Funda thinks the same and said that

Women who are shown bad characters do not already have an impact on me. They sometimes get on my nerves. But it might have negative effects on other people, more illiterate people who watch them. For example, what Semra Hanım did to her daughter-in-law candidates. I mean people might see it as normal. But it doesn't affect me.⁸¹

In addition to these managers, Ayla who is a cleaner stated that "There is no such effect on me. But maybe some people want to be like them. But I am not affected."⁸²

ettiklerini hatırlıyorum. Bu daha önce oldu. Cemile'nin kesinlikle kadın izleyiciler üzerinde bir etkisi var. Benim temizlikçim mesela onu çok seviyor. Neden diye sorduğumda Cemile'nin çok fedakar bir kadın olduğunu ve çocukları için her şeyi yaptığını söyledi. Bence bu kadınlar Cemile'de kendilerini buluyorlar. Kocasının baskısı altında olan bir sürü kadın var, aldatılıyorlar fakat hiçbir şey yapmıyorlar. Eğer karşı çıkarsak, dizide Cemile'nin kocasının verdiği aynı tepkilerle karşılaşırız diye düşünebilirler. Ben Cemile'nin hayatlarını değiştirmek için bir şey yapmamaya yönlendirdiğine inanıyorum."

⁸⁰ "Hayatıma bir yansıması olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Zaten dizilerde rol yapıyor insanlar. Yani onları örnek alıyorum diyemem. Ama beni etkileyen olay olarak Nurgül Yeşilçay'ın o dizide aşkından vazgeçmemesi beni etkiliyor. Törenin de üstesinden gelmek mümkün gibi yansıtıyor. Sonuçta ben yabancayım bunlara ama. Yine de onların o çabası beni etkiliyor. Çünkü bu çağda töre filan olmamalı. Yani sevdiği adam örneğin abisi öldüğü için yengesiyle evlendiriliyor. Ama gerçeği anlattığında Nurgül'e o da anlayışla karşılıyor. Yani sabrediyor ki her şey yoluna girsin. Sonuçta da giriyor zaten. Yani değişmez denilen şeyler de değişebilir. Aslında bunu gösteriyor dizi."

⁸¹ "Kötü yansıtılan kadınların zaten hayatıma bir etkisi yok. Sadece bazen sınırlarımı bozuyorlar. Ama izleyen başka insanlara, daha cahil kesimlere kötü etkileri olabilir sonuçta. Bu Semra Hanım'ın gelin adaylarına yaptıkları. Yani insanlar normal görebilir. Ama bana hiçbir etkisi yok."

⁸² "Bana öyle bir etkisi yok. Ama belki bazı insanlar onlar gibi olmak isteyebilir. Ama ben etkilenmem."

In addition to these three participants who said that the characters did not have an effect on their personal lives or they did not take any characters as role models, four other participants stated that they did not take their least favorite characters as role models but these characters may affect viewers.

Fahriye who is divorced does not like women who attend marriage programs but she thinks that these women might affect viewers, and more women could participate in these programs. She summarized the situation as follows “No, I don’t like them anyways. I am always at home. But there are many women going to marriage programs. I guess they see others and they think it is not bad to go to those programs. Those women affect other women watching because everybody goes there.”⁸³

Şeyda who is at the age of twenty six thinks that the character she hates may affect youngsters in a bad way. She said that “She is a very bad girl. She wants to get married Soner and she is ready to sacrifice everything in order to reach her goal. This may affect teenage girls. They can take her as a role model.”⁸⁴

Every participant evaluates the effect of characters on television according to the situation they are in and their backgrounds and experiences they have had. Merve who does not like traditional women in soap operas believes that these women may influence the society very badly. She explained the situation as such

Cemile is a character who remained under the pressure of her husband and she thinks very traditionally. I think she affects most women watching that soap opera. I always hear from the women around, they like Cemile very much because they have the same thoughts and Cemile helps them legitimize their beliefs. They simply think that we have to obey the rules of our

⁸³ “Yok ben zaten onları sevmiyorum. Ben hep evdeyim. Ama evlendirme programlarına giden bir sürü kadın var. Bence başkalarını görüyorlar ve o programlara gitmek kötü değil diyorlar. Bu kadınları izleyen diğer kadınları etkiliyor çünkü herkes oralara gidiyor.”

⁸⁴ “Çok kötü bir kız. Soner ile evlenmek istiyor ve amacına ulaşmak için her şeyi feda etmeye hazır. Bu genç kızları kötü etkileyebilir. Onu örnek alabilirler.”

husbands. Cemile sometimes tries to oppose them and her husband does very bad things. I think she is a bad image for women.⁸⁵

Selma also thinks that her least favorite character might affect viewers badly. As a married woman, she does not approve women who cheat on their husbands. She talks about a character that leaves her husband for another man. For the influence of her least favorite character Selma said that “She makes me crazy. She left her husband two times and went with another man. Then she came back and said she regretted. I think she is a very bad model.”⁸⁶

The analysis of the answers of the participants about the influence of television characters on viewers indicates that television content with either good images or bad images has an impact on viewers according to the receptions of the subjects of this study. With a high number of twelve participants saying they take the characters as role models or do comparisons between themselves and the characters, as a researcher, I concluded that whatever their backgrounds, women are affected from television content and do some changes in their lives accordingly, or at least they believe so. In addition, all remarked that television content certainly had an influence on the society. As a result, we can infer that what is presented through television programs is highly important to shape the ideas and behaviors of the viewers.

⁸⁵ “Cemile kocasının baskısı altında kalmış bir karakter ve çok geleneksel düşünüyor. Bence o diziyi izleyen birçok kadını etkiliyor. Ben hep etrafımdaki kadınlardan duyuyorum, Cemile’yi çok seviyorlar çünkü onlar da aynı düşüncelere sahip ve Cemile inandıklarını meşrulaştırmaya yardım ediyor. Basitçe kocamızın kurallarına uymak zorundayız diye düşünüyorlar. Cemile bazen karşı çıkmaya çalışıyor bunlara ve kocası çok kötü şeyler yapıyor. Bence kadınlar için kötü bir imge.”

⁸⁶ “Beni sinir ediyor. Kocasını iki kere terk etti ve başka bir adamla gitti. Sonra geri geldi ve pişmanın dedi. Bence çok kötü bir örnek.”

Reception of Women Representation on Television

The participants of this study were asked questions related to women representation on television and its effects on the society. All of the participants thought that women in general are represented both positively and negatively and these both-sided representations might affect women who watch these female characters.

Positive Representations of Women

There are different characters that each participant regarded as positive for women representation on television. However, although their favorite characters changed for some of them, nine of the participants remarked that the main character “Cemile” in *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* soap opera represented women in general very positively on television.

Semra, thirty one, who is married with two children believes that the most important duty of a woman is being a mother and looking after children. She likes Cemile very much as Cemile character is very self-sacrificing so Semra thinks that that character represents women positively on television. She said that “I think it is certainly positive. The mother’s protecting her children in every situation should serve as a model for all the mothers. And she tries to stand on her two feet. This is also positive. Cemile shows how women are strong and good mothers.”⁸⁷

Fahriye, sixty, is divorced and she has two children. She likes the same character for the same reason. She stated that “Cemile is a very good mother. She is positive. There are many bad things in that soap opera but Cemile struggles and does not give up. All of these are positive.”⁸⁸

⁸⁷ “Yani bence kesinlikle olumlu. Yani annenin çocuklarına her halükarda sahip çıkması mesela bütün annelere örnek olmalı. Sonra tek başına ayakta kalmaya çalışıyor. Bu da çok olumlu. Cemile kadınların ne kadar güçlü olduğunu ve ne kadar iyi anne olduklarını gösteriyor.”

⁸⁸ “Cemile çok iyi bir anne. Çok olumlu. O dizide kötü bir sürü şey var ama Cemile mücadele ediyor ve vazgeçmiyor. Bunlar hep olumlu.”

Ayşen, sixty two, is a housewife. She is married with two children. She stated that “Sometimes it is good, sometimes it is bad. But Cemile protects her children; she is a good model for all the mothers. There are mothers who beat their children. But she is self-sacrificing. Her husband does all the bad things. Cemile is positive for all the women.”⁸⁹

Yeliz is another participant who is a housewife. She is married and has two children. She likes the character for the same reason. She stated that “Cemile’s doing everything for protecting her children is a very good thing. In the end, there are parents who are doing many bad things to their children. For example, Ali Kaptan. He does not care his children. But mothers are different. Cemile shows what mothers do for their children. This is positive.”⁹⁰

Like Selma, Fahriye, Ayşen and Yeliz, the other five participants think that Cemile represents women very positively by being a very good mother. The other participants Ayla, Selma, Oya also have similar characteristics. They are all mothers and they are over the age of thirty. However, Gül, being single at the age of twenty five and Sinem, being a student at the age of nineteen are different from those participants. Yet they also think that Cemile represents women positively as she protects her children and does not leave them whatever happens. All these participants remember Cemile when they are asked a character that represents women positively on television. Except for one participant, Oya, all the other ones are primary or high school graduates. Apart from two of them, the others are all mothers. And except for Gül and Sinem, they are either at the same age group with

⁸⁹ “Bazen iyi oluyor bazen de kötü. Ama Cemile çocuklarına sahip çıkıyor, bütün anneler için iyi bir örnek. Çocuklarını döven anneler var. Ama o çok fedakar. Kötü şeyleri hep kocası yapıyor. Cemile bütün kadınlar için olumlu.”

⁹⁰ “Cemile’nin çocuklarına sahip çıkmak için her şeyi yapması iyi bir şey. Sonuçta evlatlarına neler yapanlar anne babalar var. Ali Kaptan mesela. Hiç umurunda değil çocukları. Ama analar farklıdır. Cemile anaların çocukları için neler yaptığını gösteriyor. Bu olumlu.”

the character or older than her. Moreover, they are all either work in low positions or do not work as they are housewives, unemployed, and retired women apart from Oya. To sum up, it is concluded that middle aged women who did not get university education and do not work in high positions think that Cemile that was presented as a self-sacrificing mother in that soap opera was a positive image for women representation in general.

Apart from these nine subjects, all the other participants referred to some other characters for the positive representation of women in general.

Funda is a young mid-level manager thinks that female characters that are presented as modern, successful are positive for women representation. She stated that “I think it depends on. But as I told you, Nurgül Yeşilçay is a good role model. She is a young, successful, modern woman. She is a very positive model for all the women.”⁹¹

Lale who is a manager thinks the same. Like Funda, she also believes that women should be presented as modern on television. She referred to Meltem character and said that “I think Meltem represents women very well. She is a modern, successful, beautiful, pretty woman who has a nice family. Also, as I told you, there are behaviors to take as a role in that soap opera. The behaviors of wife and husband to each other, environmental, cultural issues. Everything is positive.”⁹²

Dilara is another manager who thinks that women should be represented as modern in television programs. In addition, she also thinks that soap operas should give social messages. She said that

⁹¹ “Bence değişiyor. Ama söylediğim gibi Nurgül Yeşilçay çok iyi bir örnek. Genç, başarılı, modern bir kadın. Bütün kadınlar için çok olumlu bir örnek.”

⁹² “Bence bu Meltem karakteri kadınları çok güzel şekilde temsil ediyor. Yani modern, başarılı, güzel, güzel bir yuvası olan hoş bir kadın. Hem o dizide dediğim gibi hep örnek alınacak şeyler var. Hem eşlerin birbirlerine olan davranışları, çevresel kültürel şeyler. Her şey pozitif.”

I think Aslı may have an effect on young girls who want to build a career because city life is shown in that soap opera. Even she got educated abroad, she is a modern woman. Avrupa Yakası was a comedy but there are some other soap operas that give social message. For example, Fatmagül. They included Mor Çatı in one of the episodes and tried to give messages such as women who are raped could go on their lives. This was positive as well for women representation. I think Turkish people are affected so much from what they see on television.”⁹³

Merve is also a manager. She agrees with the others as well. She does not show a young- modern working woman for positive representation rather she talks about an old housewife who is not well educated. However, her reasons are the same as the others. She stated that “I think that grandmother is a very good representation of women. She should be a role model for all the grandmothers. Because I have not seen a mother-in-law like her before on television. Mother-in-laws are shown very badly on television mostly, so she is a very positive woman character.”⁹⁴

Şeyda, as teacher likes women who are educated and defend their rights. She thinks women should be represented as modern are positive. She stated that “I think Berrin is a very positive character. She represents women well. Also, I believe she affects women viewers positively.”⁹⁵

In addition to these women who work in high positions and who are well educated, Aylin likes a character who wants to change the structured rules of the society and stereotypes although she is very different from the participants thinking women who are modern and successful represent women positively in general. Aylin

⁹³ “Aslı karakterinin genç kızlara, hani ne bileyim kendi kariyerini çizmek isteyen kızlara etkisi oluyordur çünkü o dizi şehir hayatını anlatıyordu. Yani hatta yurtdışında eğitim görmüş, modern bir kızdı. Avrupa Yakası komedi dizisiydi ama aslında sosyal mesajlar veren diziler de var. Mesela Fatmagül. Mor Çatı’yı dahil ettiler bir bölümde ve tecavüze uğrayan kadınların da hayatlarına devam edebilecekleri gibi mesajlar vermeye çalıştılar. Bu da kadın temsili için olumlu bir şey. Bence Türk insanı televizyonda gördüğünden çok etkileniyor.

⁹⁴“Bence o babaanne kadınların çok iyi bir yansıması. Bütün babaanneler onu örnek almalı. Çünkü daha önce televizyonda onun gibi bir kayınvalide görmedim. Genelde kayınvalideler televizyonda çok kötü gösteriliyor o yüzden o çok olumlu bir kadın karakter.”

⁹⁵ “Bence Berrin çok olumlu bir karakter. Kadınları iyi temsil ediyor. Ayrıca kadın izleyicileri olumlu etkilediğini düşünüyorum.”

is illiterate and unemployed but being oppressed up to now due to being Kurdish and being a woman, she said that “Sıla is positive. These kinds of soap operas show what happens in the houses. This soap opera shows in the same way what happens in many houses that women can’t express and keeps inside. I like Sıla because she wants to establish a school, a hospital in Mardin. She supports people there. People see positive things when they watch Sıla.”⁹⁶

From the findings shown above, it possible to say that women with at least a bachelor degree think that women represented as modern is positive representation of women on television while women who at most graduate from high school consider a character who is represented as a good, self-sacrificing mother for positive representation. This probably shows that they believe that being a good mother is the best representation of a woman on television. Therefore, we can assume that education level and employment status might have an effect on the reception of women representation.

Negative Representations of Women

For the negative representation of women on television, the participants referred to some female characters and issues related to them. There were some common codes emerged from what they said. Those were women in marriage programs, violence on women, and some single events that harm the position of women in the society.

Eight of the participants referred to the violence on women that was shown on television as a negative representation of women in the society. Violence on women emerged in two forms. Four of the subjects talked about husbands’ killing their wives

⁹⁶ “Sıla olumlu. Bu diziler evin içinde olanları anlatıyor. Çoğu insanın evinde geçen şeyleri, insan ifade edemiyor ya söyleyemediği için öyle kapalı kutu kalıyor ya. Sıla Mardin’e okul, hastane yapmak istediği için seviyorum onu. Oradaki insanları savunuyor. Sıla’yı izleyince insanlar olumlu şeyler görür.”

as a hot topic emerged in the newscasts this year. Funda who is a well educated, working woman stated that

Recently there has been news about this. There is Ayşe Paşalı. She was murdered by her husband. Although she asked for protection from the government, it didn't provide her any. Being aware of it, women are killed. This year there have been many incidents like this. On television it is shown something as normal. Women seem desperate. And they also announce that husbands do not get deterrent punishments. All these are very bad for women.⁹⁷

On the same issue, Dilara as another well educated businesswoman said that

I feel very sorry when women who are exposed to violence are in the newscasts. I remember a girl's speech after the case for her mother who was killed by her father by getting exposed to his beating. I watched this on the news. It impressed me very much. These kinds of things show that women are still in the second place in the society. They are regarded as goods. They are regarded as the ones who are under the pressure of men, get beat up all the time and whenever men need, they can meet their needs with them. These are all negative representation of women on television.⁹⁸

This topic is not just annoying for educated women. Ayla as a cleaner who is primary school graduate talked about these killings and how the number of husbands who killed their wives increased. She said that "Murders of women affected me a lot. This year it has been on increase. As I am a woman as well, I feel frightened. These are very bad, negative. As far as I watch these in newscasts, I am affected."⁹⁹

Sinem as a student at the age of nineteen also mentioned these murders and how this topic was getting terrifying for everybody. She stated that "I feel sorry for

⁹⁷ "Son dönemde gündemde olan haberler var. Hani Ayşe Paşalı örneği var. O kadın kocası tarafından öldürülüyor. Devletten koruma istediği halde devlet koruma vermiyor. Bunu bile kadınlar ölüyor. Bu yıl bunu gibi bir sürü olay oldu. Televizyonda kadınların kocaları tarafından öldürülmesi sanki normal bir şeymiş gibi gösteriliyor. Kadınlar çaresizmiş gibi gösteriliyor. Bir de kocaların caydırıcı cezalar almadıklarını duyuruyorlar. Bütün bunlar kadınlar açısından çok kötü."

⁹⁸ "Ben haber programlarında şiddet gören kadınlar çıktığı zaman çok üzülüyorum. O hani kocasının dayığına maruz kalıp ondan sonra öldürülen kadının davasından sonra kızının konuşmasını hatırlıyorum. Haberlerde seyretmişim. Onlar beni çok etkiledi. Bu tür şeyler kadınların hala ikinci planda olduklarını gösteriyor. Onlar hala mal gibi algılanıyor. Erkeklerin baskısı altında olan, itilip kakılan ama istedikleri zaman da her türlü ihtiyaçlarını üzerinde giderebilecekleri insanlar olarak algılanıyorlar. Bütün bunlar kadınların televizyonda olumsuz gösterilmesidir."

⁹⁹ "Kadın cinayetleri beni çok etkiledi. Bu sene daha bir çoğaldı. Kendim de bir kadın olduğum için korkuyorum yani. Çok kötü, olumsuz bunlar. Haberlerde izlediğim kadarıyla etkileniyorum."

the women who were killed by their husbands. Every day I see another murder. The state does not take any action. This news is very bad for women in general.”¹⁰⁰

The other half of the women who talked about violence on women referred to the rapes appeared in soap operas. Şeyda as a teacher at the age of twenty six talked about a soap opera that discusses rape issue. Şeyda thinks that this kind of soap operas affects the society in a bad way. Thus, she believes discussing rape issue is a negative representation for women. She stated that

There is Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne? soap opera. The last thing we have seen there was the release of the rapists. Now this soap opera shows how desperate raped women are. But I believe they will change it throughout the end. I believe the rapists will be put in prison. But for now Fatmagül is desperate and can’t look for justice as the system does not work properly. Now it gives the feeling of hopelessness.¹⁰¹

Aylin is another woman who thinks that rape should not be shown on television. She is thirty three years old and has five children. She said that “This rape issue is bad. When it is shown like that, people think this can happen. They may think it is normal. When men see this, they can try, maybe. Because in the soap opera, rapists do not take any punishment.”¹⁰²

Selma talks about rape but she mentions another rape appeared in another soap opera. She is married and she talks about an event that a woman was raped by her ex-husband. She thinks that this is very bad for women as these things happen also in real life. She stated that “I felt very sorry when Cemile’s ex-husband raped

¹⁰⁰ “Kocaları tarafından öldürülen kadınlar için çok üzülüyorum. Her gün başka bir cinayet görüyorum. Devlet hiç önlem almıyor. Bu haberler genel kadınlar açısından çok kötü.”

¹⁰¹ “Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne dizisi var. Orada da en son gördüğümüz tecavüzcülerin salıverilmesi oldu. Şu anda bu dizi tecavüze uğrayan kadınların ne kadar çaresiz olduğunu gösteriyor. Fakat bunu sona doğru değiştireceklerini düşünüyorum. Tecavüzcülerin cezaevine gönderileceğini düşünüyorum. Ama şimdilik Fatmagül umutsuz ve adalet arayamıyor, adalet sistemi düzgün çalışmadığı için. Şu anda umutsuzluk aşıyor dizi.”

¹⁰² Bu tecavüz çok kötü. Öyle gösterince, insanlar bunun olabildiğini düşünebilir. Normal olduğunu düşünebilir. Erkekler bunu görünce belki deneyebilirler. Çünkü dizide tecavüzcüler ceza almıyor.”

her. And also she got pregnant. These things happen in real life. But when you see them on television, you feel very bad. Rape is very bad. Cemile got crazy later.”¹⁰³

Yeliz as a married woman talked about the same issue. Different from Selma, she thinks that as the characters are not married any more, this rape is a sin as well. She said that “Ali Kaptan raped Cemile. I felt very sorry. In the end, they are not married, namely he is her ex-husband but she does not want. It is sin as well. And also, she got pregnant. What can she do? What do the people say? I felt very sorry.”¹⁰⁴.

In addition to the participants that talked about violence on women on television is the worst representation of women, six other participants referred to the marriage programs for the negative representation of women on television although their reasons are different from each other.

Aylin is very young, at the age of thirty three and she has five children. She got married at a very early age and she says she did not want to get married. She does not want to go on her life like this as well. She does not know how to read and write so she cannot find a job easily. At the same time she does not want to go on her marriage but she cannot get divorced as she cannot look after her children alone. Thus, she cannot understand women who want to marry again as she is really fed up with her husband. She talks about marriage programs as negative representation. She said that “Sometimes I watch women going to the marriage programs. I think to

¹⁰³ “Cemile’nin eski kocası ona tecavüz edince ben bayağı üzüldüm. Bir de hamile kaldı. Bu tür şeyler gerçek hayatta oluyor. Ama televizyonda görünce çok kötü oluyorsun. Tecavüz çok kötü. Cemile de çıldırdı zaten.

¹⁰⁴ “Cemile’ye Ali Kaptan tecavüz etti. Ona üzüldüm ben. Kadın da kafayı yedi sonra. Sonuçta nikâhsız yani eski eşi ama. İstemiyor kadın. Günah zaten. Bir de hamile kaldı. Ne yapsın kadın? Millet ne der? Ben ona çok üzüldüm.”

myself they are all crazy. They humiliate women. One says I want a house, one says I want a car, a yacht, money. Sometimes very old women go there.”¹⁰⁵

Lale is thirty eight years old and she has not got married before. She also thinks that women who attend marriage programs represent women very badly on television. She said that “In marriage programs, women seem as stingy, being mad about marriage. I think this is very negative.”¹⁰⁶

In addition to her ideas about rape, Şeyda also stated that women are represented very badly in marriage programs. She remarked that “These marriage programs are very bad actually. I think the women there represent women in general very badly. They harm women image.”¹⁰⁷

Semra as a young married woman talked about marriage programs and how a young woman wanted to get married an old man for the sake of money. She is also very angry with the women who approved this marriage in that program. She summarized her ideas as follows

Once I saw a very young girl who wanted to get marry a 65-year-old man in those programs. Women in that episode of that program did not oppose. She wanted to get married as the man was rich. What a pity! She was twenty years old. Actually, she does not need a man. She can make a living on her own but women in these marriage programs just think that they should find a rich husband in order to set for life. They are very negative for women.¹⁰⁸

Oya is divorced and she is fifty eight years old so she thinks she is not young enough to get married again. She also talked about marriage programs. She said that “I hate

¹⁰⁵ “Bazen evlendirme programlarına çıkan kadınları izliyorum. Kendi kendime diyorum ki bunların hepsi deli. Kadınları küçük düşürüyorlar. Biri diyor ev isterim, biri diyor araba, yat, para isterim. Bazen çok yaşlı kadınlar oraya gidiyor.”

¹⁰⁶ “Yani bu programlarda kadınlar biraz paragöz, evlenme delisi gibi görünüyor. Bence gayet olumsuz bu.”

¹⁰⁷ “Bu evlendirme programları gerçekten çok kötü. Bence oradaki kadınlar genel olarak kadınları çok kötü yansıtıyorlar. Kadın imajına zarar veriyorlar.”

¹⁰⁸ “Bir keresinde 65 yaşındaki bir adamla evlenmek isteyen çok genç bir kız gördüm o programlarda. O programlardaki kadınlar karşı çıkmadılar. Adam zengin olduğu için evlenmek istedi. Çok yazık. Sadece 20 yaşındaydı. Aslında onun bir erkeğe ihtiyacı yok. Kendi hayatını kazanabilir ama o programlardaki kadınlar hayatlarını kurtarmak için sadece zengin bir koca bulmak istiyorlar. Bunlar kadınlar için çok negatif.”

marriage programs. Women there are like selling themselves. They go there, they say I want this, I want that. This is very bad for women.”¹⁰⁹

Fahriye is another divorced woman in the sample. She also does want to get married again. Like Oya, she thinks that women are represented very badly in marriage programs. She remarked that “As I told you, marriage programs are very bad. They show bad things. A woman does not attend television programs and look for a husband like that. Namely, marriage has become a toy. We have seen one husband. One was enough for me. When women go there, they seem like being mad about a husband.”¹¹⁰

Other than violence on women and marriage programs, two participants mentioned the bad effects of love affair of a married woman on the society and how women are humiliated with these characters. In addition to her ideas related marriage programs, Oya also thinks that married women should not have love affairs as they misrepresent women on television. She explained her ideas as follows “Bihter was a bad model for young girls. She had a love affair. This is bad in terms of harming the morality of the society. She behaves like that on television and everybody watches.”¹¹¹

Lale also thinks the same but she is not as harsh as Oya on this issue because maybe she is younger than her and she is single. She stated that “The love affair between Behlül and Bihter impressed me a lot. But actually, they are bad models for

¹⁰⁹ “Evlendirme programlarını hiç sevmiyorum. Çıkıp oraya kendini pazarlar gibi. Çıkıyorlar oraya yok şunu isterim, bunu isterim. Bu çok kötü kadınlar açısından.”

¹¹⁰ “Ay bunlar dediğim gibi çok fena. Kötü şeyler gösteriyorlar. Kadın dediğin öyle televizyon programlarına çıkıp koca aramaz. Yani evlilik de çocuk oyuncağı oldu zaten. Biz bir koca gördük. Biri bana yetti. Kadınlar öyle çıkınca koca delisi gibi görünüyorlar.”

¹¹¹ “Bihter genç kızlar için kötü bir örnektir. Yasak aşk yaşadı. Bu toplumun ahlakının bozulması açısından kötü. Televizyonda o şekilde davranıyor ve herkes de izliyor.”

young people. It can encourage those kinds of love affairs. In the end, Bihter died.”¹¹²

In addition to these that were mentioned above, one participant talked about a single event which she thinks a very bad representation of women on television. Gül is twenty five years old and during our interview she sometimes talked about politics and she particularly emphasized her opposition to politicians making use of religion. Related to this, she talked about a woman who defends polygamy for men by putting forward the arguments that some religious people have and she mentioned her opposition to this issue. Also, she talked about how she felt bad when this kind of women humiliating topics is defended by women. She summarized her ideas as follows

A woman has appeared now. Sibel Üresin. She is a woman who defends polygamy for men. This woman makes me really angry. As a woman, she says that polygamy should be legal for men. She wants the women in our country to accept that men are superior to women. I may understand a man saying this, but a woman’s defending something like this affects the society terribly. Some ideas should not be shared on television. I feel ashamed on behalf of her. She could not represent women worse than this.¹¹³

In conclusion, women talked about three main topics related to negative representation of women, which are women killed by their husbands, rape and women attending marriage programs. In terms of violence on women, the researcher could not find any affecting variations that change the views of the participants. Women who have different characteristics are aware of violence on women and they think women are misrepresented in this way. However, for marriage programs, it is

¹¹² “Behlül ve Bihter arasındaki yasak aşk beni çok etkilemişti. Ama aslında onlar gençler için kötü örnek oldular. Bu tür aşkları özendirebilir. Sonunda Bihter öldü zaten.”

¹¹³ “Şimdilerde bir kadın çıktı. Sibel Üresin. Erkekler için çok eşliliği savunan bir kadın. Bu kadın beni çıldırtıyor. Bir kadın olarak çok eşliliğin erkekler için yasal olması gerektiğini savunuyor. Ülkemizdeki kadınların erkeklerin kadınlardan üstün olduğunu kabul etmelerini istiyor. Bunu söyleyen bir erkeği anlayabilirim ama bir kadının böyle bir şeyi savunması toplumu çok kötü etkiliyor. Onun adına utanıyorum. Kadınları bundan daha kötü temsil edemezdi.”

observed that women who are divorced and in the elderly group or single in the middle aged group do not approve the participation of women in marriage programs. Hence, the researcher concluded that marital status and age affect participants' views on this issue.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings were summarized and discussed. Then, concluding remarks on the research were presented. Finally, limitations of the research were presented with suggestions for further research.

Summary

This study tried to find out how women from different social and educational backgrounds received what was presented to them through television programs and if they thought there was an influence of those receptions on their lives or not. Furthermore, it aimed to discover their opinions about this influence and what kinds of changes occurred in their lives.

The study was carried out with fifteen women from different social and educational backgrounds in İstanbul. They were interviewed with the data collection instrument developed by the researcher. The data were collected with a semi structured interview guide and recorded. The recordings were transcribed and the transcripts were analyzed by using content analysis. The within case and cross case analysis of the data were carried out. The emerging codes were analyzed and classified concerning the data.

The findings of the study showed that women see television as a relaxation tool to occupy free time. In addition, women socialize through watching television and with the people around by sharing their ideas about television programs they watch. The findings also showed that there was a reception process while watching television. In the reception process of female characters on television, it was found

out that the participants of this study developed empathy or antipathy, and identification or total opposition with the character. The analysis of data also showed the participants believed that female characters on television had an effect on the lives of viewers. About women representation on television, the subjects claimed that women represented both positively and negatively on television.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study collected from fifteen women verified the findings of the previous research (Cheers, 2010; Sherring, 2010; Wright, 2007) and indicated that television is one of the areas of informal learning processes of women. Women who are watching television are exposed to some images and they received what was presented to them. However, the way each participant received the content differed from one to another in relation to their backgrounds. All these receptions could be regarded as informal learning as all the participants agreed that things on television certainly had an influence on the viewers to some extent. This influence could be seen in different areas leading to a change in the end.

The participants of the study explained their reasons to watch television as to relax and spend free time and just to have pleasure in general. They claimed that they just wanted to have fun sometimes without any purpose. However, when their answers to the questions in the rest of the interview were analyzed, it was observed that they did not just have fun, they also learnt many things. They took some characters as role models or they watched some programs to get information about a topic. Moreover, all the participants agreed on the effect of television content on the viewers. As a result, it is possible to claim that when people are exposed to television content, they internalize many messages unavoidably. Although the participants did not expect any concrete result while watching television, Tisdell (2008) claimed

there was always an outcome of being engaged in media context. Tisdell believed active consumers of entertainment media engaged in it primarily for pleasure, yet it was necessary to keep in mind that people were educated and miseducated by the entertainment media and formed opinions about themselves and others through portrayals of characters and issues. Even though the participants of the study claimed that they had no specific reasons to watch some programs, they were actually educated or miseducated according to Tisdell.

The exposure to mass media images and messages is a form of communication according to Fiske (1990). The participants of the study verified this statement as well. According to the common codes derived from the interview data, the participants watched television to follow newscasts, health programs and celebrity news programs in order to be up to date and learn what was going on in Turkey and around the world. According to Fiske, they wanted to form communication between themselves and the world. Although communication might be regarded as two sided as it has the mutual characteristic in itself, communication is also defined as “social interaction through messages” for Fiske (1990). Furthermore, Gerbner et al. (2008) consider television as the primary common source of socialization and everyday information. Likewise, Morley (1992) considers television as part of our socialization in our primary environment and states that people are socialized by television as they “learn from television; television provides the stuff of family talk and neighborhood gossip” (p. 192). In relation to these points, all of the participants of this study stated that they talked about what they had seen on television with at least one person around them. The people they shared their experiences were family members, friends, neighbors or colleagues. Twelve of the participants said that they usually talked about the content of television programs

with the people around them, whereas three of them stated that they just talked about television programs when there was an interesting event that made them share their ideas. As a result, it could be claimed that media is one of the forms of socialization regardless of their backgrounds as Kellner (1995) argued that media culture was the dominant form of culture which socialized us and led to both social reproduction and change.

When the reasons of participants to watch television were dealt with in the framework of informal learning, it could be inferred that the participants of the study were educated and miseducated while watching television although their purpose was to relax and spend their time. In this education process, the participants certainly received and internalized what was presented to them through television.

Furthermore, from their words related to the reasons of following certain programs such as newscasts and health programs, it could be claimed that the participants watched certain programs on purpose, in order to get information. Self-directed learning occurred as there was intentionality and awareness. Self-directed learning does not necessitate the presence of a facilitator as it is most of the time self-directed and individual (Marsick and Watkins, 1990; Livingstone, 1999; Schugurensky, 2000; Eraut 2004). Eight of the participants who said that they watched newscasts, health programs and celebrity news programs continuously in order to learn the news and get information about health, so this could be regarded as self-directed learning.

In addition to watching television in order to get information about some issues, the participants also shared their experiences related to incidental learning while watching television. The answers of the participants concerning the most favorite and least favorite characters gave some clues about their learning processes. Incidental learning takes place although people are not always conscious of it, yet

they become aware of it after the process (Marsick and Watkins, 1990). Although the participants did not have an intention of learning, or getting information, they became aware of their learning while talking about the characters. Twelve participants stated that the characters they liked had an effect on their lives and all of them agreed on the influence of what was presented through television on viewers and society.

The participants of the study were asked questions related to their most and least favorite characters. In the reception process of the most favorite characters it was found out that the subjects built empathy with their most favorite female character and they identified themselves with them. In this issue, the participants liked the characters that resembled them most. Six of the participants who were married and all had at least one child stated that their favorite character was Cemile who was a middle-aged woman and tried to go on her life with her four children after she got divorced. The ages of these participants range from 31 to 62. All of these participants said that they liked Cemile because of her protecting her children in all the circumstances. They appreciated her struggle and effort to hold on to life. Five of the participants who all had at least an undergraduate degree stated that they all liked the characters represented as educated and modern on television. Four of these participants were managers in different places and one was a teacher, they regarded themselves as educated and modern. They all said that they liked that character as she was represented as modern, successful, and educated. The rest of the participants also liked the characters that they made an analogy with themselves. In terms of the least favorite characters, it was found out that the participants did not like the female characters that could not form empathy and the ones with a life style opposite to theirs. All these showed that viewers received what was presented to them according

to their own backgrounds. This contradicts what Gerbner (2008) proposed with cultivation analysis in terms of exposure to media. Gerbner took the idea that exposure to certain messages for a long time would affect the behavior for granted. Unlike Gerbner, what was found from the data verified McQuail's (1994) argument which claimed there could be other variables that intervene and neutralize cultivation process. In this study, it was found that the ages of the participants, educational levels, and social status would affect what they received from television. Viewers selected which programs they wanted to see and they received them differently and the power of the audience in giving meaning to messages should not be underestimated.

All the participants gave different meanings to the messages presented to them in television programs and they took different characters as role models. When the participants of the study asked questions related to the influence of the female character on their personal lives, twelve participants stated that the characters had a direct effect on their lives or they always did comparisons with the characters or took them as role models, three of them said that they could not say they took any character as a role model in their own personal lives. For the least favorite characters, all the participants agreed on the idea that those characters certainly had an impact on the viewers and society. This verified what Sandlin (2007) proposed. Sandlin claimed that the mass media in general, and soap operas, television, and popular magazines in specific as forms of adult education and examining adults' informal learning experiences would show how adults as learners were shaped by and actively re-create popular culture. The participants said that they took their favorite characters as role models and compared themselves with those characters, which was incidental learning. In incidental learning learners do not have an intention of learning.

Learning is not planned and it occurs as a result of an experience but the learner becomes aware of learning something only after the experience occurs (Schugurensky, 2000).

Taking the characters as role models also led to attitude and behavior change. All the twelve participants who took the characters as role models said that they would behave like Cemile character if they were her. This verified what was found out with the previous studies done to see if messages presented to them could lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors and found out that exposure to media messages changed attitudes and behaviors (Shrum, 1999; Kim et al., 2009; Pfau et al., 2008). Also, in terms of taking the characters as role models, Fiske claimed that many messages viewers encountered through television helped them shape their lives and values by making them learn many things informally and incidentally. Television, as an important component of daily life for many, has been accepted by many researchers as a tool of transformation of daily life (Morley, 1992; Papacharissi and Mendelson, 2007; Cooper and Tang, 2009; Collier et al., 2009; Tisdell and Thompson, 2007). Fiske (1989) also emphasized that meanings in television programs were not just content driven, they were produced and shaped with the interaction of the audience as well. The participants also gave answers in accordance with this claim. They showed that there was a relationship between them and the messages in television programs. The audience got the messages and interpreted them in their own culture, so it was necessary to underline that messages presented on TV, namely content of television programs, invigorated with the help of audience and affected their behaviors or change their receptions as well.

For the least favorite characters, all the participants agreed that they could affect the viewers negatively although the viewers were unaware of this influence.

This could be described as implicit or unintentional learning, or socialization covering the internalization of values, attitudes, behaviors, skills, etc. that occur during everyday life (Schurungensky, 2000). It is both unintentional and unconscious but learning occurs in the end. Individuals get those values, attitudes or behaviors unconsciously and shape their lives according to those values and gained knowledge. The participants of the study also stated that these least favorite characters could affect the viewers negatively. This study verified the findings of the related literature (López-Guimerà et al., 2010; Childers, 2002; Harris and Scott, 2002).

Although the characters were fictional, twelve participants who claimed that they did comparisons between them and the characters supported the idea that the characters might become real in our own individual and collective experience of them through the process of popular culture (Tisdell, 2008). These fictional characters had a real presence in the lives of the subjects.

The participants of the study were asked questions related to women representation on television and if they thought this representation would affect the viewers. Sandlin (2007) called this public pedagogy and talked about the importance of public pedagogy of popular culture and learning happening outside formal adult education spaces in the realms of popular culture. All of the participants thought that women in general were represented both positively and negatively and these both-sided representations might affect women who watched these female characters. Nine of the participants showed Cemile character as a positive image for women representation. They thought that Cemile as a mother, protecting her children, and self-sacrificing is a very positive image to represent women in general. The other participants referred to other characters for positive representation, yet five of them

said that women who were represented as educated and modern are positive images for the viewers, which could be because of educational level. All these five women graduated from at least university. For the negative representation of women, the participants mentioned some common points. Those were women in marriage programs, violence committed on women, and women represented as desperate and being under the pressure of men that harm the position of women in the society.

Wright (2007) investigated the impact of popular culture, especially prime-time television, on women learner-viewers' identity development. The findings of the study indicated that television viewing could become a form of public pedagogy, facilitating transformational learning in adult viewers. Furthermore, Costin (2010) regarded television as a crucial agent of individual socialization by emphasizing the influence of television can be negative or positive. On the one hand, television could inform, educate, and entertain viewers in a positive way; on the other hand it could affect viewers negatively in identity and personality formation for Costin (2010). As a result, the study confirmed that television content had an effect on viewers, either positive or negative.

In conclusion, it was found out that television content clearly had an effect on the lives of the participants. They all received what was presented to them and engaged in informal learning. However, what they receive and how they interpret these receptions are not the same. It was concluded that the background of the participant change their receptions and they analyze the television content in relation to their educational and social backgrounds. Educated participants are found out as being more critical in terms of giving meanings to the messages they received, whereas less educated ones received the messages as they were presented. Therefore,

it is possible to claim that exposure to television content is a way of informal learning which should not be neglected by an adult educator.

Limitations of the Study

As a result of being a qualitative study, one of the most important limitations of this study is its generalizability. The population is represented with fifteen participants, which is only a small percentage of the whole population. The participants were chosen by using purposive and snowball sampling methods in order to meet participants from different backgrounds. Although these methods enabled the researcher to analyze the data with a deeper understanding, the findings and the discussion related to them cannot be generalized for the whole population. However, the number of the interviews is determined according to the nature of the study. Thus, collecting more data does not necessarily provide more detailed understanding as the data saturation has been reached with this number of subjects, which can be considered new data does not seem to produce additional information.

The research has been applied with fifteen women with different demographic characteristics, which could be inferred that the results would be different with other women from other backgrounds. Although the researcher has tried to meet women who are different from each other as much as possible, it cannot be assumed that the experience and receptions of the participants in this study is applicable to all the women. In other words, individual variables may have played an important role in the answers of the participants. The results may show a change with other women from other backgrounds.

The data has been collected through face to face indepth interviews by a semi-structured interview form. Some participants might have answered the questions in socially acceptable way which may lead to some bias. This is called

social desirability bias. The participants might have tried to give replies that are thought to fit the desirable situations rather than the real factors. However, the study has tried to find out the receptions of women and how they put their receptions into words, which cannot be assumed that the participants put their ideas into words in accordance with the real situations they are in. In addition, the conclusions and discussions have been drawn from the findings of the study by the researcher. Therefore, the conclusions may reflect biases of the researcher on the base of understanding, thoughts and background of her. Both academic and personal background restrictions of the researcher might have affected the conclusions drawn from the findings.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study and other studies done in the area of media and adult education indicate that media plays an important role in the informal learning processes of adults. This study has been implemented only with women and regarding television content. As there are a few studies done by adult educators in the area of media and popular culture and its effect on the learning processes of adults, more research by adult educators will enrich the area. This study needs to be replicated and verified under different settings with different populations, which will increase the generalizability and validity of this study.

This study has not analyzed the content presented to the viewers in television programs rather just examined the receptions of participants. Another study that combines the content analysis of the media texts and receptions of subjects will give a better understanding to compare what is given and what is taken. In other words, to understand whether what is encoded in the media texts is decoded in the same way by different individuals or not, more extensive research is needed.

Another suggestion for further research could be to look into the changes occurred in the lives of the participants in detail and for a long period of time due to the exposure to the media texts. In order to claim that media texts have a direct effect on the lives of individuals, the change in behaviors should be observed within longer periods of time. This kind of ethnographic research will enrich the area and increase the validity of the results of this study.

As a result, informal learning, an area that has gained popularity in recent years in Turkey occurs in many areas of life. This study has tried to find out the role television plays in the learning processes of adults. In addition to media effect on informal learning, as becoming a recently popular area, more studies are needed in the area of informal learning both concerning media and other areas informal learning occurs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
The Interview Guide
(Turkish Form)

Kadınların Televizyon'daki Kadın Karakterlere dair Alımlamaları Alan Araştırması
Görüşme Formu

Bu Görüşme Formu Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yetişkin Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programı'nda yürütülen mastır tezi için veri toplamak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Verdiğiniz bilgiler sadece akademik amaçlar için kullanılacaktır ve gizlilik korunacaktır. Katkılarınız için teşekkür ederim.

Zehra Bahadır

Görüşme Numarası:
Tarih:
Zaman:
Yer:

I. Kişisel Bilgiler:

1. Yaş:
2. Eğitim Durumu:
3. Meslek:
4. Medeni Durumu:

II. Bundan sonraki kısımdaki sorular televizyon izleme alışkanlıklarınız ve genel olarak televizyon programları hakkındaki düşüncelerinizi kapsamaktadır.

5. Günde kaç saat televizyon izlemektesiniz?
6. Neden televizyon izliyorsunuz?
7. Takip ettiğiniz bir program var mı? Neden o programı seviyorsunuz?
8. Düzenli olarak izlediğiniz programlarda en çok beğendiğiniz ya da sevdiğiniz kadın karakter kim? Nasıl bir karakter? Neden o karakteri beğendiğinizi açıklayabilir misiniz?

9. Etrafınızdaki insanlarla beğendiğinizi ya da sevdiğiniz kadın karakter hakkında konuşuyor musunuz?
10. Sevdiğiniz ya da beğendiğiniz kadın karakterin sizin hayatınıza bir yansıması var mı? İzlediğiniz programlardan sizi etkileyen bir olay hatırlıyor musunuz?
11. Sizce beğendiğiniz ya da sevdiğiniz kadın karakterler genel olarak kadınları temsil etmeleri açısından toplum üzerinde pozitif ya da negatif bir etki yaratıyor mu?
12. Düzenli olarak izlediğiniz programlarda en az beğendiğiniz ya da sevdiğiniz kadın karakter kim? Nasıl bir karakter? Neden o karakteri beğenmediğinizi açıklayabilir misiniz?
13. Etrafınızdaki insanlarla beğenmediğiniz ya da sevmediğiniz kadın karakter hakkında konuşuyor musunuz?
14. Sevmediğiniz ya da beğenmediğiniz kadın karakterin sizin hayatınıza bir yansıması var mı? İzlediğiniz programlardan sizi etkileyen bir olay hatırlıyor musunuz?
15. Sizce beğenmediğiniz ya da sevmediğiniz kadın karakterler genel olarak kadınları temsil etmeleri açısından toplum üzerinde pozitif ya da negatif bir etki yaratıyor mu?
16. Bu bahsettiklerimiz dışında televizyon programlarından kadınlara dair sizi etkileyen herhangi bir olay hatırlıyor musunuz?

APPENDIX B
The Interview Guide
(English Form)

Women's Receptions of Female Character on Television Field Study
Interview Guide

This Interview Guide is prepared to collect data for the thesis study that continues in Adult Education Master of Arts Programme in the Faculty of Education at Boğaziçi University. The information you have provided will be only used for academic purposes and confidentiality will be kept. Thank you for your contribution.

Zehra Bahadır

Interview Number:

Date:

Time:

Place:

I. Demographic Information:

1. Age:
2. Education Status:
3. Occupation:
4. Marital Status:

II. The following section contains questions about your television watching habits and your thoughts about television programs in general.

5. How many hours do you watch television a day?
6. Why do you watch television?
7. Do you have a favorite program that you follow? Why do you like it?
8. Which character is your favorite female character in the program you watch regularly? What kind of character is she? Can you explain why you like that character?

9. Do you have an environment that you talk about your favorite female character with the people around you?
10. Do you think your favorite female character has an effect on your ideas about women or your behaviors in general? If so, can you remember any incidents that change your ideas or behaviors related to that specific female character?
11. How do you interpret the role of your favorite female character plays in shaping the ideas of women viewers? Do you think she has a positive effect on the ideas of women viewers?
12. Which character is your least favorite female character in the program you watch regularly? What kind of character is she? Can you explain why you do not like that character?
13. Do you have an environment that you talk about your least favorite female character with the people around you?
14. Do you think your least favorite female character has an effect on your ideas about women or your behaviors in general? If so, can you remember any incidents that change your ideas or behaviors related to that specific female character?
15. How do you interpret the role of your least favorite female character plays in shaping the ideas of women viewers? Do you think she has a negative effect on the ideas of women viewers?
16. Other than those two characters we have talked so far, do you remember any incidents from television programs you watch that has an effect on your life, ideas or behaviors?

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