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TÜRK TV DİZİLERİNDEKİ KARAKTERLERLE KURULAN İLİŞKİNİN DOĞASINI ANLAMAK

Understanding the Nature of the Relationship Established with Turkish TV Serial Characters

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ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı izleyicilerin Türk TV dizilerindeki karakterlerle kurdukları etkileşimin altında yatan motivasyon ve örüntüleri keşfetmektir. TV dizileri Türk halkı için çok önemli bir yer tutmakta ve bazen bu diziler bireylerin hayatlarını fazlasıyla etkileyebilmektedir. İzleyicilerin TV dizilerindeki karakterlerle kurdukları tek yönlü ilişki "parasosyal etkileşim" kavramı ile açıklanmaktadır. Bu nitel fenomenolojik çalışma 13 gönüllü Türk katılımcıyla parasosyal etkileşim kapsamı üzerine yürütülmüştür. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve doküman inceleme olmak üzere iki ayrı veri toplama tekniği kullanılmıştır. Veriler, tematik analiz yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular 2 ana tema üzerinde yoğunlaşmıştır: izleme motivasyonu (rehberlik, algılanan gerçeklik, algılanan benzerlik ve kıyas), ve parasosyal çıktılar (önceki tutumları pekiştirme, ders çıkarma, modelleme ve gerçeklik algısında sapma).

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the underlying motives and patterns beneath the interaction established with Turkish TV serial characters. Turkish people generally give importance to the TV serials, and sometimes these serials affect individuals' life exceptionally. Parasocial interaction is a one-way relationship which the audience establishes with the characters of TV serials. This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted in the context of parasocial interaction with 13 Turkish individuals. Both semi-structured interview and document review techniques were used. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings suggested that there are 2 main themes: viewing motivation as counseling, perceived realism, perceived similarity and comparison; and parasocial outputs as reinforcement of the previous attitudes, lessoning, modeling, and deviation in perception of the reality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Parasocial interaction is defined as the interaction between the spectator and the favourite character which is characteristically “one-sided, non dialectical, controlled by the performer, and not susceptible of mutual development.” In television programs, the actor whether in a fictional role or not, via using nuances of appearance and gestures seems being occupied with engaging in conversations and interactions with other role playing actors. On the other side by directly addressing the spectator personally and privately, in other words creating the illusion of face-to-face relationship, the role players locates the audience in the program’s action in a subtle way. Through this kind of staging, audience somehow implicitly emerges as a group which both observes and participates in the show alternately (Horton & Wohl, 1956: 215).

The performers in the media are defined as a group of personalities who are known as the same way the audience knows their chosen friends, functioning as indigenous figures to capture intimacy and affiliation, come into view on a regular basis and integrated into the routines of daily life (Horton & Wohl, 1956: 216). The process of constant exposure to these personalities, give ways to accumulating shared experiences, establishment of loyalty and acquaintance in part of the spectator and strengthens the one-sided nature of the relationship via internalising the parasocial role by accepting the personae-medium as a friend, counselor, comforter, and model; “benefit from the persona’s wisdom, reflect on his advice, sympathize with him[/her] in his difficulties, [and] forgive his mistakes.” (Horton & Wohl, 1956: 217, 219).

In Turkey, according to the findings of Television Watching Trends Survey (2012: 9, 14), the average hours of television watching was determined as 3.7 hours (pp. 9) and the highest rates were detected at 21.01-24.00 time period (pp. 14) on weekdays which allocated for TV serials. Within the scope of Turkish TV serials broadcast in Turkish national TV channels, crowds of audience commented under the media contents, shared their personal opinions about the passages which appeared. Users commented exemplifying the parasocial mechanism as: “This TV serial has the actual situations of everything. Happiness, desperation, friendship, poverty, wealthiness, love, romance, respect, illness, parentage, prejudices etc. It doesn’t overwhelm us, it tells all of them delightfully.”, “We are getting therapy together with Adem, thank you.”, “Learn the lesson! You cannot trust anyone!”, “Oh no Saadet, oh no! You prefer to escape instead of fighting. She is still the same while I am thinking her character is going to change and improve, her confidence is going to increase in time. I hope this event leads her to stand upright at least.”

Parasocial relationships serve to reach a bunch of gratifications such as gathering information about social life, relaxation, satisfying entertainment needs etc. (Rubin & Perse, 1987: 247). Rubin and McHugh (1987: 279, 280) took two interpersonal relations theory into consideration to understand the similarities between mass communication oriented and real-life interactions: uses and gratifications and uncertainty reduction theories. Respectively they found that in viewing preferences, audiences know their needs and choose media to fulfill these needs accordingly and in mediated contexts, amount of television communication results in increased certainty so elevated attraction to a media character. Rubin and Perse (1987: 248) formulated parasocial interaction ascribing affective, cognitive and behavioral components to its definition. Affective involvement can be operationalized as disclosing emotions to events occurring within scenario as well as character’s perceived attributes. Cognitive involvement covers reflecting about given messages coming from media content through and beyond exposure. Behavioral involvement includes talking about the reflections generated from interaction. Comments such as “I know this is a TV serial but still I wish his arms are broken.”, “Shame on you Merve, Allah damn you! My hands, my foots are shaking, I’m going off the deep end!”, “I wrote Çukur in everyplace in the school.” (Çukur is referring to the fictional area where TV serial characters live in according to their own indigenous culture) represents the components of parasocial interaction.

In Levy (1979: 72)’s study, participants claimed that they are appreciated by hearing the anchorman’s voices in their home, responded vocally to the anchorman’s good wishes and greetings, reacted in accordance with the anchorman’s gestures upon several emotions and compared their opinions with the anchorman etc. In Turkey, there are several examples reflecting parasocial interaction. In one of the TV serials broadcast in Turkey, “Avrupa Yakası”, the pajamas of a character named Gaffur appealed many people and sold out quickly. Also a history-narrated TV serial named Diriliş Ertuğrul has been attracting many individuals continuously. In Sivas, a group of dedicated viewers wanted a bus to set a trap for a bad character from municipality services.

Previous research found various factors to comprehend the structure, development and the strength of parasocial experience. These confirmed factors are attractiveness of the media character, perceived similarity constructed between the viewer and media character, perceived realism which emphasizes the credibility of the character (Giles, 2002: 291; Perse, 1986: 187; Rubin & McHugh, 1987: 288; Rumpf, 2012: 33; Tian & Hoffner, 2010: 260). In addition to these, representation across different media outlets and user contexts can be accepted as other predictors of parasocial experience (Giles, 2002: 292; Klimmt et. al, 2006: 301).

One of the first components which was tested is attractiveness. Attractiveness comprises of three dimensions including physical attraction, social attraction and task attraction. Rubin and McHugh (1987: 286, 287) suggested that social and task attraction of media personality affects parasocial experience stronger than physical attraction positively. Another important motivation source for developing parasocial interaction is the concept of perceived similarity. Similarity includes shared personality traits, behavioral tendencies, similar attitudes, similar life experiences. Also viewers have a tendency to like a character who has a similar physical appearance with themselves and their relatives (Arslan, 2013: 12, 133; Giles, 2002: 282, 283, 290; Tian & Hoffner, 2010: 264). Perceived realism is about the reflections of life as to what extent the serial gets in touch with reality. When the viewer finds it realistic, trust the characters more thus parasocial interaction develops stronger (Giles, 2002: 291; Perse & Rubin, 1989: 73). Another predictor: Representation across different media outlets. When a media performer is seen many times in various contexts such as advertisements, movies, soap operas etc., the intensity of parasocial interaction increases (Giles, 2002: 292). User Context: Openness to experience (noticing the messages), being tired or not in terms of paying attention affect parasocial interaction (Klimmt et. al, 2006: 301, 302).

These findings constitute this study's starting point and in light of these findings, the study attempts to penetrate the core patterns beneath the interaction between the viewer and the favourite media character in the light of qualitative methodology considering the fact that considerable amount of findings were gathered by using quantitative analysis methods in the literature. Parasocial experience itself requires a proper method to be understood in nature alternatively and seems to partially interact with unique individual factors in order to occur and maintain. Also the current study takes cultural components into inquiry within the assumption that the Turkish TV serials reflects shared customs, representations, conflicts, and environmental atmosphere; extends its scope beyond a specific population and works with people from different backgrounds.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

Volunteer 13 individuals (7 female, 6 male) participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 60 ($M = 33.46$, $SD = 17.7$). This study is a qualitative phenomenological study. So, the criterion sampling was used because participants must have experienced the phenomenon (watching current Turkish TV serials regularly), and all participants were selected based on this criterion. One of the participants reported that he is watching a Turkish serial on the Internet. He was included in the study because he is living in a dormitory and there is no television there. Also he said that this serial is featuring on the Internet once a week like a TV serial. For this reason, there is no big difference between this serial and the normal TV serial according to this information, and it seems that he is using the Internet likewise the TV.

2.2 Materials and Procedure

This study was conducted in 2018, Ankara, Turkey. Before beginning the research, ethical approval was obtained from Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Ethics Review Board. In this qualitative study, researchers utilized semi-structured interviews and document review methods. All interviews were conducted by the authors of this study. Interviews were conducted by face-to-face and the time ranged from 15 to 45 minutes. Interviewer audio recorded the interview after requesting the permission of the participant. Interviews proceeded until no new themes emerged. First of all, researcher gave the participants informed consent form and also explained oral information about study and their confidentiality like they can withdraw from the study if they want, only researchers will have access to their recorded voices, their credentials will be anonymous. Secondly, researcher gave them demographic form which ask their gender, age, education level, socio economic level, how much TV serial they follow, to declare 3 characters who the participants like in their favorite TV serial and 3 characters who the participants don't like in their favorite TV serial. Seven main questions were

used in this semi-structured interview as “Why did you decide to watch this TV serial?”, “What are the reasons of liking/disliking the characters who you liked/disliked?”, “What is the connection between you and the character? What are the common features between you and the character?” and “How do you feel when the characters leave the serial, or die/get wounded as needed by scenario?”. All participants were from Ankara, Turkey; so interview questions, demographic form and informed consent form were Turkish. Context of the interviews was generally selected by participant and researcher together. The main factor was that agreed upon place had to be silent enough, because the audio record should be clearly understandable. In order to protect the confidentiality, researchers gave their names some codes as using the first letters of their names. While making transcript of these interviews, these codes were used again, with their ages (i.e., “A.B., 25”). Also in this study, thematic content analysis were used. Transcripts were made by researchers manually. Researchers listened to the records of the interviews and wrote them verbatim. Then researchers read all the interviews at least 2 times. After that, each researcher analyzed every single interview independently by highlighting important possible themes and taking notes. Then all researchers compared every analyzed interviews and revealed common themes. On the other hand, all researchers searched some TV serials on the Internet, and found interesting news and some comments in this TV serials social media accounts. Again, all researchers searched, read, and analyzed these documents separately and independently, then they compared their findings. In the document review, researchers kept private these individual’s names and the links of the websites to protect confidentiality. To ensure verification, literature searches fulfilled in depth, adhered to the phenomenological method, used an adequate sample, during the interview confirmed the participants’ disorderly or complicated expressions, all interviews were recorded with audio record, and continued the interviews until saturation of data was achieved. To ensure validation of this study, multiple techniques of data collection (interview and document review techniques) were used, both data analysis and coding processes were conducted by researchers separately, and also all researchers compared their processes and conclusions each other.

3. RESULTS

From 13 verbatim transcripts, 236 significant statements were extracted. The thematic analysis of the transcripts revealed 2 general themes: *viewing motivation* and *parasocial outputs*. Table 1 contains 2 main theme clusters and their subthemes.

Table 1. General Themes and Sub-themes

General Theme	Sub-Theme
Viewing Motivation	Counseling
	a. Advice seeking
	b. Preliminary preparation
	c. Curiosity
	Perceived realism
Parasocial Output	Perceived similarity
	Comparison
	Reinforcement of the previous attitudes
	Lessoning
	Modeling
	Deviation in perception of the reality

Viewing motivation explains why the audience keep watching TV serials on a regular basis which includes *counseling, perceived realism, perceived similarity and comparison*. While watching, audience have been found to be getting into process of interaction in which they can satisfy their need for social interaction by gathering service for preparation for life exclusive to themselves. Counseling was determined as combination of advice seeking, preliminary preparation for real life circumstances, and fulfilling curiosity about inexperienced life events. For example, a participant explains his motivation for counseling as follows:

“Maybe one day, I could fall in love with someone, I could join the army, I could experience the same things. So, I just question myself. I think, I am not as strong as them. I question myself

because I never meet with difficulties in the life like them.” (S.O.,19)

The same participant repeated his concern as:

“The events only pertain to Turkish society and I didn’t experience yet. But it could happen to me. So, I don’t want to be blindsided, I want to predict.”

Another participant describes her experience for seeking advice:

“Sena protects everyone. This is encouraging me. She always asserts herself, and her behavior affects positively other women who live in the same house.” (I.B.,19)

This comment reflects the preliminary preparation from social media:

“This woman is a contemptible person. She engages in evil acts by affecting meek people around her. Understand that this woman has no emotion and always remember that there are so many women and men like this character in the real life. Be careful.”

Perceived realism sets the stage for keeping viewing motivation as long as it overlaps with particular elements from the very nature of the real life surrounding them. One of the participants complains about unrealistic attributions attained to characters:

“In this serial, Oya is always good. She is pure. She is hardworking. She is beautiful... This is backlashing me.” (U.S.,20)

Some users on the Youtube commented about unrealistic relationships of characters jokingly:

“What is this passion of these rich boys towards poor girls? Which neighborhood here in this TV serial is? Shall we go around here?”

“For God’s sake! Is there only Zeynep in this big company to love? Must everybody love her?”

Another participant explains her viewing preference accordingly as to what extent the TV serial reflects historical events about her own cultural heritage:

“I decided to watch this TV serial because I give importance to our history, and I think this is about our past. Some events which I believe that happened in the past, excited my attention. I can see the all process of establishing our country, and all fights.” (N.H.,43)

Perceived similarity comprises shared attitudes and similar experiences with characters. When the participant notices some experiences similar to his experiences, he tends to develop a bond leading to intimacy with the persona:

“I experienced the same thing with the character. When my father died, I was 3 years old. My grandmother raised me. (...) I used to lie on my grandmother’s lap, I used to cry. My grandfather had gone into the army as an artilleryman, he had been martyred. Then, my father went into the army as an artilleryman, too. When I was 16, I went to enlist in the army as an artilleryman. (...) That woman and that girl who helped the boy in the desert; I think like that the woman is my grandmother and the girl is my older sister. I perceived my sister in that girl because my sister was together with my grandmother while she was raising me.” (H.P., 60)

“I think that there are some adaptations from my own life experiences. There is love, respect, I don’t know, there is (she whispering “alcohol” timidly) in this family. Researcher: It’s okay, you can say it.

There is an alcohol problem in this family, too. I also experienced the same problem, so I feel an intimacy between us (her and characters). For this reason I like it.” (D.G.,53)

“...before that, he has written 1300 letters to the girl but the older brother of the girl has hidden them, he has never given any of them to the girl. Love confession is written in every letter. I don’t know, maybe I identify myself with him. I’ve always found that platonic love is charming.” (M.R., 21)

Examples from the comments on social media about sharing a similar life experience:

“You poor thing Yıldız! You went through so many difficult things. I see myself in Yıldız. Here I am but nobody asks my opinions.”

“...Dilara is a kind of friend whom everyone wants in their life. There is no such a thing as

Süreyya is always right because of that she is the main character. Dilara was absolutely right. I have some friends like Süreyya once. I feel my own sorrow in rebellion of Dilara. My friends didn't come to apologize to me in contrast to Süreyya."

One of the participants stated that he established an intimacy with a character because of the perceived similarity with his son who is experiencing the same events now, in the national army:

"I feel that the Osman Kanat character is like my own son. My son looks alike Osman Kanat a lot. He is a soldier, too. He has a scar in his cheek just as Osman Kanat has. Osman Kanat touches me deeply as if he is my own son. I've always been affected by those scenes in that TV serial."

Comparison serves audience an opportunity to evaluate themselves with respect to several typologies in his or her external interpersonal world including media characters. Participants mention their observations in relation to the differences of personality traits and appearance, interpersonal relations patterns, between them and the characters:

"Her (Sena) self-confidence is very encouraging. For example, I think that I'm a diffident person. This is impressing me." (I.B., 19)

"For example, Merve is a little chubby, but she doesn't care. She doesn't complain about herself or her weight like us. Everytime, she defines herself as strong and powerful. I like this. For this reason, I like her." (U.S., 20)

"When I think about her friendships, I can see that Merve is a woman who can continue her friendships even though her friends hurt her. She can also pay them back. I don't see that power in myself. I can make an end of my friendships easily. I can finish my friendship in the first mistake, I cannot continue. I can't handle my problems but Merve handles her problems and she continues her relationships somehow. She is my opposite character. Maybe I like her because I want that power inside of me." (U.S.,20)

"I am not that kind of person. That's why it catches my attention, probably." (S.O.,19)

Second main theme emerged as *parasocial outputs* which represent the achievements, alterations in attitudinal and thinking patterns, and impairment in reality connection. The theme covered 4 sub-themes mainly *reinforcement of the previous attitudes, lessoning, modeling and deviation in perception of the reality*.

Reinforcement of the previous attitudes cover promoting common sense societal awareness:

"I knew about autism before. (...) It leads more awareness for me. It was reinforced. Because I saw it every week. Think about, I am watching this every week, every week they present this character to the audience. I didn't know that these individuals can be that much good and pure-hearted." (I.B.,19)

"I am searching about if there is related foundations, what these foundations do, and how much they raise awareness. In my opinion, foundations and government are inadequate about this issue (violence against women which is the main topic of participant's preferred TV serial). I want to make a consultation with my brother. He is studying political science and public administration. So, I want to learn what government could do and I want to search this more." (A.Ş., 21)

"In the serial, there are things that should be mentioned or you want to hear. And yes, they are really things that you thought about but cannot say, or you just want to hear. It's sweetening up you and helping you to improve the inner process. (...) When they show you something which can be possible to experience in the society, you can see your process in this serial, too." (M.R., 21)

Lessoning appeared as another sub-theme. It is determined that participants end up the viewing process with gaining life lessons from these TV serials:

"For instance, her relationship with her neighbor. But her neighbor is a prostitute. She (Bahar) never ostracises her neighbor because of her prostitution. Because, we should help these kind of people and we should not isolate them even if they are doing very bad things. (...) Maybe we don't meet any prostitute in our lives but we can meet with a drug addicted, or people with some other kind of bad habits. We should think "What can we do for these people, how can we

help them?" in our real lives." (N.H., 43)

A comment about gaining a new point of view for their attitudes on social media:

"If you pay attention, you see that Enver didn't accuse Abbas for fraud without listening to him. However we, viewers accuse everyone immediately. Let's take Enver as an example since we love him so much."

For romantic relationships:

"Of course I'm learning something while I was perusing the relationships. For example Mustafa and Asiye's marriage. This is a male-dominating marriage, but in fact the real dominance is in the woman's hand, in private. I learned that if you keep on the right side of men, you can take the dominance from them, subtly." (A.Ş.,21)

A social media comment which interpret the relationship of characters and make an inference:

"A woman, Merve who compels her husband to join dinner invitations at their home everyday at one side. On the other side is a woman, Oya who becomes happy for just his coming with some lemons and opens the door with a smiling face. Then you ask why Serhan goes to Oya? Do you think why?"

Sometimes audiences take advices from the characters who have some respected positions like a religious preacher:

"There is a Muslim preacher who stands for moral aspect in this TV serial. I've received and applied some advices which this preacher gave to characters. In the last episode, Tahir (main character of TV serial) was almost going to do something bad so he went to pray for repentance. The preacher said during that time: "Avoiding to commit sin is easier than repenting because you cannot know whether your repentance is accepted throughout your life." This became a sentence which I thought "I should apply this to my life." Because of I struggled something like this too, I applied this advice to my life."

Third sub-theme is modeling which referred to imitating persona by the aspects of physical appearance, gestures, habits speech styles, preferences etc.

"I guess I am imitating their speech style mostly. If I'm watching a Black Sea serial, I am starting to talk like them (there is a special accent in Black Sea region). Firstly I am taking their accent. Especially, their clothes are impressing me. When I see a dress in a shop, I am saying "Oh, Merve wore this dress once, I should buy it" (U.S., 20)

"If I follow a TV serial, it generally comes to my mind in my daily life. I want to walk like him. I want to act like him. I even emulate his clothing style. I am emulating him because his behaviors and acts excite my attention" (I.S., 20)

"People generally think that Özge character who is an actress in the Fi serial, looks like me. Also they say that I'm behaving like her. (...) If I look like someone, I generally do things which this person did. For example, I liked Hande Doğandemir's (another actress who people think that she looks like her) haircut, I got the same haircut. Now, I got the other one's (Özge) haircut, too. I am doing this kind of things, because I like her. (T.T.,22)

The last category emerged as deviation in perception of the reality. For instance, engaging a conversation with characters, demanding bad wishes on part of the persona, assuming the scenario as real and acting towards this reality as it happens in audiences' own field, extreme empathizing, prepared to sacrifice themselves if necessary etc.

"Really, it seems they really died. I'm watching this for 2 years, it's like we have a relationship with this serial. It's suddenly leaving me. I'm trying to accept this: I am attaching. It's generally related to their actings. Then, I'm starting to search them. I'm looking at their photos on Instagram, their real lives, and I am alienated from them. I am trying to teach myself "These are just characters in the serial, they are not like that in their real life" (I.B.,19)

"If they give me the feudal landlord of the Bilecik (one of the bad characters), I will eat him easily on my own. I will disintegrate him, I swear to God I will. No offense."(In colloquial language "eat" means that "pay someone back, defeat, or beat someone". While he was saying "eat", he talks metaphorically)."(H.P.,60)

"I'm starting to live in his character instead of mine, but in fact he is just an actor. It's kind of doing something which you can't do in the life, but you think this character could; because you associate this character with yourself." (D.Y.,21)

"I feel so sad, it feels like one of my friends get wounded. In the Kutul Amare, or in the Ertuğrul, it doesn't matter. I wish that would never happen. I suppose this character was wounded in real." (H.P.,60)

Some of collected comments from social media:

"I get over excited while I'm watching this scene. I feel like I'm fighting at home, my vein swells with pride."

"I wish that Doruk and Nisan become children of Bahar in the real life, too."

"If my finger was broken, I would not feel pain this much."

"I feel like I'm over cloud nine like Süreyya is not pregnant, I'm pregnant. Who else wants to be the daughter of Süreyya?"

"Thank God, nothing happened. If something happened to Ceyda, I would die. I would not watch it again."

"This man is so terrible and disgusting! It's a crying shame to the girl. I hope Allah may burn him to death in hell. Allah damn him!"

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that viewing motivation and parasocial outputs are the general themes helping to disclose the parasocial interaction process vividly experienced by the participants. This study contributed to the literature by creating a new formulation for the parasocial interaction. The formulation is characterized as the combination of viewing motivation and the outputs of the interaction collaterally and comprehensively.

Firstly emerged general theme was viewing motivation including *counseling, perceived realism, perceived similarity, and comparison*. Through viewing, participants detected common attitudes, life circumstances, and real-life experiences which in turn prompts them to keep on track of exposure coming from media regularly. Thus it seems that TV serials provides an artificial environment and lead viewers to acquire a bunch of achievements such as learning how to cope, act, survive, communicate within real-life conditions when confronted and serves counseling to spectators.

Perse (1986: 180, 184) stated that viewers are goal-directed to explore the reality by watching soap operas. In conjunction with this finding, in the present study, participants mentioned their curiosity about historical events, events occurring outside of their environment but possible to come across such as class conflicts, tough economic conditions, hardships of life, historical events, shared customs by people from different classes, interpersonal manner, conditions specific to their culture such as army and jail and regarded their motivation to contact, be alert and previously prepared to struggle with them. It suggests that it would be functional to observe and catch significant points when it comes to adapt learned information to another context in their lives. In terms of that, participants reported their concerns about how the events appearing in serials come as true to capture credibility. In this point, second sub-theme namely perceived realism operated and the more reality-based component increased, the more serial received interest as consistent with the literature. Some of the participants declared that although the reliability of the message coming from the serial is important, sometimes emotional content would precede the rational components and entails being more affected by the serial. This would suggest that the fictional scenario may compensate the missing rationalities by the hand of substitutional emotional components to reach balance in perceived realism.

Obtained information from participants correspond to the frequently mentioned statement in the literature, viewers comprehend characters as their acquaintances. They feel an affinity with characters (Giles, 2002: 290; Levy, 1979: 72; Rubin & Perse, 1989: 73, 74). Accordingly, viewers share the stories of characters and have an illusion as if they experience together. It is plausible to indicate that several participants, in awareness or not, maintained the interaction to follow the course of similar events running in the character's life with theirs and this enabled viewers coming out the process as had been got in touch with their troubles, concerns, overall experiences as indicators of perceived similarity. Throughout the process, it is detected that participants pointed out to the events from their

perspectives and compared themselves revolving around the question of "If I were that person, how would I behave?". This part corresponded to another emergent subtheme which is comparison that in turn serves viewers to evaluate themselves involuntarily and approach themselves with a bunch of judgments in terms of values, attitudes and physical appearance.

Besides providing an environment for acquisition of knowledge to spectators, TV serials' manipulative nature would function as placing vulnerable populations at more risk via exposing the extensive amount of realities and result in dissatisfied selves when compared to the higher status population. Durak-Batigün & Sunal (2017: 56, 59, 60) found that women with low socioeconomic status have lower marital satisfaction points and higher pathological symptoms points than the women with high SES and developed parasocial interaction stronger. Perceived romantic effect from TV serials and low marital satisfaction predicted parasocial interaction positively. Regarding this, previous research found that one of the main reasons of watching TV serials is observing interpersonal relationships and getting information about them by comparing their abilities, behaviors, responses to the characters (Perse, 1986: 181, 185; Perse & Rubin, 1989: 62, 74). From this perspective, comparison can be helpful to explain parasocial experience better.

Second general theme was identified as parasocial outputs covering four sub-themes namely reinforcement of the *previous attitudes, lessoning, modeling and deviation in perception of the reality*. One of the frequently mentioned proceeds about parasocial experience is regarded as the strengthening and shaping power of the serial in terms of values, beliefs and attitudes. Besides having particular beliefs towards a phenomenon, observing the reflections of the belief on the fictional world enhanced its impact on the viewer, in other words encouraged the viewer to think more robustly in accordance with the belief compared to period former to serial. Generally mentioned reinforcements occurred within both external and internal world of the participants. It would suggest that the viewer got the idea that their attitudes were valued and approved apparently by crowds of people and subsequently paved the way for keeping previous attitudes in a more strong fashion.

Lessoning appeared as a sub-theme symbolizing the response of the question "When you compare yourself before watching this TV serial and after, what do you think you learned?". Most of the participants pointed out at least one gaining from how to act in the presence of particular conditions to raw information about several realities. In the cluster of parasocial outputs, modeling which is a differentiated concept from parasocial interaction emerged as a covariant construct interacting with parasocial experience. Most of the participants stated that somehow they capture particular nuances and gestures of the characters in the background harboring positive attitudes towards them. Elaborating upon this finding, aligned with Giles's (2002: 296, 297) study, parasocial interaction may be reconceptualized via entering modeling into formula especially for further inventories composed to measure parasocial interaction quantitatively. Bandura (1971: 5) explained modeling as one of the main principles of social learning theory based on learning occurs through observation, imitation, modeling. By the hand of modeling, interaction seemed to facilitate and the viewer sustained and conveyed the reality of the serial to several contexts in his/her life. Watching TV serials which legitimate critical crime oriented issues can be imitated and resulted in detrimental consequences especially on part of adolescents in stage of developing a sense of self-concept. Displayed TV serial characters seemed like heros for everyone, however, must use violence and does illegal activities, because they are fighting over evil characters to protect their loved ones, serve as models for adolescents (Erjem & Çağlayandereli, 2006: 24, 25). This can be evident to the statement that "Normally I hate swearing but when he swears it fits him well". Additionally Erjem & Çağlayandereli (2006: 26) suggested that high school students who have more siblings, parents with low educational backgrounds and socioeconomic conditions show more modeling behavior on TV serial characters significantly.

Lastly, deviation in perception of the reality generated from the viewing process which can be characterized by extreme empathy on part of the spectator to a degree of catastrophizing events in the scenario accompanying with robust and sometimes devastating emotions which remind of losing the sense of reality for a period of time while watching at peak and beyond exposure descendingly. Consistent with perceived realism, people felt elevated amounts of emotions towards the characters who reminded of their unfavored, loved or imaginative acquaintances in turn enforced them attempting to contact with the characters in real life to call them account for the events occurring within the boundaries of the scenario. They break their bonds with the reality. It can be regarded as pathological when the viewers take the imaginary encounter out of its context and try to bring it into the real life (Horton & Wohl, 1956: 223).

Physical, social and task attractions of TV serial characters were found significant predictors for parasocial interaction (Rubin & McHugh, 1987: 287). Remarks for this prediction appeared in the statements of the some participants. One participant mentioned that for task attractiveness: "You watch it involuntarily since the TV serial is about military." Another two participants praised characters' self-sacrifice for social attractiveness. Giles (2002: 292) suggested that representation of media personalities across different media outlets affect parasocial interaction positively. One participant referred that: "If I am acquainted with actors from their previous appearance in other TV series, I watch it with more enthusiasm."

The findings of the study emphasized the role of the TV serials in Turkish culture from the perspective of a group of individuals with different backgrounds in Ankara. Arslan (2013: 75) suggested that college students who prefer to watch Turkish TV series develop parasocial interaction stronger than the students who prefer to watch foreign TV series. Therefore, the present study has a significant side to show the importance of exploring parasocial interaction on the cultural context. This study attempted to explain the patterns beneath parasocial interaction and found several interrelated categories explaining what motivates people to maintain the viewing process regularly and what would constitute the acquisitions throughout and after exposure.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTION

Some of the participants declared that they follow foreign serials on the internet. The rapidly growing existence of technological facilities serve as placing more viewers to a position where they could acquire as much media content as possible constantly and eventually surrounded by much more serial options to follow. It would be reasonable to suggest further research to explain parasocial interaction in the field of foreign TV serials which harbor different cultural components apart from Turkish cultural heritage.

Inquiring about a patient's regular preference of TV serials may assist professional practitioners in psychology to capture some beneficial cues in understanding client's concerns, history and milestones in life.

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