

## **AFFECTS OF TELEVISION AS A NATURAL EDUCATOR: CAN TELEVISION BE A TOOL AS AN INFORMAL EDUCATOR? : A TRNC SAMPLE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The major objective of this study is to discuss the effects of television on children and adolescents. Our children are spending many hours in front of the television. This study examined the viewing habits and personal opinions of Turkish Cypriot children. The participants were 250 children and adolescents whose ages varied between 4 – 17. This study revealed that children and adolescents are spending most of their time in front of the TV. Besides most of them admire a character and want to act like their famous character. It is one of the most important finding of some certain studies about the role of television on socialisation and shaping values. In this study, viewing habits and personal opinions of children and adolescents are revealed. From that point of view, some suggestions are put forward in order to benefit more from TV. Also a comparison about viewing habits, effects of watching TV is made between other cultures and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

A new era has started with the invention of television. The word “Television” consists of two words, “Tele” that means *at distance* and “Visio” which means *to see*. Composite of these two words forms the word “television”, which means to see an image at a distance (Temel Britannica, 135) Television is the source of most broadly shared images and messages in history (Brynat&Zillman, 1994). In 1926 the very first television image was broadcast by a Scotch engineer, John Logie Baird.

It was a very important invention from the beginning, an invention that brings the world, entertainment, news and some other programs into every home. In 1981, a study reported an average, that a young person has watched more than 15,000 hours of television, but spent only 10,800 in school (Mitchell&Kirkham, 1981)). Another similar study has been done by The Istanbul Chamber of Commerce in Turkey. This study has showed that 441 out of 504 adults (who were older than 18) watch television, at least two hours everyday (ICC, 2001). In such a time period it is inescapable that children watch television with their parents. It is the mainstream of the common symbolic environment into which our children are born and in which we all live out our lives (1). We allow our schedules to be altered by televisions. If we had to sum up the spiritual zeitgeist of the late twentieth century, it might be said that ours is an age not of churchgoers, not of atheists, not of Buddhists or Muslims, but of TV watchers (Arthur, 1996). Arthur argues that, it has been estimated that in the course of an average lifetime we may spend as much as eight years watching television. Since its invention many studies have been done about viewing television and its effects on people especially on young children. Many disadvantages and advantages of watching television has been examined since its invention. Many researchers in various subjects are still conducting comprehensive studies about viewing television and its effects in a broad perspective.

In spite of this situation, we, as educators, should guide the parents and children in order to benefit from television. Therefore, orientating television channels should be educators’ and other authorities’ profession.

### **Research Question**

Everything which concerns education should be analyzed very thoroughly. As mentioned earlier, television has a great influence on people, especially on children. For this reason, there are certain questions that we should research for possible answers. These certain questions are; “How many hours per day do they watch television?” what do people do when they watch television, “what do people, especially children watch on television?”, “Do they think that television is a natural educator?” In this research the exact question we would like to find the answer to is “Is it possible to use television as a teaching tool, outside the classrooms?”

### **Literature Review**

Lawrence Cremin, the distinguished historian of US education, defined education as the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit evoked or acquired knowledge, attitudes, skills or sensibilities as well as any outcomes of that effort. This definition clearly explains the education concept which is not restricted within the term schooling.

There are three patterns of education which are; formal, informal and non-formal education. According to Merriam, formal education refers to all educational institutions including all levels of schools both private and public, as well as specialized programs offering technical and professional training. She explains informal

education as an unplanned incidental learning that occurs in the process of people's daily lives. Merriam explains non-formal education as any organized educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives (Merriam&Brockett, 1996).

People often confuse the education concept with schooling and they discuss this concept only within the scope of schooling. These terms of education might help us to examine the education concept. As Merriam indicated earlier, informal education is based on incidental learning, occurring in people's daily lives. Television and radio channels, the Internet, various games are all included in the scope of informal education. There is no real evidence that all the television sets and viewing hours make a difference in how much children learn, but certainly much informal learning does take place (Lesser, 1975). Recent research studies have showed that the television is an essential need for humankind especially children. From this view point we need to critically examine its effects on children in order to develop a more balanced approach (Schlozman, 2002).

“It came as little surprise to me when a Kaiser Family Foundation study found that children between the ages of 8 and 18 spend more time with the television than with almost all other media combined, including books, computer games, magazines and video games”, says Williams (Williams, 2003). In fact people watch television in their everyday lives. They have fun, acquire knowledge, and learn what is happening all around the world. Experts are still investigating the effects of viewing television; they guide the authorities, parents and educators as well according to the results. In this section some relevant research studies and results will be explained.

It is easy for children to ignore sights and sounds that surround them. To some extent they have to learn to do this, or how else could they concentrate? But the medium which is the most ignored is also the one supposed to be most stimulating: *television* (Cullingford, 1995). At this point the question we need to answer is what do children watch? Cullingford says that children mostly watch programs which make fewest demands on them. Such programs are usually action films that are aimed at adults. Cullingford also points to that the amount of time spent on watching television. Most, if not all, spend about three hours everyday. In this case, we should investigate the negative effects of viewing television.

A study report which was prepared by the American Academy of Pediatrics has showed that watching television has possible negative health effects; such as violent or aggressive behaviour, substance use, sexual activity, obesity, poor body image and decreased school performance (AAP, 2001). A similar study on the same subject has been done among high schools in the United States of America. The study analyzed data from the 1999 National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, a representative sample (N = 15,349) of USA high school students. 11% of 15,349 students were overweight, 31% were sedentary and 43% of them watched television more than two hours everyday (Lowry, Wechsler, Galuska, Fulton&Kann, 2002). Another study was done by other certain researchers. They randomly selected 2760 children whose ages vary between 14 and 16 from ten urban areas. For all the young people surveyed, these behaviours correlated with frequency of viewing television. This study has reported that, as the frequency of viewing television of young people increases, an increase in such behaviours as having sexual intercourse, drinking, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, cutting glass, cheating, stealing and driving a car without permission has been observed (Schlozman, 2002). Scholzman also claims that a body of data suggests that children who witness either fictional or real violence on television sometimes develop symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder.

In many countries, especially in the USA many similar studies have been done by certain researchers and institutions. All findings are summarizing the negative effects of television as; obesity, poor communication, aggressive behaviour and decreased school performance.

We usually have an inclination to say that viewing television has disadvantages more than advantages; but actually it would be much more constructive and enlightening to examine with good programs. Cullingford put emphasis on using television as an educational tool. This idea of using television as an educational tool requires information about how children and adolescents learn. Attempting to use television to teach children and adolescents is based on so little real evidence that it is almost purely an act of faith (Lesser, 1975). All we need is to obtain necessary information about children's learning and the effects of television. In the 21st century both positive and negative effects of watching television is known thoroughly. And we are able to see its definite and lasting effects on children. Children are more likely to learn through television, than going to school or reading a book. Going to school is compulsory whereas watching television is not. Reading a book might be dull or obscure whereas, viewing television is easier and amusing in a visual manner. For whatever reasons, children seek opportunities to watch television, providing us, in turn with opportunities—as yet unused—to put their spontaneous pleasure to use (Lesser, 1975).

The effects of television on children's behaviours are not all negative. Educational programs such as "Sesame Street" give children the opportunity to learn letters of the alphabet, words, numbers, and social skills. Such programs also show people solving problems and resolving differences through cooperation and discussion rather than through aggression and hostility. Television's conventions operate strongly to expedite a viewer's understanding. Clair and Schwetz have investigated the effects of a show named "Between the lions" on children. The show's message aimed at children between the ages of 4 to 7. They found that the program helped children with certain details of the reading process (Clair&Schwets, 2003). They also claimed that such shows help youngsters on the road to literacy.

American Pediatrics stress on the effects of messages conveyed through television. In 1967 Bandura, a psychologist, helped kids of similar ages who were afraid of dogs, to overcome their fears by showing them a short film. The film featured a kid resembling them who was not afraid of dogs and was playing with dogs in a happy mood. Thus he has succeeded in helping children to overcome their fears (Senemoğlu, 2000). One of the most important points about viewing television is that, young children have a tendency to imitate the televised characters as indicated in the Bandura's experiments named *Modelling*. Giggling, washing, scratching, kicking, hopping, rubbing and various actions evoke considerable imitation. According to Bandura; individuals are more likely to learn modelled actions that are valued rather than those acts that are not rewarded (Smith, Nathanson&Wilson, 2002). To prove this idea, in the early 1960s Bandura and other researchers conducted a classic set of experiments that demonstrated the power of observational learning. In one experiment, a preschool child worked on a drawing while a television set showed an adult behaving aggressively toward a large inflated Bobo doll. The adult pummelled the doll with a mallet, kicked it, flung it in the air, sat on it, and beat it in the face. The child was then left in another room filled with interesting toys, including a Bobo doll. The experimenters observed the child through one-way glass. Compared with children who witnessed a non-violent adult model and those not exposed to any model, children who witnessed the aggressive display were much more likely to show aggressive behaviours toward the Bobo Doll, and they often imitated the model's exact behaviours and hostile words. (Senemoğlu, 2000) Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory has maintained an important place in the study of aggression and criminal behaviour. In order to control aggression, he believed family members and the mass media should provide positive role models for their children and the general public (Bandura, 1976). As Bandura indicated the importance of mass media in informal education, we, as educators and parents should also focus on the effects of commercial television programs.

Because of the modelling theory and its effects, it requires quite attention to investigate the commercial television programs and their contents. In general, the messages these programs convey, lead people to think in a narrow perspective. On commercial television's family situation comedies father is bumbling and helpless, but lovable-doubly so if he happens to be a professor. On game shows women are greedy, grasping and hysterical with gratitude when receiving a refrigerator dishwasher for nothing. On soap operas, only bad people have sexual impulses; good peoples' sex is apologetic and engaged in solely for purposes of reproduction. Good children are respectful and reverent, dogs are heroic and loyal, dolphins are clever and sharks are vicious (Lesser, 1975). In this view, it is not possible for children to grow up as intellectuals. Stereotype characters only cause rote learning but nothing.

During the prime-time hours, many situation comedies and advertisements are broadcast. Furthermore similar approaches are still used in various television programs. In Turkey, on commercial televisions, such as family situation comedies and advertisements, mothers and girls are quiet and shy and all responsibility of house works belongs to them! Fathers and boys are always strong and pretend to be powerful; they never help their wives or mothers and expect to be served. In other words, discrimination in sex roles is still imposed to young children as a part of informal education. As stated earlier, informal learning does take place mostly during viewing television. For these reasons, the messages conveyed in these programs must be analyzed with further attention. In addition to this, necessary alterations should be made in the scheduling of the programs.

### **Importance of the study**

Since its invention, television has become one of the most influential tools in humankind's life and behaviour. As especially children are influenced by what they see on television, a study concerning the positive and more importantly the negative effects television has on the informal education of children is of utmost importance.

Furthermore, as this study is not only about the effects of watching television on informal education, but also about how everybody in the society must act to improve these effects, it requires further and close attention.

### **Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to observe the role of television as an informal education tool and knowing its effects, make the necessary changes in programming of television channels. In addition to these, this study aims to help academicians guide their students while helping the rest of the society guide their young ones, (and making television a positive tool for informal education), thus helping to raise a healthier and more educated generation in the context of social behaviour.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited due to;

- The academic year of 2004-2005 fall semester
- 250 students from 4 different age groups, and 4 schools
- The insufficient number of TV channels and lack of quality, Turkish Cypriots prefer to watch Turkish television channels. Consequently the subject studied in this research includes eight international TV channels which are still being transmitted on Turkish TV channels in Turkey.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

The subjects were 250 students, 119 boys and 131 girls, enrolled in different classes and age groups. There are 20 people in the ages of 4 – 6, 60 people in the ages of 7- 11, 91 people in the ages of 12-14 and 79 people in the ages of 15 – 17.

### **Instruments**

Two types of questionnaires are used for this research. One of them is for the children who are between 7-17 years old and the other form was prepared for parents of the children whose ages are between 4-6 years old. The questions that are included into the questionnaire are prepared according to the certain scientific research studies. It includes two parts that are; personal information and questions about television viewing.

A pilot survey on 22 children in the ages of 4 – 17 was performed. Afterwards, a questionnaire was arranged in the context of answers to the questionnaire. In the following procedure the questionnaire was proofread by two experts. After that the questionnaire was rearranged and proofread by experts again. In the last version of the questionnaire there are two parts. The first part includes the first 7 questions which are the age, gender, education of mother and father, number of television in the home, in the child's bedroom, if any. The second part includes 10 questions and those 10 questions consist in each of the following categories:

- (a) viewing television habits
- (b) effects of viewing television
- (c) Personal opinions about watching television.

All questions in the questionnaire require either various or yes/no responses

### **Procedure**

The subjects, between the ages 7 and 17 were given the questionnaire in their classrooms. A few oral instructions were given to emphasize that the honest perception was required and the items were to be answered without consultation or comparison with peers. The subjects, who were younger than 7 years old, answered the questions in the questionnaire with the help of his or her parents and the researchers or the questionnaire was completed by the child's parents.

## **III. RESULTS**

### **Demographic Data**

The first five items of the questionnaire asked for "Personal Data", including the variable age, gender, education level of their mothers and fathers and whether they television(s) at their home and bedroom.

An analysis of the characteristics of the target population for the study indicated that 52.4 % (131) female and 47.6 % (119) male responded the questionnaire.

Similarly, 8 % of participants are between the ages of 4 – 7. 24 % of the subjects are between the ages of 7 – 11 and 36.4 % of the participants are between the ages of 12 – 14. 31.6 % of the participants are between the ages of 15 – 17.

About 10.4 % (26) of the participants stated that their mothers' education level is primary school, 13.6 % (34) of the participants stated that secondary school level, 41.6 % (104) responded as high school level, 28 % (70) of the participants responded as graduate level and 6.4 % (16) of the participants responded as postgraduate level by comparing their mothers' education level.

In addition to this, About 9.6 % (24) of the participants stated that their fathers' education level at primary school, 9.2 % (23) of the participants stated that secondary school level, 36.8 % (92) responded as high school level, 36 % (90) of the participants responded as graduate level and 8.4 % (21) of the participants responded as postgraduate level by comparing their fathers' education level.

Another analysis of the peculiarity of the target population for the study showed that 23.2 % (58) of the participants have only one television, 54.8 % (137) of the participants have two televisions, 16.8 % (42) of the participants have three television and 5.2 % of the participants have more than three televisions at their homes.

Similarly, 24.4 % (61) of participants stated that they have a television in their bedrooms whereas 75.6 % (189) of the participants stated that they do not have a television in their bedrooms.

### Frequencies of Survey Items

**Table 1. How many hours per day do you watch television?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <2 hours	50	20.0	20.0	20.0
2-4 hours	120	48.0	48.0	68.0
4-6 hours	62	24.8	24.8	92.8
More than 6 hours	18	7.2	7.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In Table 1, 20 % of the subjects indicated that they watch television less than two hours per day. About 48 % of the subjects responded that they watch television between 2-4 hours per day, 24.8 % of the subjects stated that they watch television between 4-6 hours per day and 7.2 % of the subjects stated that they watch television more than 6 hours.

**Table 2. At what time of the day do you prefer watching television?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 7 am - 12 pm	17	6.8	6.8	6.8
12 pm - 5 pm	42	16.8	16.8	23.6
5 - 9 pm	131	52.4	52.4	76.0
9 pm - 12 am	52	20.8	20.8	96.8
After midnight	8	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In Table 2, 6.8 % of the participants responded that their preferences about watching TV time are between 7 am – 12 pm. Similarly 16.8 % of the subjects prefer watching television between 12 pm – 5 pm. About 52.4 % of the participants prefer watching television between 5 pm – 9 pm. About 20.8 % of the subjects prefer watching TV between 9 pm – 12 am.

In addition to this, subjects are asked to answer the kind of television programs that they prefer to watch. They have selected at most three kinds of programs and results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. What kind of television programs do you prefer to watch?**

	Frequency		Frequency
Valid Fight Films	73	Horror Films	113
Comedy Films	141	Reality Shows/Discussion	10
Action Films	103	Platforms	
Suspenser Films	0	Documentary Programs	39
Cartoons	61	Series of Film	30
Competition Programs	35	Educational Programs	10
Reality Shows	21	Other	2
News	37		
Magazine Programs	6		
Advertisements			

**Table 4. When you see a character smoking on television, do you feel any urge to smoke or do you envy the character who is smoking?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	14	5.6	5.6	5.6
no	236	94.4	94.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

As it is obvious from Table 4, 5.6 % of the subjects chose the option yes for “When you see a character smoking on television, do you feel any urge to smoke or do you envy the character who is smoking?”, whereas 94.4 % of the subjects responded the question as “ No”

**Table 5. What do you do while watching television? (You may choose more than one options)**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid I definitely eat snacks	137	54.8	54.8	54.8
I chat with people around me.	26	10.4	10.4	65.2
I prefer to remain silent	72	28.8	28.8	94.0
I read newspapers, books or magazines	8	3.2	3.2	97.2
Other	7	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 5 most respondents 54.8 % (137) have chosen the option which is “I definitely eat snacks” About 28.8 % (72) of the participants prefer to remain silent. “Chatting with people” option was chosen by 10.4 % (26) of the participants, 3.2 % (8) of the respondents read newspapers and 2.8 % (7) of the participants choose “other” option in the questionnaire.

As a follow-up question, participants are asked to prefer to watch a TV program that is enjoyable or going out to have fun. Results are listed in Table6.

**Table 6. Would you prefer to watch a television program that you enjoy over going out to have fun?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	49	19.6	19.6	19.6
sometimes	146	58.4	58.4	78.0
no	55	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In Table 6, it is shown that 19.6 % of the subjects prefer to watch a TV program that they enjoy. Most of the respondents 58.4 % (146) have chosen the option “sometimes”. 22.0 % (55) of participants prefer to go out to have fun.

In the next question, subjects were asked to indicate, if there is a famous character that they envy on any TV channel. Further details are listed in Table 7.

**Table 7. Is there a famous character that you envy on any television channel?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	163	65.2	65.2	65.2
no	87	34.8	34.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

5.2 % (163) of the subjects indicated that they envy a famous character while 34.8 % (87) of the subjects do not envy a famous character.

As a follow up question, respondents who chose option “Yes” were asked to indicate the type of their famous character that they envy and results are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. which of the followings is the type of the character?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Film/TV Series Star	67	26.8	41.4	41.4
Sportsman	32	12.8	19.8	61.1
Showman	4	1.6	2.5	63.6
Cartoon Character	20	8.0	12.3	75.9
Model	12	4.8	7.4	83.3
Singer/Actor/Actress	25	10.0	15.4	98.8
News Caster	2	.8	1.2	100.0
Total	162	64.8	100.0	
Missing System	88	35.2		
Total	250	100.0		

41.4 % (67) of the participants responded that, the character they envy is a film/ TV series star. Similarly 19.8 % (32) of the participants responded that the character they envy is a sportsman. About 2.5 % (4) of the participants indicated that they envy a showman. 12.3 % (20) of participants envy a cartoon character, 7.4 % (12) of the participants envy a model, 15.4 % (25) envy a singer/actor/actress and 0.8 % (3) of the participants envy a news caster.

In the next question, participants were asked to state if they dream any events, characters or people after watching them on television. Results are shown in table 9.

**Table 9. Are there any events, characters or people that you dream about after watching them on the television?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	99	39.6	39.6	39.6
no	151	60.4	60.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

As shown by (in) table 9. 39.6 % (99) of the subjects responded that they dream any event/ character/ or people after watching them on the TV. 60.4 % (151) of the subjects responded negatively by choosing “No” option.

**Table 10. Do you believe that television is an informative invention in any way ?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	92	36.8	36.8	36.8
sometimes	98	39.2	39.2	76.0
no	60	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In question 16, subjects are asked to indicate their personal opinions about watching TV. Results are listed in table 10.

36.8 % (92) of the subjects believe that TV is an informative invention in any way. 39.2 % (98) of the subjects believe that TV, sometimes is an informative invention in any way whereas, 24 % (60) of the subjects did not believe that TV is an informative invention in any way.

Last question is “Do you support the idea that there is no life without television?” was also in the category of personal opinions about watching TV, which Results are shown by table 11

**Table 11. Do you support the idea "there is no life without television"?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	126	50.4	50.4	50.4
sometimes	73	29.2	29.2	79.6
no	51	20.4	20.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Slightly more than half of the respondents 50.4 % (126) indicated that they supported the idea that “there is no life without television”. 29.2 % (73) of the subjects sometimes support the idea that “there is no life without television”. 20.4 % (51) of the subjects indicated that they did not support the idea “there is no life without television”.

#### **t-test and ANOVA Results**

In the analysis of the data, when comparing means, no evidence is found to say that there is a statistical difference between the specific groups except a gender difference about the kind of programs. A t-test analysis revealed a significant difference between males and females about the preference of TV programs ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Most of the male participants in the ages of 7-17 prefer to watch fight, action or horror films whereas; most of the female participants in the ages of 7-17 prefer to watch comedy, horror films and TV-series.



Another result of the study showed that female participants in the ages of 7 – 17 envy a famous character. In the follow-up analysis it is found that 33 % (43) of the females' famous character they envy is a film/TV series star. Similarly, 13 % of the female participants' famous character they envy is a model. In the same way, 21% of males' famous characters they envy are film/TV series star and sportsman.

Same question was also asked to the participants who are in the ages of 4 – 6. A surprising result was found. That is all participants envy a character on the TV. 25 % of the children indicated that, their famous character they envy is a TV/film star, 30 % of the children responded that, their famous character they envy is a sportsman 20 % of children responded that, their famous character they envy is a model or a singer/actor/actress and 5 % of the children indicated that his/her character he/she envies is a carton character.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS

This study was designed to explore the viewing habits and personal opinions about TV of the children and adolescents between the ages of 4 – 17. We can draw a number of conclusions regarding the likelihood that viewers will learn anything (violence, love, etc...) from depictions on TV channels.

In answer to research question, it is found that over 80 % of people watch TV 2-6 hours per day. In addition to this participants indicated that they ate definitely snacks when they watch TV. It is a big problem for the whole world people to deal with health problems such as obesity. Television watching is directly linked with obesity. It is not only "obesity" but also hypertension and poor body concept are the major problem that people deal with such sicknesses. In a research that is done by Prof. Dr. Manfred Spitzer, an academician at the Ulm University in Germany, it is found that about 20.000 people die per year because of watching too much TV in their everyday lives. (Hürriyet Gazetesi<sup>1</sup>, 2005). Prof. Spitzer also found that such people are under the risk of obesity, hypertension and diabetics. In this study it is found that a child in the ages of 4 – 17 watches television averagely 4 hours per day. A research was done in July 2005, by the Cyprus Turkish Association of Diabetics. This research explored that more than 33 % of Cypriot children are obese and pre-obese that overlaps with those studies. So our children are under the risk of obesity and diabetics. And yet in spite of this situation, we should guide both our children and their parents about the serious effects of watching TV. ( Kıbrıs Gazetesi<sup>2</sup>, 2005)

A big portion of the sample indicated that their preference(s) about watching TV time is/are between 5 pm – 12 am. Another finding of this study put forward that children prefer to watch fight, action, comedy and horror films. After an attentive examine of rating percentages of aforesaid TV channels, it is found that high rated programs are consistent with the survey results. That program selections differ according to the gender. The study showed that male participants prefer to watch programs that involve violence. According to this result, many of the male participants in the ages of 12 – 17 stated that the character they envy is a mafia man who acts in a TV series named "Kurtlar Vadisi". This TV series was always in the first rank of the rating list on every Thursday. Its content includes too much fight and violence. Young males would like to act as the man who stars in this TV series. This actor and his gangs are spreading terror and not punished for any violence. And the adolescents especially boys would like to imitate like this strong, unbridled and popular man. Further more this TV series is broadcast between 8 – 10 pm that is the most preferred watching time.

Similarly, another finding revealed that, female participants prefer to watch TV series that involve love, passion, treason and intrigue. But female participants did not indicate any specific character. Another result showed that most of the children prefer to watch a fantastic TV series named as "Sihirli Annem". The theme of that program is about daily lives of several families and fairies. They are flying and practicing some kind of magic. These scenes are the most exciting scenes of the TV series. And besides this TV series is one of the most rated programs on TV.

Such programs can cause children build high hopes or experiment disappointments in their real lives. And this can make children unhappy. We, as adults should not let children and adolescents to get confused and submit themselves to the external imaginary. It is not surprising that about 40 percent of the participants dream any event, characters or people after watching them on TV. This finding shows that people are hypnotized by TV. May be it is brainwashing or destroying their fresh minds. Also it is not surprising that more than half of the subjects cannot imagine a world without television. So it is easy to draw a conclusion that; our children are colonized by TV.

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<sup>1</sup> Hürriyet Gazetesi: A newspaper that is published in Turkey

<sup>2</sup> Kıbrıs Gazetesi: A newspaper that is published in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

An expected result is also consistent with the study, which is a very low percent of the sample would like to watch educational programs. This is why; educational programs are not broadcast in the prime time or those programs are not broadcast! We all know some certain regulations about the broadcasting laws and principles. Every TV channel has to broadcast some kind of educational programs for a certain amount of time. But most of the international TV channels violate this rule. And this is the second issue that should be considered in order to guide some authorities.

If our children like watching TV and don't think a life without a television and think it is informative in anyway then, it can be used as a teaching tool outside the classrooms. In fact we have to assemble our power to make this hypnotizing machine more useful than it is. If we let *Social Cognitive Theory* to frame this study, it can be said that TV can serve as a teaching tool in many ways. "If violence in television causes people to be more aggressive, then shouldn't the good-hearted qualities in TV cause its audience to be kinder to others? Then what do we need? We need to serve good role models by using TV in an appropriate way. We should be qualified to speak about rating system and work with competent authorities such as producers, directors and channel owners.

Overall, this study found that watching television is a very popular activity that all people participate. Within prime time, most of the TV channels are broadcasting some similar programs which are violating the broadcasting laws and principles. And they mostly contain many features that may encourage a luxury life both in TV-series and films that make children and adolescents imitate their behaviours. So this factor may affect a person's life in a bad way. However, it should be reminded that these findings should be interpreted with the limitations that are mentioned before.

Further research studies should be encouraged for the following subject;

What are the reflections of watching TV on children and adolescents in their daily lives?

In what ways of socializing do watching television influences?

What is the relationship between health issues and watching television?

As a result, television has a great potential to be informal educator to educate our children in a positive way, and it should be of the utmost importance for the teachers and other authorities.

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