Media Literacy Education in Turkey: An Evaluation of Media Processes and Ethical Codes

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate school principals', teachers', parents', and students' opinions, arising from participation in a pilot program which used a media literacy curriculum in Turkey. The research population covers all seventh grade students who attended the media literacy course during the 2006-2007 academic year, in five pilot cities and their teachers, principals, and families. A semi-structured one-on-one interview technique was used to collect data. In order to determine students' opinions regarding media's conformance to ethical codes, five ethical codes were determined and the "Basic Ethical Codes for Media to Follow Scale" was developed. The study results clearly show that principals, teachers, and parents have serious concerns with the content and quality of national publishing and broadcasting. Participants' critiques generally concentrate on media's corrupting social values for the sake of ratings and circulation, and they violate individuals' rights and exaggerate in publishing and broadcasting. Students, especially from four of the pilot program cities, state that media has problems concerning processes and ethical codes, and it conforms to ethical codes sometimes or hardly-ever. The study results show that students' opinions regarding media's objectiveness, respect for individual rights, honesty, congruence for responsible broadcasting, and strengthening social values in publishing and broadcasting coincide with those of the principals, teachers, and parents.

Key Words
Media Literacy, Ethic Codes, Media Process.

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The world today, for many, especially adults, is much different from that remembered from childhood. The world of the twenty-first century is controlled by media, driven by technology, and globalized day-by-day. In other words, it is a place where people are more connected with each other (Kellner & Share, 2007). Today, mass media influences life from many aspects, and media is more active than ever in shaping daily routines.

Media is an important and indispensable reality of life, and it has growing effects on the processes of economic, cultural, and political decisions. Mass media is, in many ways, the cornerstone of social change. On the one side, mass media changes itself and forms the shape of the communication; on the other side, it affects and determines socialization processes (Bilgili, 2006). Mass media outlets have been accepted as a power for both social control and change (Demir, 2006; Kotaman & Avcı, 2006). Media reflects power-relations in society, but it also regenerates, alters, and constructs these relationships in new forms (Binark & Bek, 2007, p. 147). In addition, media, especially television broadcasting, pioneers economic, societal, cultural, and political transformation because it has unique abilities: provides opportunities for creativity, disseminates information constantly, affects more than one sense organ, allows a high degree of access, and applies to both education and entertainment. In addition, media enjoys wide acceptance as the primary news source (Çelenk, 2005; Ertürk & Gül, 2006; Tığlı, 2006).

Unquestionably, accomplishing these functions effectively results in the media's desirability; however, discussing and questioning problems brought by media to daily life remain legitimate. The contemporary world is bombarded every second by visual images, complicated audio arrangements and a variety of media formats (Kellner & Share, 2007). As a result of the advancing influence of media, some current problems have occurred in society: media monopolization (Arhan, Demirer, Hozatlı, Orhangazi & Özbudun, 1998; Demir, 1998; Kongar, 2003; Mutlu, 2005), channeling effect of television (Akbulut & Kartopu, 2006; Arık & Solmaz; 2007; Balkaş, 2005; Bilgili & Akbulut, 2007; Çoban, 2007; Kaypakoğlu, 1999; Konukman, 2006; Taşkıran, 2005), encouraging consumption (Balkaş, 2005; Gün, Tüzel & Durmaz, 2005; Karaca, Pekyaman & Güney, 2007), degenerating and corrupting culture (Balkaş, 2005; Kongar, 2003), high regard for rating concerns (Baykal,

2007; Kayış, 2007; Serim, 2007), falsifying news reports (Bilgili & Akbulut, 2007; Can & Şimşek, 2005; Göksu & Eroğlu, 2006), compromising privacy (İrvan, 2003), and encouraging self-interest (Demir, 2006; Erdoğan, 2006).

Belsey and Chadwick (1998) emphasized that the important aspects of the application of media, especially in journalism, should inevitably include definition and analysis by ethical standards of freedom, neutrality, truthfulness, righteousness, and privacy. In response, the European Council of Parliamentary Assembly disclosed a resolution in 2008 which stated: There "should be a system of media self-regulation including a right of reply and correction or voluntary apologies by journalists. Media should set up their own self-regulatory bodies, such as complaints commissions or ombudspersons, and decisions of such bodies should be implemented. Journalists should set up their own professional codes of conduct and they should be applied. They should disclose to their viewers or readers any political and financial interests" (Avrupa Konseyi Parlamenter Meclisi, 2008).

Transmitting true and complete news to influence public opinion is a basic code of media ethics: "The first, four things to occur in the mind regarding journalism ethics is to become fair, true, objective, and right. Media's first priority is to inform the public truthfully about what is going on in society." (Eryılmaz, 1999, p. 23-24). In other words, media ethics include broadcasting news truthfully and objectively. Another ethical issue discussed is privacy; whose violation can reasonably occur when public benefit as an issue. Accordingly, the Turkish Press Council code of professional ethics of the press, Article Five states, "private lives of individuals shall not be reported except when made necessary by the public interest" (Basın Konseyi, 2009).

In order to find some solutions to ethical problems in the media, Turkish journalists' declaration of rights and responsibilities was prepared by the Turkish Journalist Association (2009), whose standards are in addition to those of the Turkish Press Council Code of Professional Ethics. As a continuation of these, a new ethical code for television and radio broadcasting was prepared with the participation of all national media organizations under the leadership of the Radio Television Supreme Council (Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu [RTÜK]) in 2007. An outline of this ethical code is:

- Respect for individuals' basic rights and freedoms,

- Respect for freedom of thought,

- No broadcasting for self-benefit and inequitable purposes,

- No broadcasting of issues that include segregation, humiliation and prejudice about race, gender, class, religion, language and disability,

- Respect for individuals' and organizations' rights to reply and request corrections,

- Respect for the confidentiality of sources,

- Avoidance of publication of material that is conducive to violence, offensive to human values and use of force,

- Respect for private lives of individuals,

- Close attention to protecting children and teenagers from inappropriate content.

Certainly, applying these ethical codes and rendering them functional provide a basic platform for overcoming the problems of media ethics. Even though people accept these codes as preconditions for media and expect them to be followed strictly, in reality, ethical codes are not applied effectively, either by media owners or employees, and they are violated frequently. At this point, instead of waiting for media to follow-thorough on ethical codes, building "a common consciousness" in society, as expressed by Kongar (2003), could be a more effective method to find a solution for ethical problems in media. In order to provide active participation of readers and viewers in this process and to build a common consciousness in society, media literacy education seems to be the most logical and functional approach in today's world.

Educational experts discuss an educational process, "media literacy," for individuals using mass media actively in order for them to be conscious media consumers. These experts emphasize the importance of providing children with the insight to use media (Ertürk & Gül, 2006; Goodman, 2003; Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Leistyna & Alper, 2007; Livingstone, 2008; Potter, 2005; Scharrer, 2002; Semali & Pailliotet, 1999; Singer & Singer, 1998; Thoman & Jolls, 2006; Torres & Mercado, 2006). However, media literacy education not only includes teaching positive and negative aspects of media or how to use media, but also media literacy education should encompass a broader perspective that intends to un-

derstand, express and interpret facts and events in every part of life. As indicated by Burn and Durran (2007), media literacy should accomplish its critical, creative, and cultural functions in society.

As a result, media literacy education and media ethical codes cannot be taught separately. Hence, the main point of this research is to evaluate the processes of media and the conformance of media to media ethics, from the point-of-view of school principals, teachers, parents, and students from schools where media literacy education was applied as a pilot study.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate school principals', teachers', parents', and students' opinions, arising from participation in a pilot program which applied a media literacy curriculum in Turkey. This program considered media processes and media's conformance to ethical codes. Turkish media, analyzed in this study, considers content according to principals', teachers', parents', and students' opinions of: respect for individual rights, honesty in broadcasting, congruity of responsible broadcasting, objectiveness in broadcasting, and strengthening of social values.

Method

Qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used to evaluate principals', teachers', parents', and students' opinions, arising from participation in a pilot curriculum of application of media literacy in Turkey, with specific attention to media processes and media's conformance to ethical codes.

Research Population and Sample

The research population covers all seventh grade students who attended a media literacy course during the 2006-2007 academic year, in five pilot cities (i.e., Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Erzurum, and Adana), and their teachers, principals, and families. Since the study begun in September of the 2007-08 academic year, the students who had participated in the curriculum as 7th graders had become eighth graders when they completed the study's questionnaire. The study aimed to reach all stu-

dents who attended a media literacy course; therefore, sampling was not used. However, because of transferring students (in and out), student-discontinuity and so on, the research did not capture the entire targeted student population.

For the qualitative data, the study includes interviews with all teachers and principals, working in the media literacy pilot schools, Also, from five cities, twelve parents from each school, whose children attended a media literacy course, were interviewed. Parents were selected according to socio-economic level information, provided by the school's administration. Interviews included a total of seventy-four people, five principals, nine teachers and sixty parents.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interview methodology was used to evaluate the Turkish principals', teachers', and parents' opinions, arising from those who participated in the pilot study of media literacy, specifically regarding media processes and media's conformance to ethical codes.

The study required an in-depth examination of specific ideas and actions in specific settings (DeMarrais, 2004). This type of inquiry coincides with the strengths of qualitative research, rather than any forms of quantitative research. In addition, information of perceptions, attitudes, and practices is most likely to be available from participants by talking to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, 2000).

The ability of qualitative data to describe a phenomenon is an important consideration, not only from a researcher's perspective, but also from a reader's perspective. Qualitative research reports are typically rich in detail and insights of participants' worldly experiences and render such reports "epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience" (Stake, 1978, p.5) and thus more meaningful.

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed about a particular phenomenon, the experiences they have had, and how they make sense of the world around them (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research is an umbrella term, covering several forms of inquiry that help to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena within natural settings. In contrast to quantitative research, which takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts or variables, qualitative research seeks to

shed light on how all the parts work together to form a whole (DeMarrais, 2004; Merriam, 1998).

In the light of the explanations of qualitative study, a semi-structured one-on-one interview technique was used to collect flexible information, and realistic and in-depth data about participants' individual characteristics, experiences, and comments. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Interviewees were identified as: Principals P1, P2…, teachers T1, T2…, and parents, Ankara F1, Ankara F2….

Qualitative findings may be presented alone or in combination with quantitative data. Research and evaluation studies employing multiple methods, including combinations of qualitative and quantitative data, are common. At the simplest level, a questionnaire or interview that asks both fixed-choice (closed) questions and open-ended questions are an example of how quantitative measurement and qualitative inquiry are often combined (Patton, 2002: 5).

In order to determine students' opinions regarding media's conformance to ethical codes, five ethical codes were determined and the "Basic Ethical Codes for Media to Follow Scale" (BECMFS) was developed. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to record students' responses. The scale has choices for: (5) Always conforming (4) Generally conforming (3) Sometimes conforming (2) Hardly-ever conforming (1) Never conforming.

In June 2006, a pre-test was administered to 120 seventh grade students, selected from one of the schools included in the research population. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach Alpha) for the BECMFS was 0.75. According to the results, the survey was accepted as being reliable. On the other hand, item-total correlations for survey changes from 0.47 to 0.62. KMO and Barlett's test was used to decide whether factor analysis will be applied to pilot study. The survey was evaluated using factor analysis since KMO test result close to 1 (.874). On the other hand, Barlett test results, lower than 0.05, indicate that factors could be taken from correlation matrix (Şencan, 2005).

Data Analysis

A content analysis technique was used to analyze principals', teachers', and parents' opinions regarding media's conformance to ethical codes. In order to analyze data, first, interviews were carefully transcri-

bed. Reading the transcription while listening to the original recordings to check for accuracy, and coding data followed. After examining, separating meaningful parts, and transforming data units (sentences), to understand conceptual meanings of each part of data, data was organized as draft themes and categories (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Finally, relationships between themes and categories were determined, and both themes and categories were organized and interpreted according to the purpose of the study. QSR NVivo® 7.0 was used for analyzing qualitative data.

Quantitative data analysis techniques were used to determine students' opinions regarding media's conformance to ethical codes. In order to compare quantitative data according to the variable of the pilot-program cities, frequency, percentage, mean and one way variance analysis were used. Collected data was analyzed with SPSS® 16.0 statistical package program.

Findings

In this study, principals', teachers', parents', and students' opinions were evaluated, after they attended a pilot, media literacy course which considered the content and quality of broadcasting and publishing in Turkey. In this regard, participants' opinions were categorized under five ethical codes and principles for broadcasting and publishing: objectiveness in broadcasting, respect for individual rights, honesty in broadcasting, congruity of responsible broadcasting, and strengthening social values (cooperation, sharing, helping each other and so on).

Objectiveness in Broadcast

The majority of participants agree that the media is not objective in their broadcasts and publications. Participants strongly expressed that the media is neither objective nor conforming to ethical codes.

Participants articulated the existence for several reasons why media is not conforming to objectiveness in broadcasting. For example, according to some of the participants, media cannot be objective because people, who work in the media sector, generally do not receive their educations in the communication area, and their political views are too influential and affect their opinions.

On the other hand, even though some participants reveal negative opinions about some media companies' objectiveness, they also express that objective media companies still exist, and they broadcast and publish objectively regarding uncovering fraud in an unbiased approach to governments' policies.

According to the city-variable, students, who attended the media literacy course in the pilot program schools, expressed different opinions about media's conformance to an objectiveness code in broadcasting. Students from Ankara articulated that media is always conforming to an objectiveness code in broadcasting; students from Istanbul stated that media sometimes conforms to an objectiveness code in broadcasting, and students from Adana, Erzurum and Izmir say that media hardly ever does.

According to results of analysis, a significant difference exists between students' perceptions regarding media's conformance to a broadcasting objectiveness code in Turkey [$F_{(4-495)}$ =17.56, P<0.01]. In other words, students' perceptions about objectiveness of Turkish media significantly change depending on the city-variable. The results of analysis to determine which cities represent a difference, show a significant difference among students' perceptions among those who attended courses in Istanbul ($\overline{X}$=3.29) and Izmir ($\overline{X}$=2.35), Erzurum ($\overline{X}$=2.36), and students' perceptions, who attended courses in Ankara ($\overline{X}$=3.92) and Izmir ($\overline{X}$=2.35), Erzurum ($\overline{X}$=2.36), Adana ($\overline{X}$=2.55) regarding media's conforming to an objectiveness code in broadcasting.

Respect to Individual Rights

Participants have serious concerns about the media's approach to respect for individual rights, and they emphasized the importance of self-evaluation of media and the reflection of that self-evaluation on broadcasting. They articulated that the issue of respect for individual rights has different aspects, requires in-depth consideration by the media, and unfortunately, in the media the insensitivity appears to grow daily, reaching a serious level.

According to the city-variable, students, who received media literacy course training in pilot program schools, expressed different opinions about media's conformance to a code that respects individuals' rights in broadcasting. Students from Ankara articulated that media is generally

conforming to a respect for individuals' rights code; students from other cities state that media hardly-ever does.

According to results from analysis, a significant difference exists between students' perceptions regarding media's conformance to respect for individuals' rights code in broadcasting in Turkey [$F_{(4-495)}$=8,409 P<0.01]. In other words, students' perceptions significantly change depending on the city-variable with regard to respect for individuals' rights in Turkish media. The cities which indicate differences show a significant difference among perceptions of students who, attended the course in Ankara ($\overline{x}$=3.61) and Istanbul ($\overline{x}$=2.49), Izmir ($\overline{x}$=2.67), Erzurum ($\overline{x}$=2.66), Adana ($\overline{x}$=2.70).

Honesty in Broadcast

Participants state that they do not trust media completely since the media generally presents distorted and exaggerated "truth," and mixes real and constructed messages together. Also, participants believe that media forces people to believe what the media considers truth. Therefore, the participants emphasized the importance of evaluation of the media's messages after questioning and scrutinizing the information to avoid falling into the media's trap.

Students, who received media literacy in the pilot-course schools, expressed different opinions about media's conforming to an honesty code in broadcasting, according to the city- variable. Students from Ankara articulated that media generally conforms to an honesty code in broadcasting; students from Istanbul stated that media sometimes conforms to an honesty code in broadcasting, and students from Adana, Erzurum and Izmir say that media hardly-ever does.

According to the analyses' results, a significant difference exists between students' perceptions regarding media's conforming to an honesty code in broadcasting in Turkey [$F_{(4-495)}$ =17.56, P<0.01]. In other words, students' perceptions significantly change depending on the city-variable. The results indicate the differences among cities represented by students who attended the course in Istanbul ($\overline{x}$=3.12) and Erzurum ($\overline{x}$=2.42), Adana ($\overline{x}$=2.50), and students who attended the course in Ankara ($\overline{x}$=3.76) and Izmir ($\overline{x}$=2.43), Erzurum ($\overline{x}$=2.42), Adana ($\overline{x}$=2.50) regarding media's conformance to an honesty code in broadcasting.

Congruity of Responsible Broadcast

Throughout the interviews, participants underlined some basic deficits in content and quality of broadcasting and publishing in Turkey. Participants especially revealed their concerns for: not using language properly, sham publishing or broadcasting, lack of educational programs, too many commercials, simplistic content, too much attention to television entertainment or "arranged marriage" shows, and an overall lack of selectivity in programming.

According to participants, who criticized media for improper language usage, many programs on television do not properly use words or apply Turkish grammar rules. Participants, especially, underlined the negative effect of this problem on children's language development.

Some participants expressed that publications and broadcasts do not meet expected levels of quality because of media's apprehension for presenting realities and truth. According to participants, media distorts news, pays too much attention to yellow journalism, and leaves limited space for real country problems.

According to participants, media bears not only an entertainment role but also informational and educational roles. However, participants believe that Turkish media does not accomplish its educational responsibilities as much as meeting societies' expectations.

If one considers that each media company represents commercial purposes, then reasonably, the main purpose of these companies is to expand their profits by increasing their ratings and circulations. However, participants revealed that they feel uncomfortable with media's policies because they believe that media is just interested in increasing ratings and circulations to make profits and ultimately wastes people's time with cheap programs.

Some participants stated that media, especially television channels, broadcast improperly under the umbrella of claiming to consider society's priorities and requests in their broadcasting policies and program selections. They also assert that media takes the easy way out using programs of foreign origin.

Participants emphasized that yellow journalism takes hold of almost all television programs and newspapers; therefore, a big problem exists regarding quality in broadcasting and publishing. They, especially, complain about unnecessary and the empty content of women's shows that

create a vicious cycle, which does not allow generating solutions and compelling people to think.

While participants underlined the indispensable importance of media on raising awareness of the public, they say that they would like to see a media, which is more selective, more current issues oriented, and exercise self-control mechanism more effectively.

Students, who received the pilot media literacy course in their schools, expressed different opinions, according to the city-variable about the media's conforming to a congruity of responsible broadcasting code. Students from Ankara articulated that media sometimes conforms to a congruity of responsible broadcasting code, students from other cities state that media is hardly-ever does.

According to results of the analysis, a significant difference exists between students' perceptions regarding media's conformance to congruity of responsible broadcasting code in Turkey [F (4-495) =10.63 P<0.01]. In other words, students' perceptions significantly change depending on the city-variable with regard to congruence of a responsible broadcasting of Turkish media. The results show which cities have differences and a significant difference among students' perceptions for those who attended the course in Ankara ($\overline{x}$=3.39), and Istanbul ($\overline{x}$=2.41), Izmir ($\overline{x}$=2.21), Erzurum ($\overline{x}$=2.33), Adana ($\overline{x}$=2.19) regarding media's conformance to congruity of responsible broadcasting code.

Strengthening Social Values (Cooperation, Sharing, Helping Each Other etc.)

Participants believe that media has enormous power but that the common belief in society does not recognize that influence. According to participants, media is not only influential in daily life, but it also channels society in economic, cultural and societal manners, and further it has significant power from a political aspect to change governments in countries.

According to participants, media does not accomplish social responsibilities and broadcast enough educational and instructional programs; therefore, it causes degeneration of social and cultural values.

One of the participants revealed completely different opinions regarding media's effects on cultural degeneration and corruption of soci-

ety. The participant asserted that each viewer or reader may possibly put their personal values forward, while evaluating media, therefore, their evaluation is subjective. According to him, media publications and broadcasting may leave a different mark on each person's mind depending upon their class, gender, and belief.

According to the city-variable, students, who attended the pilot media literacy course, expressed different opinions about media's conformance to the strengthening of social values codes. Students from Ankara articulated that media sometimes conforms to the strengthening of social values code; students from other cities stated that media hardly-ever does.

According to the results of the analysis, a significant difference exists between students' perceptions regarding media's conformance to the strengthening of the social values code in broadcast in Turkey [$F_{(4-495)}$ =9.77 P<0.01]. In other words, students' perceptions of significantly change depended on the city–variable. For this aspect, the results of the analysis, show a significant difference among students' perceptions, according to attendance in Istanbul ($\overline{x}$=2.82) and Erzurum ($\overline{x}$=2.04), Adana ($\overline{x}$=1.96), and students' perceptions when attending the course in Ankara ($\overline{x}$=3.11) and Erzurum ($\overline{x}$=2.04), Adana ($\overline{x}$=1.96).

Results

The purpose of this study is to evaluate school principals', teachers', parents', and students' opinions based on participation in a pilot program of a media literacy course conducted in Turkey. The study of opinions involved media processes and the media's conformance to ethical codes. Turkish media is evaluated on the basis of dimensions of functioning, broadcasting policy, and conformance to ethical codes.

The results clearly show that principals, teachers, and parents have serious concerns with the content and quality of national publishing and broadcasting. Participants' critiques generally concentrate on media's corrupting social values for the sake of ratings and circulation, and they violate individuals' rights and exaggerate in publishing and broadcasting. When the interviewees' opinions were deeply analyzed, participants heavily criticized media's publishing and broadcasting policies. According to participants, not publishing and broadcasting programs to educate and to raise the awareness of the public, airing similar quiz

shows, series, women's and magazine programs, using similar program formats, and broadcasting programs not in accord with reality are the best examples which show the low level of media contents and quality. In this sense, the study findings coincide with other study results conducted in Turkey (Akbulut & Balkaş, 2006; Balkaş, 2005; Baykal, 2007; Bilgili & Akbulut, 2007; Budak & Erdoğan, 2007; Can & Şimşek, 2005; Çoban, 2007; Demir, 2006; Erdoğan, 2006; Gün, Tüzel & Durmaz, 2005; İrvan, 2003; Karaca, Pekyaman & Güney, 2007; Kayış, 2007; Kaypakoğlu, 1999; Kongar, 2003; Konukman, 2006; Mert, 2004; Serim, 2007; Taşkıran, 2005).

In summary, boldly, media does not accomplish its responsibilities, and publishing and broadcasting are far from society's expectations. Even though media's commercial concerns are understandable, in order to overcome the problems articulated by participants in this study, media should follows policies of increasing and strengthening social solidarity, and nourishing universal values in the framework of social responsibility.

Students, especially from four of the pilot program cities, state that media has problems concerning processes and ethical codes, and it conforms to ethical codes sometimes or hardly-ever. The study results show that students' opinions regarding media's objectiveness, respect for individual rights, honesty, congruence for responsible broadcasting, and strengthening social values in publishing and broadcasting coincide with those of the principals, teachers, and parents. However, students, who attended the media literacy course in Ankara, have more positive perspectives regarding media's conformance to ethical codes, and this could be evaluated as an interesting finding. Basic factors underlie Ankara's students' different perspectives, and those opinions may follow from characteristics of the school, socioeconomic status of the region surrounding the school, education level of parents, and so on.

On the other hand, another consideration is that each participant has a different standard of judgment. As one of the principals underlined, "Moral principles may from change person to person." Therefore, having principals', teachers', parents', and students' differing opinions regarding media processes is probably a natural occurrence.

Media organizations should activate self-control mechanism themselves without any external interference in order to make ethical co-

des functional. The study results show that media's placing too high regard on ratings while selecting television programs is an incorrect policy. Participants argue that people watch or read unethical programs or read improper columns because they do not have any chance for selection since all media organizations prepare the same types of programs. On the other hand, media insists that they prepare programs according to society's inclinations; therefore, programming and publishing reflects not only the media's decisions but also society's decisions. At this point, what appears is a problem of a "vicious cycle": "*whether or not media prepares programs we would like to watch,* or *we watch the programs since media wants to watch us.*" Obviously, this vicious cycle will not arrive at a conclusion for years.

At this moment, media literacy education could be the most rational solution in light of the opinions expressed in this study. One of the principals said, *"Just as language is necessary, I think media literacy as necessary"* (P3). This underlines the importance of how seriously people should approach the issue. Another principal asserted the importance of media and the necessity of being media literate, *"Students should learn the benefits and harms of media at school… Using the benefits of media and following modernity through the media helps a country's development, but we use media aimlessly"* (P4). One of the teachers articulated similar opinions, *"If we want to raise a conscious generation, and look to the future with confidence, I think, this course [media literacy] will play an invaluable role"* (T4). These opinions of participants have been expressed similarly in different parts of the world. For instance, George Ventura, who is a teacher in West Toronto Institute in Ontario, says, "We teach our children how to read a book or to analyze a poem but we do not teach them how to analyze a television show, to see behind the scene of newspaper news, and to understand the effect of companies on a magazine's advertising. All of those must be taught." (Radford, 2004, p. 385). Similarly, according to Kotaman and Meral (2006), if individuals are not educated how to protect themselves from media's harmful effects, to have political awareness, to look at events critically, to question what they see and to read in media messages correctly, media's negative effects on society will continue.

The study results show that preparing different programs and avoiding routine content should be seen as a source of richness by media companies. When media companies prepare news and inform peop-

le, they should not construct messages, and the content should reflect only truth. According to participants' opinions, media owners or workers should be sure that their personal beliefs, values, and benefits never hide or preclude the truth.

The study results also demonstrate that participants believe that media has more power than what people think. Participants revealed that media not only affects daily lives of people but also controls people's economic, cultural and societal decisions, and more than that media has a power to control and change governments. In order to comprehend this power and to evaluate the effects of media, audiences or target populations should have the ability of critical analysis. At this juncture, indeed, the important point is to have media conform to internationally accepted, basic codes of media ethics and to reflect these codes in their broadcasts and publications. However, if this is not be possible; the most powerful and reasonable solution could be to improve and generalize media literacy education.

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