Revealing Power of Engaging Family Stories in Television Serials: Effects on Repairing Our Mood

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Abstract

Ages and ages, stories and storytelling are connected to all human beings and are part of every form of communication. With the Internet technology, engaging stories and storytelling are not limited "particular area" with "particular people". This study puts forward an engaging family relationships stories in media text during managing mood. Qualitative research methodology was preferred, and case study was chosen as a research design in this study. As a research context, Küçük Ağa, which is Turkish serial and data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. People like to engage in funny, non-crime/tragedy and non-sadness ending in story and like to escape from reality for entertainment due to increase their morale, their psychological well-being and to decrease their stress. Thus, people engage mutual activities with their family members and thereby "do" relationships.

Keywords: family, relationships, serials, social media, stories, television

1. Introduction

Stories and storytelling have been associated with all human societies and all human relationships, from the very beginning, as a primary means for communicating and sharing own and other's stories with the help of verbal and non-verbal ways (Denning, 2005; McKendry, 2008; McDonough & Colucci, 2019; Maliki, 2020). Intercalarily, storytelling is known as ancient art and altered in many years (Denning, 2005; McKendry, 2008; Sami,2020) and several forms of storytelling have been part of all human beings for years. For example, drawing picture on cave/cave painting is known as non-verbal way of ancient storytelling as well as a form of art (George,2019; Sylaiou & Dafiotis, 2020). Thus, stories and storytelling have taken part in all human communities down the ages (Maraffi & Sacerdoti,2018). For instance, writing on clay tablets in the 15th century, print culture (books, magazines, newspaper) in the 19th century, electronic media text (radio, television) in 20th century, digital media (personal computers, netbooks, smartphone, tablets etc.) (Kipphan, 2001), new media platforms/ social media (online stories and online storytelling) in 21th century. Hence, and storytelling are rapidly influenced with the technology and increase alternative ways of storytelling in all around world (Rizvic et.al, 2017).

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It has been already known, stories and storytelling are not limited with reality, fiction is another extension (Hobbs, 2010; Verri, 2020).

In addition to all rapid transition in storytelling, digital media era or platforms open new dimension by facilitating and contribution to storytelling in media texts (Jenkins, 2016; Mora-Fernández, 2012). The media has been used within different forms in people's everyday lives. For example, people put down own contribution while witnessing stories and storytelling by blogging, using social media in digital platforms (Mitchell, 2019;James et al., 2010) and people use digital platforms exercise their creativity accordingly their interested topics. Also, digital media improve communication among people with their friends, family members and make easy to share and engage special moments (Wang, et.al., 2016; Deuze, Blank, & Speers, 2012; Hobbs, 2010; Holmes, 2008). Power of engaging stories and storytelling are very crucial and meaningful in each relationship because "which people tell stories and thereby 'do' relationship" (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). In addition, Langellier and Peterson (2004) focus on collaborative storytelling among family members "as one of the many strategies for doing family and reproducing family culture" (p.34). For example, when family members watch television, they as an audience may cry, may [interpret] or may fall asleep (Göktepe, 2015; Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney, & Wise, 2006). Within this way, people practiced storytelling and are part of the story and at the

same time they internalize the story with [their] family in their special and specific places (i.e. house, restaurant, bedroom, coffee houses) (Denning, 2005). Hence, social problems and social changes can be witnessed and elucidated by media because media tell our stories and symbolize the society (Kalehsar & Solhi, 2012).

Indeed, people prefer storytelling because of numbers of reasons. For example, transferring culture values, improving teaching techniques (Barton, & Barton, 2017), feeling well, reducing stress, helping healing process of health problem (la Cour, Ledderer, & Hansen, 2016; Soundy, & Reid;2019), managing and controlling mood. Also, TV serials mostly present family lives. Based on this, the ultimate goal of the present study is to explore the role of television as storyteller in relation to family relationships presented in the popular Turkish TV serial Küçük Ağa. The present study aims to focus a Turkish television serial to investigate importance of television for managing mood by engaging family stories in media. Thus, the present study seeks to explore a groups of audience who are active in new media platform (official Facebook Like Page of Küçük Ağa) about the representation of family relationships in the popular TV serial Küçük Ağa. Within this respect, the researcher aims to explore some objectives. These are; how audience defines the TV serial Küçük Ağa how audience find out represented family relationships and cultural values in TV serial Küçük Ağa, how cultural values about family are represented in TV serial Küçük Ağa, why audience prefers to watch TV serial Küçük Ağa and why audience are not content from TV serial Küçük Ağa.

2. Theoretical /Conceptual Framework

Under theoretical and conceptual framework, five approaches are taken part and incorporated to this study. These are; Mood Management Theory, Self-determination Theory, Narrative Performance Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory.

Mood Management Theory was founded by Zillmann and Bryant (1985) and help to predict and explain media and media texts choices of the people (Knobloch, 2003). Indeed, various media texts have various impact on the people as Zillmann states in 1988. At the same time, Zillmans (1988) states 4 dimensions of media content as a part of Mood Management Theory. These are; "the excitatory potential", "the absorption potential", "semantic affinity" and "hedonic valence". "The excitatory potential" is referring to "the effect of media messages on the arousal level of media users". For example, slow music can reduce "level

of arousal" and action films can increase "level of arousal" (Reinecke, 2017). ""The absorption potential" is related to power of media consumption on existing mood of the people because media text can change "the existing" mood of the people or can interfere with "the existing" mood of the people (Knobloch, 2003). If the people want to change "their existing mood", they prefer to engage high level of absorption media text. If they do not want to change "their existing mood", they try to minimize engage the media text (Zillmann, 1988). "Semantic affinity" is referring connection of media content [i.e. television serial] to a personal situation. When the people mood is fine and positive, this shows that high level of affinity could be wanted by the audience. However, the mood of people is not positive, the people would not be pleasant to reinforce and increase their negative mood by engaging media text (Knobloch, 2003). "Hedonic valence" is, final factor. This factor points out that positive media contents are more effective to increase pleasurable moods than the negative ones (Reinecke, 2017). Thus, Mood Management Theory highlights the content of stories in media text have influence on the mood of the people. Therefore, numbers of research had been conducted to illustrate power of the content of media on the people. For example, Bowman & Tamborini conducted a research video games in 2013. Bowman and Tamborini (2015) states that sound, narrative, graphics are stimulus as feature of media content more than the traditional content. Because interactive media could provide new opportunities to the people to change their existing mood with new one.

Self-determination Theory was founded by Deci and Ryan in 1985 and help to understand how human can be motivated under some conditions such as supporting "autonomy", "competence" and "relatedness" can foster "motivation", "creativity" and "engagement" (Deci & Ryan, 2000). And also, this theory points out that how human motivation can be affected by "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" factors (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Numbers of studies had been done on motivation because motivations include different goals or reason of any action as Deci and Ryan mentioned in 1985. Therefore, Self-determination Theory has been used in varied contexts (Deci & Ryan, 2008). These are "sport" by Edmunds, Ntoumanis, and Duda (2006) and Standage & Ryan (2020), "work" by Lian, Ferris, and Brown (2012), "health" by Ryan, Patrick, Deci, and Williams (2008) and by Ntoumanis et.al (2020), "parenting" by Meneghini et. al (2020), "relationships" and "education" by Black and Deci

(2000), Noels, Pelletier, Clément, and Vallerand (2000), Reeve (2012) and Virkkula, (2020). Deci and Ryan (2012) mention that all people have three fundamental psychological needs in order to "be competent, autonomous and related to others" (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Thus, engaging stories and being part of storytelling can be explained by Self-determination Theory. Because, watching television serials with their family members in their private place [at home] show their need of being autonomous (individual liberty), following and sharing own views about television serials on social media show their need of being competent (demonstrating efficacy), and being interested and related to the others' stories and relationships in media text show their need to be related (a sense of belonging) to others.

Narrative Performance Theory was founded by Langellier and Peterson in 2004. Numbers of studies conducted and highlighted Narrative Performance Theory, in light of stories and storytelling. These studies revealed that engaging stories and practicing storytelling are very crucial in the people relationships because of telling stories lead to do relationships (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). Because narrative performance in today is focusing on practice of storytelling rooted in the lives of people and in their relationships (i.e. families, communities), thus, the people can do family and reproduce family culture by collaborative storytelling among family members (Langellier & Peterson, 2004).

Uses and Gratification Theory, was founded by Katz et al. in 1974. Katz et.al (1974) state that by engaging media text help the people; "(1) The social and psychological origins (2) Needs which generate (3) Expectations of (4) The mass media or other sources which lead to (5) Differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities) resulting in (6) Need gratifications, and (7) Other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (p.20). In the light of Uses and Gratifications Theory, the people can be "goal-oriented" and they try to maintain need of gratification by engaging and utilizing the media (McGuire, 1974). Numbers of studies conducted and highlighted Uses and Gratification Theory, in light of stories and storytelling. For example, the research had been done on newspapers by Lazarsfeld and Stanton in 1949, Warner and Henry also conducted research on radio in 1948. Then, Conway and Rubin (1991) performed a study on television, Perse and Dunn (1998) conducted a study on the Internet; and, in 2002, Webster and Lin performed a study on the Internet in light of Uses and Gratifications Theory.

3. Methods

Qualitative research methodology has been preferred in this study for rooting on constructivist paradigm. Because qualitative research methodology helps actively the researcher for locating as the observer in the world by getting field notes, engaging conversations, recording and taking memos for own self. Thus, the researcher tries to study in natural setting as well as try to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Lincoln, 2005). Indeed, the researcher tries to conduct qualitative research as cyclical in nature, thus, this research purpose to reveal the people views on engaging stories and practicing storytelling via sharing on views on the Facebook Like Pages of Küçük Ağa.

Küçük Ağa is one of Turkish television serials, it was broadcasting September 2014 to June 2015. The content of this serial was on a child adventures in genre of child comedy television. This serial was the unique one over 38 Turkish television serials in 2014-2015. Views of the people who watched Küçük Ağa, were gathered from posts on the official Facebook Like Pages of this serial. The researcher gathered data over online environment, only focused posts which one had been commented in each month.

This serial has been on the air between 2014 - 2015 in Channel D and had 50 episodes. Three main characters were in the serial. These are; Sinem, Ali and Mehmetcan. Sinem is a mother of Mehmetcan and married with Ali. She is a doctor (a specialist in neurology). At the same time, she is the daughter of a wealthy family in İstanbul. Ali is a father of Mehmetcan and from eastern part of Turkey Şanlıurfa. He is a son of the descendant of an 'Ağa' and the leader of Şanlıurfa. They decided to divorce in their 10th years of marriage. Sinem is very beautiful and intelligent. Ali is handsome, presentable and intelligent and is an important employee of an advertising agency. He made very important projects. Mehmetcan, their son, was affected from their decision for divorce. His naughty behaviors and school situation did not help to stop their divorce. The families of Sinem and Ali get involved in the process. Unfortunately, these families did not come from the same cultural background. In short, Mehmetcan tried to solve their problems in a simple way. In the story, the problems encountered by families are mentioned.

The researcher had initially screened the comments of the people in the official Facebook like Pages of Küçük Ağa and the researcher transcribed the related parts of people's comments under the post about Küçük Ağa. Then, the collected data

were analysed by using thematic analysis techniques. For determining themes, initial coding, provisional coding and axial coding (Saldaña, 2015) was done. For reliability and validity of the present study, analyst triangulation was done (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999). All the analyses were done by the researcher and one of the professors (from the same field with the researcher) as independently, discussion session was held to reach a consensus on discrepancies. The aim of analyst triangulation is not merely looking for a consensus or common point, nevertheless, this triangulation also aims to aid seeing data in more than one way. Then, peer debriefing) was done by a university professor with a PhD degree in counselling (Patton, 1999).

3.1 Results

The content of this study is limited with Küçük Ağa because this serial was only broadcasted in one year during 2014-2015 and the main character of this serial was a child. This serial was different rather other serials which were broadcasted in 2014-2015. Also, this serial was popular during broadcasting period, because the fun groups of this serials had opened numbers of social media accounts (especially on Facebook) to show their involvements and liking to this serial and to some characters in this serial.

This situation is also related to opportunities and reachability of `today`s media/new media because `today` media/new media platforms allow people/ the audience to be part of stories and storytelling in freeways as well as in unrestricted ways.

The people's views illustrated that this serial was named and called as "a child" serial and the people focused on adventure of a little boy in the story. Indeed, the people shared positive points for this serial over social media. Meanwhile, the people are reluctant and willing to read the text on the media and write and put own contribution to the text on about story of this serial.

In addition to general observation of the researcher, almost all audience/people views included positive points and claims on Küçük Ağa, nevertheless, the people shared their complains as well as criticism for some points.

Followers of these social media platforms include heterogeneous profile, for instance, the people can be a mother, grandmother, father, grandfather, child or so on. Over one year, the people define the content and the story of this serial by using different adjectives. For instance, "a lovely serial", "beautiful", "nice", "good", "family serial" and "comedy". While defining this serial, the people also compared story of this serial with other serial on broadcastings. These adjectives also explain why the people watch this story and how people perceive the story and the content of the serial.

In addition to definition of this serial, the people pointed out that, the content of this serial is "suitable" for "families" because it is a family serial and sensible examples for all family members. Thus, the people maintained that "we can watch this serial as altogether". Furthermore, the power of this serial and story helps family members for being together and sharing time together by witnessing humour, comedy and joy in a story as well.

On the other hand, some people shared their complaints and criticisms on the story of this serial. Especially storyteller of this serial had been criticized because of bad and worried part of the story. For example, a child character generally "does" unacceptable behaviours as called "wrong" or "unexpected" (i.e. telling lies, cheating people etc.,). At the same time, the father character always prefers to solve problems by using violence. Under morality issues, the storyteller had been criticized even though the good part of the serial.

Furthermore, the people shared their expectation to remove or finish unacceptable relationships example in this serial. Also, these expectations were done about specific characters. For example, the people who watch this serial, they don't want to see cheating relationships and they don't want to see end of marriage [Ali had forbidden love with one of woman who is not local]. Despite of problems in marriage, the people would like to see continuation of the main characters (Ali and Sinem) relationships. In this context, the people who watch this serial, they warn the scenarist about what they want to see in this serial, otherwise, they will end to watch this serial. This reaction can be interpreting as reflection of culture in the media text. At the same time, the people could try to manage what they watch because the content of any serial can make an impact on them and on their relationships. Besides these views, Küçük Ağa had given a shape to the story by figuring adventure of child character, therefore, this serial also named as a funny child serial as well as family serial. Thus, numbers of children also followed and watched this serial because of the child character. Intercalarily, romantic love and partner relationships of main characters (Ali and Sinem) had given a shape this serial, thereto, their relationships problems were the main concern of this serial (For example, class and cultural differences between Ali and Sinem, jealousy problems of Ali and Sinem, power and

impact of root families on their relationships). Additionally, the child character and his father and mother show problematic behaviors. For example, Mehmetcan was doing dangerous things, his father used violence. Also, the people complain about repetition of storytelling, thus, they felt bored and were unpleasant because of repetition. While examining the people comments, there was not any post about mother and father roles, even though they called and named this serial as a child and a family serial. Generally, they focused on role of being husband, being wife being child and impact of root families in couple relationships. This reflection might be interpreted as a regional problem in marriage as well. Regarding Küçük Ağa's story, the people posted their views about negative impact of this serial on people. Therefore, they claimed that these sorts of stories/ serials cause to worry oneself. They shared their positive expectation instead of tragedy and also, they said that story of this serial might influence children psychology as well as adults. They complained about negative and unfavourable feelings especially about ending. At the end of this serial, majority of followers were not happy with ending of story. The people post too many comments that were related the unexpected ending. They were angry impact of this ending, because they felt as "sad" and "upset". Because ending of this serial involved drama, unexpected worries and tragedy. Expectations of the people were not matched with the ending of story. In this context, they used different adjective to define their feelings and reason of dissatisfaction about the ending. They also mentioned that numbers of absurd serial should be ended instead of Küçük Ağa and they asked to restart again.

4. Discussion and conclusion

In short, the people prefer some television serials with respect to specific reasons. When concentrating on the people's views, it can be easily understandable. People might not want to engage with reality. It means that people cannot escape from pain or sad moments in their lives. However, nearly almost all people probably look for happiness and they want to prevent divorce and cheating in relationships. Thus, they want "life managing", "cheat managing", "the divorce managing" and "loss". Within this context, the people might not want to see tragedy, drama, crime and traumatic ending in serials without exceptions. In light of Mood Management Theory, preferences of the people are linked to their mood. If people want to enhance their "existing mood" they would like to engage appropriate media text according to

their desires (Reinecke, 2017). At the same time, when they prefer and choose the media text when they want to escape from their negative mood (Reinecke, 2017; Zillmann, 1988). Reason of this preferences can be also explained in Uses and Gratification Theory. But all issues can be happened in the lives of people. It can be called as escaping reality. As it has been mentioned earlier, people look for maintaining their needs by watching television and they like to get pleasure and feel joy in their private place (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007; Perse & Rubin, 1990; Rubin, 1983; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985) therefore their preferences indicate that they do not want to watch something as real in television serials (Katz & Foulkes, 1962; Perse, 1986; Whiting & Williams, 2013). Additionally, they like to enjoy that's why content of Küçük Ağa was preferred instead of other television programs. Besides, negative and traumatic content of television serials influence psychological wellbeing of people (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). Therefore, at the end of the serial, almost all complained ending way of the serial and they claimed what they would like to see in the serial instead of what they saw. In addition to all audience's comment illustrate their desires and views about the serial that are related to their personal variables (Cole & Leets, 1999; Greenwood, 2008; Greenwood & Long, 2009, 2011; Greenwood, Pietromonaco, & Long, 2008). What is more; Perceptions and statements of the people can illustrate on social media that why the people like to be part of this story. At the same time, the story of the serial help reproducing family culture together as mentioned in Narrative Perception Theory (Longellier & Peterson, 2004) as well as the people "do" relationships while engaging the story of the serial together (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). Also, the people did not want to see unacceptable relationships example in this serial because the people assume collaborative storytelling activities influence culturing in families (Longeilier & Peterson, 2004). In addition to all, Self-determination theory shows that the people have own motivation reason to choose. Thus, engaging stories and being part of storytelling can be explained by Self-determination Theory. Because, watching television serials with their family members in their private place [at home] show their need of being autonomous (individual liberty), following and sharing own views about television serials on social media show their need of being competent (demonstrating efficacy), and being interested and related to the others' stories and relationships in media text show their need to be

related (a sense of belonging) to others (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Furthermore, the rapid development of the Internet and communication technologies satisfy our needs of everyday lives (Özad & Uygarer, 2014; Croteau & Hoynes, 2013) and leads to changes in the communication model through television. Television is changing and it is difficult to think of television as linear broadcasting (Caldwell, 2006; Creeber & Hills, 2007; Meikle & Young, 2008). The nature of traditional mass media has influenced and changed and has become interactive through the development of internet technology (Uygarer & Özad, 2015). Because of this, the internet saturation has had an influence on traditional media and its convergence to being interactive. Internet saturation also provides opportunities to people for entertainment, getting information, utilities, business services, sharing platforms and communications. Furthermore, the Internet and communication technologies enable people to contribute to some media texts and [aids, to increase learning process (Granitz & Forman, 2015) that aids to the unification of the author(s) or producer(s) with the people. In this sense, people shared their views what they saw in the serial and what they expected from it. In this way, the points of Self-determination Theory had included within processes of creativity, engagement, motivation, relatedness, autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

As gleaned from the discussions above, these technological developments indicated the numbers of ways to the convergence of media instruments rather than replacing one another. Technological convergence enabled an exchange of dialogue among media platforms. Today, younger generations prefer to utilize social media and online platforms for exchanging and sharing their ideas due to help learning of younger generations (Perrin, 2015; Baruah, 2012; Bughin et al., 2011). Exchanging ideas among platforms also reflect what the people expect from a media text in a personal sense. At the same time the exchanging process reflects what sort of things influence in the media text such as Küçük Ağa's unexpected traumatic ending. Prensky refers to this group of people as digital natives because they are familiar with all technological instruments and Prensky highlights differences in learning between digital natives and digital immigrants (Dyikuk,2019; Ito et al., 2009). Group of people also like to use social media and the significance of the Internet and communication technologies and new media are also recognized by nearly all television channels (Perrin, 2015; Greer & Ferguson, 2011; Prensky, 2001). The popularity and power of social media platforms have been used by television channels in formal level. Because television channels can see what their potential followers/audience want and how their media text placed in their people's live.

In the light of social learning theory, Facebook like pages help people share own views about family examples in Turkish television serials. They can learn specific roles in the family and can transfer their lives with respect to social role theory. Media cultivates these family examples in traditional media and people practice and are active in new media such as Facebook Like Pages. Portrayal of mixed cultural marriages and family relationships in mass media can impact the people's attitudes and beliefs toward mixed cultural marriages and family relations in mixed cultural marriages. Specifically, such example can influence how young people anticipate their future marriage decisions. With the help of television and new media platforms refer different group of people to show differences in societies. Therefore, people tried to say what they want to see if they do not like what they saw on television. The present study primarily emphasized storytelling and stories in Turkish television serials and the linkage between television serials and new media platforms are examined in the influencing process of people. In addition, the present study also focuses on place of media text in the people's lives such their psychology.

Changes are then determined in the light of the interactive features of media, and the power of the Internet and communication technologies have been examined to indicate transactional ways of communication with the help of new media due to increased level of learning of people. Since the present study targeted on the official Facebook Like Page of the serial, a study can be done further on the other specific new media platform, such as blogs or Twitter. Also, the present study focused itself only on one television serial that is based around Turkish culture, therefore, a study can be done further on the other country or culture.

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