PREDICTORS OF PARASOCIAL INTERACTION
WITH THE FAVORITE AND THE LEAST DESIRABLE
CHARACTERS PORTRAYED IN TV SERIALS

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_____

Prof. Dr. Sencer Ayata

Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

_____

Prof. Dr. Nebi Sümer

Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

_____

Assoc.Prof. Dr. Bengi

Öner-Özkan

Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc.Prof. Dr. Tülin Gençöz	(METU, PSY)	_____
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Bengi Öner-Özkan	(METU, PSY)	_____
Assoc.Prof. Dr. Yeşim Yasak	(TSOF, PSY)	_____

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Name, Last Name: Selen Arda

Signature:

ABSTRACT

PREDICTORS OF PARASOCIAL INTERACTION

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PORTRAYED IN TV SERIALS

Arda, Selen

M.S., Department of Psychology

Supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Dr. Bengi Öner - Özkan

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In this study, 248 university students completed questionnaires measuring their perceptions of and responses to their favorite and least desired characters in their favorite TV serial. Firstly, the respondents named their favorite serial character and then rated their favorite character on several attributes (physical attractiveness, positive social behavior, strength and humor) and indicated their level of agreement to the items of the parasocial interaction scale. Secondly, the participants named the character they desired the least in their favorite TV serial, rated that character on several attributes (physical repulsiveness, negative social behavior, weakness) and responded to the items of the negative parasocial interaction scale. Regression analyses predicting the sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction, namely companionship, empathic involvement and interest, and

negative parasocial interaction, namely, boredom, anger, disturbance and amazement were performed. Different attributes of the characters were found to be important in predicting different dimensions of parasocial and negative parasocial interaction.

The predictors of the sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction were determined. Significant predictors of companionship sub-scale were found as the positive social behavior, humor and strength of the character. In terms of empathic involvement, the perceived attributes of positive social behavior, physical attractiveness, strength and humor were found as significant predictors. For the interest sub-scale, the significant predictors were found as humor, strength and physical attractiveness.

The newly-formed scale named as Negative Parasocial Interaction Scale was factor analyzed and interpretable factors were determined. The predictors of these factors were also examined. Significant predictors of boredom sub-scale were found to be the perceived weakness and physical repulsiveness of the character. Negative social behavior of the character was found to be a significant negative predictor of boredom sub-scale. In terms of anger sub-scale, only negative social behavior was found to be a significant predictor. For the disturbance sub-scale, significant predictors were found as negative social behavior, physical repulsiveness and weakness. Finally, the amazement sub-scale was significantly predicted only by the physical repulsiveness of the character.

The implications of the findings, the strengths and weaknesses of the study are discussed.

ÖZ

TV DİZİLERİNDE YER ALAN
EN ÇOK VE EN AZ SEVİLEN KARAKTERLER İLE
PARASOSYAL ETKİLEŞİMİ YORDAYAN FAKTÖRLER

Arda, Selen

Yüksek Lisans, Psikoloji Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Bengi Öner - Özkan

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Bu çalışmada 248 üniversite öğrencisi favori TV dizilerindeki en sevdikleri ve en sevmedikleri karakterleri nasıl algıladıklarını ve bu karakterlere olan tepkilerini ölçmeye yönelik sorular içeren bir ankete cevap vermişlerdir. Öncelikle katılımcılar dizideki en sevdikleri karakteri belirtmiş, sonra bu karakteri çeşitli özellikleri üzerinden (fiziksel çekicilik, olumlu sosyal davranış, güçlülük ve espri anlayışı) değerlendirmiş, ve sonra da parasosyal etkileşim ölçeğindeki ifadelere ne kadar katıldıklarını belirtmişlerdir. İkinci olarak, katılımcılar favori dizilerindeki en sevmedikleri karakteri belirtmiş, bu karakteri çeşitli özellikleri üzerinden değerlendirmiş (fiziksel iticilik, olumsuz sosyal davranış, zayıflık) ve olumsuz parasosyal etkileşim ölçeğindeki ifadelere ne kadar katıldıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Parasosyal etkileşimin alt boyutlarının, arkadaşlık, empati ve ilgi duyma, ve

olumsuz parasosyal etkileşimin alt boyutlarının, sıkılma, sinirlenme, rahatsızlık duyma ve şaşkınlık, yordayıcılarını belirlemek amacıyla regresyon analizleri yapılmıştır. Parasosyal ve olumsuz parasosyal etkileşimin farklı boyutlarını yordamakta karakterlerin farklı özellikleri önemli bulunmuştur.

Parasosyal etkileşimin alt boyutlarını yordayan faktörler belirlenmiştir. Arkadaşlık alt boyutunun anlamlı yordayıcıları karakterin olumlu sosyal davranış, espri anlayışı, ve güçlülük özellikleri olarak bulunmuştur. Empati alt boyutunda, karakterin olumlu sosyal davranış, fiziksel çekicilik ve espri anlayışı özellikleri anlamlı yordayıcılar olarak saptanmıştır. İlgi alt boyutunun anlamlı yordayıcıları güçlülük ve espri anlayışı olarak belirlenmiştir.

Yeni oluşturulan ve Olumsuz Parasosyal Etkileşim ölçeği olarak adlandırılan ölçeğe faktör analizi uygulanmış, anlamlandırılabilir dört faktör belirlenmiş ve bu faktörlerin yordayıcıları da irdelenmiştir. Sıkılma alt boyutunun yordayıcıları zayıflık ve fiziksel iticilik olarak bulunmuştur. Olumsuz sosyal davranış ise sıkılma alt boyutunu olumsuz olarak yordamıştır. Sinirlenme alt boyutunu yordamakta yalnızca olumsuz sosyal davranış anlamlı bulunmuştur. Rahatsızlık duyma alt boyutu için anlamlı yordayıcılar ise olumsuz sosyal davranış, fiziksel iticilik ve zayıflık olarak belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, şaşkınlık alt boyutunu yordamakta yalnızca karakterin algılanan fiziksel iticiliği anlamlı bulunmuştur.

Sonuçların olası implikasyonları, çalışmanın güçlü ve zayıf tarafları tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Parasosyal Etkileşim, TV Dizilerinde Sevilen ve Sevilmeyen Karakterler, Karakter Özelliklerinin Algılanışı.

To My Family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The media has a well-established place in people's lives. Through media consumption, the individual is transferred into an "artificial social world" in which s/he is "bombarded by thousands of media figures" including all kinds of celebrities; actors, musicians, models, politicians, sports figures, talk show hosts or even fictional characters and the number of characters an individual knows through the media may exceed the number of people in his/her actual social environment (Caughey, 1984; p.32).

The relationship of viewers with the performers in the media is important since it adds to their involvement with the medium (Cohen, 1999) and to their loyalty to media productions (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985). In communication research, involvement is defined as "the cognitive, affective and behavioral participation" of audience members during media exposure (Rubin & Perse, 1987; p.247) or even beyond periods of consumption (Caughey, 1984).

Audience involvement may take different forms and hence the relationship of audience members with media personalities have been conceptualized in different ways including affinity, identification, wishful identification, fandom and parasocial interaction (Cohen, 2001; Giles, 2002). The term "parasocial

interaction" which was first used by Horton & Wohl in 1956, includes elements of perceived similarity, friendship and empathy with media personalities (Levy, 1979; Rubin & Step, 2000) and it constitutes the affective part of participant involvement (Rubin & Perse, 1987). Viewers who are parasocially involved with media personalities feel that they know these characters just like they know their friends (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985; Rubin & Perse, 1987) and see themselves as active participants in their lives (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, 2001). Individuals also evaluate the media personalities personally and begin to experience strong feelings toward them (Caughey, 1984) which results in "acting or reacting based on those attributed meanings" such as verbally addressing the figure (Levy, 1979; p 70) or "showing emotional involvement by responding emotionally" to the events that occur in the character's life (Perse, 1990; p.20).

Previous research demonstrated that parasocial involvement of audience members with media figures was facilitated by several factors including the characteristics of the medium (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Nordlund, 1978; Caughey, 1984, Meyrowitz, 1986; cited in Auter, 1992), characteristics of the program (Nordlund, 1978; Cohen, 1999) and characteristics of the viewers (Turner, 1993; Cole & Leets, 1999; McCourt & FitzPatrick, 2001; Cohen, 2004). The role of performer characteristics in the development of parasocial relationships have also been explored (Auter, 1992; Hoffner, 1996; Cohen, 1999), however, to our knowledge, the direct interplay between character attributes of the performer and parasocial

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interaction was examined by only one study in a sample of children aged 7 to 12 (Hoffner, 1996).

The main purpose of the present study is to explore the characteristics of performers that predict higher levels of parasocial interaction in the context of local TV serials. More specifically, the present study aims to determine which perceived attributes of the serial characters will be related to higher parasocial involvement on part of the viewers.

Another goal of this study is to explore the concept of parasocial interaction with one's disliked characters as well as favorites. It is argued that viewers may still engage in parasocial interaction with media figures without liking or admiring them; and this characteristic of parasocial interaction makes it different from other conceptualizations of media involvement (Giles, 2001; Cohen, 2001). Hence, the present study aims to explore viewers' responses while being exposed to a character they actively dislike and to identify the dimensions of these negative thoughts and feelings. To our knowledge, the present study will be the first to examine negative parasocial interaction.

The context of serials was preferred due to several reasons that will be discussed in detail while mentioning the aim of the present study. One of the main reasons was that; serials were found appropriate for studying viewers' level of interaction with both liked and disliked characters simultaneously. Livingstone (1998) argues that soap operas do not have heroes but rather "a multiplicity of equivalently

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important characters" (p.52). However, all these characters do not necessarily have to be liked by the viewer and some characters are actually designed to be disliked. In this sense, the viewers may experience strong negative feelings toward these characters but they may not avoid them since they want to follow the serial and the events occurring in their favorite characters' life. While studying the dimensions of these negative feelings, this study also aims to explore which attributes of the characters will predict higher levels of negative emotions.

To sum up, the present study consists of two major parts. In the first part of analysis, the relationship between parasocial interaction (PSI) and the perceived attributes of one's favorite serial character will be explored using the items from the "Parasocial Interaction Scale" developed by Perse, Rubin & Powell (1985) and modified by Rubin & Perse (1987). For the second part of analysis, a scale that was developed by the author will be used in order to assess the negative emotions experienced by the viewers and the scale will be referred to as "The Negative Parasocial Interaction Scale" in the remaining parts of the study. In the second part of study, the relationship between negative parasocial interaction (NPSI) and the perceived attributes of the least desirable characters will be explored. The development of the negative parasocial interaction scale and the properties of both scales will be discussed in detail in the section related to pilot studies.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Definition and Nature of the Parasocial Relationship

Horton and Wohl (1956) were the first to use the term "parasocial" in reference to the interaction between media personalities and members of the audience. They have suggested that television, the new medium of the time, had the ability to make audience members feel like they were in an "apparently intimate, face-to-face association with a performer" (p.228). Through directly observing the television personality in a variety of situations and with the accumulation of the shared experiences; the viewers come to feel that they actually know the media personalities like they know their friends. In other words, a fake bond of intimacy is formed between media personalities – "the personae" - and the viewers. "Personae" refers to a special category of personalities who exist only as a function of the media (Horton & Wohl, 1956; p.216) and parasocial interaction is a "perceived interpersonal relationship on the part of the television viewer" although the media personality actually is unknown and distant (Perse & Rubin, 1989; p.59).

Parasocial interaction is a complex process that occurs when the viewers see themselves as actively participating in the lives of TV characters (McCourt &

Fitzpatrick, 2001) or when they "interact with a mediated representation of a person as if the person was actually present" and behave like they are having a two-way interaction when in fact they are only in relation with the medium (Nass & Sundar, 1994; unpublished paper).

Caughey (1984) states that although parasocial relationships lack actual interpersonal interaction; still the viewers know about the figures, evaluate them personally and experience strong feelings toward them. This intimacy is argued to be established through directly observing the performer and interpreting his/her behavior, gestures, voice and conversation in a wide range of situations (Horton & Wohl, 1956). In other words, although the viewer does not have the chance to engage in an actual social relationship with the performer, s/he has the opportunity to observe how the performer acts in a relationship within the limits of the program content. As time goes on, the character becomes more familiar and predictable (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Levy, 1979).

According to Levy (1979), parasocial interaction requires more than interpreting and evaluating the behavior or gestures of the media personalities; it also involves "acting or reacting based on those attributed meanings" (p. 70). Parasocial interaction is reflected in viewer responses such as feelings of embarrassment, misery, joy or pride due to the events occurring in the character's life (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, 2001). Levy (1979) has demonstrated that respondents who were parasocially involved with newscasters reported they liked hearing their favorite newscasters' voice in their homes, missed them when they were gone and they felt

sorry for their mistakes. The latter response was believed to suggest a sense of viewer empathy since instead of being annoyed due to the mistakes of the newscasters or to the disorganizations in the program; the viewers shared the persona's discomfort.

While watching television, viewers sometimes tend to advice TV characters, answer questions asked by the program host or to coach sports team members even though the game is being played miles away. Such behaviors are considered as indicators of parasocial involvement (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, 2001). This involvement may also take forms including seeking guidance from a media personality, imagining being part of a television program's social world and desiring to meet media performers (Rubin, Perse & Powell,1985). Audience members with a high degree of parasocial interaction often seek personal contact with the media figure (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Caughey, 1984) or they try to contact by letter, telephone and other means (Sood & Rogers, 2000).

Seeing media personalities almost like friends is the most general indicator of parasocial relationships (Levy, 1979). Koenig and Lessan (1985) have demonstrated that the viewers placed their favorite television performers in an intermediate position between their acquaintances and close friends. People engage in "pseudo-social" interactions with media figures as if they are intimately involved with them (Caughey, 1984; p.33).

The level of intimacy between media performers and members of the audience may also be reflected in their feelings of distress to the loss of a favorite celebrity like in the case of Princess Diana (Brown, Basil & Bocarnea, 2003) or to the hypothetical loss of a favorite television character; a term coined as "parasocial break-up" (Cohen, 2003). By asking respondents how they would feel if their favorite TV character was taken off the air, Cohen (2003) has demonstrated that parasocial break-ups from real or fictional TV characters are also negative experiences for the viewers, although not as distressing as the ending of a close relationship. The dissolution of parasocial relationships "elicits symptoms similar to those that follow the loss of a friend" (p.196).

Horton & Wohl (1956) claim these strong feelings of intimacy to be "spectacular" (p.216) since the personae are not available in any other social sphere beyond the media and furthermore, the relationship offered by the media personalities is "inevitably one-sided, non-dialectical, controlled by the performer and is not susceptible of mutual development" (p.215). In other words, they argue that it lacks effective reciprocity and communication, which is central to actual interpersonal relationships. Hence, the word "interaction" refers to a form of "pseudo-interaction" that occurs within the mind of the audience member (O'Sullivan & Hoffner, 1998, unpublished paper).

In this sense, a great majority of the previous studies on parasocial interaction attempted to demonstrate that it was dysfunctional and unhealthy. Researchers have assumed that parasocial involvement of individuals could be related to lack

of social alternatives in their lives such as loneliness (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985) or chronic loneliness (Perse & Rubin, 1990); however they have failed to demonstrate a significant association. On a similar vein, some researchers have explored the relationship between parasocial involvement and the social or psychological skills of the viewers such as shyness (Ashe & McCuthceon, 2001), openness (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, 2001) and self-esteem (Turner, 1993). The results indicate that parasocial interaction is a normal consequence of television viewing rather than an atypical response on the part of the viewers (Perse & Rubin, 1989). Parasocial relationships are considered pathological only if they become "substitutes for autonomous social participation" and result in "absolute defiance of objective reality" (Horton & Wohl, 1956; p.223). Parasocial interaction is also considered to be dysfunctional or pathological in the form of celebrity worship and erotomania (McCutcheon, Ashe, Houran & Maltby, 2003) or in extreme cases such as stalking a media person (Sood & Rogers, 2000). McCutcheon and colleagues have demonstrated that cognitive deficits were facilitative of an individual's obsessions with celebrities.

Caughey (1984) argues that, via media consumption the viewers are transported into a different world but this other world is still social since it includes a great number of humans or humanlike creatures in a variety of social contexts. He further states that, making sense of the contents of media productions and the symbolic social situations involved in them still requires social skills. Finally, he contends that knowing about the artificial social world and the famous media figures sometimes even can be useful for socializing with strangers since many of

the daily conversations are about these "pseudo-mutual acquaintances" (p.33). The media can bring people together and help them to initiate or maintain social relationships by giving them something in common (Vivian, 2001). Besides, parasocial interaction provides viewers with some other social benefits such as the opportunity to model social behaviors or to learn cultural values (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, 2001). In their study on parasocial interaction with soap opera characters, Perse & Rubin (1989) indicated that parasocial relationships also had the benefit of reducing uncertainty about social relationships.

Correspondingly, studies pointing to the similarities between social and parasocial relationships and viewing them as extensions of each other have been more successful. It has been demonstrated that similar factors were effective in the development of interpersonal and mediated relationships such as homophily (Turner, 1993). Rogers & Bhowmik (1970) define homophily as "the degree to which pairs of individuals who interact are similar with respect to certain attributes, such as beliefs, values, education, social status and the like" and in Lazarsfeld & Merton's (1954) definition, it is "a tendency for friendships to form between those who are alike in some designated respect" (cited in Turner 1993, p444). In the study by Turner (1993), the highest correlation was observed between attitude similarity and parasocial interaction. Appearance and background similarity were also significantly correlated with parasocial interaction.

Rubin & McHugh (1987) have explored the development process of parasocial relationships and contended that the developmental phases of social and parasocial relationships followed a similar path. Berger & Calabrese (1975) suggest that; in interpersonal relationships, increased amount of communication results in increased liking of the other, increased amount of communication and liking together lead to more intimate feelings which finally increases the importance of the relationship (cited in Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Parallel to these suggestions, the authors have demonstrated that; amount of television exposure was positively related to the degree of attraction towards and liking of the media personality, which resulted in increased intimacy, in other words higher levels of parasocial interaction. Finally, parasocial interaction was found to be positively related to the perceived importance of the relationship with the media personality.

As mentioned before, Cohen (2004) has pointed to the similarities between individuals' reactions to the ending of close and parasocial relationships.

To sum up, with the application of proper technical production techniques to create an illusion of face-to-face relationship that promotes a perceived intimacy (Nordlund, 1978) along with the efforts taken by the performers such as directly addressing the audience; what the viewer experiences is quite similar to social interaction in many ways (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and it is found natural that people feel close to the television personalities (Perse & Rubin, 1989). In other words, although the relationship takes place in an artificial social world, the

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audience responds like s/he would in an actual relationship most of the time (Caughey, 1984).

The relational bond of the viewers' to media figures increases their viewing motivation to a certain degree. Evidence suggests that parasocial interaction provides social and emotional gratifications for viewers and motivates continued viewing of programs (Horton and Wohl, 1956; Levy, 1979; Perse, 1990; Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Rubin & Perse, 1987; Rubin, Perse and Powell, 1985). Moreover, individuals who are parasocially involved with the program host treat the host as an important and credible source of information and they are more likely to be influenced by his/her attitudes and actions about societal issues (Rubin & Perse, 1987).

The involvement of the viewers may continue even after the medium is turned off (Caughey, 1984) and parasocial interaction leads audience members to talk about the media messages and content with each other both during and beyond periods of media exposure (Rubin & Perse, 1987).

Rubin & Step (2000) demonstrated that parasocial involvement with a talk radio host leaded to more planned and frequent listening to the host, suggesting that parasocial interaction increases the desire for interaction and results in more intentional and regular listening of the program (Rubin & Step, 2000).

2.2 Factors Effecting the Development of Parasocial Relationships

2.2.1 Characteristics of the Medium and Perceived Reality

Nordlund (1978) argues that different media and media contents vary in their potential to create media interaction, and one of the determinants of this potential is "the extent to which the medium is able to approximate reality" (p.152). For instance, moving pictures instead of still ones or colors in various combinations rather then only black and white have higher potential for media interaction. Similarly, Caughey (1984) argues that the viewers connect to the artificial social world "because it seems vividly real" (p.35). Horton & Wohl (1956) emphasize that the illusion of face-to-face relationship plays an important role in the development of parasocial relationships and among mass media; especially television and movies have the greatest ability to create this illusion. Meyrowitz (1986) states that audiences react to various camera distances almost in the same way they would react to interpersonal distances in actual face-to-face interactions (cited in Auter 1992, p175).

A variety of techniques are applied to induce pseudo involvement of the viewers. Structural variables within a given program, such as camera shots and manipulations of technical devices can also affect audience parasocial relationships. One common technique is switching the role of audience back and forth between the roles of voyeur/observer and identified participant (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Horton & Wohl (1956) described the process by which the audience

is invited to consider that they are involved in a face-to-face relationship rather than in passive observation and stated that:

> When the television camera pans down on a performer, the illusion is strong that he is enhancing the presumed intimacy by literally coming closer. But the persona's image, while partial, contrived, and penetrated by illusion, is no fantasy or dream; his performance is an objectively perceptible action in which the viewer is implicated imaginatively, but which he does not imagine (Horton & Wohl, 1956; p.216).

2.2.2 Characteristics of the Viewer

It is widely argued and accepted that human beings have a basic need for social interaction. Most media theories revolve around the idea that if these social needs can not be met due to several reasons, people turn to media in order to satisfy the lack of social interaction in their lives. Namely, the uses and gratifications theory offered by Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch (1974) assumes that people are goal directed in their behaviors, they are active media users and they are aware of their needs and select media to gratify these needs (cited in Rubin & McHugh1987, p280). Consistently, Rubin & Step (2000) argue that "people turn to media as supplements, complements or substitutes for face-to-face interaction". (p.639). For instance, in their study on talk radio listeners, Armstrong and Rubin (1989) have demonstrated that those who called in to talk radio programs were less mobile, had less social interaction and they tended to find face-to-face communication less rewarding compared to non-callers. In other words, these individuals who telephoned a talk radio program were willing to communicate

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and they preferred using the telephone to gratify their desire for interpersonal contact since it lacked the physical cues. Caughey (1984) notes that the media personalities fill the gaps in the viewers' actual social world and -although artificially- they may compensate for dissatisfying social situations.

The nature of parasocial relationships is found appropriate by several authors for this kind of compensation. Horton & Wohl (1956) suggest that the relationship offered by the media figures is continuous in nature since the figures appear regularly; they are highly predictable and free of unpleasant surprises. They "remain basically unchanged in a world of otherwise disturbing change" (p.217). Hence, parasocial relationships do not challenge the viewers much; they don't have to be involved in great understanding or empathy; they only have to take the reciprocal part offered to them.

Correspondingly, previous studies on parasocial interaction have widely focused on audience characteristics; more specifically the possible deficiencies in the personal skills or social lives of the audience members who are highly involved with media contents. To start with, Perse, Rubin and Powell (1985) have demonstrated that loneliness was associated with less interpersonal communication; and loneliness and parasocial interaction together were linked to more reliance on television. However, when looking only at the association between loneliness and parasocial interaction with the newscasters, the correlation was insignificant.

Perse & Rubin (1990) examined the relationship between chronic loneliness and dependence on media and demonstrated that the respondents were more likely to turn to movies or television when lonely. However, they have argued that the observed reliance on media was not an active and purposive attempt to seek excitement or to compensate for lack of social interaction like offered by Levy & Windahl (1972); but just an act "to fill idle time" (p.48). In other words, just like loneliness or chronic loneliness decrease the motivation for interpersonal communication (Rubenstein & Shaver, 1980; cited in Perse & Rubin, 1990); they neither are related to parasocial communication, which requires active audience participation.

McCourt & Fitzpatrick (2001) tried to determine how personal characteristics (openness and loneliness) and actual romantic relationships of the viewers were related to the degree of parasocial involvement. They hypothesized that openness would be associated with less parasocial involvement with media performers and more interactions with actual partners. Similarly, it was argued that lonely individuals would be more attracted to and involved in parasocial relationships. However, neither openness nor loneliness significantly predicted parasocial involvement. Rather, it was found that the extent to which individuals maintain parasocial relationships was related to their daily routines with their romantic partners. Individuals who experience greater rewards in their romantic relationships were more interested in parasocial ones. The authors concluded that it was a possibility that individuals who find their actual relationships more rewarding were more likely and willing to engage in relationships in other

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domains. Besides, since involvement in parasocial relationships did not violate the viewers' romantic relationships, they were able to maintain both relationships simultaneously. Finally, the results of this study once again confirmed that there was no significant relationship between loneliness and parasocial interaction; and the authors concluded that "lonely individuals might lack the energy to make an investment in a TV-based relationship" (McCourt & Fitzpatrick, p8).

Ashe and McCuthceon (2001) argued that the one-sided nature of the parasocial relationships would seem attractive to shy people since in parasocial relationships the viewer does not need to actually communicate with the media personality and hence the viewer neither feels uncomfortable in the TV personalities' presence nor "experiences the discomfort that typifies the interactions with ordinary people" (p.125). However, the relationship between shyness and parasocial interaction was also found to be too weak to account for variance.

Turner (1993) explored the relationship between self-esteem and parasocial interaction with different types of television performers; comedians, soap-opera characters and newscasters. Among self-esteem dimensions, negative self-evaluation was found to be unrelated with parasocial relationships and positive self-evaluation was positively correlated with parasocial interaction with comedians. Another dimension of self-esteem, communicative propensity, was a significant negative predictor of parasocial interaction with soap-opera characters. These results once again confirm that relationships formed in a parasocial domain

may not be restricted to individuals who lack or feel uncomfortable in social relationships.

Another group of studies pointed to the similarities between social and parasocial relationships and emphasized that actual and mediated relationships were complementary to each other.

To start with, Cole and Leets (1999) have offered that attachment theory would be useful for understanding how parasocial relations are formed between audience members and television personalities. The authors demonstrated that viewers' level of parasocial interaction varied significantly across the three different attachment styles; secure, anxious-ambivalent and avoidant. More specifically, they have showed that viewers with an anxious-ambivalent style of attachment were the most likely to form parasocial relationships with television personalities and avoidant viewers were the least likely.

The three attachment categories of Hazan & Shaver (1987) were formed with the application of John Bowlby's infant-parental attachment theory to adult relationships and the three different patterns are characterized by different feelings and experiences of individuals in close relationships. Individuals with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style tend to believe that others are unwilling to get as close as they want to be, they want to "merge completely" with the other person and at the same time worry that their partners will leave them. (p.515). Also, Feeney & Noller (1992) contend that individuals with an anxious-ambivalent

attachment style tend to hold a negative view about themselves while idealizing their relational partners (cited in Cole & Leets 1999, p.499). In this sense, Cole & Leets (1999) have contended that anxious-ambivalent individuals were more likely to turn to relatively stable TV characters and to develop parasocial relationships "as a means of satisfying their unrealistic and often unmet needs" (p.507). On the other hand, avoidant individuals report being "uncomfortable" when they are close to others, they find it difficult to trust or depend on others completely, and they feel "nervous when anyone gets too close" (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; p515). The results indicate that avoidant individuals avoid mediated intimacy as well as relational intimacy. "Perhaps avoidant individuals have concluded that no one can be trusted, including TV characters (Cole & Leets, 1999; p507).

On a similar vein, Cohen (2004) examined the relationship between individuals' attachment style and their responses to the potential loss of their favorite characters by asking individuals questions about how they would feel and react if their favorite TV character was taken off the air. First of all, a direct significant relationship was found between viewers' anticipated break-up distress and their level of parasocial involvement. Secondly, the anxious-ambivalently attached individuals demonstrated greatest levels of parasocial involvement as shown by Cole & Leets (1999), and they anticipated the most negative responses to the hypothetical loss of their favorite characters. According to Cohen (2004), these results demonstrate that the patterns of attachment which are formed in childhood are also effective in determining how individuals will behave in their imaginary

relationships with media figures; "the boundaries of attachment research extend beyond social relationships" (p.199). He further suggests that these findings provide support for the view that sees parasocial relationships and social relationships as extensions of each other.

> If parasocial relationships were compensating for a lack of social relationships, it would be expected that avoidants, who have trouble with intimacy would have the strongest parasocial relationships, which are safer than social relationships but are built on simulated intimacy. It would also be expected that secure viewers, who are most likely to be satisfied with their social relationships, would have significantly less intense parasocial relationships and certainly be less concerned about losing them. However, this is not what the data revealed (Cohen, 2004; p.198-199).

2.2.3 Characteristics of the Program

Parasocial relationships between the media personalities and the audience members have been examined and demonstrated in various contexts including talk-radio programs (Armstrong & A.M. Rubin, 1989; Rubin & Step, 2000), romance novels (Burnett & Beto, 2000), and more commonly in a variety of television programs; namely the news (Levy, 1979; A.M. Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985; Perse, 1990), soap operas (A.M. Rubin & Perse, 1987, Perse & R. Rubin, 1989) and television shopping programs (Grant, Guthrie and Ball-Rokeach, 1991). Alperstein (1991) argued that television commercials in which the celebrities directly address the audience were also an ideal place for this interaction to occur. Finally, some studies focused on viewers' parasocial interaction with their favorite television personality in their program of choice (R. Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Conway & A.M. Rubin, 1991).

Nordlund (1978) argues that program contents that include "one or more dominating or leading figures" or that are "characterized by the presence of one or more figures who regularly appear in various media contexts" have greater potential for media interaction (p.152). Depending on these factors he suggests that serials, entertainment shows and quiz programs in television or radio to have a higher degree of media interaction potential. News and items about famous media personalities in weekly magazines or the diary and gossip columns about celebrities in newspapers also have a high media interaction potential.

Cohen (1999) states that talk show hosts or newscasters are more suitable candidates for parasocial interaction compared to characters in serials, since serials are not characterized by the presence of one figure who dominates the show or directly addresses the audience. On the other hand, Livingstone (1998) argues that since soap operas do not have heroes but rather "a multiplicity of equivalently important characters" (p.52), they invite the viewer to an active involvement with a variety of characters instead of passive identification with a central figure. Correspondingly, strong levels parasocial interaction has been demonstrated in the context of soap operas (A.M. Rubin & Perse, 1987, Perse & R. Rubin, 1989).

2.2.4 Characteristics of the Performer

Cohen (1999) states that viewers' relationship with the media characters constitutes "an important part of their involvement with the medium" (p.327) and

this involvement also is an important factor that increases viewers' loyalty to media productions (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985).

In the context of serials, it is the cast of characters that play a key role in motivating individuals to watch the program on a regular basis and "to care what happens from week to week" (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; p325).

Livingstone (1998) contends that while watching soap operas, "viewers experience a wide range of emotions towards the characters as well as sharing the emotional experiences of the characters" (p.56). Individuals feel they can relate to the characters, they understand them and they recognize some characters, which remind them of people they know. The characters come to seem like real people to them; they become significant others in their lives and through this involvement they come to feel themselves like part of the soap world. In other words, the author contends that it is their relationship with the characters that makes individuals watch soap operas in considerable numbers. Similarly Rose (1985) argues that it is the cast of characters is the main vehicle that connects individuals to the programs rather than the events (cited in Cohen 1999, p327).

Horton & Wohl (1956) claim that since parasocial relationships are one-sided by nature on the part of the viewer, all the burden of establishing a relationship and of "creating a plausible imitation of intimacy is thrown on the persona" (p.218). One of the main strategies applied by television performers in creating this intimacy with audiences is directly addressing them and engaging in monologues

that seem to require their reciprocity (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Levy, 1979). Auter (1992) conducted an empirical study to examine how the construction of the program affects the degree of parasocial interaction and demonstrated that individuals' level of parasocial interaction was significantly related to the degree of intimacy offered by the character. In other words, "breaking the fourth wall" was found be associated with higher levels of parasocial interaction. The fourth wall is defined as "the imaginary barrier separating characters from the audience" (p. 178) and it is broken when the actor or actress steps out of the character and directly addresses the audience. One group of participants were exposed to a situation comedy that breaks the fourth wall, and the second group was exposed to the same program but the parts in which the audience is directly addressed were taken out. In support of his hypothesis, PSI scores were higher in the first group of participants who saw a more intimate program. This study showed that breaking the fourth wall does make viewers experience higher levels of parasocial interaction, and especially when that wall is broken by their favorite character.

A more recent study by Sood and Rogers (2000) aiming to examine the dimensions of parasocial interaction revealed similar results. The authors analyzed viewer letters coming to a popular soap opera in India and observed that the largest number of letters was received by the character who addresses the audience directly at the end of each episode. Since the desire to contact performers is considered as an indicator of high parasocial involvement, the results of the study –although not empirically- once again confirm the importance of breaking the fourth wall.

Horton & Wohl (1956) claim that while "greatest pains are taken by the persona to create an illusion of intimacy" (p.217) there are very little obligations on part of the viewer in parasocial relationships. The viewers are free to withdraw from the relationship any moment they like and they are "free to choose among the relationships offered (p.215). As Caughey (1984) argues, there are thousands of media figures available to consumers through various kinds of mass media and hence some performers are preferred over others. In this sense, researchers have tried to identify performer characteristics that contribute to higher levels of parasocial involvement.

Evidence suggests that, one of the factors that plays an important role in the formation and strength of parasocial relationships is perceived similarity. Viewers are more likely to form strong parasocial bonds with figures they perceive as similar to themselves in attitudes, background and physical appearance; perceived similarities in demographic characteristics, personality, behavioral tendencies and life experiences are also found to be important (Turner, 1993).

Another characteristic of performers that make them chosen over others is attractiveness. Rubin & McHugh (1987) argue that television executives "actively seek attractive television personalities so that audiences will continue to view programs week after week" (p.279). Exploring the link between parasocial interaction and attraction, the authors observed that parasocial interaction was significantly related to both physical (r =.16) and social attraction (r = .35). The results demonstrated the importance of social attraction in the development of

parasocial interaction relationships rather than physical attraction, indicating that "viewers are more interested in television personalities who are attractive as social or work partners than in the physically attractive" (p. 288). Correspondingly, Caughey (1984) contends that the basis of viewers' attachment to celebrities is social rather than physical.

Cohen (1999) asked Israeli teenage viewers to indicate their favorite character from a popular night-time serial and explored the reasons of their choices. The results showed that, teenage viewers were more likely to choose opposite-sex characters (contrary to previous research) and characters that were their own age as favorites. The importance of the role played by the character (pro-social vs. anti-social) was also explored and it was found that non-Jewish participants were more likely to choose pro-social characters compared to Jewish participants. When asked about the reasons of their choices, the most commonly mentioned reasons were the physical attractiveness and personality of the characters. The respondents also focused on behavior, social relations and specific acts of their favorite characters. The author concluded that "the reasons for character preferences were related more to attributes of the character than to attributes of the viewer" (p.327).

Hoffner (1996) explored the role of perceived character traits on viewers' parasocial interaction and wishful identification with media figures. Parasocial interaction was conceptualized as "the desire to be with the character" while wishful identification was "the desire to be like the character" (p. 390) Children

(aged 7 to 12) were asked to name their favorite television character and then asked questions regarding four perceived character traits; attractiveness, strength, intelligence and humor of the character. Perceptions of the character's pro-social (kind, helpful, caring) and anti-social (mean, selfish, violent) behaviors were also measured. The predictors of parasocial interaction and wishful identification with male and female performers were examined separately. A great majority of boys (91.1 %) and over half the girls (52.6 %) named same-sex characters as their favorites. For both boys and girls, parasocial interaction with male characters was predicted by intelligence and attractiveness and for boys parasocial interaction with male characters was also predicted by strength. Female characters were chosen as favorites only by girl respondents and parasocial interaction with female characters was predicted only by attractiveness. Parasocial interaction was found to be higher with characters who were perceived as kinder, more helpful, more caring, less mean and less selfish after controlling for the characters' and the subjects' sex. Characters' perceived violence was not significantly related to parasocial interaction or to wishful identification.

In a more recent study, Hoffner & Buchanan (2005) examined the role of perceived similarity and perceived character attributes (intelligence, success, attractiveness, humor, violence and admiration by other characters) of the characters in a sample of young adults, but this time only concerning individuals' wishful identification with television characters. As demonstrated by previous research, attitude similarity was found to be a strong positive predictor of wishful identification for both male and female participants with male and female

characters. In terms of character attributes, the predictors of wishful identification were found to be different for men and women who chose same-gender characters. Male participants reported stronger wishful identification with male characters whom they perceived as smarter, more successful and more violent. For female respondents, wishful identification was higher for female characters that were smarter, more successful, more admired by other characters and more attractive.

The number of studies exploring the link between parasocial interaction and performer characteristics is relatively small compared to the large body of research that explores the characteristics of the viewers. On the other hand, there is evidence pointing to the importance of performer characteristics in the development of parasocial relationships. Hoffner (1996) has demonstrated a direct relationship between viewers' perceptions of male and female media figures and their level of parasocial involvement in the sample of children aged 7 to 12. The role of perceived character attributes was again demonstrated by Hoffner & Buchanan (2005) in a sample of young adults in the domain of wishful identification with media figures. However, to our knowledge, there are no studies in the literature that explored the direct link between perceived character attributes of the performers and young adults' level of parasocial involvement.

2.3 The Present Study

As discussed in greater detail in the previous section, Rubin, Perse and Powell (1985) have conceptualized parasocial interaction as the interpersonal involvement of a media user that can take different forms including "seeking guidance from a media persona, seeing media personalities as friends, imagining being part of a favorite program's social world, and desiring to meet media performers (p156-157). According to Levy (1979), the most general indicators of parasocial interaction were "seeing media personalities almost like friends" and "looking forward to seeing them again" (p. 72). The respondents regard their favorite newscasters as "cognitive guides with whom they explore the world" (p.73) and report they like comparing the ideas expressed by their favorite newscasters with their own. Viewers also appreciate "the audio presence of the newscasters" (p.74) and indicate they like hearing the voice of their favorite newscaster in their own homes and they generally respond back to gestures or behaviors of the newscasters' with similar gestures and remarks (i.e. saying "good evening to you too" in response to the opening greeting). Empathy, companionship, getting to know and being interested in media personalities are also considered to be components of parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Levy, 1979; Nordlund, 1978).

Consistent with previous conceptualizations, the present study aims to explore the predictors of parasocial interaction in the context of serials. Since the concept "parasocial interaction" has first been used by Horton and Wohl in 1956, many

studies have been conducted on the topic and the concept has become "fairly well established in the media and communication literature" (Giles, 2002; p.279). However, the great majority of these studies aimed to explore the role of viewer characteristics in the development of parasocial relationships. The current study aims to explore the concept focusing on the characteristics of the performer rather than the viewer and analyze the role of characteristics of the performer on viewers' level of parasocial interaction. More specifically, the present study aims to examine which character attributes of the serial characters will predict higher levels of parasocial interaction on part of the viewer. Correspondingly, the following research questions (RQ) are asked:

RQ1: Which attributes of the characters will predict higher levels of parasocial interaction?

RQ2: Will the contribution of these attributes vary among different dimensions of parasocial interaction?

One of the main reasons for choosing the context of serials in the present study was the serials' current significant status in Turkish television. Correspondingly, several events that took place in Turkish media have pointed to the importance of local serials and serial characters in the lives of audiences. One most striking event was the newspaper advertisement that was given by "Kurtlar Vadisi" viewers in response to the death of a main character, Süleyman Çakır, in the serial. Another significant example was the unexpected contribution of "Asmalı Konak" series to the domestic tourism in Cappadoccia zone, followed by the

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introduction of a new wine brand named after the leading characters in the serial (Seymen ve Bahar Şarapları) and peaked at the reaction of The Chamber of Medicine to the final episode of the serial. The Chamber have placed an add in one of the leading newspapers in Turkey saying the serial was misleading the public by sending Bahar, the main female character in the serial, to America for cancer treatment, since the disease could be well treated in our own country.

In addition, the context of serials was preferred over other formats since another objective of this study was to explore the feelings and thoughts of the spectators when confronting a character that they actually dislike. If the study was formatted in a different way, it would have been difficult to scale and measure such response, because people simply don't watch the programs of the performers they do not like. But in the context of local TV serials, the spectators do not have the option of not watching the characters they dislike, since to be able to watch the character of fondness, they have to watch the disliked character as well. In other words, while parasocial involvement with a favorite serial character makes the viewer more interested in the serial and watch it regularly; it also results in being exposed to the least desired characters.

The major distinction between parasocial interaction and other conceptualizations of media involvement is argued to be its interactional component (Cohen, 2001; Giles, 2001). For instance, in the form of identification, the viewer experiences the events as if s/he was inside the text, however, for parasocial interaction to occur the individual "needs to retain his or her self-identity and interact with the

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character" (Cohen, 2001; p253). The form of wishful identification refers to "the desire to be like" the character hence it includes admiration of the character (Hoffner, 1996; p390). However, as stated by Giles (2001), individuals "may still engage in parasocial interaction without sharing any perspective; this enables the viewers to interact with media figures whom they actively dislike" (p290).

To our knowledge, parasocial interaction with disliked characters has never been explored in previous studies. The present study aims to explore the dimensions of parasocial interaction with disliked serial characters and identify the thoughts and feelings of the viewers in response to the characters they do not desire. Moreover, the current study aims to identify which attributes of the characters predict higher levels of negative responses. Consistent with the second goal of the study, the following research questions are asked:

RQ3: What will the feelings of the viewers be in response to the characters they desire the least?

RQ4: Which attributes of the disliked characters will predict higher levels of negative thoughts and feelings?

RQ5: Will the contribution of these attributes vary among different dimensions of negative parasocial interaction?

The present study aims to explore the role of perceived character attributes of serial characters on two different concepts; parasocial interaction and negative parasocial interaction. Although both concepts have the interaction component in

common, it is not possible to scale and measure these two concepts using the same instrument. Hence, addressing the proposed research questions required the selection of a measure for parasocial interaction and the development of a measure for negative parasocial interaction.

For the measurement of parasocial interaction, a commonly used scale that was first developed by Perse, Rubin & Powell (1985) and later been modified by Rubin & Perse (1987) was used. The scale was translated from English, and hence the reliability and validity of the scale was tested in a pilot study. The properties of the Turkish version of the scale will be discussed in the first pilot study. Since parasocial interaction with disliked characters was not explored in previous research, a scale to measure negative parasocial interaction was not available. For the purpose of the present research, a scale was constructed to assess viewers' responses toward disliked serial characters. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to select the character attributes to be included in the scales for rating favorite and least desired characters. Hence, two scales including character attributes of liked and disliked serial characters were constructed. The development of the negative parasocial interaction scale and the selection of the character attributes of liked and disliked characters will be discussed in the second pilot study.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

3.1 Participants

The sample of the present study consisted of 248 undergraduate university students (159 female, 89 male) with a mean age of 20.35 (SD = 2.26, range = 17-26). The majority of the participants (80.6 %) were undergraduate students at İstanbul Bilgi University from various departments taking "Introduction to Psychology" course as a non-departmental elective. They were given bonus credits for participating in the study. 15.3 % were from Dokuz Eylül University and the remaining 4.1 % were from Adnan Menderes, Haliç, Kocaeli, Marmara, İstanbul Teknik and Boğaziçi Universities.

Overall the participants were from 21 different departments. 43.1 % of the participants were students in the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (Business Administration, Economics, International Finance, International Relations and Political Science), 18.9 % were from Faculty of Arts & Sciences (Computer Science, Mathematics, Comparative Literature, Sociology, Psychology and History), 18.5 % were from Faculty of Communication (Public Relations, Advertising, Visual Communication Design, Graphic Design, Media and Communication Systems, Film & Television and Television Journalism), 14.9

% were from Faculty of Medicine and 4 % were from Faculty of Law. Only one participant (0.6 %) was from the School of Advanced Vocational Studies.

70.2 % of the participants mostly lived in İstanbul, 9.7 % in İzmir and 20.1 % in 19 other cities in Turkey. 70.2 % were living with their families, 13.7 % were staying in the dormitory, 10.1 % were living with their housemate(s) and 6 % were living alone.

11.7 % of the participants reported they watched television more than 4 hours on weekdays, 32.4 % from 3 to 4 hours, 53.4 % 1-2 hours and 2.4 % said they did not watch television at all. 12.6 % of the participants indicated they liked watching serials very much, 24.7 % liked watching serials, 37.7 % neither liked nor disliked, 20.2 % did not like watching serials and the remaining 4.9 % did not like watching serials at all. 4.9 % of the participants were followers of four or more local TV serials, 44.5 % were followers of 2-3 local serials, 32.8 % followed only one local serial and 17.8 % reported they were not following any particular local serial. The respondents who were not followers of any of the local serials named either a local serial that is no longer broadcasted or a serial from different channels such as DIGITURK and CNBC-E. On the whole, 87.8 % of the participants named a local serial as their favorites, and 12.2 % chose serials from other channels.

Table 3.1 displays the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Variable	N	Percent (%) *
Gender		
Female	159	64.1
Male	89	35.9
Age		
17-20	154	62.1
21-23	79	31.9
24-26	15	6
University		
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi	200	80.6
Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi	38	15.3
Other Universities	10	4.1
Faculty		
Faculty of Arts & Sciences	47	18.9
Faculty of Communication	46	18.5
F. of Economics & Administrative Sciences	107	43.1
Faculty of Law	10	4
Faculty of Medicine	37	14.9
School of Advanced Vocational Studies	1	0.6
City		
İstanbul	174	70.2
İzmir	24	9.7
Other Cities	50	20.1
Living...		
with their families	174	70.2
in the dormitory	34	13.7
with their housemate(s)	25	10.1
alone	15	6

* Valid percentages were given.

3.2 Procedure

The participants were briefly informed about the true aim of the study and requested to answer the questions sincerely since there were no right or wrong answers to the questions they were about to answer. In order to assure anonymity, the participants were not asked for any information about their identities in the scale (i.e. name, surname, student ID) and the students who were to receive extra credits for participating in the study wrote their student IDs on a different piece of paper.

After answering questions about their demographic characteristics, the respondents rated their affinity towards television and television serials on a 5-point Likert scale. They were also asked about their television viewing level and the number of local serials they liked and regularly followed. Then they were asked to indicate their favorite local TV serial and to answer the remaining questions thinking of the serial they named and the characters portrayed in that particular serial. The respondents who were not followers of any of the local TV serials were asked to name either a local serial they used to follow, or a serial from any channel they like (i.e. serials from DIGITURK or CNBC-E) and answer the remaining questions thinking about the serial they chose.

3.3 Primary Measures

3.3.1 Parasocial Interaction with the Favorite Serial Character

In the present study, participants' level of parasocial interaction with their favorite serial character was measured using a 14-item parasocial interaction scale. The original scale was developed by Rubin, Perse & Powell (1985) and it was designed to assess the level of parasocial interaction between viewers and their favorite newscasters. The scale consisted of 20 items and it was found to be internally consistent with an alpha value of .92. The original scale was slightly modified and used by Rubin & McHugh (1987) to assess viewers' parasocial involvement with their favorite television performers (α = .88). Rubin & Perse (1987) reduced the original scale into a 10-item one and adapted the scale for parasocial interaction with soap-opera characters (α = .88) and the short version was found to be highly correlated with the original scale (r = .96). The short version was used in different settings by Perse (1990), Conway & Rubin (1991) and Cohen (1997) with alpha reliabilities of .91, .90 and .82 respectively. The 10-item version of the parasocial interaction scale (PSI) scale has also been used in the context of soap-operas by Perse & Rubin (1989) with an alpha value of .85 (M = 3.34, SD = .76) and by A.Rubin & Perse (1987) (α = .88, M = 3.19, SD = .80).

The 14-item PSI scale used in the present study included 6 items from the original parasocial interaction scale (A.Rubin et al., 1985) and 8 items from the shorter version that was adapted for soap-opera characters by Rubin & Perse (1987). Two items from the Rubin & Perse (1987) version were excluded since they were

developed for online soap-operas and hence they were found to be inapplicable to the local TV serials in Turkey. The excluded items were "My favorite soap-opera character seems to understand the kinds of things I want to know" and "I miss seeing my favorite soap-opera character when s/he is ill or on vacation". Four items from the original version (A.Rubin et al., 1985) were excluded since they were developed specifically for newscasters and were found to be irrelevant to the context of serials. The excluded items from the original scale were "The news program shows me what the newscasters are like", "When the newscasters joke around with one another it makes the news easier to watch", "When my favorite newscaster shows me how s/he feels about the news, it helps me make up my own mind about the news story" and "I am not as satisfied when I get my news from a newscaster different then my favorite newscaster". The remaining items were modified by using "my favorite serial character" instead of "my favorite newscaster".

The respondents were asked to name their favorite local TV serial and to name their favorite character in that particular serial. Then they were asked to read the items of the PSI Scale and indicate their level of agreement by responding on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale included items such as "My favorite serial character makes me feel comfortable as if I am with a friend" or "If I saw a story about my favorite serial character in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it" (see Appendix A).

The original items of the scale were translated into Turkish by the author and then they were back-translated into English by a research assistant from Bilgi University. The reliability and validity of the parasocial interaction scale was tested in a pilot study since it was translated from English and was employed to the Turkish sample for the first time. The Turkish version of the scale was found to be internally consistent with an alpha reliability of .93 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.31; $\underline{SD}$ = 0.96) and it was found to be positively correlated with other concepts that were found to be related with PSI in previous research. The details of the procedure and the results will be discussed in the first pilot study section.

3.3.2 Perceived Attributes of the Favorite Character

The respondents were asked to rate their favorite characters on a list of 21 attributes and indicate the extent to which these attributes described their favorite characters on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one 1 (not describing at all) to 5 (describes very well). The character attributes to be included in the main study were chosen depending on the results of the second pilot study and the final scale included the items beautiful/handsome, charismatic, attractive, intelligent, considerate, strong, brave, challenger, successful, determined, helpful, altruistic, cute, good-willed, responsible, emotional, honest, outspoken, modest, funny and has a sense of humor. The respondents were also provided with an "other" option in case there are attributes they would like to include (see Appendix B).

3.3.3 Parasocial Interaction with the Least Desired Character

A scale was developed in order to assess the feelings of viewers when they are watching the character they least desire in their favorite serial. 4 items of the scale were constructed by transforming the items in the PSI scale into their opposites such as "I don't like hearing his/her voice" and "I wouldn't wish to see him/her even on another show". The remaining items were selected depending on the results of the second pilot study. The final scale consisted of 23 items. The respondents were asked to name the character they desire the least in their favorite serial and then to read the items of the Negative Parasocial Interaction Scale (NPSI) Scale and indicate their level of agreement by responding on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale included items such as "I feel uncomfortable while I watch that character" and "I get bored watching his/her scenes" (see Appendix C). The detailed procedure of scale construction will be discussed in the second pilot study section.

3.3.4 Perceived Attributes of the Least Desired Character

The respondents were asked to rate the character they desire the least in the serial on a list of 19 attributes and indicate the extent to which these attributes described the character they disliked on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one 1 (not describing at all) to 5 (describes very well). The character attributes to be included in the main study were chosen depending on the results of the second pilot study and the final scale included the items ugly, repulsive, antipathetic, stupid, foxy,

incompetent, unsuccessful, weak, irresponsible, selfish, merciless, senseless, bad-willed, liar, hypocrite, insidious, ungrateful, jealous and aggressive. The respondents were also provided with an "other" option in case there are attributes they would like to include (see Appendix D).

3.4 Pilot Studies

3.4.1 Pilot Study 1

The first pilot study was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the parasocial interaction scale since it was translated from English and was employed to the Turkish sample for the first time.

Participants & Procedure

The sample of the first pilot study consisted of 47 participants (24 female, 23 male) and their ages ranged from 20 to 43 with a mean age of 27.23 ($\underline{SD}$ = 5.05). The majority of the respondents (63.8 %) were working in Middle East Technical University in either academic or administrative positions. 21.2 % were students in METU and the remaining 15 % were new graduates who were not working at the time the data was collected.

The respondents were informed about the aim of the study and requested to inform the researcher if they see questions that are hard to understand or ambiguous.

The participants were given a questionnaire including questions aiming to collect information about their level of parasocial interaction with their favorite serial character and other questions from a variety of scales that were found to be related with parasocial interaction in previous research. These questions were used to test the validity of the parasocial interaction scale.

Primary Measures

In the first part of the scale, the respondents were asked to indicate their favorite local TV serial that they follow on a regular basis and to name their favorite character in that particular serial. They were requested to answer the remaining questions thinking of their favorite serial and their favorite character in that serial.

<u>**Parasocial Interaction**</u>

Respondents' level of parasocial interaction with their favorite serial character was measured using a 14-item scale that included 6 items from the original parasocial interaction scale (A.Rubin et al., 1985) and 8 items from the shorter version that was adapted for soap-opera characters by Rubin & Perse (1987). The participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement by responding on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (see Appendix A).

Responses to Parasocial Break-up

The participants' responses to parasocial break-up was measured by using the parasocial break-up scale developed by Cohen (2003). The original scale was designed to assess how viewers would respond if their favorite television personality would be taken of the air. The scale was found to be internally consistent in three different samples with Cronbach alpha values of .80, .85 and .85 respectively. In previous research, it was demonstrated that viewers who had more intense parasocial relationships were more distressed "at the thought of loosing the relationship" (Cohen, 2003; p194) and the two scales were found to be significantly and positively correlated ($r = .62$).

For the purposes of the present study, the items on the original parasocial break-up scale were translated into Turkish and the viewers anticipated how they would respond if their favorite character in their favorite serial would leave the program. The participants were asked to rate their level of agreement by responding on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (see Appendix E).

Cognitive and Behavioral Involvement

Cognitive involvement refers to "thinking about media messages" both during and beyond periods of media exposure and behavioral involvement constitutes talking about the media messages with one another (Levy & Windahl, 1984; Perse &

Rubin, 1987; p248). Previous research demonstrated that parasocial interaction was positively related to both cognitive and behavioral participant involvement in the context of serials (Rubin & Perse, 1987) and also in talk radio programs (Rubin & Step, 2000).

In the present study, 4 items were used to assess viewers' level of cognitive involvement and 3 items were used to assess viewers' behavioral involvement. The original items were developed by Rubin & Perse (1987) in the light of the research by Levy & Windahl (1984). The items were translated into Turkish and for each item the respondents were asked to indicate how often they engaged in that particular activity. The response options ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (very often) (see Appendix F).

<u>Sociotropic Orientation</u>

The term sociotropic orientation refers to an individual's desire to spend his/her time in social interaction rather than solitude (Leary, Herbst & McCrary, 2002). A high sociotropic orientation is "reflected in a desire for social contact and social interaction, and a low sociotropic orientation reflects a low desire to affiliate with others but not necessarily an avoidance of social interaction" (p60). Cheek & Buss (1981) demonstrated that high sociotropic orientation was related to sociability and extraversion and hence sociotropic individuals preferred being with others to being alone (cited in Leary et al, p60).

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Depending on previous research that pointed to similarities between social and parasocial relationships (Rubin & McHugh, 1987, Turner, 1993, Rubin & Perse, 1987, Cole & Leets, 1999, Cohen, 2004) it was expected that individuals who were more interested in socializing with others would also be more likely to be involved in parasocial relationships. The original sociotropy scale that was developed by Beck, Epstein, Harrison & Emery (1983) was translated into Turkish by Şahin, Ulusoy & Şahin (1993). The Turkish version of the scale was found to be internally consistent (α = .83) and valid. Sociotropy was found to be consisting of three sub-dimensions; namely concern for approval, concern over separation and pleasing others. In the present study, only the 13 items of the "concern over separation" sub-scale were included (see Appendix G). The rest of the scale was not found to be related to the purpose of the present study.

Results

The 14-item parasocial interaction scale used in the present study was found to be internally consistent with a Cronbach alpha value of .94 ($\underline{M}$ = 2.31; $\underline{SD}$ = 0.96). All items were significantly and highly correlated with the other items and item-total correlations ranged from .67 to .79.

Consistent with previous findings, individuals' parasocial involvement with their favorite serial characters was found to be positively related with their anticipated responses to loosing the characters. The Turkish versions of the parasocial interaction (α =.94) and parasocial break-up scales (α = .89) were found to be

significantly correlated ($\underline{r}$ = .81, $\underline{p}$ < .001). Parasocial interaction was also found to be correlated with cognitive involvement ($\underline{\alpha}$ = .91) with $\underline{r}$ = .52, $\underline{p}$ < .001 and behavioral involvement ($\underline{\alpha}$ = .88) of the viewers ($\underline{r}$ = .49, $\underline{p}$ < .01). The relationship between parasocial interaction and sociotropic orientation was also significant ($\underline{r}$ = .50, $\underline{p}$ < .01).

Since the above mentioned scales, except for sociotropy are not standardized in Turkish, we can not derive at convergent validity. However, the predictable associations of the scales in the current study show potential for future validity testing studies.

3.4.2 Pilot Study 2

The second pilot study was conducted in order to determine the character attributes of the favorite and least desired serial characters to be included in the main study. The second pilot study also aimed to provide basis for the development of the scale to be used in assessing the thoughts and feelings of the viewers in response to the character they least desire in their favorite serial.

Participants & Procedure

Participants were 96 undergraduate students from İstanbul Bilgi University taking an introductory course common to all first grade students. Their ages ranged from

17 to 24 with a mean of 19.7. Among the 85 participants who have indicated their sex, 37 (43.5 %) were male and 48 (56.5 %) were female.

The participants were asked to name their favorite local TV serial and their favorite character in that serial on a piece of paper, and then to describe their favorite character in their own words. They were then asked to name the character they desire the least in that particular serial and to describe the character in their own words. Finally they were requested to indicate their sincere thoughts and feelings at the times their least desired character is portrayed in their favorite serial.

Results

The participants named 32 different serials as their favorites; 17 of them were broadcasted on local TV channels and 15 of them were the serials broadcasted on Digiturk and CNBC-E. 58 different favorite and 49 different least desired characters were named. 12 students said they liked all the characters in their favorite serial and hence did not answer the remaining questions.

Despite the variability in the choices for favorite serials and the most or least desired characters in those serials; the words used by the participants in describing the characters were quite similar. The attributes mentioned by the respondents with the highest frequencies were included in the main study. 21 attributes were selected to be included in the scale for perceived character attributes of the

favorite character (see Appendix B); and 19 attributes were selected for the rating of disliked characters in the main study (see Appendix D).

The great majority of the participants reported they were disturbed and bored while their least desired characters were portrayed. The respondents also indicated that they were surprised and annoyed by the way the character acts and talks. For some of the respondents the sight of that particular character was the signal of a bad event that is about to happen. Some participants reported they sometimes could not stop themselves from shouting or cursing to the screen and on the extremes 2 participants said they wanted to kill the character.

The thoughts and feelings common to the majority of the participants were turned into items after correcting the wording of the sentences. In addition, 4 items from the parasocial interaction scale were transformed into their opposites. The final scale consisted of 23 items (see Appendix C).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1 Data Screening and Analysis

Before the analysis, all data were examined through various programs of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in terms of accuracy of data and missing values. In order to reduce the extreme kurtosis and skewness, z scores for all values were computed and no case was found to be with extremely low or high z values.

Prior to the main analysis, factor analysis was performed for the Parasocial Interaction Scale (PSI) and Negative Parasocial Interaction Scale (NPSI) and their factor structures were examined. The two scales including the perceived character attributes of the favorite and least desirable characters respectively were also subjected to factor analysis. Finally, the predictors of parasocial and negative parasocial interaction were examined through multiple regression analyses.

4.2 Factor Analyses

4.2.1 Parasocial Interaction Scale (PSI)

The responses to the 14 items of PSI were subjected to factor analysis using principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. The examination of initial eigenvalues, percentages of explained variance, and the scree plot suggested a three-factor solution. As indicated in Table 4.1.1, four items loaded on Factor 1, five items loaded on Factor 2 and the remaining five items loaded on Factor 3. The three factors explained 56.8 % of the total variance and the item loadings ranged from .41 to .80.

Items such as "I think my favorite serial character is like an old friend" and "My favorite serial character keeps me company when the serial is on television" loaded on Factor 1 and hence the factor was named "Companionship". The companionship factor had an eigenvalue of 5.56 and it explained 20.18% of the total variance. The factor was found to be internally consistent ($\alpha = .78$).

Items like "I feel sorry for my favorite serial character when s/he makes a mistake" and "I sometimes make remarks to my favorite serial character during the serial" loaded on the second factor which explained 19.37% of the total variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.35. The factor was named "Empathic Involvement" and it was found to be internally consistent with an alpha reliability of .75.

Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 1.04 and it explained 17.32% of the total variance. Some items that loaded on this factor were "I would like to meet my favorite soap opera character in person" and "If I saw a story about my favorite serial character in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it". Accordingly, the factor was named "Interest" and it was also found to be reliable (α = .78).

Table 4.1.1 Item Composition of the PSI factors, their factor loadings, eigenvalues, percentage of explained variance and Cronbach Alpha Values

	Factor Loadings		
Factors and Items	**Factor 1**	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**
Factor 1: Companionship			
α= .78 Explained Variance= 20.18 %			
6. My favorite serial character keeps me company when the serial is on television.	**.759**	.239	.204
9. I think my favorite serial character is like an old friend.	**.741**	.087	.270
14. My favorite serial character guides and helps me in taking some decisions.	**.695**	.198	-.018
13. My favorite serial character makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend.	**.641**	.347	.227
Factor 2: Empathic Involvement			
α= .75 Explained Variance= 19.37 %			
1. I feel sorry for my favorite serial character when s/he makes a mistake.	.258	**.723**	.120
10. I find my favorite serial character to be attractive.	.050	**.648**	.148
4. I see my favorite soap opera character as a natural, down-to-earth person.	.167	**.637**	.196
2. I like to compare my ideas with what my favorite serial character says.	.436	**.578**	.082
13. I sometimes make remarks to my favorite serial character during the serial.	.302	**.541**	.157
Factor 3: Interest			
α= .78 Explained Variance= 17.32 %			
12. If my favorite serial character appeared on another TV program, I would watch that program.	.083	.176	**.798**
11. If I saw a story about my favorite serial character in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it.	.046	.306	**.796**
8. I would like to meet my favorite soap opera character in person	.365	.000	**.670**

Table 4.1.1 Continued

5. I like hearing the voice of my favorite serial character in my house.	.206	.468	**.517**
7. I look forward to watching my favorite serial character on the next episode	.381	.309	**.410**

α = .88   **Total Explained Variance = 56.8 %**

4.2.2 Perceived Attributes of Favorite Character (PAFC)

The responses to the 21 items of PAFC were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. Four factors were extracted among the scale and four factors explained 67.9 % of the total variance. Item loadings ranged from .64 to .91. As indicated in Table 4.1.2, nine items loaded on Factor 1, six items loaded on Factor 2, three items loaded on Factor 3 and the remaining three items loaded on Factor 4.

Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 8.41 and it explained 23.45 % of the total variance. Some items that loaded on this factor were good-willed, helpful and modest. The factor was named "Positive Social Behavior" and it was found to be reliable (α = .91).

The attributes that describe the strength of the character (i.e. strong, brave, and determined) loaded on Factor 2. The factor had an eigenvalue of 2.72 and it explained 21.57 % of the total variance. Factor 2 was named "Strength" and it was found to be internally consistent with a Cronbach alpha value of .89.

Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 1.77 and it explained 11.84 % of the total variance. The items that loaded on this factor were beautiful/handsome, attractive and charismatic and hence Factor 3 was named "Physical Attractiveness" and it was found to be reliable with an alpha value of .86.

Factor 4 explained 11.1 % of the total variance and it had an eigenvalue of 2.33. The items that loaded on this factor were; funny, cute and has a sense of humor, and hence Factor 4 was named "Humor".

Prior to regression analysis, mean values were obtained by averaging the related items, namely positive social behavior, strength, physical attractiveness and humor.

Table 4.1.2 Item Composition of the PAFC factors, their factor loadings, percentage of explained variance and Cronbach Alpha Values

Factors and Items	Factor Loadings			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor1: Positive Social Behavior				
α= .91 Explained Variance= 23.45 %				
altruistic	**.787**	.379	.069	-.125
good-willed	**.782**	.107	.159	.208
honest	**.776**	.241	..93	-.076
modest	**.724**	.298	.064	-.070
emotional	**.722**	.017	.326	.215
helpful	**.700**	.414	.106	-.001
considerate	**.583**	.446	.152	-.085
responsible	**.581**	.484	.044	-.210
outspoken	**.494**	.387	-.139	.032
Factor 2: Strength				
α= .89 Explained Variance= 21.57 %				
determined	.161	**.788**	.131	-.076

Table 4.1.2 Continued

successful	.258	**.738**	.162	-.106
strong	.226	**.731**	.160	-.160
challenger	.332	**.711**	.123	-.154
brave	.315	**.703**	.159	-.178
intelligent	.201	**.685**	.116	.128

Factor 3: Physical Attractiveness
α= .86   Explained Variance= 11.84 %

attractive	.172	.140	**.893**	-.088
beautiful/handsome	.211	.164	**.859**	-.177
charismatic	-.001	.462	**.683**	-.088

Factor 4: Humor
α= .79   Explained Variance= 11.11 %

funny	-.078	-.113	-.236	**.905**
has a sense of humor	-.088	-.082	-.223	**.885**
cute	.392	-.161	.229	**.635**

α= .89   Total Explained Variance= 67.9 %

4.2.3 Negative Parasocial Interaction Scale (NPSI)

The responses to the 23 items of NPSI were subjected to factor analysis using principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. The examination of initial eigenvalues, percentages of explained variance, and the scree plot suggested a four-factor solution. As indicated in Table 4.1.3, eight items loaded on Factor 1, seven items loaded on Factor 2, five items loaded on Factor 3 and the remaining three items loaded on Factor 4. Item loadings ranged from .42 to .85 and the four factors explained 61.19 % of the total variance.

Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 7.52 and it explained 23.48 % of the total variance. Some examples of the items that loaded on this factor were "I get bored while watching his/her scenes" and "I feel like changing the channel when he/she is on".

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Accordingly, Factor 1 was named "Boredom" and the factor was found to be internally consistent (α = .89).

The eigenvalue for Factor 2 was 3.22 and the factor explained 17.05 % of the total variance. Items such as "I want to see him/her get punished for what s/he did" or "I wouldn't want her/him to be better off" loaded on this factor and hence Factor 2 was named "Anger" (α = .84).

Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 2.05 and 10.78 % of the total variance was explained by this factor. Some examples of the items that loaded on this factor were "I feel uncomfortable while I watch that character" and "I don't like hearing his/her voice". Factor 3 was named "Disturbance" and it was found to be internally consistent with an alpha value of .81.

The remaining three items loaded on Factor 4 that explained 9.86 % of the total variance and had an eigenvalue of 1.28. Items such as "I can't make sense of his/her behavior" and "I get astonished at what he/she does and says" loaded on this factor and hence Factor 4 was named "Amazement" (α = .72).

Prior to regression analysis, mean scores on the four dimensions of negative parasocial interaction, namely boredom, anger, disturbance and amazement were computed by averaging the related items.

Table 4.1.3 Item Composition of the NPSI factors, their factor loadings, percentage of explained variance and Cronbach Alpha Values

Factors and Items	Factor Loadings			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Factor 1: Boredom				
α= .89 Explained Variance= 23.48 %				
21. I shift my attention to something else or I think of something else when he/she is on.	**.849**	-	.110	.122
20. I feel like changing the channel when he/she is on.	**.829**	-		
18. I get bored watching his/her scenes.	**.796**	-	.110	.143
11. I want the scenes to be over as soon as possible when he/she is on.	**.718**	.201	.280	-
12. I want him/her to leave the TV serials.	**.703**	.245	.149	-
19. I find him/her superficial.	**.679**		-.108	.133
1. I find him/her irrelevant in the tv serials.	**.661**	-.149		.335
23. I wouldn't wish to see him/her even on another show.	**.643**	.190	.124	-
Factor 2: Anger				
α= .84 Explained Variance= 17.05 %				
17. I want to see him/her get punished for what he/she did.	-	**.807**	-	.135
16. I believe that someday there will be a payback time for what he/she did.	-	**.791**	-	.220
14. It upsets me when he/she is successful.	.143	**.784**	-	-
15. I wouldn't want him/her to be better off.	-	**.779**	.178	-
13. I get annoyed when he/she gets away with what he/she did on the serials.	.124	**.684**	.150	.271
10. I sometimes feel like harming him/her.	.230	**.528**	.313	-.187
22. Sometimes while I watch his/her scenes I start grumbling by myself or to the others around.	.296	**.424**	.148	.317
Factor 3: Disturbance				
α= .81 Explained Variance= 10.78 %				
6. I wouldn't want to meet someone like him/her in my actual life.	-	.115	**.766**	.244
5. I wouldn't want to be like him/her.	-	-	**.687**	.353
7. I don't like hearing his/her voice.	.478	.104	**.593**	.204
8. I feel uncomfortable while I watch that character.	.557	.195	**.583**	-
9. Seeing him/her annoys me.	.425	.445	**.538**	-
Factor 4: Amazement				
α= .72 Explained Variance=9.86 %				
3. I get astonished at what he/she does and says.	-	.152	.187	**.768**
2. I can't make sense of his/her behaviour.	.360	-	.195	**.729**
4. I think I wouldn't have behaved like that if I was in his/her shoes.	-	.206	.162	**.680**
α= .90 Total Explained Variance= 61.19 %				

4.2.4 Perceived Attributes of the Least Desired Character (PALDC)

The responses to the 19 items of PALDC scale were subjected to factor analysis using principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation. Three factors were extracted among the scale. As indicated in Table 4.1.4, eleven items loaded on Factor 1, five items loaded on Factor 2 and the remaining three items loaded on Factor 3. Item loadings ranged from .60 to .86 and the three factors explained 62.39 % of the total variance.

Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 6.62 and it explained 33.08 % of the total variance. Some items that loaded on this factor were; bad-willed, merciless, selfish and aggressive and hence Factor 1 was named "Negative Social Behavior" (α = .92).

Attributes such as weak, irresponsible and unsuccessful loaded Factor 2 that had an eigenvalue of 3.45 and explained 16.77 % of the total variance. Factor 2 was named "Weakness" and the factor was found to be internally consistent (α = .84).

Factor 3 had an eigenvalue of 1.80 and it explained 12.53 % of the total variance. The items ugly, antipathetic and repulsive loaded on this factor and hence Factor 3 was named "Physical Repulsiveness" (α = .83).

Prior to main analysis, mean scores for the three factors; namely negative social behavior, weakness and physical repulsiveness were obtained by averaging the related items.

Table 4.1.4 Item Composition of the PALDC factors, their factor loadings, percentage of explained variance and Cronbach Alpha Values

	Factor Loadings		
Factors and Items	**Factor 1**	**Factor 2**	**Factor 3**
Factor 1: Negative Social Behavior			
α= .92 Explained Variance= 33.08 %			
insidious	**.840**	-	-
merciless	**.831**	-.158	-
bad-willed	**.814**	-	.227
liar	**.810**	.194	-
hypocrite	**.806**	.123	-
ungrateful	**.794**	.120	.133
senseless	**.747**	-.119	.251
selfish	**.707**	.155	-
jealous	**.619**	.175	-
foxy	**.598**	-.165	-
aggressive	**.595**	-	.140
Factor 2: Weakness			
α= .84 Explained Variance= 16.77 %			
incompetent	-	**.835**	-
unsuccessful	-	**.807**	-
weak	-	**.803**	.170
stupid	-	**.696**	.321
irresponsible	.223	**.670**	-
Factor 3: Physical Repulsiveness			
α= .82 Explained Variance= 12.53 %			
repulsive	.187	.137	**.859**
antipathetic	.196	-	**.859**
ugly	-	.211	**.767**
α = .88 Total Explained Variance = 62.39			

4.3 Main Analyses

4.3.1 Choice of Favorite Serials

Among the 242 participants who have indicated the name of their favorite TV serial properly, 44 different names were mentioned as favorites. 88.02 % of the favorite serials were broadcasted on local TV channels and 11.98 % were broadcasted on cable or pay TV (CNBC-E and DIGITURK). The majority of the respondents chose Avrupa Yakası as their favorites (17.77 %) followed by Kurtlar Vadisi (16.12 %), Aliye (9.92%), Haziran Gecesi (7.02 %) and Aşk Oyunu (5.79 %).

4.3.2 Choice of Favorite Characters

Among the 240 respondents who wrote the name of their favorite serial characters properly, 91 different characters were named. The favorite characters of the participants were male in 68.7 % and female in 31.3% of the cases. 43.3 % of the female participants chose female serial characters as favorites and 56.7 % chose male characters. Only 9.6 % of the male participants chose female characters as their favorites; 90.4 % of the male participants' most desired characters were also male.

In terms of favorite serial characters, Polat Alemdar from Kurtlar Vadisi was the most commonly mentioned name (10.8 %) followed by Volkan Sütçüoğlu from Avrupa Yakası (8.33 %) and Deniz Erbil from Aliye (4.58 %).

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4.3.3 Choice of Least Desired Characters

10 participants reported they loved all the characters in their favorite serial and hence did not answer the remaining questions and 10 participants reported they did not remember the name of the character they least desired. Among the remaining 223 participants, 115 different least desired serial characters were named.

The least desired characters were male in 61.8 % and female in 38.2 % of the cases. 46.1% of the male respondents named female characters and 53.9% named male characters as their least desired serial characters. The least desired characters of female respondents were male in 53.9 % and female in 46.1 % of the cases.

The most commonly mentioned least desirable character was Nizamettin Güvenç from Kurtlar Vadisi (6.73%) followed by Burhan Altıntop from Avrupa Yakası (5.83%) and Sinan Karahan from Aliye (4.93%).

4.3.4 Regression Analyses Predicting the Dimensions of Parasocial Interaction

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how well the sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction are predicted by demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the favorite serial character. The predictors of the sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction were analyzed separately and hence three

separate multiple regression analyses were conducted: 1. For companionship, 2. For empathic involvement and 3. For interest. In all of these analyses, the variables were entered in two blocks. Control variables (i.e., gender and age) were introduced on the first step, and they were hierarchically entered into the equation. Thus, among control variables only those having significant association with the criterion variable entered into the regression equation. Second step variables constituted of perceived attributes of the favorite serial character (i.e., positive social behavior, strength, physical attractiveness, and humor), these variables were forced to enter into the regression equation. 7 participants were excluded from the sample since the majority of their scales were left empty, leaving 241 cases for regression analyses. The means and standard deviations of criterion variables and the predictor variables that were used in the two blocks are presented in Table 4.2.1. The Pearson product-moment correlations among the predictor and the criterion variables are presented in Table 4.2.2. As can be seen from Table 4.2.2, most predictor variables were found to be significantly correlated with the criterion measures.

Table 4.2.1 The Means and Standard Deviations of the Criterion and Predictor Variables

Criterion Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Companionship	2.25	0.91
Empathic Involvement	3.01	0.93
Interest	3.26	0.95
Predictor Variables		
(Block 1)		
Age	20.36	1.84
Gender	1.36	0.48
(Block 2)		
Positive Social Behavior	3.9	0.88
Strength	3.99	0.87
Physical Attractiveness	3.45	1.13
Humor	3.44	1.14

Table 4.2.2 Correlations among the Predictor and Criterion Variables

	Gender	Age	Positive Social Behavior	Strength	Physical Attractiveness	Humor	Companionship	Empathic Involvement	Interest
Gender (1=Female, 2=Male)		.097	-.166**	-.032	-.243**	-.132*	.004	-.268	-.066
Age			.029	.090	-.062	-.103	-.178**	-.160*	-.167**
Positive Social Behavior				.666**	.381**	-.031	.373**	.535**	.292**
Strength					.463**	-.240**	.302**	.454**	.335**
Physical Attractiveness						-.254**	.144*	.483**	.277**
Humor							.190**	.096	.222**
Companionship								.620**	.570**
Empathic Involvement									.595**
Interest									

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

4.3.4.1 Predictors of Companionship Dimension

To evaluate how well companionship dimension is predicted by demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the serial character, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The analysis showed that age (first block) (R^2 = .032, F (1,239) = 7.83, p < .01) and the perceived attributes of the character (second block) (R^2 = .199, F Change (4,235) = 15.16, p < .001) both contributed significantly to the prediction of companionship.

According to the results in the final model, age (β = -.180, t = -3.097, p < .01) was found to be a significant negative predictor of companionship. When each single variable in the second block was considered, the contributions of positive social behavior (β = .246, t = 3.12, p < .01), strength (β = .209, t = 2.51, p < .05) and humor (β = .229, t = 3.73, p < .001) were significant. 19 % of the variances in companionship were explained by the perceived attributes of the character, and using all the factors in the model, 23 % of the variances in companionship dimension were explained. The standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2, R^2 Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.3.1.

Table 4.3.1 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Companionship

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	β	t
	1	.032	.032	7.826**		
	2	.230	.199	15.163***		
Age					-.180	-3.097**
Positive Social Behavior					.246	3.123**
Strength					.209	2.512*
Physical Attractiveness					.000	.007
Humor					.229	3.732***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

4.3.4.2 Predictors of Empathic Involvement Dimension

To evaluate how well empathic involvement dimension is predicted by demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the serial character, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The analysis showed that both demographic variables (first block) (R^2 = .090, F (2,238) = 11.8, p < .001) and the perceived attributes of the character (second block) (R^2 = .36, F Change (4,234) = 38.73, p < .001) both contributed significantly to the prediction of empathic involvement.

According to the results in the final model, age (β = -.135, t = -2.74, p < .01) was found to be a significant negative predictor of empathic involvement. When each single variable in the second block was considered, the contributions of positive

social behavior (β = .300, t = 4.47, p < .001), strength (β = .167, t = 2.35, p < .05), physical attractiveness (β = .309, t = 5.28, p < .001) and humor (β = .197, t = 3.75, p < .001) were significant. 36 % of the variances in empathic involvement were explained by the perceived attributes of the character, and using all the factors in the model, 45 % of the variances in empathic involvement were explained. The standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2, R^2 Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.3.2.

Table 4.3.2 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Empathic Involvement

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	β	t
	1	.090	.090	11.79***		
	2	.453	.362	38.735***		
Age					-.135	-2.736**
Positive Social Behavior					.300	4.469***
Strength					.167	2.351*
Physical Attractiveness					.309	5.282***
Humor					.197	3.749***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

4.3.4.3 Predictors of Interest Dimension

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well the demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the favorite serial character predicted the interest dimension. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The

analysis showed that, both age (first block) ($\underline{R}^2$ = .028, $\underline{F}$ (1,239) = 6.83, $\underline{p}$ < .01) and the perceived attributes of the character (second block) ($\underline{R}^2$ = .24, $\underline{F\ Change}$ (4,235) = 19.29, $\underline{p}$ < .001) contributed significantly to the prediction of interest dimension.

According to the results in the final model, age (β = -.150, t = -2.64, p < .01) was found to be a significant negative predictor of interest. When each single variable in the second block was considered, the contributions of humor (β = .336, t = 5.61, p < .001), strength (β = .331, t = 4.07, p < .001) and physical attractiveness (β = .195, t = 2.99, p < .01) were significant. The perceived attributes of the character explained 24 % of the changes in interest and using all the factors in the model, 27 % of the variances in interest dimension were explained. The standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2, R^2 Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.3.3.

Table 4.3.3 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Interest

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	Total F Change	β	t
	1	.028	.028	6.830**		
	2	.268	.240	19.285***		
Age					-.150	-2.642**
Positive Social Behavior					.013	.167
Strength					.331	4.074***
Physical Attractiveness					.195	2.997**
Humor					.336	5.612***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

4.3.5 Regression Analyses Predicting the Dimensions of Negative Parasocial Interaction

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how well the sub-dimensions of negative parasocial interaction are predicted by demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the least desired serial character. The predictors of the sub-dimensions of negative parasocial interaction were analyzed separately and hence four separate multiple regression analyses were conducted: 1. For boredom, 2. For anger, 3. For disturbance and 4. For amazement. In all of these analyses, the variables were entered in two blocks. Control variables (i.e., gender and age) were introduced on the first step, and they were hierarchically entered into the equation. Thus, among control variables only those having significant association with the criterion variable entered into the regression equation. Second step variables constituted of perceived attributes of the least desired serial character (i.e., negative social behavior, weakness, and physical repulsiveness), these variables were forced to enter into the regression equation.10 participants were excluded from the analysis for not having indicated a character they disliked in their favorite serial, leaving 231 cases for analysis. The means and standard deviations of criterion variables and the predictor variables that were used in the two blocks are presented in Table 4.4.1. The Pearson product-moment correlations among the predictor and the criterion variables are presented in Table 4.4.2. As can be seen from Table 4.4.2, most predictor variables were found to be significantly correlated with the criterion measures.

Table 4.4.1 The Means and Standard Deviations of the Criterion and Predictor Variables

Criterion Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Boredom	2.52	1.04
Anger	2.70	0.99
Disturbance	3.47	0.99
Amazement	3.44	1.05
Predictor Variables		
(Block 1)		
Age	20.34	1.83
Gender	1.36	0.48
(Block 2)		
Negative Social Behavior	3.49	1.09
Weakness	2.58	1.03
Physical Repulsiveness	3.28	1.13

Table 4.4.2 Correlations among the Predictor and Criterion Variables

	Gender	Age	Boredom	Anger	Disturbance	Amazement	Negative Social Behavior	Weakness	Physical Repulsiveness
Gender (1=Female, 2=Male)		.097	.129*	.071	-.004	-.204**	-.081	.098	-.038
Age			-.127	-.037	-.065	.029	.071	-.078	-.023
Boredom				.289**	.540**	.318**	-.063	.432**	.376**
Anger					.453**	.317**	.540**	.146*	.272**
Disturbance						.486**	.331**	.247**	.447**
Amazement							.209**	.148*	.312**
Negative Social Behavior								.077	.277**
Weakness									.311**
Physical Repulsiveness									

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

4.3.5.1 Predictors of Boredom Dimension

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how well the demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the least desirable character predicted the boredom dimension. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The analysis showed that both the demographic variables (first block) ($R^2 =$ .038, F (2,229) = 4.49, $p < .05$), and the perceived attributes of the character (second block) ($R^2 = .26$, F Change (3,226) = 28.03, $p < .001$) contributed significantly to the prediction of boredom.

According to the results in the final model, only the contribution of the variables in the second block was found to be significant. When each single variable in the second block was considered, the contributions of physical repulsiveness ($\beta =$ .321, t = 5.28, p < .001) and weakness ($\beta = .327$, t = 5.51, p < .001) were found to be significant. Negative social behavior was found to be a significant negative predictor of boredom dimension ($\beta = -.162$, t = -2.77, p < .01). 26% of the variances in boredom dimension were explained by the perceived attributes of the character and using all the factors in the model, 29 % of the variances in boredom dimension were explained. The standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2, R^2 Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.5.1.

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Table 4.5.1 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Boredom

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	β	t
	1	.038	.038	4.49*		
	2	.299	.261	28.028***		
Physical Repulsiveness					.321	5.276***
Negative Social Behavior					-.162	-2.772**
Weakness					.327	5.510***

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

4.3.5.2 Predictors of Anger Dimension

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how well the demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the least desirable character predicted the anger dimension. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The analysis showed that, only the perceived attributes of the character (second block) (R^2 = .313, F Change (3,228) = 34.58, p < .001) contributed significantly to the prediction of anger dimension.

When each single variable in the second block was considered, only negative social behavior (β = .504, t = 8.82, p < .001) was found to be a significant predictor of anger. 31 % of the variances in anger dimension were explained by the perceived attributes of the character. The standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2, R^2 Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.5.2.

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Table 4.5.2 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Anger

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	β	t
	1	-	-	-		
	2	.313	.313	34.577***		
Physical Repulsiveness					.110	1.840
Negative Social Behavior					.504	8.819***
Weakness					.072	1.254

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

4.3.5.3 Predictors of Disturbance Dimension

Stepwise regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how well the demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the least desirable character predicted disturbance dimension. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The analysis showed that, only the perceived attributes of the character (second block) (R^2 = .259, F Change (3,228) = 26.58, p < .001) contributed significantly to the prediction of disturbance.

When each single variable in the second block was considered, the contributions of physical repulsiveness (β = .346, t = 5.57, p < .001), negative social behavior (β = .225, t = 3.8, p < .001) and weakness (β = .121, t = 2.02, p < .05) were found to be significant. 25 % of the variances in disturbance dimension were predicted by perceived attributes of the least desirable character. The standardized

regression coefficients (β), R², R² Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.5.3.

Table 4.5.3 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Disturbance

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	β	t
	1	-	-	-		
	2	.259	.259	26.583***		
Physical Repulsiveness					.346	5.565***
Negative Social Behavior					.225	3.801***
Weakness					.121	2.023*

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

4.3.5.4 Predictors of Amazement Dimension

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate how well the demographic variables and the perceived attributes of the least desirable character predicted amazement dimension. The demographic variables were entered in the first block and the perceived attributes of the character were entered in the second block. The analysis showed that, both gender (block 1) (R^2 = .043, F (1,230) = 10.37, p < .01) and the perceived attributes of the character (second block) (R^2 = .15, F Change (3,227) = 9.98, p < .001) contributed significantly to the prediction of amazement dimension.

According to the results in the final model, gender (β = -.197, t = -3.187, p < .01) was found to be a significant negative predictor of amazement, indicating that

level of amazement was higher for female participants. When each single variable in the second block was considered, only the contribution of physical repulsiveness (β = .246, t = 3.7, p < .001) was found to be significant. The perceived attributes of the character explained 11 % of the changes in amazement and using all the factors in the model, 15 % of the variances in this dimension were explained. The standardized regression coefficients (β), R^2, R^2 Change, F Change and t values of the last model in the analysis are presented in Table 4.5.4.

Table 4.5.4 Regression Analysis: Significant Predictors of Amazement

Variables	Block	R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	β	t
	1	.043	.043	10.369**		
	2	.155	.111	9.997***		
Gender					-.197	-3.187
Physical Repulsiveness					.246	3.691**
Negative Social Behavior					.119	1.862
Weakness					.082	1.265

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

One of the major aims of the present study was to explore the concept of parasocial interaction by focusing on the characteristics of the performer. Consistent with this aim, it has been demonstrated that perceived attributes of the characters portrayed in TV serials were significant predictors of parasocial interaction both with liked and disliked figures. Further, by including different dimensions of the concepts, parasocial and negative parasocial interaction, the study reached at more detailed and some very interesting findings.

In the first part of the study, dimensions of parasocial interaction with favorite characters portrayed in TV serials were predicted by several attributes of the figures which were determined depending on the results of the second pilot study. These attributes were positive social behavior, physical attractiveness, strength and humor. Prior to analysis, the items of the parasocial interaction scale were subjected to principal components factor analysis and three factors were extracted. These factors were found to be meaningful and interpretable dimensions of parasocial interaction (companionship, empathy and interest) that were mentioned in previous research as primary components of parasocial involvement (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Levy, 1979, Perse, Rubin & Powell, 1985; Sood & Rogers, 2000). The interplay between performer characteristics and the different dimensions of

parasocial interaction was analyzed separately and the importance of different attributes of the figures varied significantly among these dimensions.

The companionship dimension mainly included seeing the serial character almost like a friend and enjoying his/her company. The results indicated that the physical attractiveness of the figure was unrelated with this dimension; viewers enjoyed the company of and felt closer to characters who had a sense of humor, who were strong and who were nice to others. Even though media producers try to impose physical attractiveness as a pre-qualification to take a role on the screen, the results indicate that this factor is irrelevant on the fondness of the TV serial viewer, especially within the companionship dimension. These results are also consistent with previous findings that suggest social attraction to be a more important concept in the development of parasocial relationships rather than physical attraction (Caughey, 1984; Rubin & McHugh, 1987).

The interest dimension included the desire to meet the character in person and the wish to see the figure as soon as possible either in the next episode or in a newspaper, magazine and another TV program. The results of regression analysis showed that viewers were more interested in seeing characters whom they perceived as more humorous, stronger and more physically attractive. The contribution of positive social behaviors of the figure in predicting interest dimension was not found to be significant. While viewers enjoyed the company of characters who are socially desirable during periods of consumption, they were not much interested in following or seeing the figure via different channels. One explanation for this finding may be that, socially desirable characters are so highly

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predictable that, the viewers do not feel the need to follow them in each and every domain. Further, when the qualities included in positive social behavior are considered (good-willed, altruistic, emotional, helpful, etc.), being exposed to such figures may result in boredom after a point, especially in a sample of university students. As Berger & Calabrese (1975) suggest, in interpersonal relationships, increased amount of communication results in increased certainty about the other which may be rewarding up to a point, but then may result in boredom (cited in Rubin & McHugh, 1987).

The empathic involvement dimension consisted of seeing the character as a natural and down-to-earth person, evaluating him/her personally and emotionally responding to the events that occur in the character's life. Actually, this dimension involves personification of the serial character and then getting involved almost in a social interaction with the person created. Among all dimensions of PSI that were covered in the present study, the role of performer characteristics had most priority in predicting empathic involvement and all four attributes of the favorite serial character contributed significantly to the prediction of this dimension. Horton & Wohl (1956) emphasize that since parasocial relationships are inevitably one-sided and not "susceptible of mutual development" (p.215), all the burden of creating a relationship and controlling it is thrown on the performer. The results suggest that, this suggestion is especially true for empathic involvement dimension since 36 % of the variances in this dimension were explained only by the characteristics of the performer.

The contribution of age was found to be significant in predicting all sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction within an age range of 17-26. The results indicated that, the level of interaction with a serial character decreased as the age of the participants increased. The contribution of age and its effects on viewers' level of parasocial interaction should be further explored in future research in a larger sample including different age groups.

The contribution of humor was also found to be significant in predicting all sub-dimensions of parasocial interaction. Humor was found to be unrelated with children's level of parasocial interaction (Hoffner, 1996) and young adults' level of wishful identification with media figures in previous research. The contribution of humor in predicting young adults' level of interaction may be related to the viewing motivations and intentions of individuals. The reasons why adults watch television should obviously be different from children, however, the viewing motivations of participants were not controlled for in this study. Futher research may also examine the interplay between viewing intentions and the role of different attributes of the performers.

The first part of the study reveals evidence concerning the importance of perceived attributes of the serial characters in predicting different dimensions of parasocial interaction. Moreover, the study presents a measure in Turkish for further research in this topic. Although more work has to be done for demonstrating the validity of the scale, the reliability of the measure was demonstrated in two different samples with alpha values of .93 and .84

respectively. Furthermore, the items of the scale loaded on three factors which were meaningful and interpretable dimensions of parasocial interaction as suggested by previous research, indicating construct validity. The observed associations between the Turkish version of the scale and concepts that were found to be related with parasocial interaction in previous research show potential for future validity testing studies. Hence, the presentation of a promising measure in Turkish for parasocial interaction may be seen as a contribution of this study for further research on this topic.

The second part of the study aimed to predict viewers' level of interaction with disliked characters portrayed in TV serials from perceived attributes of the figures which were again determined depending on the results of the second pilot study. These attributes were negative social behavior, physical repulsiveness and weakness. Above all, the major goal of the second part of the study was to identify the dimensions of parasocial interaction with characters that are not desired by audience members. The items of the NPSI scale, that was constructed by the author depending on self-reports of the participants, were subjected to principal components factor analysis. Four meaningful and interpretable factors were extracted among the 23 items of the scale and they were named accordingly.

The boredom dimension mainly included loss of interest in the program content on part of the viewers. This dimension consisted of seeing the character irrelevant in the serial and the desire to avoid the character while still being exposed to the program (wanting the scenes of that character to end as soon as possible, taking

part in distracting actions, and shifting attention to something else). The participants reported greater levels of boredom in response to the characters whom they perceived to be weak and unattractive, parallel to their feelings of greater interest in physically attractive and strong figures. However, it was also found that, feelings of boredom were negatively predicted by the anti-social traits of the figure. In other words, while the portrayals of weak and unattractive characters resulted in feelings of boredom and loss of involvement, these feelings were reduced by the presence of bad-willed, merciless and aggressive figures and were replaced with anger toward the figure.

The anger dimension consisted of talking to the scene while being exposed to the disliked character, feeling sorry whenever s/he succeeds in and gets away with what s/he did, and even the desire to see her/him pay for what s/he did to others. Hence, among all dimensions of negative parasocial interaction suggested in the present study, this dimension constitutes higher levels of audience activity compared to others. Not surprisingly, this dimension was significantly predicted by the negative social behavior of the character. This finding may have important implications for studies focusing on the possible negative effects of media exposure. Most media theories suggest that, in order for media contents to have any effect, the viewers should first at least like the character and be actively involved in the content, rather than being passive observers (Levy & Windahl, 1984, Perse, 1990). The activity caused by portrayals of anti-social figures is in the form of anger and these figures may still have negative effects on the spectators, especially when children and adolescents are concerned. Hence, the

possible negative effects of the "bad" figures as role models may be explored in future studies.

One another interesting finding was the contribution of gender to the prediction of amazement dimension. Although, participants from both genders were almost equally annoyed by the presence of anti-social figures, male participants were not much surprised by the way the character acts compared to females. This finding may also suggest some form of viewer empathy on part of male participants which also can have important implications for media effects studies. It was also interesting that the amazement dimension was predicted only by the physical repulsiveness of the character. The disliked characters' behavior received surprise reactions only when the character was perceived as unattractive. It may be argued that, compared to the good characters, the bad characters are portrayed as being less attractive and the physical repulsiveness of the characters may have suppressed their other qualities.

Finally, the disturbance dimension included feeling uncomfortable while watching or even listening to the character and all three perceived attributes of the character contributed significantly to the prediction of this dimension. Further research may examine the duration of these feelings and whether these feelings generalize to other contexts.

Consistent with previous studies that see social and parasocial interaction as extensions of each other, the present study has demonstrated that sociotropic

orientation was significantly related to the level of interaction experienced by the viewers. In this sense, this study adds to the number of studies that point to the similarities between social and mediated relationships. In actual interpersonal relationships, individuals may sometimes find themselves in unavoidable situations that they have to spend time with people they actively dislike. Hence feelings of anger, disturbance, boredom or amazement are also important components of interpersonal relationships as well as positive emotions, and the same is expected to be true for mediated relationships. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore the thoughts and feelings of the viewers in response to the disliked characters as well. Consistent with this aim, the study presents a newly-developed measure for the assessment of interaction with least desirable figures in TV serials. Although the scale was found to be reliable (α = .90), the validity of the scale should be explored in future research and a clearer conceptualization has to be made. Whether boredom can be regarded as a component of negative parasocial interaction should also be further examined since it involves distraction and loss of interest on part of the viewer rather than active participation in the media content.

In terms of the choices of favorite and least desired characters named by both male and female participants, the majority of the liked characters were male, and the majority of the disliked characters were female. Future research may explore the differences between how male and female characters are portrayed in TV serials. The importance of perceived attributes of the character in predicting parasocial interaction may also vary within male and female participants rating

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male and female performers. Future research may also examine gender differences in viewers' perceptions of both male and female characters separately in a larger sample, which could not be examined in the present study due to the small sample size.

To sum up, TV serials have an obvious significant status in Turkish television and so does the characters portrayed in these serials, either liked or disliked. The present study successfully explored the relationship between the perceived attributes of the serial characters and the positive or negative reactions toward them. Further, the attributes of the liked and disliked characters that were used in the present study were selected depending on the self-reports of Turkish university students who have participated in the pilot study. In this sense, these adjectives are specific to Turkish population and they provide us with valuable information reflecting what is considered desirable and what is not within a sample of Turkish young adults. Finally, while demonstrating the relationship between perceived attributes of one's favorite character and parasocial interaction, this study may also be regarded as an introduction to exploring the other side of the picture; the significance of the disliked figures and the reactions toward them.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Parasocial Interaction Scale

Lütfen aşağıdaki cümleleri en sevdiğiniz karakteri düşünerek okuyunuz ve bu ifadelere ne kadar katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendiriniz:

1 - Hiç katılmıyorum
2 - Katılmıyorum
3 - Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum
4 - Katılıyorum
5 - Tamamen katılıyorum

1. Dizideki en sevdiğim karakter bir hata yaptığında veya başından olumsuz olaylar geçtiğinde onun adına üzülüyorum.**
2. Düşüncelerimi onun söyledikleri ile karşılaştırmaktan hoşlanıyorum.*
3. Dizideki en sevdiğim karakter sanki arkadaşlarımlaymışım gibi kendimi rahat hissetmemi sağlıyor. **
4. Onu doğal, ayakları yere basan bir kişi olarak görüyorum.**
5. En sevdiğim karakterin sesini duymak hoşuma gidiyor.*
6. Dizinin gösterildiği zamanlarda en sevdiğim karakter bana adeta can yoldaşı oluyor.*
7. Onu görmek için bir sonraki bölümü iple çekiyorum.**
8. Onunla şahsen tanışmak isterdim.**
9. Onu sanki eski bir arkadaşımmış gibi iyi tanıyorum.*
10. Onu çekici buluyorum.**
11. Bir gazetede veya dergide onunla ilgili bir haber çıksa okurum.**
12. Dizideki en sevdiğim karakter başka bir televizyon programına çıksa o programı seyrederim.**
13. Diziyi izlerken bazen onun yaptıkları veya söyledikleri üzerine sesli olarak yorum yapıyorum.*
14. En sevdiğim karakter bazı kararlar vermemde bana yardımcı olup yol gösteriyor.*

* Items from the scale developed by Rubin, Perse & Powell (1985).
* *Items from the scale developed by Rubin & Perse (1987).

APPENDIX B

Perceived Attributes of the Favorite Character

Dizideki en sevdiğiniz karakteri aşağıdaki özellikler üzerinden değerlendiriniz ve bu özelliklerin onu ne kadar yansıttığını beş üzerinden puanlayınız.

(1: Hiç yansıtmıyor; 5: Tamamen yansıtıyor)

1.	Güzel / Yakışıklı	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Karizmatik	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Çekici	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Zeki	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Düşünceli	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Güçlü	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Cesur	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Mücadeleci	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Başarılı	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Kararlı	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Yardımsever	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Fedakâr	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Sevimli	1	2	3	4	5
14.	İyi kalpli	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Sorumluluk sahibi	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Duygusal	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Dürüst	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Açık sözlü	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Alçak gönüllü	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Komik	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Esprili	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Diğer: _____	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

The Negative Parasocial Interaction Scale

Lütfen aşağıdaki cümleleri dizideki en sevmediğiniz karakteri düşünerek okuyunuz ve bu ifadelere ne kadar katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendiriniz:

1 - Hiç katılmıyorum
2 - Katılmıyorum
3 - Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum
4 - Katılıyorum
5 - Tamamen katılıyorum

1. Onu dizide gereksiz buluyorum.
2. Yaptıklarına anlam veremiyorum.
3. Yaptıkları ve söyledikleri karşısında hayrete düşüyorum.
4. Ben onun yerinde olsaydım öyle davranmazdım diye düşünüyorum.
5. Onun gibi olmayı istemem.
6. Onun gibi bir insanla gerçek hayatta karşılaşmak istemem.*
7. Onun sesini duymaktan hoşlanmıyorum.*
8. Onu izlerken rahatsız oluyorum.
9. Onu görmek beni sinirlendiriyor.
10. Bazen ona zarar vermek istediğim oluyor.
11. Onun olduğu sahnelerin hemen bitmesini istiyorum.
12. Onun diziden ayrılmasını istiyorum.
13. Yaptıkları yanına kar kaldığında kızıyorum.
14. Başarılı olması beni üzüyor.
15. İyi durumda olmasını istemem.
16. Bir gün yaptıklarının kendi başına geleceğine inanıyorum.
17. Yaptıklarının cezasını çektiğini görmek istiyorum.
18. Onun olduğu sahneleri izlerken sıkılıyorum.
19. Onu yapay buluyorum. *
20. Onun olduğu sahnelerde kanal değiştirmek istiyorum.
21. Onun olduğu sahnelerde farklı şeylerle ilgileniyorum ya da başka bir şey düşünüyorum.
22. Onun olduğu sahneleri izlerken bazen kendi kendime veya yanımdakilere söyleniyorum. *
23. Farklı bir programda da olsa onu görmek istemem.

* Items from the parasocial interaction scale that were transformed into their opposites.

APPENDIX D

Perceived Attributes of the Least Desired Character

Dizideki en sevmediğiniz karakteri aşağıdaki özellikler üzerinden değerlendiriniz
ve bu özelliklerin onu ne kadar yansıttığını beş üzerinden puanlayınız.

(1: Hiç yansıtmıyor; 5: Tamamen yansıtıyor)

1.	Çirkin	1	2	3	4	5
2.	İtici	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Sevimsiz	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Aptal	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Kurnaz	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Beceriksiz	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Başarısız	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Güçsüz	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Sorumsuz	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Bencil	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Acımasız	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Duygusuz	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Kötü kalpli	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Yalancı	1	2	3	4	5
15.	İkiyüzlü	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Sinsi	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Nankör	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Kıskanç	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Agresif	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Diğer: _____	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E

The Parasocial Break-up Scale

Dizideki en sevdiğiniz karakterin diziden ayrıldığını / ayrılacağını öğrenseniz ne hissederdiniz? Lütfen aşağıdaki cümlelere ne kadar katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendiriniz:

1 - Hiç katılmıyorum
2 - Katılmıyorum
3 - Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum
4 - Katılıyorum
5 - Tamamen katılıyorum

1. Üzülürdüm
2. Sinirlenirdim
3. Hayal kırıklığına uğrardım
4. Kendimi yalnız hissederdim
5. Onu özlerdim
6. Kendimi yakın bir arkadaşımı kaybetmiş gibi hissederdim
7. O diziyi seyretmenin benim için pek bir heyecanı / anlamı kalmazdı
8. Dizinin tekrar bölümlerini seyrederdim
9. Bu durumu değiştirmek için birşeyler yapmaya çalışırdım
    (kanalı aramak, mail atmak gibi)
10. Dizideki en sevdiğim karakterin yer aldığı başka programları seyrederdim.
11. Onunla ilgili bilgiyi farklı kaynaklardan arardım
    (gazete, internet ve benzeri)

12. Onunla farklı yollardan karşılaşmaya /tanışmaya çalışırdım
13. Kendime sevecek başka bir karakter bulurdum.*

* Reversed item.

APPENDIX F

Cognitive & Behavioral Involvement Scale

Diziyi seyretmekte olduğunuz zamanlar dışında aşağıda belirtilen davranışları ne sıklıkta yaparsınız? Lütfen size en uygun seçeneği daire içine alınız.

Cevaplarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendiriniz:

1- Hiç yapmam
2- Nadiren yaparım
3- Bazen yaparım
4- Sık yaparım
5- Çok sık yaparım

1. Dizide geçen hikaye ve olanlar üzerine düşünmek*
2. Dizide gördüklerimi ve duyduklarımı aklımdan geçirmek*
3. Gelecek bölümde ne olacağı hakkında tahmin yürütmek*
4. Dizideki karakterler hakkında düşünmek*
5. Etrafımdakilerle dizide olan olaylar hakkında konuşmak**
6. Etrafımdakilerle dizideki karakterler hakkında konuşmak**
7. Gelecek bölümde ne olacağı hakkında tahmin yürütmek için başkalarıyla konuşmak**

* Items used to assess cognitive involvement.
** Items used to assess behavioral involvement.

Items from the Sociotropy Scale

Aşağıdaki sorular sizi tanımaya ve çevrenizdekilerle ilişkilerinizi anlamaya yöneliktir. Bu soruların "doğru" veya "yanlış" cevapları yoktur. Lütfen aşağıdaki cümleleri dikkatlice okuyunuz ve size en uygun seçeneği daire içine alınız.

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendiriniz:

1 - Hiç katılmıyorum
2 - Katılmıyorum
3 - Ne katılıyorum ne katılmıyorum
4 - Katılıyorum
5 - Tamamen katılıyorum

1. Yaşadığım olayları başka insanlarla paylaştığımda o olaylar bana daha da güzel gelir.

2. Hafta sonlarında başkaları ile olacağım bir etkinlik planlamazsam kendimi kötü hissederim.

3. Hayatımdaki bir insanın bana gerçekten ilgi duyduğunu hissetmezsem yaptığım işlerden zevk almam.

4. İlk defa gideceğim bir yeri tek başıma ziyaret etmek benim için eğlenceli olmaz.

5. Sevdiğim insanlardan ayrı olmak benim için zordur.

6. Geceleri evde tek başıma kaldığımda kendimi yalnız hissederim.

7. Sık sık ailemi ya da arkadaşlarımı düşündüğümü fark ederim.

8. Boş zamanlarımı diğer insanlarla birlikte geçirmekten hoşlanırım

9. Diğerleri tarafından beğenilip sevilmek ve onaylanmak benim için önemlidir.

10. Diğer insanlarla yakın ilişkiler kurduğumda kendimi emniyette hissederim.

11. Başıma tatsız bir olay gelirse başvuracağım bir yakınımın olduğundan emin olmak isterim.

12. Yaşlanmanın en kötü yanı yalnız kalmaktır.

13. Sevdiğim bir insanın öleceğini düşünerek endişelenirim.