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Training function of Media: A research about university  
radios in Turkey

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**Abstract**

Today, radios which began gradually to lose importance, one of the most important function is public service broadcasting. Public broadcasting, public service point of view, one of the most important elements is education. The purpose of the study, university radios in Turkey, as a result of the investigations in accordance with program content, radios adequately perform the function of the implementations of education will be put forward.

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**1. Introduction**

The human being is in need of education as a requirement of his nature. The education plays an effective role in the transmission of beliefs and values as well as modes of behaviours of adult generations into new generations related thereto. It teaches the individuals the art of living, namely his beliefs and modes of behaviours, within the society. The education begins within family and in the meantime, continues at school and social environment.

At our current period, all sorts of information, views and opinions are transmitted to large group of people through the media covering the visual, oral and printed media (press) communication, used for the description of mass media as a whole, namely, radio, television, books, magazines, cinema and theatres

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and so on. The media offers the modes of various feelings and behaviours to the large group of people with rich alternatives and by doing so, it also fulfils the educational function in the meantime.

The radio playing an effective role among the mass media has entered in the life of societies for a period of time exceeding fifty years and it turns out to be a means trying to set up the connection with the universe beyond it through by way of sound. Individuals are taken out of their worlds through the radio and are able to experience what have been happening throughout the world either instantly or after a short period of time. The aim of the research will be to evaluate the role of the program contents of the universities, engaged in radio broadcasting in Turkey, within the educational process by taking the effective role of the media in the socialization and education into consideration. Relevant field scanning has been carried out is made as a research method and following this, university radios are determined and their program contents evaluated accordingly. In the evaluation of findings and conclusion part, however, new idea pertaining to the subject matter thereof is discussed and relevant assessments are made on the proposal of an effective program model.

## 2. Public Service Broadcasting

The broadcasting is a public activity! This is because the frequencies are the property of the society. The “Public Service broadcasting” concept starting from this reality is based on the principle pertaining to the messages, transmitted by these frequencies, for the provision of service to everybody at different socio-economical level, raising their standards of living and getting information and expressing themselves freely (Aziz, 2009). Public service broadcastings are the broadcastings of autonomous and impartial institutions or establishments that are established by the state in accordance with applicable laws and have a public legal entity and of which financial sources are provided by public income. The fundamental principles of these broadcastings are as follows: to provide news and information, transfer of education and culture, entertainment, and respect to plurality in ideologies. Notwithstanding that private broadcastings take up these kinds of functions, the entertainment in this broadcasting understanding is transformed into magazine and constitute two third of the programs. Since the public broadcasting is designed for the entire population of country, the programs take place predominantly for enlightenment of the viewers on social, economical and political matters and especially in interactive communication, education and cultural services. The collection of any advertisement (commercial) does not take place in the programs of an institution that is under the administration of the state. The public service broadcasting cannot be in the service of any person/party, organization and ideology (<http://www.iletisimarastirma.org/haberler/48-kamu-hzmet-yayincilii.html>, 15.04.2012).

According to the social responsibility theory dwelling upon the functions of the fact that the mass media have responsibility in the social lives of individuals, it is necessary to grant right to everybody, who want to reveal an important matter, to express their opinions. As a requirement of the theory, the mass media are obliged to constitute principles such as authenticity, definiteness, objectivity, equability and so on and professional criteria that will provide the functionality of them while they carry out duties that they may have responsibility towards the society. It is also necessary to attain the principles such as giving opportunity to the revelation of opinions of different sections compatible with the principles of plurality-participation, permitting the same to give answer within this framework and so on, as a mission. It is also necessary for the media to keep the educational function in the forefront and provide the transmission of culture and art. Along all these, they must not give coverage to any broadcastings that may encourage the involvement in crime and violence, and humiliate any individuals and groups (Tüfekçioğlu, 1997: 63-64).

The Democratic participation approach concentrating on the requirements, interests and wishes of active receivers are mostly seen in liberal societies. It refuses the media under the control or guidance of

the state, standardization, central structuring, theory supporting the interaction and reach to the entire society and location of plurality. According to the theory defending the fact that the groups and local communities should create their own media, the mass media has to make a viewer-focused broadcasting (Tüfekçioğlu, 1997: 71-74).

Mr. Özden, who emphasizes the importance of a public in a democratic and participative society, defends the fact that it is necessary to grant a share to the section, which does not have financial capacities or opportunities within the society to set up a radio and television, from the field of the public broadcasting under the inspection and supervision of the state. It is a necessity in the broadcasting model, suggested by Özden, to transmit the problems of the institution that is engaged in the public broadcasting, create an atmosphere for discussion and vest a right of broadcasting to different sections of the society (Cankaya, 2003: 338).

From the point of view of a general aspect, the public institutions providing services are established and administered (managed) as organizations that may be autonomous and independent from the state (central authority). The state that especially takes up the transmission section of broadcasting service does not have to go beyond the boundaries of its duty of inspection in the determination of budget and general policies of the institution and appointments, made by the broadcasting organization (Pekman, 1997: 15).

### **3. Radio Broadcasting on the Basis of Mass Media as a Field of Application of University**

While the 21<sup>st</sup> century witness innovations in revolutionary nature in the field of the mass media, the grounding of the radio in these mass media is based on the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The works pertaining to the radio began in advance of television and radio has been the first electronic means offering services for public (Aziz, 2006: 5). The radio together with its participation in the social life in 1920s contained a much stronger competence of persuasion in its own structure than those of mass media available in advance of that era.

Following the launch of first regular radio broadcastings in 1920 in the USA and in 1922, however, in Europe, “it was decided in our country just a short while after as long as 4 years to launch radio broadcastings in the first years of the foundation of the Turkish Republic” (Aziz, 2008: 86) and the first radio broadcasting was initiated in 1927 in Istanbul. (Cankaya, 1997: 2).

#### *3.1. Radio Broadcasting at Universities*

The educational structures of the universities ranking among the most important institutions within the transformation process to the information society are described in Article 5 and the subparagraph no. d of the Higher Education Law no. 2547, entered in force in 1981, saying “The education-teaching plans and programs shall be prepared and permanently developed in short and long term according to scientific and technological principles, and requirements of the country and local areas” (<http://www.yok.gov.tr/content/view/435/>, 08.05.2012). In this context, the universities are expected to make contribution to the social structure and way of living as a requirement of their main principles, objectives, structuring and activities. As a consequence, it is necessary for the universities to take up and support the functions with the understanding of social responsibility of being an educational institution taking place within the scope of public service understanding such as setting up ties and communication with regional environment and society where they are located, not only for its students. The development of the publication structure of the university beyond fundamental concerns such as rating, listener increase of commercial publication gives opportunity to the approaches of the public service model.

It is seen that the first university radios in our country have gone back to 1946 when the matter is taken into consideration in respect of radio broadcasting. Pursuant to Article 2 of the Wireless Law and based

on the principle of ability to engage in radio broadcasting by the educational institutions, the Istanbul Technical University Radio was established in 1946, Istanbul technical School radio in 1950 and Radio of the Faculty of Science of the Istanbul University, however, in 1951 and they have taken place among the first university radios in Turkey. The university radios have the potential of some sorts of values be acquired by its listeners that are the important natures of the public service broadcasting such as pluralism, diversity, critical view and so on by means of alternative broadcasting understanding that they developed within the scope of localization. (Saran&Tunç, 2004:650).

The university radios were regarded as illegal pirate radios in Turkey at the beginning as it used to be in other countries as well and then, the university radios were given permission through relevant legal arrangements, made in subsequent periods (Özer, 2006:73). The legal arrangement that allowed the universities in Turkey to have and use the mass media opened the door to allocate frequencies and free of charge channels by the Law no. 3984 on the Establishments and Broadcasts of Radio and Television on local basis to the related faculties ([http://www.rtuk.org.tr/sayfalar/IcerikGoster.aspx?icerik\\_id=8e56c98d-e0fd-4c25-a9c4-1c615a431b71](http://www.rtuk.org.tr/sayfalar/IcerikGoster.aspx?icerik_id=8e56c98d-e0fd-4c25-a9c4-1c615a431b71) 08.05.2012). However, the Law no. 6112 on the Establishments and Broadcasting Services of Radios and Televisions that was newly arranged at the beginning of 2011 abolished this right, given late by the Law no. 3984.

However, it is known that the university radios create a ground where it will be possible to be able to offer the functional structure of the mass media, which can assure democratic participation away from the understanding of commercial broadcasting to the society in correct, accurate and proportional manner for the society as of its positioning within a structure both as a field of education-application of the students of the universities and attached to the university especially in this progress of becoming an information society.

### *3.2. Radio Programming and Features of Radio Programs, Designed for Education*

The main starting point of the radio programming begins with the determination of the characteristics and requirements of the listener mass. However, this structure will contain features varying in parallel with the coverage area and location of the radio. The structure of the radio programs within this scope have to be handled basically from the point of view of the functionalities of the radio and the listener-mass and other features of the radio – technical specifications, coverage zone and so on – have to be mixed and formed accordingly. The functionalities of the radio, however, are taken into consideration under following topics:

- Provision of news, informing,
- Educating, acculturation,
- Introduction of goods and services,
- Entertainment,
- Persuasion and mobilization.

While the provision of news and informing takes the priority among all these functionalities, the use of the radio and television as an educational means especially in the countries that could not achieve so far to complete their national developments is regarded as the most effective mode of education of the last 30-40 years (Aziz, 2006: 70). The duty for the realization of programs, designed especially for educational function, of the radio in our country is granted upon the TRT by Article 121 of the 1961 Constitution as is indicated in the Radio Broadcasting section in Turkey.

Notwithstanding that frequent amendments were made in the radio and television broadcasts from the establishment of the TRT up to the private radio-television broadcasting process, the programs, designed

for education, have continually find place at these arrangements even if their scope and form might show changes.

Article 4 of the Law no. 3984 on the Establishment and Broadcasts of Radios and Televisions explains the idioms, mentioned (experienced) in the application of the regulation related thereto. According to this Article, the educational programs:

*Educational Programs:* These are the sorts of programs that are formed up in order to contribute to the development of individuals, who form up the society, in terms of social and cultural aspects and make possible for them to have knowledge on social, cultural, economic and legal developments and contain educational elements in the context of relevant subject matters, presentations, modes, methods and techniques. The principles pertaining to the educational programs are indicated in Article 26 of the same Law: The educational programs are the types of programs that aim the information and development of the indicated group of people where it is addressed and made in accordance with the principles of broadcasting, provided to be designed for children, youngsters, families, general listeners and/or audiences, farmers and peasants as well as for various business and profession groups. It is necessary for the educational programs within this scope to be prepared by taking advantage of consultants having expertise on the matter whereof and to allocate 5 % of the total weekly broadcasting period to the education contents. ([http://www.rtuk.org.tr/sayfalar/IcerikGoster.aspx?icerik\\_id=f512243b-b2c1-4a77-9d93-d6d2aa5b5543](http://www.rtuk.org.tr/sayfalar/IcerikGoster.aspx?icerik_id=f512243b-b2c1-4a77-9d93-d6d2aa5b5543), 08.05.2012)

The program structure with educational content can comprise the basic education or auxiliary, enhancing-promoting education (Aziz, 2006:176-177). While the educational broadcasts with narrow-scope cover the content of formal education, it is possible for the educational broadcasts to be consisted of contents that are related to the social life, all knowledge and information beyond the boundaries of basic education and in the meantime, they cover the program features supporting the individuals as of its general culture aspect.

No clear arrangements pertaining to the education, programs, designed for education, and their rates of broadcasts are not available on the Law no. 6112 on the Establishments and Broadcasting Services of Radios and Televisions, entered into force finally with relation to the radio and television broadcasts.

## 4. Research

### 4.1. Importance and Objective of the Research

The importance of universities and mass media cannot be denied within the process of formation of the information society. The inclusion of a mass media (instrument) such as radio especially in the broadcasting structure through the universities bears a significant importance within the social education process.

Private radios operating under the dominance of commercial broadcasting offer contents for entertainment within the framework of concerns such as program contents and broadcasting structures as well as rating, profitability, more listeners and so on. In this context, it is extremely important for the university radios to become a part of the broadcasting field from the point of view of the social education and public service model.

The aim of the research is to assess the role that the program contents of the universities, engaged in radio broadcasting in Turkey, play within the education process by taking the effective role of the media in the socialization and education into consideration. It is aimed to make evaluations on the proposal of an effective program model by assessing related evidences and discussing new ideas pertaining to the subject matter hereof.

#### 4.2. Assumptions of the Research

The university radios are also within a structure away from a public service broadcasting model even if for causes different than the radios, engaged in commercial broadcasting.

They leave the entertainment function behind the educational and cultural functions and adopt a broadcasting understanding, predominantly music based.

#### 4.3. Methodology of the Research

Relevant field scanning has been made in summer as a research method and afterwards, the flows of broadcast and program contents of the universities pertaining thereto were reached. The broadcasting periods of the programs and classifications of program contents have been made and they are examined comparatively.

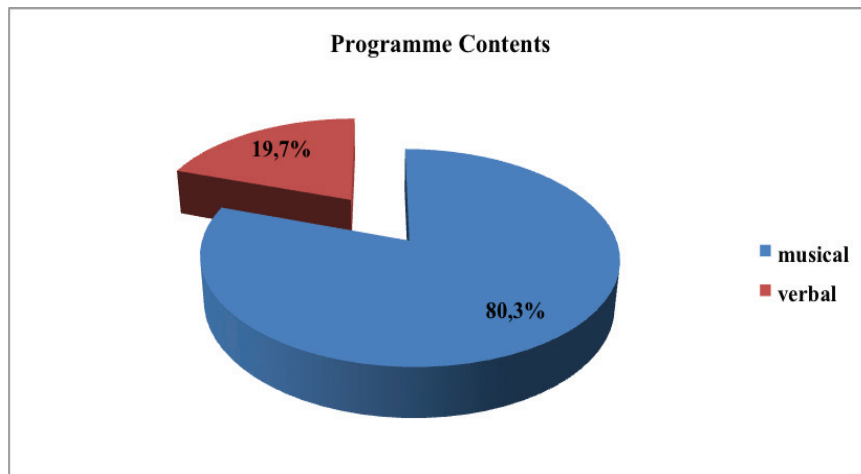
All university radios operating in Turkey have been taken into consideration at the research as a main mass. Since the number of the main mass is limited, sampling have been used, research has been applied the whole main mass. Thirty university radios that are on air over internet and FM band have been determined and reached twentyeight of those radios.

Programme contents and broadcast streams of twentyeight radios are searched on the internet first. Remainings were studied through phone call with the radio officials. Radio programme contents are classified into two main groups as verbal and musical programmes in this article.

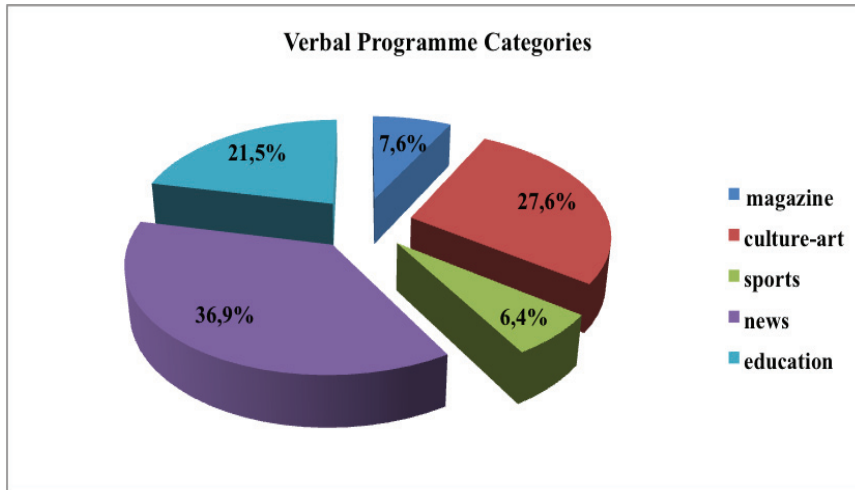
The verbal programmes are studied in the category of magazine, culture-art, education, news and sports headlines.

#### 4.4. Model Proposal in the Context of Findings

That 20% of the programmes are verbal, 80% of them are musical has been determined in the research. The percentages of programme kinds in the category of verbal programmes are presented in Graphic 2.



Graphic 1. Programme Contents



Graphic 2. Verbal Programme Categories

When it is taken into consideration of the fact that 20 % of the content, determined within the scope of the research, consisted of talk (oral) programs and remaining 80 %, however, of music programs, it is seen that the radios are converted into music boxes that commence to lose their educational and cultural functions gradually. However, on the basis of the fact that this structure exhibits a behaviour away from the corporate structure of both the university and radio, an opinion has been created that a university radio due to be structured under the proposed topics will take the social merits into consideration more.

It is necessary for the university radios to exhibit a closer standing to the public service broadcasting differently from private radios, engaged in local, regional and national broadcasting being structured with commercial broadcast understanding. In this context, they should arrange the broadcasting contents by taking the cultural, artistic and educational aspects of the society into consideration and in a direction to meet the expectations in these fields.

An understanding of broadcasting that may constitute an example to other radios should be adopted within the framework of the public service broadcasting.

It is necessary to give coverage to the programs attaching importance to the people's voice, participation committed to the principle of democratic participation, apart from unique broadcasting being a consequence of globalization within the framework of an understanding of a democratic broadcasting.

It is necessary to increase the publications that contain periodical activities, sporting and cultural activities, developments on environment, art and health as well as renewals, and bring forward the problem of the university youth as well as any changes and transformations in the training and education.

It is necessary to concentrate on the contents supporting social life by mentioning about the problems of the region, city and people.

It is also required to prepare related research results that the universities may determine according to the country and local requirements and develop within scientific and technological framework and also various programs where they may offer information therein, and the information has to be shared with the society through the programs due to be conducted by university experts at independent institutions.

Within the light of all proposals, brought forward in this respect, the university radios should not be perceived as institutions that contribute only to the social life and do not have to give place to any other



content apart from the implementation of educational functions, and the duty, taken up within the scope of its students being the requirement of being an university unit, should not be taken into consideration within the scope of contribution only to the social living. The demands and expectations of the students, academicians and their requirements or studies as well as institutional successes should be presented to the society. A mode of broadcasting where an excessively boring and didactic structure becomes predominant should not be adopted by keeping the “comprehension of educating while entertaining” in the preparation and presentation of all program contents especially.

## **5. Conclusion**

The importance of education that gains an effective function during the life is significant to transfer the beliefs and values certain modes of behaviours to the new generations. The education that is one of the most important functions of the mass media should effectuate the entertainment function jointly with it in order to get away from a didactic mode. The education within a narrow scope transmits the information allowing the integrity of individual with society; it takes up a function for the socialization of individual, facilitation of his life and provision of necessary information to allow him to make his living. When the matter is evaluated out of the radio broadcasting that especially constitutes the main subject matter of the research, the information and cultural programs comes into the scope of education in its broad meaning. At this point, the education in broad meaning contributes to the education in a narrow sense, and takes its place from time to time. The radio ensures the transmission of information that will replace basic education and teaches occupation and knowledge.

At our current period, the offer of only service by mass media to the society is not seen as sufficient. It is necessary for them to constitute a participation that will ensure the individuals within the society to put forward their opinions within the framework of democratic participation and social responsibility theories. The radios should express the good tastes and problems of the mass (group of people) that they may address at local and regional arena, and take place within the comprehension of programming that will ensure the individual to integrate with the society. However, it appears that a great proportion of the radios, examined within the scope of the study, get away from the understanding of necessity making broadcast towards the educational function within the scope of public service broadcasting.

The radios should offer alternatives to the private radios along with the public service understanding on the basis of the concepts of public service understanding, educational and cultural functions of the mass media - information society. It is necessary to bring the local matters on the agenda more often with the purpose of the development of local one in the radio broadcasts in order to prevent the uniformity that becomes prevalent within the framework of globalization. The number of the music programs in Turkish should be increased as well along with those of programs in foreign music.

In conclusion, the university radios, engaged in public broadcasting, should make contribution to the formal and informal education, and adopt a broadcasting comprehension reflecting the plurality that invite the people for participation where the democratic participation is kept in the forefront, “education with entertainment” by giving place in the culture-art, news-sporting, magazine and so predominantly beyond the music programs.



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