Turkish-Speaking Satellite Channels and Ethnic Identity of the Youth of Tabriz City

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1. Introduction
With the expansion of modern information and communication technologies such as satellite channels and networks, individuals and ethnic groups use these media differently for creating and establishing their ethnic identity. The number of these satellite channels which are active based on ethnicity and their audiences are increasing day by day. This issue may face the role of the government and natural media with challenges in terms of communication and information. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate the most important reasons and grounds of tendency of the youth of Tabriz City towards satellite channels of the two countries of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey and the effects of these networks on the ethnic identity of this group of individuals in Tabriz.

2. Theoretical Framework
Regarding the effect of media, there are different theories and ideas among which, the Cultivation Theory and the uses and gratifications theory were selected as the theoretical framework of the study. The Cultivation Theory emphasizes the interactions between media and those audiences using the media and how media influence their audiences. The main hypothesis of this theory is that there is direct relationship between the degree of encountering and using media and realism in contents and programs of those media in such a way that long hours of exposure to specific media cause the changes in attitudes and ideas in favor of media content. In fact, the Cultivation Theory studies the degree of the effect of these media by determining the degree and type of programs used by the media in order to achieve the mechanism and the way of influencing.
The uses and gratifications theory in addition to considering audiences active, emphasizes their needs and motivations in using media and believes that values, interests, and social roles of audiences are important, and people select what they want to see and hear based on these factors.
In general, with relying on the theoretical framework, this hypothesis can be presented that there is a significant relationship of the duration of using these channels, the degree of use of them,
the type and aims of audiences (purposive and non-purposive), and trusts in contents of Turkish-speaking satellite channels with audiences’ ethnic identity.

3. Methodology

The present study was conducted using the descriptive mixed-method approach (qualitative and quantitative approaches). In addition, to collect data, the study uses a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. To do this research in the quantitative part, copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the sample in Tabriz using quota random sampling method using easy convenience (with considering that the population size of the research was not exactly identified). The population included all the youth using Turkish-speaking satellite programs. The sample size consisted of 388 participants. The data were analyzed using software programs and multivariate regression. In addition, the variable of ethnic identity included 21 questions among which 10 questions were related to cultural and linguistic dimensions, 4 questions were related to social and political dimensions, and 3 questions were related to ethnocentrism. To investigate the relationship of variables in the qualitative part, the data obtained via semi-structured interviews with 20 participants using the purposive sampling method and, were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis technique in order that the most reasons and grounds of tendencies of the youth towards Turkish-speaking satellite channels can be obtained.

4. Results

The results indicate that about two third of the participants used these satellite programs for two hours or more per day. In the variable ethnic identity, 61.3% of the participants considered their ethnic identity at the high level, 32.5% of them at the moderate level, and 6.2% of them at the low level.

Findings of the study indicated that there is a direct and significant correlation between the duration of using these programs, purposive uses, and trust in contents of these Turkish-speaking satellite channels with their users’ ethnic identity. Moreover, findings of the research show that dissatisfaction with provincial network programs of East Azerbaijan Radio and TV Organization and weaknesses in cultural representations or inappropriate representations of Turks in programs of the national media are considered as the most important reasons and grounds of tendencies of the youth of Tabriz towards Turkish-speaking satellite channels.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In general, tendencies of the youth towards Turkish-speaking satellite channels refers to deficits in provincial network programs and weaknesses in cultural representations or inappropriate representations of culture, history, literature, language, and music of ethnic groups. Provincial network programs of East Azerbaijan Radio and TV Organization and even the national media allocate little time for representing music, dance, rituals, history, traditions of Turkish people and other ethnic groups. Therefore, audiences cannot realize their cultural and ethnic needs as much as possible and consequently, they tend to Turkish-speaking satellite channels of the two countries of Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey in order to re-identify their ethnic identity. The theoretical basis of this claim is that in the globalization era, not only cultural-ethnic interests are not weakened, but tendencies to reconstructing their elements increase. In this arena, communication media have the main roles, and people tend to refer to their own cultural and ethnic identity and they tend to each medium representing their culture and ethnicity; there is no
difference for the audience that what are the logos of the channels they are watching, or whether they are foreign or domestic. When a medium becomes the interest and preference of people, they see their cultural and identity images in it.

**Keywords:** Turkish-speaking satellite channels, Identity, Ethnic identity, The youth of Tabriz City.

**References (In Persian)**
   *Society, Culture and Media*, 1(1), 67-86.

References (In English)