

THE EFFECTS OF PEOPLE EDUCATION CENTERS' LITERACY COURSES
ON PARTICIPANTS' LIVES

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Thesis Abstract

Ayhan Erbay, “The Effects of People’s Education Centers’ Literacy Courses on Participants’ Lives”

The aim of this study is to find out the effects of literacy acquisition on adults’ lives by exploring their background profiles, (e.g. their life history, their economic and social background, their demographic information like age, gender, marital status, etc.) literacy course experiences, and thoughts pertaining literacy’s effect. In order to find effects of literacy course, case study method was used and semi-structured interviews were carried with both Level 1 and Level 2 literacy course participants in Kadıköy People’s Education Center.

Results of this study can be grouped in two categories. The first is participation process of adults and second is outcomes of literacy courses. Almost all participants had similar life histories which triggered them to looking for new solutions in order to cope with life. Age and psychological status of participants were especially powerful inputs in participation process. On the other hand, results that appeared after their participation in the courses all participants were able to travel, read and write in order to perform in their daily lives without having rely on others. Also, all participants in this study felt themselves more confident, improve their communication skills and develop sense of empowerment.

The outcomes of this study underlined that literacy course must be separated according to age and psychological status of participants where needs and aims of participants differentiate. Moreover; strategies, aims, and methods of literacy education should be improved according to participants needs.

Tez Özeti

Ayhan Erbay, “Halk Eğitim Merkezleri Okuma Yazma Kurslarının Katılımcıları Üstündeki Etkileri”

Bu çalışmanın amacı okuma yazma kurslarının katılımcıların günlük yaşamlarındaki etkilerini bulmaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak adına katılımcıların profilleri, (yaşam öyküleri, ekonomik ve sosyal altyapıları; yaş, cinsiyet, evlilik durumları gibi demografik özellikleri) okuma yazma kursu deneyimleri ve okuma yazmanın etkileri hakkındaki düşüncelerinden yola çıkılmıştır. Okuma yazma kursunun etkilerini belirlemek için “örnek olay” çalışma yöntemi olarak kullanılmış olup, Kadıköy Halk Eğitim Merkezindeki birinci ve ikinci seviye okuma yazma kursuna katılan tüm yetişkinlerle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları iki kategoriye ayrılabilir. İlki yetişkinlerin katılım süreciyle ilgili bulgularken, ikincisi ise okuma yazma kurslarının çıktıları ile ilgilidir. Hemen hemen tüm katılımcıların gündelik yaşamlarıyla mücadele etmek için yeni yollar aramasını tetikleyen benzer yaşam öyküleri vardır. Özellikle katılımcıların yaşı ve psikolojik durumu katılım sürecindeki en önemli iki girdidir. Öte yandan, yetişkinler okuma yazma kursuna katıldıktan sonra kimseye bağımlı olmaksızın seyahat edebildikleri, günlük aktivitelerini gerçekleştirebilmek için okuyabildikleri ve yazabildikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, tüm katılımcılar kendilerine daha fazla güvenmeye başladıklarını, iletişim becerilerini geliştirdiklerini ve güçlenmiş hissettiklerini bildirmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre yetişkin okuma yazma kursları katılımcıların yaşlarına ve psikolojik durumlarını temel alarak katılımcıların ihtiyaçlarını ve amaçlarını gözетerek ayrıştırılmalıdır. Ayrıca, okuma yazma eğitiminin amaçları, stratejileri ve yöntemleri de katılımcılara göre şekillenmelidir.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Literacy is an acquisition which enables people to read and write. It is also widely accepted as a way to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to express someone's thoughts, to share his/her experiences and to adapt to a community with dynamic structure. Within a local community the ability to read and write can be seen as crucial for communicating one's own views and having access to political institutions, and socio-cultural and scientific resources. Beyond one's community, literacy leads to participation in the world, providing access to alternative sources of information and means for expressing one's views and beliefs.

Moreover, literacy is a most distinctive human right; it is key to achieving most of the basic human rights like improved nutrition and health, increased productivity and poverty reduction, enhanced political participation, conscientization of the oppressed, empowerment of women, or sensitization to environmental issues.

Literacy is the foundation of all kinds of learning processes which enables individuals to initiate change, and improve their life conditions, economical background, political attitudes and psychological awareness. As Goody (1968) noted, the acquisition of literacy is generally acknowledged as a complex cultural and psychological process deeply affecting the transformation of societies and the development of individuals. In 2008, UNESCO declared that mastering literacy is essential for living in a modern society, just as a literate population is essential for a country to compete in a global world.

Despite all discourses about the important roles of literacy in people's lives, there is no universal definition of it. Since literacy cannot be considered independent

of time and space, there are only a few attempts to define it by bringing out new complex thoughts about its functions. All these attempts can be classified into two categories. The first view is the functionalist approach, which claims that literacy is key an economic capital for economic development advocated by UNESCO and OECD; on the other hand, the second view, to critical approach claims that literacy is key input a cultural capital for social and democratic development leading by Freire, Macedo, and Stromquist.

Literacy is the ability to read and write, with being able to understand, a short, simple sentence about one's everyday life (UNESCO, 1967). With neo-liberal policies, the definition of literacy has been revised and roles of individuals are identified within the terms of economic production. Literacy is crucial for economic, social and political participation and development, especially in today's knowledge-societies (UNESCO, 2006). Faced with the growing amount of computer based knowledge the definition of literacy has been revised once more. Individuals are given a new broadening role as agents who do not produce knowledge but consume and disseminate the produced knowledge. According to OECD (2010), governments and other stakeholders are increasingly interested in assessing the skills of their adult populations in order to monitor how well prepared they are for the challenges of the modern knowledge-based society. Adults are expected to use information in complex ways and to maintain and enhance their literacy skills to adapt to ever changing technologies. So, literacy is important not only for personal development, but also for positive educational, social and economic outcomes.

For the functionalist approach, it can be said that economic capital plays an important role in the definitions of UNESCO and OECD. Using information, adapting to the new technological era, community development, economic

productivity, and disseminating knowledge are the key words of the new purpose of literacy education. The aim is obvious; illiterates have been trained as substitute workforce to perform well when they are needed. Economic capital refers to the stock of competences, knowledge and personality attributes embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value (Bourdieu, 1986). So, literacy is a basic that leads to the improvement of economic capital by providing basic educational competency to illiterate individuals.

Instead of defining literacy from an economic point of view, critical approach have emphasized the social and political context of literacy, taking into account the socio-cultural aspects of development and the concerns of different communities and individuals. Literacy is seen as contributing to social transformation and empowering people to participate actively in the democratic process (Stromquist, 2004). The goal is, basically, to overcome oppression (Freire, 1972). Contrary to the Functionalist Approach, the Critical Approach focuses on the individual and the strength of the individual to transform the community. Literacy training is seen as a fundamental instrument that individuals who could not be educated for various reasons use to participate in society. Thus, Critical Approach can be associated with cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986) stated that cultural capital is a human capital including knowledge, skills, education, and advantages that people have, giving them a higher status in society. Parents provide their children with cultural capital by transmitting the attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in the current socio-political system. At this point, the Critical Approach defines literacy as an awareness process of individuals in which they can utter their own thoughts.

Freire and Macedo (1987) claimed that literacy has to be viewed as a social construction that is always implicated in organizing one's view of history, the present

and the future; he claimed furthermore that the notion of literacy needed to be grounded in an ethical and political project that dignified and extended the possibilities for human life and freedom. In other words, literacy as a radical construct is a project of possibility that enabled people to participate in the understanding and transformation of their society.

Literacy programs also contribute to the emergence of political awareness and knowledge among participants. As Stromquist (1997) noted, the connection between literacy and political engagement is predicated on the assumption that individuals become more exposed to information about their environment, especially the public institutions and government. There is the expectations also that as individuals are engaged in political decisions about their lives; they need to set up connection between literacy and democracy. Therefore, attention to literacy is a must.

Windham (1999) noted that a large portion of the benefits of women's literacy may still be unmeasured because they influence activities in the home or work by indirectly affecting the economic activity of other household members. One of the observable and assessable benefits may be in terms of the probability of employment or employment in different activities. The jobs taken by newly literate workers may provide fewer non-monetary advantages than those taken by more highly educated workers. If the monetary benefits are taken into account, then this may over-estimate the relative benefits of literacy.

In spite of the outcomes which are uncovered by the studies mentioned above, illiteracy is still a major concern for many countries. According to UNESCO statistics (2008), the global literacy rate increased from 56% in 1950 to 70% in 1980, 75% in 1990 and 82% in 2000-2004. Worldwide, the adult literacy rate increased at a faster pace in the 1970s than in the subsequent decades. Literacy rates increased by

more than 10% between 1990 and 2000 in the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, and the Arab States. Despite these substantial increases and because populations have grown rapidly, the overall numbers and distributions of illiterates have hardly changed. Most of the approximately 774 million adults unable to read and write – about one-fifth of the world's population – are concentrated in South and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific.

According to the Turkish Statistic Institution (TUIK, 2009) 5 million adults which is 7.7% of the country population – or about 1 out of 13 population of the country, are illiterate and 80% of them are women. During 2009, both the Ministry of National Education (MONE) and other non-governmental institutions have reported that only 5% of illiterate adults (400,000) were trained in literacy courses in that year (MONE, 2009). This rate demonstrates that participation in literacy courses in Turkey is very low compared to other countries like Mongolia with 97%, Qatar with 93%, Indonesia with 92%, and Brazil with a 90% literacy rate (UNESCO, 2008).

There are some assumptions as to why adults do not participate in literacy courses in Turkey. Low self-confidence, negative attitudes toward education, financial and communicational barriers, time constraints, family responsibility and lack of familiarity with the courses, fear and hesitation regarding the environment, dissatisfaction with education are some of these (Yıldız, 2006; Çankaya, 2005; Kirazoğlu, 1996). However, Nohl and Sayılan (2004) emphasized that the methodology of literacy teaching and the purpose of the institution that teaches literacy is an important matter affecting participation rate. Teaching reading, writing, and numeracy in a style that promotes freedom and in a transformative approach will be different than a style which does not promote critical thinking. The state power is in the position that affects adults' ability of self-esteem, critical thinking, civic rights

or skills of reading hospital signs, calculate shopping lists, within the aims and applications of literacy education. The state itself, as a system, is the focal point of all dynamics reveals the disadvantageous situation of the adult illiterates because of the problem of illiteracy and economic and political imbalance. Providing a well-balanced literacy education; aims of literacy education, type of the content that will be used, the methodology of the literacy training, the target groups of literacy training, and which languages to be taught must be taken into account while preparing an adult literacy program.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to analyze how literacy courses affect participants' lives from the view point of the participants. No matter what the definition of literacy, it is obvious that individuals who lack the skills and competencies given in the educational settings suffer in their daily lives. It is important to determine how and what way literacy courses affect individuals. Moreover, it is crucial to find out how literacy courses and individuals affect each other in terms of the improvement of individual competencies and course processes.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to find out the effects of literacy acquisition on adults' lives by exploring their background profiles, (e.g. their life history, their economic and social background, their demographic information like age, gender, marital status, etc.) literacy course experiences, and thoughts pertaining literacy's effect.

In order to find the effects of adult literacy education programs, the following questions are asked:

1. What are the background profiles of adults who participate in adult literacy education programs?
2. What is the participation process of adults in literacy courses?
3. How does adult literacy education affect the lives of participants?

Significance of the Study

In Turkey, most of the studies on adult literacy are related to the demographic information of participants, the historical evaluation of literacy education, the reasons of non-participation in literacy courses, and literacy campaigns implemented by governments. There are few studies analyzing the impact of literacy on adults' lives. This study may enrich literacy literature by examining the impact of literacy and it may contribute to related studies which have been carried out by researchers, policy makers, curriculum developers, and teachers in the adult education field.

Analyzing the reasons of adult literacy participation in terms of participants' life histories may determine personal dynamics in the participation process which can be helpful to third parties in re-formulating adult literacy courses.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on literature which deals with crucial concepts of adult literacy education and effects of adult literacy education. I present the literature under three categories. The first is about the definitions and approaches of adult literacy. The second part relates with current adult literacy education in the world and in the Turkey. The last one concentrates on the outcomes of adult literacy education.

Definitions of Literacy

In all societies, literacy, its functions, effects and roles are dealt with in different ways. Social and cultural codes may determine what literacy is (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) but this also brings complexity in order to reach a global definition of literacy. Holme (2004) claims that everyone has an opinion about what literacy is, however no one can put a clear meaning of it. It seems safe to say that most people who can read or write have a fairly clear idea of what literacy is. But when focusing on any definition of a practice or a state of knowledge, it gets harder to understand what they really mean.

There are two main approaches that define literacy. The first one puts literacy as the starting point of economic development as UNESCO and OECD do. On the contrary, the second one focuses on human development which is advocated by Freire, Macedo, and Stromquist.

UNESCO pays much attention to education and related sub-fields like adult illiteracy in series of international conferences. Jomtien conference (Thailand, 5-9 March, 1990) which was organised in response to widespread concerns about deteriorating education conditions and end of the Cold War as well as the emergence of new market economies and democracies. The Jomtien conference represented a

significant turn in the approach of the national governments and of the international organisations to education in two ways.

...first of all, it marked the emergence of a consensus that education is the single most important critical element in combating poverty, empowering the poor, enhancing economic growth, controlling population growth, protecting the environment and promoting human rights and democracy. Secondly, the Jomtien conference contributed substantially to expanding the vision and broadening the notion of basic education so as to include early-childhood care and initial education, primary schooling, the learning needs of youths and adults including literacy, skills training and knowledge, and information on social issues, among other points... (Jandhalaya, 2003, p.76)

It seems UNESCO has conceptualized education in two ways. First one is about economic growth after cold war period which is parallel to neo-liberal policies and second one is about functions of education which determine abilities of individuals who constitute workforce for economic advancement.

UNESCO (2003) defined literacy as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Moreover, literacy has been connected with a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. On the other hand, OECD (2010) defines literacy as a skill that labor market demands. They claim that adults should be trained in literacy, numeracy, problem solving in rich media texts and etc. OECD is a leading institution focusing on effective literacy that involves the ability to understand the language on an insurance contract, to follow web-based instructions on assembling a chair, to assess the accuracy of a candidate's argument.

Using information, adapting to new technological era, being literate in terms of community development are the key issues and the new purposes of the literacy education. These elements are pre-requisite for activating personal and socio-

economic progression which is linked with education proces in supranational organizations' definitions of education. However, in the definitions, skills and competencies which are underlined and associated with literacy have ignored individuals' cultural and social background. All forms of personal knowledge, skills, and attitude, has forced to transform into economic capital which is the stock of competences, knowledge and personality attributes embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value (Bourdieu, 1986). This re-constructed disposition of educational process also brings out a new pattern which depends of the markets' needs. So, in the definitions of OECD and UNESCO, education and related sub-field, like literacy, is modified as a premise of improvement of economy.

Freire, Macedo, and Stromquist emphasize the social and political contexts of literacy, taking into account socio-cultural aspects of development and the concerns of different communities and individuals. Freire (1972) defines literacy as contributing to social transformation and empowering people to participate actively in democratic process. The goal is, basically, to overcome oppression. On the other hand, Freire and Macedo (1987, p.21) claim that "literacy has to be viewed as a social construction that is always implicated in organizing one's view of history, the present and the future; furthermore, the notion of literacy needed to be grounded in an ethical and political project that dignified and extended the possibilities for human life and freedom". In the same vein, Stromquist (2004) defines literacy as a skill needed by an individual to fully function in all areas of his/her personal, social, economic and political life continue to develop under forms of increasing complexity of social life.

Approaches to Literacy

Functional Literacy

The term functional literacy is kept for the level of reading and writing which is a basic requirement in a contemporary society. According to Barton (2007) functional literacy underlines the idea that although people may have basic levels of literacy, they need a different level to operate in their day to day lives.

The major goal of the functional approach is to produce readers who meet the basic reading requirements of contemporary society. This position has led to the development of functional literates, regulated primarily to meet the requirements of more complex technological society. Freire and Macedo (1987) argue that functional literacy puts emphasis on the mechanical learning of reading skills while sacrificing the critical analysis of the social and political order that generates the need for reading in the first place. Literacy within this perspective is geared to make adults more productive workers and citizens within a given society. Giroux, (1986) criticizes functional literacy in spite of its appeal to economic mobility, functional literacy reduces the concept of literacy and the pedagogy in which it is suited to the pragmatic requirements of capital; consequently, the notions of critical thinking, culture and power disappear under the imperatives of the labor process and the need for capital accumulation.

Functional literacy puts a distance between individuals who are main actors in social and political participation and knowledge which have power to change official interpretation of social and political reality. Freire and Macedo (1987) criticized the notion of functional literacy that the real issue for the functional literate is whether they can decode the messages of media culture, counter official interpretations of social, economic, and political reality; whether they feel capable of critically

evaluating events, or, indeed, of intervening in them. Giroux (1986) stated that if we understand literacy as the ability of individuals and groups to locate them in history, to see themselves as social actors able to debate their collective futures, then the key obstacle to literacy is the sweeping privatization and pessimism that has come to pervade public life.

As Holme (2004) explains, it is quite common to think about education as being linked to the economic performance of the individual and their society. The emphasis on the knowledge economy in the contemporary capitalist societies created further justification for literacy increasingly tied to economic performance because learning itself is treated as a commodity that can be sold or exchanged for goods. It means such societies invest in its population in order to make them more skilled and productive individuals or a commodity rather than independent human being who have their own choices and lives.

Liberating / Critical Approach

Liberating / Critical approach relates literacy with developing a critical consciousness and skills that an individual is starting to interrogate the current social, economic, politic conditions. It is well known that Paulo Freire is the most famous adult literacy educator whose work integrated notions of active learning within socio-cultural settings. Freire emphasizes the importance of bringing the learner's socio-cultural realities into the learning process itself and then using the learning process to challenge these social processes. Central to his pedagogy is the notion of "critical literacy", a goal to be attained in part through engaging with books and other written texts. "Reading" (e.g. interpreting, reflecting on, interrogating, theorizing, investigating, exploring, probing and questioning) and "writing" (e.g. acting on and

dialogically transforming) are the main connectors of the social world (Oxenham, 2008).

Freire and Macedo (1987) discuss that literacy can only be emancipatory and critical to the extent that it is conducted in the language of the people. It is through the native language that students name their world and begin to establish a dialectical relationship with the dominant class in the process of transforming the social and political structures. According to their views, there are two ways transforming social and political structures. On the one hand, students have to become literate about their histories, experiences, and the culture of their immediate environments. On the other hand, they must also appropriate those codes and cultures of dominant spheres so they can transcend their own environments.

Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Freire's critical pedagogy was marked by his commitment to visions of social justice and transformation. The underlying assumptions of his pedagogy were oppression, consciousness and historical change. Freire had a genuine faith in the capacity of human beings to become active knowers and critical questioners of their reality in the struggle to transform it. Freire developed his pedagogy within a concept of *praxis*, a unity of knowledge and action (Yazlık, 2008).

Central to Freire's approach to literacy is a dialectical relationship between human beings and the world. As Giroux (1986) pointed that, literacy is not approached as merely a technical skill to be acquired, but as a necessary foundation for cultural action for freedom, a central aspect of what it means to be a self and socially constituted agent. Most importantly, literacy for Freire is inherently a political project in which men and women assert their right and responsibility not

only to read, understand, and transform their own experiences, but also to reconstitute their relationship with the wider society. In this sense, literacy is fundamental to aggressively constructing one's voice as part of a wider project of possibility and empowerment.

Freire develops his conception of education as a practice of freedom from a critical reflection on various adult education projects which he undertook in Brazil in the late 1950s and early 1960s. *Pedagogy of Oppressed* (1970) Freire contends that human nature is expressed through intentional, reflective, meaningful activity situated within dynamic historical and cultural contexts that shape and set limits on that activity. The praxis that defines human existence is marked by a dialectical interplay between the ways in which history and culture shape people even while people are making that very history and culture. This enables the realization of freedom, opening up choices among various ways of being within any given situation. He argues that the struggle to be free, to be human and make history and culture from the given situation, is an inherent possibility in the human condition. The struggle is necessary because the situation contains not only this possibility for humanization, but also for dehumanization. Dehumanization makes people objects of history and culture, and denies their capacity to also be self-defining subjects creating history and culture. Freire argues that overcoming the limits of situations is ultimately an educational enterprise that he calls a practice of freedom, a permanent form of cultural re-creation that enables the fullest possible expression of human existence. Further, Freire holds that democratic socialism provides the necessary conditions for each person to achieve his or her freedom, to become fully human.

In the *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992), Freire further develops his ideas, argues that liberation, oppression, and their interrelation are contingent facts which mark

precisely the possibility to choose one way of life or another. Even so, human nature, does not contain as part of itself, does not contain humanization, except as the vocation whose contrary is distortion in history. Glass (2001) who explicates Freire's pedagogical methods and educational philosophy in detail explains that Freire deploys the theological notion of vocation to build a link between particular contingent choices, for humanization, and universal human ontological capacities. He wants to invoke a type of authenticity that distinguishes a way of living that expresses the deepest, most primordial aspects of human existence. This vocation embodies freedom, and through humanizing action people understand and become critically intentional about their creation of culture and history.

Glass (2001) explains Freire's term *conscientization* to capture the complex ontological, epistemological, and ethical-political features of education as a practice of freedom. His analysis places cultural formation, knowledge creation, and linguistic practices as central to situations and identity and thus also as necessarily central to revolutionary (or any other) social change. Since situations are permeated with defining axes of power and authority that establish standards and norms in favor of some rather than others, liberation entails a people's struggle to be, to feel, to know, and to speak for themselves.

Freire's ideas have been used as pedagogical tools to support learners who have been oppressed, excluded or disadvantaged, due to class, gender, ethnicity or socio-economic status. Fernandez (2005) reports that in Africa mobilization for an "Africanized" literacy that would directly respond to the pressing communication needs of the continent. This movement has motivated the introduction of Freirean methodologies by several NGOs.

Literacy Education

In last several decades, many countries have developed adult literacy education programs in order to improve economic and social welfare. These programs are mostly supported by UN and other supra-national organizations. UNESCO (2008) explains that three REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) projects in Bangladesh, El Salvador and Uganda approach the issue of productivity and income through an examination of resource management – or making available resources more productive than they were previously. It demonstrates how the process of that particular form of literacy education had stimulated participants to reconsider and improve their uses of land, water, crops and money.

Many adult literacy programs were aimed at women. Agnaou (2004) notes that socio-economic underdevelopment was considered as the cause of adult illiteracy among men and women, particularly in developing countries. She points out that since women experienced further marginalization due to cultural and traditional practices such as parents' opposition, gender roles, multiple social roles as mothers and workers, and heavy demand of family life, they had higher rates of illiteracy, which was called as “feminization of illiteracy” (p.45). Oxenham (2008) states that in many countries, the majority of participants in literacy education programs are poor women. The reason is that girls from poor families generally have the fewest opportunities to attend and to continue in primary school, and therefore form the majority of adult illiterate populations. Adult educators suggest that participation to literacy programs helps these women to develop self-confidence, to inspire greater respect among their family and community members, and to take more active roles in running and improving their communities. If that is so, literacy

education programs would certainly be promoting gender equality and empowering women.

Studying the situation in Nepal Burchfield (1997) finds three groups of women: those who had had no schooling or adult education; those who had had a basic six-month adult education; and those who had taken a three-month post-literacy course after their six-months' basic experience. Two indicators measured confidence or empowerment: (1) perceptions that one is respected by her family and community; and (2) confidence in stating one's opinions to her family and community. Whereas 38 and 42 percent of the basic and post-literacy course participants respectively believed they now had more respect within their families, and could give examples of what they meant, only 2 percent of the control group shared that belief. On the second indicator (confidence in stating one's opinions to the family and community), the proportions of basic course participants asserting that they now had more confidence to do so were much the same as on the first indicator. In contrast, among the post-literacy course participants, a full 50 percent claimed they were more confident in stating their opinions to the family, and 44 percent made the same claim with regard to the community. In steep contrast, only 4 percent of the control group felt their confidence had increased over the past year.

Oxenham (2008) reports the most interesting study was done in Nicaragua 10 years after the National Literacy Crusade of 1980. It is found out that woman who had learned literacy through the crusade enjoyed higher survival rates among their children than the woman who had remained illiterate. Also, survival rates were higher among the children born to participating women after the crusade than among the children they had had previously. Similarly, Burchfield's three-year study in

Nepal found that participation and attainment in literacy classes did increase health knowledge, but by not very much more than other media such as the radio.

Literacy Education in Turkey

MONE is the main literacy education provider in Turkey. According to MONE statistics (MONE, 2009) there are over 28.000 literacy courses have been offered and almost 400.000 people participated in the courses in 2008. MONE has authorized some non-governmental institutions (e.g. Anne Çocuk Eğitimi Vakfı [AÇEV] and Rotary Club) to offer literacy courses throughout the country.

Table 1 shows that literacy rate of Turkish population in 2009 according to age groups. There are about five million illiterate adults, which is 7% of country population, 80% of them (about four million) are women and 20% of them (about one million) are men in Turkey. It is 12% of women and 3% of men are illiterate according to gender groups. These results are the highest women illiteracy rate in Central and Eastern Europe (included Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia, Macedonia) and Central Asia (included Armenia, Georgia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan) regions (UNESCO, 2010).

Table 1. Literacy Rate of Turkey in 2009

AGE GROUP	GENDER	ILLITERATE	LITERATE	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
6-13	Male	5.013	5.222.974	28.202	5.256.189
	Female	14.523	4.938.100	33.411	4.986.034
14-17	Male	12.594	2.533.956	32.731	2.579.281
	Female	42.548	2.364.030	43.521	2.450.099
18-21	Male	28.276	2.372.077	133.972	2.534.325
	Female	85.397	2.191.151	139.202	2.415.750

22-24	Male	18.724	1.607.285	288.466	1.914.475
	Female	76.891	1.652.529	109.024	1.838.444
25-29	Male	38.858	2.894.618	365.152	3.298.628
	Female	156.302	2.853.598	178.442	3.188.342
30-34	Male	43.285	2.756.903	190.958	2.991.146
	Female	164.222	2.617.273	119.941	2.901.436
35-39	Male	49.875	2.595.727	111.752	2.757.354
	Female	216.171	2.416.731	98.941	2.731.843
40-44	Male	53.534	2.244.155	74.790	2.372.479
	Female	229.046	1.974.361	86.809	2.290.216
45-49	Male	60.228	2.092.647	83.119	2.235.994
	Female	291.351	1.833.544	98.062	2.222.957
50-54	Male	64.040	1.722.836	87.486	1.874.362
	Female	320.621	1.425.307	97.020	1.842.948
55-59	Male	66.929	1.317.335	74.692	1.458.956
	Female	356.491	1.038.589	84.821	1.479.901
60-64	Male	78.980	980.748	61.963	1.121.691
	Female	400.410	755.969	77.008	1.233.387
65 +	Male	394.718	1.698.417	124.292	2.217.427
	Female	1.403.230	1.243.519	208.680	2.855.429
TOTAL	Male	915.054	30.039.678	1.657.575	32.612.307
	Female	3.757.203	27.304.701	1.374.882	32.436.786
G.TOTAL		4.672.257	57.344.379	3.032.457	65.049.093

(Source: TUIK, 2009.)

Adult literacy education courses provide in two levels by Ministry of National Education (MONE) in Public Education Centers. The first level of literacy courses lasts 90 hours with the purposes of teaching writing skill, numeracy skills and basic civic education, using Turkish language effectively, and training participants on some skills and behaviors which are related to daily life. After 90 hours course schedule participants will get a final exam. If participants pass the exam they will get basic literacy certificate and they can apply the second level of literacy courses. Second level of literacy courses has a length of 180 hours. Participants who are complete successfully the whole process awarded a certificate which is equal to primary school diploma (MONE, 2009).

MONE (2007) states the purposes of the adult literacy courses for illiterate people as to generate functional literacy skills in order to develop personal, social, and economic progress and provide necessary skills for participating in global socio-cultural conditions. Furthermore, MONE puts forward an acquisition list, for adult learners, which cover critical understanding, creative thoughts thinking, searching, decision making, reasoning, using information technology, self-discipline, participation, collaboration, solidarity, using Turkish language effectively and efficiently, and etc.

MONE's adult literacy courses are subject of some criticism. Nohl and Sayılan (2004) notes that Level 1 Literacy courses of MONE aimed to teach basic literacy, numeracy and civic education emphasizes the duties of a good citizen rather than teaching people their human rights and ways of using these rights. Their analysis of the instructional materials and methods revealed that in these courses literacy was reduced to a technical skill taught with a behaviorist approach. The instructional materials, which were based upon elementary school subjects, should be

re-designed so as to take the needs and life experiences of adult learners into consideration. They also criticize the materials for reinforcing traditional gender roles of women and asked for in-service training on the principles of adult education for elementary school teachers teaching these courses.

Functional Adult Literacy Courses (İşlevsel Yetişkin Okuryazarlığı Programı, İYOP) is offered by AÇEV. They focus on participants' experiences, while they learn how to read and write. There are some deficiencies in their textbooks like democracy, human rights, and gender equality. Despite those deficiencies, AÇEV's program creates fundamental standing for empowering women (Nohl and Sayılan, 2004).

Simplified Reading and Writing Education Program (Kolaylaştırılmış Okuma Yazma Eğitimi Programı, KOYE) is being organised by the Rotary Club in Turkey. Their teaching method starts with a collective activity (e.g. cooking) and then they define each action while they cooking with separated sentences. The fundamental aim of this program is to use participants' experiences and view to create sentences and texts (Nohl and Sayılan, 2004).

From the time of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, literacy courses and campaigns had played an important role on the rise of literacy rate of the population. Primary education was made compulsory in 1924 with the primary teaching and education law number 222. In addition to this, literacy courses for illiterate adults was begun in 1924, and five literacy campaigns were launched for a wide range of people in the years of 1928, 1960, 1971, 1981, and 2001 (Kirazoğlu, 2003).

Women and Literacy

Women's literacy has become a priority target of many developing countries since WCEFA, The World Conference on Education for All, which was held in Jomties, Tailand, in March 1990. The conference acknowledges the need to reduce the gender gap in illiteracy by encouraging and ensuring girls' and women's education (Agnou, 2004). UNESCO reported that there are about 800 million illiterate adults in the world and 80% of them are women (UNESCO, 2010). Total population of the world is about 7 billion and half of them are women¹. It means 11.4% of the total world population is illiterate. When it is documented according to gender the whole picture reveals the dramatic situation against women. 18.4% of total female population and 4.6% of the total male population is illiterate in the world. Obviously, female population has reached education less than male population. There are some reasons about why women can not reach education which is a fundamental human right. Van der Westen (1994) explained that domestic work prevents girls from attending school and hinders women's participation in literacy education. Women's limited geographic mobility also creates less need for literacy and less contact with print, which reduces their opportunity to develop literacy skills. Family-related factors (e.g., illness, early marriage, and parents' resistance to mixed schools) and school-related factors (e.g., distance from school, quality of education, relevance of the curriculum, and teachers' attitudes toward boys and girls) also limit girls' education. Also, Stromquist (1997) discussed illiteracy that reflects women's subordination, which is achieved through male control of women's sexuality and the sexual division of labor, which is pronounced in rural areas where families rely on subsistence

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/xx.html> data retrieved in 05.04.2011.

production and traditional roles are prevalent. Purcell-Gates & Waterman (2000) gave a life history of young adult, named Tomasa, and her experiences about reasons of un-schooling as:

...because she was the oldest girl in her family of six children, four of whom were boys, her mother asked that she help her with the survival tasks relegated to females. So, Tomasa helped care for younger siblings, helped make the tortillas and prepare the beans, washed the family's clothing, and collected wood for cooking. Tomasa's father died when she was still young, which further increased the need that Tomasa stay home from school and help her mother...(p. 54)

In Turkey, reasons of not being able to reach formal and non-formal education are similar to the above mentioned countries for women. Çankaya (2005) and Kirazoğlu (1996) pointed to low self-esteem, fear and hesitation regarding the environment, and familial responsibilities among women, who also had lower formal educational attainment. Çankaya's study acknowledged that migrants in Istanbul tended to live in close-knit communities comprised of residents coming from the same region. Çankaya also noted that these communities acted as "an informal control mechanism especially on women to prevent any change in their life style and make sure that they function in defined roles as a mother and caregiver" (p. 77). Thus, both Çankaya and Kirazoğlu pointed to the importance of taking women's socio-economic and educational background into consideration in designing courses for them and asked for courses aiming at consciousness-raising that could challenge power relations between men and women.

Womens' interest in and ability to come to class shifted across time and space as they took on different roles and identities in and out of the classroom (Sylvester-Skilton, 2002). It is vital to situate illiteracy and literacy education for women within the broader social, economic and cultural context since women's life choices and opportunities for education are prescribed by the particular realities of their lives

(Yazlık, 2008). Literacy education should equip women to develop a sense of self, exercise power in relationships (Stromquist, 1995) and work with others to solve collective problems (Rowlands, 1997).

As for the effect of participation in Peoples' Education Center (PEC) activities on women's lives, the study of Kalkan (1996) is important. The participants in her study attended courses in handcrafts, machine embroidery, cutting and sewing, embroidery, furnishing, painting, mother-child education, knitting, accounting, fashion design, and fashion styling. She concluded that participation in the courses had positive effects on women's lives in terms of their self-perceptions, relations with the family, the husband's attitude toward their participation in the course, and the way they spent their time. Yet, participation in the courses didn't seem to challenge traditional gender roles that were internalized by women to a great extent. Kalkan's study revealed the overall positive impact of participation in PECs at the level of individuals in their social contexts. On the other hand, focusing exclusively on women's daily concerns and survival-related needs ("practical gender needs" such as caring for children), programs may reinforce women's domestic roles and marginal status. It is true that programs must be relevant to women's daily lives and build on their traditional knowledge. However, they should also introduce new knowledge and skills that challenge women's perspectives and equip them to enter new social, political, and economic arenas. The challenge is discerning how to meet growing survival needs without losing sight of women's demands for greater equality and opportunity for active participation in formulating alternatives (Fink, 1992).

Freire's emancipatory conception of literacy explored the place of women in society, questioned their oppression and marginalization and fight for equity through literacy. Molyneux (1987) distinguishes between practical gender interests and

strategic gender interests, where the former are linked to women's basic needs like employment and family. The latter, on the other hand, are linked to women's empowerment as they seek to redress their condition within and outside the family, to combat discrimination, oppression and violence against women, and promote their political participation. This distinction between women's conditions (practical interests) and position (strategic interests) engendered the impetus for research on gender and literacy (Agnou, 2004).

Despite its powerful psychosocial benefits, Fink and Stromquist question to what extent emancipatory education can contribute to social change processes such as democratization or changing government policies to benefit women. According to Fink (1992), most popular education programs have failed to address the broader issues such as laws, policies, and economic structures that inhibit women's full contribution to society and national development. To achieve its emancipatory aims, local literacy initiatives should connect with women's organizations, social movements, and/or other local and national democratic initiatives, as these have provided a viable way for women to work toward social change and gender equality. In short, emancipatory literacy education and macro-level change have to occur simultaneously (Stromquist, 1997).

Women's illiteracy is especially high in sub-Saharan Africa states, Arab states, and South and West Asian states (UNESCO, 2010). It should be noted that those states are also sites of the brunt of armed conflicts, oil and debt crises, and structural adjustment programs. Paradoxically, the changing context and roles may motivate women to pursue literacy, but survival needs may take precedence over education in such sites. If educators recognize how women's roles and responsibilities as wives and mothers, workers, community managers, and citizens intersect with literacy

education, then women may transform themselves in order to survive (Stromquist, 1997). Similarly, Southeast Anatolia and East Anatolia regions, where majority of population is mostly Kurds, have the highest illiteracy rate among women in Turkey (TUIK, 2009). Those regions are also sites of armed conflict between Kurdish guerillas and Turkish Armed Force since 1981. Kurdish women have preferred to revive their mother language, Kurdish, rather than participate in literacy course which taught in the Turkish language. With this choice of Kurdish women, the Kurdish language has become the primary communication tool in such regions. As a result, the Kurdish language and culture have improved.

Effects of Literacy

EFA (Education For All) Global Monitoring Report (2006) shows that there are research efforts scattered over several countries since 1975 have been producing empirical evidence in support of the beneficial effects of literacy programs. A statement by Carr-Hill, Kweka, Rusimbi and Changele (1991) in their study of the effects of 20 years of literacy programs in Tanzania show that:

- a. the main effect which may be attributable to literacy is the spreading of modern agricultural techniques in the rural areas. Even where problems in affording the necessary agro-inputs, peasants had a positive attitude towards agricultural development. Kalinzi people acknowledged that they attended literacy classes not so as to be able to seek waged employment as had previously been the case, but to become better farmers.
- b. the richer farmers were first to adopt new agricultural techniques, openly attributing their success to the effects of literacy. Though the poorer farmers might not see the direct relevance of literacy, such examples of a horizontal transfer of information from the richer farmers can probably be attributed indirectly to the literacy campaigns (p.80)

More directly, in Kenya, farmers who had graduated from literacy courses were much more likely to use hybrid seeds and fertilizers than their illiterate fellows (Carron, Mwiria and Righa, 1989, p.173).

In Bangladesh, Cawthera (1997) evaluates the effects of the Nijera Shikhi approach to literacy education. He concludes that the Nijera Shikhi approach to NFEA (Non-Formal Education with Literacy for Adults) was effective on three literacy practices;

- a. sustained and beneficial impact on livelihoods: ... Incomes have increased by amounts which are highly significant to people who earn below-average incomes in one of the world's poorer countries.
- b. a lasting impact on agricultural practices and on nutrition: ... Many of the women now have kitchen gardens and grow a wider variety of fruit and vegetables. They also rear more poultry. Some of this is traded and so raises household income while some is consumed within the household and improves vitamin and protein consumption.
- c. a sustained increase in savings and investment: ... Many of those engaged in entrepreneurial activities had saved and invested in capital assets in order to generate profit. Many of these people said they only thought of doing this as a result of their learning during the course (p.114).

Political Effect of Literacy

Gramsci (1992) views literacy as both a concept and a social practice that must be linked historically to configurations of knowledge and power, on the one hand, and the political and cultural struggle over language and experience on the other. For Gramsci, literacy is a double-edged sword; it could be wielded for the purpose of self and social empowerment or for the perpetuation of relations of repression and domination and critical literacy had to be viewed as a social movement. Moreover, as an ideology, literacy had to be viewed as a social construction that is always implicated in organizing one's view of history, the present and the future; furthermore, the notion of literacy needed to be extended the possibilities for human

life and freedom. In other words, literacy is a project of possibility that enabled people to participate in the understanding and transformation of either society.

Giroux (1986) explained that literacy is both a referent and mode of critique for developing forms of counter-hegemonic education around the political project of creating a society of intellectuals who could grasp the importance of developing democratic public spheres as part of struggle of modern life to fight against domination as well as take an active part in the struggle for creating the conditions necessary to make people literate, to give them a voice in both shaping and governing society.

There are several attitudes and behaviors commonly recognized as political in nature: engagement in voting, seeking information about candidates or issues, participating in discussion of political issues, and affiliating with a political party or social movement (Torney-Purta and Richardson, 2004). Stromquist (2006) believes that these activities create varying degrees of tensions for participants, as voting or seeking political information, for instance, offer less potential for conflict than affiliation with a social movement. Instruments that simply measure the presence or absence of a given behavior may miss the different natures of some indicators. In modern societies, literacy skills are fundamental to informed decision-making, to active and passive participation in local, national, and global social life, and to the development and establishment of a sense of personal competence and autonomy.

Since literacy is fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active and passive participation in local and global social community, schools spend a certain amount of time on the provision of civic education. Stromquist said that (2006) for a greater understanding of the political impacts of

literacy on adults, it is pertinent to know what we have learned about the acquisition of political values and attitudes among younger populations.

As Torney-Purta and Richardson (2004) remark, the school is expected to provide content instruction about democracy, political history, voting, and government structures. In contrast, not all literacy programs seek to have political impacts and do not provide a uniform set of political information. In international studies of civic education in schools, knowledge of political institutions and processes has been found to be a predictor of political participation. Consequently, research on the political impact of literacy must recognize that neither the objectives nor the content of specific literacy programs may have sought political outcomes. Almond and Verba, (1963) explain that illiterates typically have very limited political awareness given their lack of access to detailed and systematic information about their immediate and distant environment. The evidence for this is the correlation between levels of education and political engagement and education and modernity, which includes the sense of one's ability to control the environment (Inkeles, 1983). Although the connection between levels of education and political participation is not linear, it has been demonstrated that as individuals acquire greater knowledge and information, they also demonstrate a greater propensity to participate in various political practices.

It should be noted, however, that if literacy programs have no civic education content, it is not reasonable to expect participants on their own suddenly to acquire knowledge of democratic institutions and processes or skills in interpreting political information. It must also be remembered that literacy programs have been used not only to provide critical skills and thus a responsible citizenship but also to enable social control and political repression by authoritarian governments (Graff, 1987).

Self-esteem can be considered a personal condition that precedes social and political action. Stromquist (2006) points that an individual's heightened sense of confidence can lead to incipient forms of political behavior; it functions as an invisible armor that prepares people to undertake behaviors that may introduce risks but also intended results. Accessing to public sphere decision-making appears to require personal attributes that permit the individual to develop feelings that one can influence one's environment; this implies a combination of sense of personal efficacy which is developed through experience with political institutions and self-esteem in the psychological sense.

Since self-esteem is the strongest and most common outcome of literacy programs (Stromquist, 2006) perhaps it is time that policy maker and program designers incorporate self-esteem as a legitimate objective. This would facilitate the design of interventions that enhance self-esteem through effective selection of content and design of literacy classes. For women, in particular, these programs would create a safe space for collective discussion and friendships outside the confines of the home. Literacy programs contribute to the emergence of political attitudes and knowledge among women by providing a space that allows women to occupy the public sphere without their husband's jealousy or suspicion.

There is clear evidence that literacy education has an influence on adults' political dispositions. Beyond the detailed studies I mentioned above, there are also various studies contributing this result;

- i. An adult literacy program set up by workers at a Brazilian construction site increased participation in union activities (Ireland, 1994).
- ii. Literacy program participants in the United States reported an increase in community participation (Greenleigh, 1968; Becker, 1976) and were more

likely than non-participants to register to vote, though they did not actually vote more than non-participants (Boggs, 1979).

- iii. Literacy program graduates in Kenya participated more in elections and local associations than did illiterates (Carron, 1989).
- iv. Women who took part in literacy programs in Turkey voted more and participated more in community organizations than did illiterate women (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005).
- v. Among Nepalese women, those who had spent two years in state-run literacy programs demonstrated more political knowledge than those not in the programs and were more likely to believe they could serve as political representatives (Burchfield, 2002). On various measures of political participation, the more intense participation in a literacy program was, the larger the proportion of women reporting changes in their political attitudes, except as regards voter registration. Much the same results held for NGO-run programs in Bolivia.
- vi. Qualitative studies yield similar results to these quantitative analyses. Literate women in Nigeria, for example, reported being confident enough to participate in community meetings, unlike illiterate women (Egbo, 2000).
- vii. Rural women who participated in literacy programs in El Salvador claimed a voice in community meetings and several were able to engage in sophisticated socio-political analysis (Purcell-Gates and Waterman, 2000).

Social Effects of Literacy

The practice of literacy can be instrumental in people's achievement of a range of capabilities such as maintaining good health and living longer, learning throughout life, controlling reproductive behavior, raising healthy children and educating them.

Improving literacy levels thus has potentially large social benefits, such as increased life expectancy, reduced child mortality and improved children's health.

Some researches evaluated the health benefits of literacy programs points to the same impact as that of education, and indeed in some cases, to a greater impact. For example, infant mortality was less, by a statistically significant amount, among Nicaraguan mothers who had participated in an adult literacy campaign than among those who had not, and the reduction was greater for those made literate in the campaign than for those made literate in primary school (Sandiford, 1995). Bolivian women who attended literacy and basic education programs displayed gains in health-related knowledge and behavior, unlike women who had not participated in such programs; the former group was more likely, for instance, to seek medical help for themselves and sick children, adopt preventive health measures such as immunization and know more about family planning methods (Burchfield, 2002). A survey in Nepal found similar effects but was less able to link these to program participation, because women in the control group of non-participants, like women in the programs, had been exposed to radio broadcasts and other health interventions (Burchfield, 2002).

Maddox (2005) says that, most literacy programs have targeted women rather than both sexes, limiting the ways in which gender equality can be addressed holistically and directly through the programs themselves. The programs have thus tended to concentrate specifically on women's inequality rather than gender equality. Participation in adult literacy programs does enable women to gain access to and challenge male domains by, for instance, entering male-dominated areas of work, learning languages of power previously associated with men (where only men had access to formal education) and participating in household finances. In some

Bangladesh households, literacy has enabled women to become involved in the financial management of the household, previously controlled by men. In India, an evaluation of a literacy program using the Total Literacy Campaign approach showed that women learners had a strong desire to learn. They liked to go to the literacy classes because this gave them an opportunity to meet others and study collectively. Thus, literacy classes provided women with a social space, away from home (Patel, 2005). Many women have reported that acquiring literacy and attending a class is in itself a threat to existing gender relations (Horsman, 1990; Rockhill, 1987).

Literacy program participants can gain more voice in household discussions through their experience of speaking in the public space of the class, though this may vary according to context and the kind of decisions involved. Detailed case studies reviewed by Robinson-Pant (2005) indicate that, while a newly literate woman may be able to decide whether to send her daughter to school, for example, she may not feel able to assert herself regarding family planning. Similarly, women may become aware of further education possibilities or of information about AIDS prevention through literacy programs but still find it difficult to make actual changes in the household. The same social barriers that kept these women from attending school in the first place may, for example, impede their access to education beyond literacy programs. There are, however, many instances of social mobilization due to literacy programs tackling of gender issues at the community level, including campaigns against men's alcohol use in India (Dighe, 1995; Khandekar, 2004) and the use of legal measures to address abuse (D'Souza, 2003; Monga, 2000).

Barton (1994) notes that people's literacy practices are situated in broader social relations. People have networks of support and roles within these networks. Literacy practices within broader social relations are that people act within various

networks. These networks have broad functions covering work, child rearing and other areas of social activity and are often networks of reciprocal support. An important aspect of these networks is that since these networks exist in problems with reading and writing does not arise; people have networks of support which help them avoid problems.

Economic Effects of Literacy

Education has been consistently shown to be a major determinant of individual income, alongside professional experience. While the number of years of schooling remains the most frequently used variable, recent studies tend also to use assessments of cognitive skills, typically literacy and numeracy test scores. These studies show that literacy has a positive impact on earnings, beyond the impact of the quantity of schooling; studies of the impact of adult literacy programs are much rarer, however.

Several studies find that economies with a larger stock of economic capital or rate of economic capital accumulation do experience faster growth. Coulombe (2004), using data from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) to investigate the relationship between literacy skills and economic growth, concludes that differences in average skill levels among OECD countries explained fully 55% of the differences in economic growth over 1960–94. Furthermore, the study found that direct measures of economic capital based on literacy scores performed better than years-of-schooling indicators in explaining growth in output per capita and per worker.

There are other studies that have examined specifically the relationship between literacy and economic growth includes:

- i. Barro (1991), which, using cross-country data for 1960–85, finds that adult literacy rates, as well as school enrolment rates, exert a positive impact on growth;
- ii. Bashir and Darrat (1994), which find the same relationship for the same period for thirty-two Islamic developing countries;
- iii. Hanushek and Kimko (2000), which identifies a relationship between student achievement in mathematics and science and economic growth that is consistently strong across thirty-one countries. However, the apparent relationship is reduced: a) when South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, with high growth and high scores during the period, are removed from the analysis; and b) in the most recent period when many Asian countries went into a slow-growth phase. This suggests that the overall effect between mathematics and science achievement and economic growth may not be a causal one.
- iv. Naudé (2004), which, using panel data for 1970–90 for forty-four African countries, finds that literacy was among the variables with a positive effect on GDP per capita growth.

Thus, while there is evidence relating literacy and education to economic growth, the mechanisms are not well explained. Today the contribution of education to economic efficiency lies to some extent in the very nature of the growth process, in which new technology and skilled labor complement each other. Economies are increasingly based on knowledge and less on physical capital or natural resources, and knowledge is characterized by strong network effects. The more people with access to knowledge, the greater its likely economic benefits. Thus, the average literacy score in a given population is a better indicator of growth than the percentage of the

population with very high literacy scores (Coulombe, 2004). In other words, a country that focuses on promoting strong literacy skills widely throughout its population will be more successful in fostering growth and well-being than one in which the gap between high-skill and low-skill groups is large.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study examines how adult literacy education affects participants, using qualitative inquiry for the research questions it aims to answer. It uses descriptive case study method. In this part research method and process are explained, participants, data collection and analysis procedures are defined.

Research Method

This study aims at to understand effects of adult literacy courses which are offered by People Education Centers on participants' daily lives. Descriptive case study has used as a research method in order to describe how literacy course affects participants' lives in their real life context from their perspectives. The case study is an empirical inquiry which focuses on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident suitable for studying complex social phenomena (Yin, 2003).

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select research participants. Five participants were from the first level and four were from the second level of literacy courses in the Kadıköy People's Education Center. The ages of participants ranged from sixteen to sixty-two years (four of them were below twenty-five; five of them were above fifty years old). Participants were born and grew up in five different regions of Turkey (three of them were from Eastern Anatolia; two of them were from Blacksea; one of them was from South East Anatolia; one of them was from Mediterranean; one of them was from Marmara). Four of the participants were married and three of them have children. Eight of participants were migrated to İstanbul due to economic reasons along with their families. One of them was born in İstanbul after her parents

had migrated. Two of them work as clerks, two of them are looking for a job actively, and five of them have never worked and they do not attempt to find one. Two of them had dropped out from primary school (5th and 3rd grade) due to their families' suppressions. Four of them have maintained their extended family; five of them were transformed into nuclear family after migration.

Data Collection

A semi structured interview form was developed according to the research questions of this study. Yazlık's study (2008), and Nohl and Sayılan's reports (2004) about adult literacy education in Turkey were also helpful in formulating interview questions. The interview form was revised after the pilot study which held in Besiktas Public Education Center as a part of Advanced Qualitative Research course at Boğaziçi University.

There are three categories in interview questions. The first category is about the participants' background information (e.g. their life history, their economic and social background, their demographic information like age, gender, marital status, etc.) which deals with developing profiles and comparing participants' experiences and thoughts in order to understand their motivation to participate in literacy courses. The second category is about exploring the participation process, like how they decided to participate in literacy courses, what was their family's reaction, etc. The last category is related with the effects of literacy in participants' lives.

Data Analysis

The researcher tape recorded the interviews with the informed consent of the participant and fully transcribed the interviews. The interviews were content analyzed to identify recurring themes and core meanings (Patton, 2002). Each

interview was taken as an individual case, with with-in case and cross case analyses (Merriam 1998).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter has two parts. In the first part, the case of each participant is described, concentrating on their family background, their schooling experiences, their relationship to their communities, and their emotions and thoughts pertaining their schooling memories. This detailed information will contribute to establishing a link between the effects of literacy courses and the participants' life histories. In the second part, the themes that appear in the interviews will be presented. Themes were categorized into two parts which are participation process of adults and effects of literacy courses on participants' lives.

Participants

Zeynep

Zeynep is 56 years old. She was born in Bayburt, which is the smallest city in the Black Sea Region. The population of Bayburt consists mostly of farmers with a low economic income. Zeynep has three brothers and two sisters. She is the oldest female child and the second child in her family. All her brothers and sisters have gone to school except Zeynep.

I could not go to school. There was no school in our village, so all children went to school in the nearest village. My parents did not want to send me to school because I had to work in fields and do housework. My brothers, including the oldest one, went to school with the other children in the village. My younger sisters were (*babies*) so young. When a school was established in our village, I wanted to go to school. My father allowed me to go to school. However my age was bigger than the other new starters and school principal refused to accept me. My younger sisters were accepted but I missed my chance. I am the only one who remains illiterate in my family.²

² Ben okula gidemedim. Bizim köyde okul yoktu. Köydeki bütün çocuklar yakındaki başka bir köyün okula giderlerdi. Annem babam beni okula göndermek istemedi. Ben hem tarlada çalışıyordum hem de ev işlerine yardım ediyordum. Abim ve diğer küçük erkek kardeşlerim köydeki diğer çocuklarla birlikte okula gidip geliyorlardı. Benden küçük olan kız kardeşlerimde çok küçüktüler zaten. Bizim köyde okul açıldığında ben çok heves etmişim.

Zeynep's mother was also illiterate but her father had a primary school diploma.

Zeynep is angry with her father because he had ignored her feelings about going to school.

I begged my father to send me to school along with the other children in the village. However he did not listen to me. He told me once, “girls should not go to school; they should help their family in fields and housework; they should take care of their siblings, if they have any.” I was angry with my father and still I am. My mother was a naïve and modest housewife. I did not share my feelings and thoughts with her. She was like a shadow in the house.³

Zeynep's family migrated to İstanbul when she was 18 years old. She married one year after their migration. Her husband graduated from primary school and he was a construction worker. She has two sons and one daughter. Her older son graduated from high school and other children graduated from university.

Zeynep has worked as a babysitter for seven years. During her work she felt the need of literacy often, especially when she went to markets.

For me it was always stressful to go to the market to buy infant food. There were a lot of brands and plenty of food types. My employer ordered me to buy a specific one and she wrote the brand on the paper. However, I could not read either the paper or the market's shelf. I always ask for help from strangers when I go to markets⁴.

Babamla okula gittik ama ordaki müdür yaşımdı diğer yeni başlayanlardan büyük diye beni okula kabul etmedi. Benden küçük kızların yaşı tutuyordu ama ben şansımı kaybettim. Yani, kısacası bizim ailede bir ben okula gidemedim.

³ Babama yalvardım beni diğer çocuklarla birlikte okula göndersin diye ama beni hiç bir zaman dinlemedi. Bana bir seferinde “kızlar okula gitmemeli, onlar ailelerine tarlada yardım etmeli, ev işleriyle uğraşmalı, kendinden küçük kardeşleri varsa onlarla ilgilenmeli” demişti. Ben babama çok kızmıştım halen de kızgıyım. Annem ise saftı, sıradan bi rev hanımıydı. Onunla hiç birşeyimi paylaşmazdım ne duygularımı ne de ne düşündüğümü. Aslında annem evde bir gölge gibiydi benim için.

⁴ Bebek maması almak için markete gittiğimde hep stres yaşırdım. Marketlerde bir sürü marka ve çeşit var. Yanında çalıştığım kadın belirli bir markayı almamı istiyordu ve onun adını da bir kağıda yazıp bana veriyordu. Ama ben ne kağıttakini okuyabiliyordum ne de raftaki kutuların üstünde yazılanları. Ne zaman markete gitsem insanlardan yardım isterdim. O insanları da tanı mıyordum.

The reason behind the participation in the literacy course for Zeynep is to get a diploma for job applications, to follow daily news papers, to read storybooks to her grandson, and to gain an ability to deal with some staff by herself in hospitals.

I want to work. I don't have any health insurance. No one wanted to hire a worker like me. I am old, illiterate, and a woman. If I get a secondary school diploma, I may find a suitable job for me. Moreover, I want to read daily newspaper to know what is going on in Turkey. This is important because I want to give correct information about environment to my grandson. I want to protect him from bad things. I also want to read storybook to my grandson, this makes me very happy. Lastly, I am an old woman. I need to go to the hospital regularly. I do not want to ask help from someone to get an appointment for me. I want to do it on my own⁵.

There are some positive outcomes during literacy education process. Zeynep puts forward some of her feelings and thoughts which may trigger her transformation process as an individual.

I feel I am changing. During the literacy course I force myself to produce examples related to our study texts. If I produce plenty of them I feel stronger. I can express myself better than before I attended literacy course. I have better communication with my children and relatives. I learned to listen them and they learned to listen what I am saying. I feel happier. I am looking forward now, what we have done in the past is not past⁶.

⁵ Ben çalışmak istiyorum. Sağlık sigortam yok. Hiç kimse benim gibi birini işe almak istemiyor. Ben yaşlıyım, okumam yazmam yok, kadını. Eğer ortaokul diploması alırsam belki kendime göre bir iş bulabilirim. Bir de gazete okumak istiyorum. Türkiye'de ne olup bittiğini öğrenmek istiyorum. Bu önemli bir şey çünkü torunuma etrafta olup bitenle ilgili doğru bilgi vermek istiyorum. Onu kötü şeylerden korumak istiyorum. Ona hikaye kitapları okumak istiyorum. Ona hikaye okuyabilirsem çok mutlu olacağım. Ben yaşlı bir kadını. Düzenli olarak hastaneye gidiyorum. İnsanlardan benim adıma doktordan randevu almalarını istemiyorum. Kendi işimi kendim yapmak istiyorum.

⁶ Değiştiğimi hissediyorum. Kursta okuduğumuz şeylerle ilgili örnek vermek için kendimi zorluyorum. Çok örnek verebilirsem kendimi iyi hissediyorum, güçlü hissediyorum. Okuma yazma kursuna katıldıktan sonra kendimi daha iyi ifade edebiliyorum. Çocuklarımla ve komşularımla daha iyi iletişim kurmaya başladım. Onları dinlemeyi öğrendim, onlarda benim ne dediğimi dinlemeye başladılar. Kendimi daha mutlu hissediyorum. Artık önüme bakıyorum, geçmişte ne yaptığımız önemli değil. Ne yapacağımız önemli.

Halime

Halime is 62 years old and she was born in Elazığ which is a mid-sized city in South-East region. Population of Elazığ is mostly farmers with a modest economic income level from small industrial and commercial corporations' activities. Halime has six brothers and two sisters. She is the oldest child in her family. All her brothers and sisters had found an opportunity to enroll in formal education except for Halime.

I am the only one who could not go to school. My parents wanted to send me to school but there was no school in our village. The nearest school was 10 km away and it was too difficult to get there by walking, so I refused to go to school. When school was established in our village, I was 11 years old and school board did not accept me because of my age. I did not intend to go to school actually, I preferred to work in fields and take care of my siblings⁷.

Halime told me that she has never been angry with her parents about her enrollment in formal education.

I am not angry with my parents. They wanted to send me to the school. However, in the winter it was impossible to walk 10 km. When I look at my past, I was right to refuse to walk 10 km. It was dangerous and I was terrified when dark comes while we were walking back to home⁸.

Halime got married when she was 17 years old. Five years later, her husband found a job in rail roads and she migrated along with her husband and her two children to İstanbul. After a couple of years, she had another baby. Her two sons graduated from high school and her daughter graduated from university. She said that she wanted to

⁷ Ben bizim ailede okula gidemeyen tek kişiyim. Annem babam beni okula göndermek istemişti ama bizim köyde okul yoktu. En yakın okul bizim köyden 10 km uzaktı. Oraya yaya gitmek gelmek çok zordu. Bende gitmek istemedim. Bizim köyde okul açıldığında ben 11 yaşındaydım ve okula başlamak için yaşıma geçmişti. Zaten okulun müdürü de Kabul etmemişti. Okula gitmek için bir niyetim de yoktu zaten, ben de tarlada çalışmaya başladım, kardeşlerime baktım.

⁸ Okula gidemediğim için annem babama kızgın değilim. Onlar benim okumamı istiyordu ama kış aylarında 10 km yürüyerek okula gitmek sonra geri gelmek mümkün değildi. Geçmişe baktığımda ben haklıydım. O yolları yürümek tehlikeliydi ve ben karanlık olduğunda çok korkardım.

support her sons to continue their education in university; because of economic hardship it was not possible.

Halime had never worked outside of her house. She had taken care of her children and done housework for years. She had been using anti-depression drugs for last two years because of panic attacks and isolation from outside world. These issues were reasons behind her decision to participate in the literacy course and other vocational training offered by people's education center.

I was just doing housework after we moved to Istanbul. I never went to a cinema or a tea-garden by myself. I got sick two years ago and doctors said that it was not physical but psychological. They said that I should go out and get new friends. One of my neighbors talked about people's education center and invited me to go there with her. I came here once and I observed all women doing something fun like painting, carpet weaving, learning how to write and read, etc. I decided to participate in painting and literacy courses. I feel good and strong now and my doctor even reduced my drug dosage⁹.

There are many positive effects of literacy courses on Halime's life. Better communication with other people, doing her daily life activities by herself, and empowerment are basics ones.

I think I can express myself better than before. I know what I am talking about and what I am referring to. I know numbers, so I can get my appointment by phone from the hospital by myself and I can find where the doctors' offices are in the hospitals. Finally, I feel like a complete human being. I do not need any help while I am doing something. I can go to the cinema or a tea-garden with my friends now. I wish I did the same thing 10 or 15 years ago because I am too old to continue such activities¹⁰.

⁹ Buraya taşındıktan sonra sadece ev işleriyle uğraşıyordum. Sinemaya ya da çay bahçesine hiç gitmedim. İki yıl önce hastalandım. Doktorlar psikolojik sorunların var dediler, yani aslında hasta değildim. Dışarıya çıkmamı yeni arkadaşlar bulmamı söylediler. Bir komşum bana halk eğitim merkezinden bahsetti ve onunla bir sefer gitmemi istedi. Buraya bir sefer geldim. Baktım ki kadınlar burada eğlenceli şeyler yapıyorlar. Resim çiziyorlar, halı dokuyorlar, okuma yazma öğreniyorlar. O gün ben de kaydımı yaptım. Resim kursuna ve okuma yazma kursuna yazıldım. Şimdi kendimi daha iyi, daha güçlü hissediyorum. Hatta doktorlar benim ilaçlarımı da değiştirdiler daha iyisin diyorlar.

¹⁰ Kendimi daha iyi ifade ediyorum eskiye göre. Ne konuştuğumu biliyorum, ne demek istediğimi de biliyorum. Rakamları artık tanıyorum. Hastaneden kendi randevumu kendim alıyorum. Hastanede doktorların nerede olduğunu kendim buluyorum. Artık tam insan olduğumu hissediyorum. Bir şeyler yaparken kimseden yardım istemiyorum. Arkadaşlarımla

Ruken

Ruken is 50 years old and she was born in Diyarbakır. Diyarbakır is a big city where industrial, commercial, agricultural and livestock activities are the main economic entries. Beyond economic activities, historically, Diyarbakır has also been the political capital of the Kurdish people, who are the majority population of the city and have been repressed under nationalist Turkish policy for decades. Ruken has three brothers and two sisters. She is the oldest female and second child of the family. Among her siblings, only Ruken and her twin were illiterate.

My father sent us to school. However, my twin and I ran away from school. I did not want to go to school, I was bored in class. I wanted to do something more fun than going to school¹¹.

Ruken is angry with herself because she thought that she led her twin into illiteracy. She had found an opportunity to participate in the literacy course in İstanbul; however her twin could not find a chance to participate in a literacy course in Malatya which is a semi-conservative city.

I have found an opportunity to participate in literacy courses here. I am doing my best to learn. Now I can do many things that I could not before. However, I feel sorrow for my twin sister. She could not continue to the school because of me. I did not want to go to school and I ran away from school with my twin sister. She used to do the same thing that I did. She becomes illiterate and she depends to other people in daily activities. She lives in Malatya in a conservative family and she even could not ask her husband to go to the literacy course. My twin sister suffers illiteracy because of my mistakes in past¹².

sinemaya veya çay bahçesine gidiyoruz. Keşke şimdi yapabildiklerimi 10 – 15 sene önce de yapabilseydim. Çünkü bu gibi şeyleri devam ettirebilmek artık zor.

¹¹ Babam beni ve ikiz kız kardeşimi okula gönderdi ama biz okuldan kaçıyoruz. Ben okula gitmek istemiyordum çünkü sınıfta sıkılıyordum. Okula gitmektense daha eğlenceli şeyler yapmak istiyordum.

¹² Burada okuma yazma öğrenme fırsatı buldum. Öğrenirken elimden gelen her şeyi yapıyorum. Esiden yapamadığım ama şimdi yapabildiğim çok şey var. Bunlara rağmen üzülüyorum. İkiz kız kardeşim için çok üzülüyorum. O benim yüzümden okula devam edemedi. Ben okula gitmek istemiyordum, okuldan kaçıyordum. İkiz kız kardeşim ise ben ne yaparsam o da aynısını yapıyordu. Şimdi okuma yazması yok ve günlük işlerde hep

Ruken has never married. She migrated to İstanbul twenty years ago by herself. Her older brother was in jail for eight years after he graduated from university due to his political opinions and he requested her to assist his family. So, Ruken has come to İstanbul and never gone back to Diyarbakır. When her older brother was released from jail, Ruken decided to stay in İstanbul and work in a job. However, Ruken as an illiterate Kurdish woman could not find a job. Her older brother asked her take care of his son who has an autistic spectrum disorder while she stays in İstanbul. She has been taking care of her nephew for the last twelve years.

Ruken stated that the reasons behind her participation in the literacy course was to act independently in daily life situations like getting an appointment from hospital, filling a form, or getting driver license.

My nephew is sick and we generally visit his doctor twice a week. We need to get an appointment by phone for our every visit. I did not recognize the numbers and I could not catch what they said on phone. I get into trouble in this situation every time. Also, when I go to the banks or municipality, they request me to fill a form. However I could not do it and I need someone to fill the forms for me. Moreover, I wanted to get a driving license, but I need to get a diploma for this. As a result, I have decided to participate in literacy course to get my freedom¹³.

Ruken told that there are many positive outcomes when she became literate.

When I fill a document by myself or get an appointment from a hospital, I feel that I can handle whatever I need to do. I feel that my self-confidence

başkalarına muhtaç. Malatya’da muhafazakar bir aileye gelin gitti. Kocasına okuma yazma kursundan bahsedemiyor bile. Benim yaptığım hatalardan dolayı kız kardeşim benden daha çok acı çekiyor.

¹³ Benim yeğenim hasta ve her hafta iki sefer doktora gidiyoruz. Doktora gitmeden önce mutlaka telefonda randevu almanız gerekiyor. Ben rakamları bilmiyordum bir de telefonda söyledikleri şeylerden anlamıyordum. Her seferinde problem yaşıyordum bu yüzden. Birde banka da ya da belediyede bir işim olduğunda benden bir şeyler doldurmamı istiyorlardı. Yazmam olmadığı için yapamıyordum. Birilerinden sürekli yardım istiyordum. Bir de ehliyet almam lazım ama bunun için de diploma istiyorlar. Tüm bunlar yüzünden okuma yazma kursuna katıldım. Özgürlüğümü geri kazanmak için.

increases. Also, I can read storybooks to my nephew and it is wonderful for him and for me¹⁴.

Merve

Merve is 16 years old and was born in İskenderun which is highly industrialized county in Mediterranean region where the biggest iron and steel industry zone have established. Population of İskenderun consists of mostly industrial workers. Merve has four brothers and three sisters. None of them were sent to the school before they migrated to İstanbul in 2005. When they came to İstanbul two boys started primary school. Merve and her two older sisters could not go to school neither in İskenderun nor in İstanbul because of economic distress of the family and her father's problems. She is the third child in the family.

We are a very problematic family actually. We are eight siblings and neither my father nor my mother can work. My father was an alcoholic when we were in İskenderun, he was never worked in a job. Every night my father used to beat my mother and his children. My mother had to work in day-to-day cleaning jobs and sometimes we, the older children, assisted our mother in her jobs. After a couple of years, my father got cirrhosis and my mother was diagnosed with a herniated disk. None of them could work in the house and we were in miserable conditions. My uncle has convinced my parents to live in İstanbul. So, we migrated here in 2005. From that date, we are three older sisters started to work. We assist our little brothers who are on the school age. But, we as the older sisters remained illiterate¹⁵.

¹⁴ Tek başıma bir form doldurduğumda ya da hastaneden randevu aldığımda her şeyi yapabilirim gibi hissediyorum. Kendime güvenimin arttığını hissediyorum. Bir de yeğenime masal kitabı okuduğumda kendimi çok iyi hissediyorum. Yeğenim de çok mutlu oluyor.

¹⁵ Aslında bizim aile çok problemlidir. Biz sekiz kardeşiz ve ne annem ne de babam çalışıyor. İskenderun'dayken babam alkolikti ve hiç bir zaman bir işte çalışmamıştı. Her akşam hem annemi hem de bizi döverdi. Annem gündelik işlerde temizlik yapıyordu. Bazen biz de ona yardım etmeye gidiyorduk. Birkaç yıl sonra babam siroz hastalığına yakalandı annem ise bel fıtığı oldu. Evde hiç kimse çalışmıyordu ve çok kötü bir durumdaydık. Amcam annemi ve babamı İstanbul'a taşınmamız konusunda ikna etti. 2005 yılında buraya taşındık. O tarihten beri biz üç büyük kız kardeş çalışmaya başladık. Diğer küçük kardeşlerimizin okula gitmelerine yardımcı olduk. Ama bu sefer biz cahil kaldık.

Merve is working for a fast food restaurant as a clerk. She has faced many problems related with her job contract but she could never demand better working conditions, because she was afraid of losing her job due to her illiteracy.

I had the worse job contract in the restaurant among all clerks. There, only I was illiterate. I did almost all of the dirty works in the restaurant even if it was not my responsibility. Restaurant did not pay me minimum wage as government has stated. There was no insurance, there was no transportation fee, and there was no food ticket. I still do not have all privileges but it is better than it used to be. If I were a literate person, I am sure that I would find another job easily. Sometimes, I want to resign from this restaurant but I am afraid that I can not find another one. So, I have to be patient. When I get my diploma I am going to search better jobs¹⁶.

Merve applied to another literacy course in their district. The course was in a primary school and course teachers asked for money for the course and diploma. Merve did not get suspicious and paid the money, however literacy course did not start and course teachers did not pay back her money. Merve and her mother went to the school to find out what is going on, but no one listened to them. Merve and her family have given up insisting to get back their money.

The reasons behind Merve's participation in the literacy course are for improve her skills to negotiating better job conditions and to find a better job.

I am still young and I thought that I can continue my education until at least high school level. When I get my high school diploma, I can apply for governmental jobs. Or, when I get my high school diploma, I can negotiate with my boss to increase my salary or pay my privileges like transportation fee, food ticket and insurance¹⁷.

¹⁶ Ben çalıştığım yerde en kötü koşullara sahip bir işçiyim. Orada sadece ben cahilim. Benim işim bile olmayan en kötü işleri bile bana yaptırırlardı. Çalıştığım yer bana asgari ücretten bile daha düşük bir maaş verirdi. Sigortam yoktu, yol parası yoktu, yemek vermezlerdi. Halen bile bu gibi ayrıcalıklara sahip değilim ama eskisinden daha iyi. Eğer okumam yazmam olsaydı başka bir yerde çok daha rahat iş bulurdum. Bazen buradan istifa etsem diyorum ama kimse de bana iş vermez çünkü okuma yazma bilmiyorum. O yüzden sabırlı olmam lazım. Diplomamı alır almaz başka işlere bakacağım.

¹⁷ Daha gencim ve liseye kadar okuyabilirim diye düşünüyorum. Lise diploması aldığımda devlet memurluğu için başvuracağım. Ya da lise diplomamı aldığımda gidip patronumla maaşımı yükseltmesi için, yol parası vermesi için, yemek için, sigorta için konuşacağım.

Merve said that everyone around her gives her support in continuing her education.

With great enthusiasm Merve is improving her literacy skills and she is getting promoted in her workplace.

I am trying to do my best. I believe I made a progression so far. My family, friends, and neighbors have encouraged me to start a literacy program and they still support me. I also got promoted in my workplace when I decided to participate in literacy course. It is not big deal but it makes me feel better¹⁸.

Selin

Selin is 18 years old and she was born in Erzurum which is the biggest city in Eastern Anatolia Region. Population of Erzurum mostly consists of farmers and their income level is low. Selin has two brothers and one sister. Her older brother could not enrolling in school along with Selin.

I am the second child in the family. I have an older brother and two little siblings who are students in primary school. My older brother and I could not find a chance to go to school. There is an oral agreement between my older brother and me. I am taking care of my mother who is sick since my childhood; and my older brother works with my father in order to increase income level of the family. So, my whole life focuses on my mother's needs¹⁹.

Selin and her family migrated to İstanbul in 2008. The main reasons behind the migration are economical distress of family and Selin's mother's health conditions.

One of our relatives visited us in Erzurum. He was in shock when he realized our living conditions. Physical condition of our house was too bad, there was no electricity, no gas, no water, nothing. We tried to survive with the donations of the neighbors. He suggested that my father go to İstanbul with him and he promised to find a job for him. On the other hand, my mother's

¹⁸ Elimden geleni yapmaya çalışıyorum. Şimdiye kadar iyi iş çıkardım bence. Ailem, arkadaşlarım, komşularım kursa başlamam için beni teşvik ediyorlardı halen de ediyorlar. İş yerinde geçen gün terfi bile aldım. Çok önemli bir şey değildi ama yine de kendimi daha iyi hissettiriyor böyle şeyler.

¹⁹ Ben ailede ikinci çocuğum. Benden büyük bir abim birde iki küçük kardeşim var ilkokula gidiyorlar. Ben ve abim okula gidecek fırsatı bulamadık. Abimle aramızda sözlü bir anlaşma vardı. Ben anneme bakacaktım o da babamla birlikte çalışacaktı. Benim annem çocukluğumdan beri hasta. Ailenin durumu da iyi değil. Abim de o yüzden babamla birlikte çalışıyor daha çok para kazanmak için. Benim hayatım hep annemin ihtiyaçlarına göre oldu.

illness was getting worse. None of the hospitals accepted my mother because she is a schizophrenic. Our relative said that the hospitals in İstanbul will take care of her; however the hospitals in İstanbul also did not accept her²⁰.

Selin is angry with her mother. She told that her life is miserable because of her mother. She could not go to school; she could not play with the other kids when she was a child, and etc.

Sometimes I asked myself what my fault was. If there is a God, I want to ask him where his justice is. My mother is sick, our economic conditions are awful, I sacrificed myself in order to assist my family, and I could not go to school. I could not even play in playgrounds when I was a child. I believe all problems are related with my mother. Those problems that I faced with would not have happened if my mother had been healthy. I had lost my hope for a better life. I was lost myself and wanted my mother die. Can you image that a child wanted her mother die. I felt terrible. I treated my mother terribly²¹.

Selin's anger decreases when she meets her friends. She feels like a university student when she goes to a café with her friends. She motivates herself with this idea and it leads her to participate in the literacy course even her family is against her decision.

I made new friends in İstanbul and most of them are university students. Sometimes they invited me to socialize in a café. I imagine that I am one of them. I wanted to be like them. I thought that I should get a primary school diploma, then a secondary school and a high school diploma. So, I can apply to the university entrance exam and maybe I will be a university student. That is why I decided to participate in literacy course. However, my family, especially my older brother, was against my decision. He was anxious about

²⁰ Bir akrabamız bizi Erzurum'da ziyarete gelmişti. Adam nasıl bir şekilde yaşadığımız görünce şok olmuştu. Evimizin durumu çok kötüydü, elektrik yok, gaz yok, su yok, hiçbir şey yok. Konu komşu ne verse onunla idare ediyorduk. Babamın İstanbul'a taşınmasını istemişti bir de ona iş bulacaktı. O zamanlar annemin hastalığı da kötüleşmeye başlamıştı. Hiçbir hastane annemi kabul etmiyordu. Annem şizofreni hastasıydı. Akrabamız İstanbul'da anneme bakacak hastanelerin olduğunu söylemişti ama burada da hiçbir hastane annemi kabul etmedi.

²¹ Bazen benim suçum neydi diye soruyorum. Eğer oralarda bir yerde Allah varsa, ona sormak istiyorum nerede adaleti diye. Annem çok hasta, ekonomik durumumuz çok kötü, ben ailem için kendimi feda ettim ve okula hiçbir zaman gidemedim. Hatta çocukken parka oyun oynamaya bile gidemedim. Bence bütün problemler annemle ilgili. Eğer annem sağlıklı olsaydı karşılaştığım hiçbir problemde olmazdı. Ben daha iyi bir yaşam için umudumu kaybettim. Kendimi kaybettim ve annemim ölmesini istiyordum. Hayal edebiliyor musun bir çocuk annesinin ölmesini istiyor. Kendimi o kadar kötü hissediyordum ki. Anneme o kadar kötü davrandım ki.

my mother's condition. I argued with him and I said I will continue to the course. My little brother said he will take care of my mother when he is off the school. So, there was not any objection and here I am. I am going to continue until I get high school diploma²².

There are some positive outcomes of literacy course; higher self-confidence, better self-explanation and improved communication skills.

After I started the literacy course, I learned how to write my name and to calculate a shopping list. Those things make me feel better. I believe I can do everything. When my reading ability improved, I could discuss any issue with my older brother. All this progress shows me that I can be a university student²³.

Gönül

Gönül is 58 years old and she was born in Trabzon which is a mid-sized city in Black Sea region. The majority of the populations in Trabzon are farmers and fishers.

Gönül had four brothers and three sisters. Two of her older brothers had passed away. Gönül and other two girls could not find a chance to go to school because of her father's opinions about girls and school.

We are eight children in the family. All boys went to school. Three of them finished high school education and one of them graduated from university. However, girls were not sent to school. My father did not want us to go to school because he believed that it was a waste of time and money to send girls to school. Girls were going to get married and leave home. So, girls are not their father's problem, they are problems of their potential husbands.

²² İstanbul'da birçok yeni arkadaş edindim ve hepsi de üniversite öğrencisi. Zaman zaman beni bir kafeye sohbet etmeye de çağırıyorlar. Onlardan biri olduğumu hayal ediyorum. Onlar gibi olmak istiyorum. İlkokul diploması almam lazım, sonra ortaokul ve lise diplomalarını. Böylelikle üniversite sınavlarına başvurabileceğim belki de üniversite öğrencisi olacağım. Bu yüzden okuma yazma kursuna katıldım. Ama ailem özellikle abim bu düşünceme karşı. Annemin durumu onu çok endişelendiriyor. Onunla tartıştım ve kursa devam edeceğimi söyledim. Küçük kardeşim ben kurstayken anneme bakabileceğini söyledi ve artık her hangi bir itiraz çıkmıyor karşıma. Ben de lise diplomasını alana kadar devam edeceğim.

²³ Kursa başladıktan sonra adımları yazmayı ve alışveriş listesini hesaplamayı öğrendim. Bunlar kendimi daha iyi hissettiriyordu. Her şeyi yapabilirim. Okumam geliştikçe abimle pek çok şeyi tartışır hale geldik. Bence, bütün bunlar üniversite öğrencisi olabileceğimi gösteriyor.

Moreover, local public thought that if girls are sent to the school they will be rebellious to their fathers and husbands. Finally, we could not go to school²⁴.

Gönül got married when she was 18 years old. After six years, her husband has assigned to a high school in İstanbul.

I was so young when I got married. I did not want to marry at such a young age. However, no one asked my opinions about marriage as they did not ask other girls. I did not even know the man I was going to marry. We met with each other two days before our engagement. Anyway, I got married. My husband was a university student and when he finished university, he applied to the Ministry of National Education to work at a high school in İstanbul. When he was assigned to İstanbul, I was 24 years old and I had three children. So, we migrated to İstanbul in 1976²⁵.

Gönül has five children and all of them have graduated from university. Her husband has retired from high school as a math teacher. She talked about a very interesting detail pertaining illiteracy and her life.

Until this year, no one in my family was aware that I was illiterate. My husband is a retired high school teacher and all of my children have graduated from university, but none of them had known that I was illiterate. There are two reasons why both my husband and my children did not know about my situation. The first one is that we are a crowded family. Someone in the house could write something down if I asked them. For example, if a shopping list needed to be written, I asked my son to write while I pretended to think about the list. The second reason is that I can hide my emotions and abilities from others. I am a discreet person. I did not share what I feel even with my husband and my children. This year my oldest son asked me to write a petition about something. I tried to write but as expected, it was horrible. When my son saw my masterpiece, he asked me why I wrote like that. I said I am illiterate. He was in shock. I needed to tell someone that I was illiterate.

²⁴ Ailede sekiz kardeşlik. Bütün erkek çocukları okula gitti. Üç kardeşim liseyi, biri de üniversiteyi bitirdi. Ama kızların hiç biri okula gitmedi. Babam kızları okula göndermek istemezdi. Çünkü kızların okula gitmesi onun için para ve zaman israfıydı. Kızlar evlenip aileden ayrılırlar. Yani, kızlar babalarının değil, kocalarının problemidir. Köydeki diğer insanlara göre, eğer kızlar okula giderlerse babalarına ve kocalarına karşı çıkacağından onların okula gönderilmemeleri gerekir. Böylece kızlar okula gidemedi.

²⁵ Ben evlendiğimde çok gençtim. O yaşta evlenmek istemedim. Ama hiç kimse benim ne düşündüğümü sormadı. Kızlara zaten kimse bir şey sormazdı. Evleneceğim adamı bilir bilmiyordum ben. Nişandan birkaç gün önce eşimle tanıştırdım. Neyse evlendik. Evlendiğimde kocam daha üniversiteyi yeni bitirmişti ve İstanbul'da bir okula öğretmen olmak için başvurmuştu. Eşim İstanbul'a atandığında ben 24 yaşındaydım ve üç çocuğumuz vardı. 1976 yılında da İstanbul'a yerleştik.

So, my oldest son knows that I am participating in a literacy course in here. I told him to not tell anyone about the literacy course. I thought that no one should know that I was illiterate except for my oldest son²⁶.

Gönül is angry with her mother. She believed that her mother could influence her father to send the girls to school.

I am angry with my mother. She is the one who did not want to send the girls to the school. Women in the Black Sea region have a very powerful influence on their husbands. My mother had it too. However, she was a conservative woman and she believed that girls should go to Koran courses in order to be a good wife and a good Muslim. I felt ashamed when I ask someone to fill a document or to read a bus plate for me. I have felt oppressed in the community. My mother is the main reason of things that I experienced and ashamed about²⁷.

The main reason behind Gönül's decision to participate in the literacy course is to cope with daily life issues such as filling documents requested from banks, reading bus plates, and writing his youngest son's wedding invitation cards.

I have visited a friend of mine in Trabzon. She was writing her son's engagement invitation cards. I did not remember any moment in my life that I felt ashamed that much. My son is going to get married and I asked my oldest son to write the invitation cards. Moreover, I always ask someone else to help

²⁶ Bu yıla kadar ailemden hiç kimse okuma yazma bilmediğimi bilmiyordu. Eşim emekli bir öğretmen çocuklarımda üniversite mezunu olmasına rağmen kimse benim okuma yazma bilmediğimi fark etmemişti. Bence bunun iki sebebi var. İlki bizim aile kalabalık bir ailedir. Eğer bir şey yazılacaksa birilerinden bunu yapmasını isteyebilirdim. Mesela eğer alışveriş listesi hazırlanacaksa bunu oğlumdan isteyebilirdim. Bu arada bende düşünüyor numarası yapardım ki benden yazmasını istemesin. İkinci sebep ise ben duygularımı ve düşüncelerimi dışarıdaki insanlardan saklayabilirim. Ketum bir insanım, duygularımı kocam ve çocuklarımdan bile saklayabilirim. Bu yıl büyük oğlum bir şey bir dilekçe yazmamı istemişti. Bir şeyler yazmaya çalıştım ama çok kötüydü yazı dışında her şeye benziyordu. Oğlum eserimi görünce neden böyle bir şey yaptığımı sordu. Okuma yazma bilmediğimi söyledim, şoka girdi çocuk. Sanırım birilerine okuma yazma bilmediğimi söylemek istedim. Şimdi büyük oğlum buraya geldiğimi biliyor. Sanırım ondan başka da kimse bunu bilmiyor.

²⁷ Anneme çok kızgıyım. Bence asıl annem beni okula göndermek istemiyordu. Karadeniz'de kadınlar kocaları üstünde etkilidir. Aneminde gücü vardı. Ama o çok muhafazakar bir kadındı. Kızların iyi bir Müslüman ve iyi bir eş olması için kuran kursuna gitmesini istiyordu. Şimdi ben otobüs levhasını okuyamıyorum, bir şey yazamıyorum hep birilerinden yardım istiyorum. Bundan çok utanıyorum. Küçükten toplum beni çok ezdi. Annem bana sahip çıkmadı onun yüzünden şimdi utanıyorum.

to fill a document or to read a bus plate. I have decided to find a solution to this issue. So, I applied to participate in the literacy course²⁸.

Higher self-confidence and empowerment are basic outcomes of Gönül's participation.

I am practicing on invitation letters now. It makes me feel good. I can read bus plates, I can fill any documents, I can read storybooks to my grandchild, and etc. I wish I could start to literacy course when I was younger. However, I am old now. I am not going to continue my education²⁹.

Ahmet

Ahmet is 21 years old and he was born in Ağrı which is a small city in the Eastern Anatolia Region. Ağrı has a small population due to its high altitude and cold climate. Population of the city consists of mostly farmers. Ahmet has three brothers and five sisters. In spite of the presence of a primary school in his village, Ahmet and three of his older siblings did not go to school, since they have their own duties like field works, barn works, house works, and etc.

We were a very crowded family living in a small village. In the winter, our village loses contact with outside world. Sometimes, this situation lasts for six months. So, we as the older children had different duties in the village in order to survive. We had used to work outside for ten hours a day for six-seven months. So, we could not go to school. My little siblings went to school, because they were too young to work in the fields or in the barn³⁰.

²⁸ Trabzon'da bir arkadaşımı ziyarete gitmiştim. Oğlunun nişan davetiyelerini yazıyordu. Hayatımda bu kadar utandığımı hiç hatırlamıyorum. Oğlum evelenecek yakın bir zamanda ve ben davetiyeleri yazması için büyük oğlumdan yardım istemiştım. Yani, hep başkalarından yardım istemek, bir şey doldurmak için, otobüs levhalarını okumak için. Kendimi kötü hissediyorum böyle olunca. En sonunda buraya başladım kendi işimi kendim görmek için.

²⁹ Şimdi evde nişan davetiyelerini kendim yazıyorum. Bu kendimi iyi hissettiriyor. Otobüs levhalarını okuyorum, form doldurabiliyorum, toruma masl kitabı okuyorum. Keşke bu kursa daha önce başlasaydım. Şimdi yaşlıyım artık. Okuma yazmayı öğrendikten sonra devam etmeyeceğim.

³⁰ Küçük bir köyde kalabalık bir aileydik. Kışın bizim köyün dünyayla bağlantısı kesilir. Bazen bu durum altı ay falan sürer. Ailenin çocuklarının yaşamak için çeşitli görevleri vardır. Altı yedi ay boyunca günde on saat çalıştığımız olurdu. Okula falan gidemezdik. Ancak çalışamayacak kadar küçük olanlar okula giderdi.

Ahmet left his home because of the economic distress of the family. He found a job in İstanbul and started to work as a cleaner in a restaurant. After a couple of years he was promoted and started to work as a waiter. He defines himself not as an immigrant but an expatriate who is temporarily living in outside of his homeland.

Someone must work in a paid job. I contacted some of my friends and requested them to find me a paid job. Now, I have been working for the same restaurant for five years. I started to work as a cleaner. Then, I promoted because I work a lot, I am trustworthy, and never lie. I am a waiter now. I am paid better, I have health insurance. During my exile, I have been sending all my salary to my family because I know their living conditions in that small village³¹.

Ahmet's boss suggested him to attend a literacy course. With a primary school diploma, Ahmet can apply for a driving license and continue his education in vocational training courses as his boss requested.

My boss is like a father for me. He directed to me to participate in a literacy course. After I get my diploma, I am going to apply for a certificate which is important for waiters in order to work in five star restaurants. Moreover, I want to get a driver's license for my military service in order to find a position in driver class in the army, since I think soldiers who are in driver class have easier tasks during military service³².

There are both negative and positive attitudes toward Ahmet's decision in participating in a literacy course. His colleagues in the restaurant believed that Ahmet was avoiding work and they also have to do Ahmet's duties. His boss, on the other hand, supports Ahmet's decision.

³¹ Ailede birilerinin para kazanması gerekiyordu. Bende bazı arkadaşlarımı aradım bana iş bulsunlar diye. Şimdi bir lokantada çalışıyorum. 5 yıl oldu çalışmaya başlayalı. Önce bulaşıkçı olarak başladım şimdi garsonluk yapıyorum. Garson olana kadar çok çalıştım, hiç yalan söylemedim, hep güvenilir oldum. Şimdi daha iyi bir maaş alıyorum, sigortam var. Gurbete çıktığımdan beri, bütün maaşımı aileme gönderiyorum. Çünkü orada yaşamak için paraya ihtiyaçları var.

³² Patronum benim babam gibidir. Bu kursa gelmemi o istedi. Diplomamı aldıktan sonra garsonluk için bir kursa yazdıracak beni. Beş yıldızlı lokantalarda garson olabilmek için bu kurs. Birde askerliğimi rahat yapmak için şoför olmak için başvuracağım. Ehliyet içinde diploma istiyorlar.

When I decided to participate in a literacy course my friends in the workplace treated me negatively. They said that I am avoiding work. We argued a couple of times. However, my boss supports me, and education is the most important issue for him³³.

Ahmet is going to continue his education until high school. He wanted to complete the literacy course to get a primary school diploma until he goes to his military service.

Raziye

Raziye is 58 years old and she was born in Kars which is a small city with a high altitude and severe weather conditions in the North-East of the Eastern Anatolia Region. The population of Kars consists of mostly farmers. Raziye has four brothers and one sister. Only two boys finished primary school, her other siblings were not sent to the school.

I have four brothers and one sister. We lived in a small village. There was a school in our village but my parents did not want to send me to the school. My father decided to send my two older siblings to school until they finished the primary school. When boys graduated from primary school they started to work as apprentices in local shops. Female children have never been sent to anywhere. It was forbidden to go outside the house for us. I and my sister lived in a grave during our childhood³⁴.

Raziye lived in a conservative family. Especially, her mother was too strict about her daughters.

My father was a naïve person. He had not any education background. He only followed oral culture and the traditions. He believed that if girls learned how to write, they would write a love letter to boys, and this would be a

³³ Okuma yazma kursuna katılmaya karar verince iş yerinde bazı arkadaşlar arkamdan konuşmuşlar, olumsuz şeyler söylemişler. İşten kaçmak için buraya geldiğimi söylüyorlar. Birkaç sefer kavga ettik bu yüzden. Ama patronum beni destekliyor ve eğitim onun için çok önemli bir mesele.

³⁴ Dört erkek kardeşim birde kız kardeşim var. Küçük bir köyde yaşıyorduk. Bizim köyde okul vardı ama annem babam beni okula göndermedi. Babam iki erkek kardeşimi ilkokulu bitirene kadar okula gönderdi. Sonra o ikisini bir de diğer iki küçük kardeşimi çırak olarak ustaların yanına verdi. Ben ve küçük kız kardeşim ise ne okula ne de başka bir yere gidemedik. Evden çıkmamıza bile izin vermezlerdi. Ben ve kız kardeşim mezarlıkta yaşıyor gibiydik.

humiliation for the family. When I was thirteen years old, a carpet weaving course has established in our village. All my peers have participated in this course and I wanted to go too, but my mother did not want me to go there. She said that ‘your brother will kill you if you participate in the carpet weaving course, because you will be seen as a prostitute who blinks at boys when you walking on the street. You will ruin our family.’ I could not say anything to my mother. I had to obey her rules³⁵.

Raziye was angry with her mother. According to Raziye, her mother is the main actor who destroyed her life.

I have a great vengeance to my mother. I was passive during my entire life because of her attitudes and thoughts about me. She was against my enrollment in the school and participation in carpet weaving courses. She turned me into a brindled animal. I could never protect my rights, explain myself, and do anything by myself. All of these happened because of my mother. When my husband beat me because of my illiteracy, I used to wish I would die rather than be humiliated. My husband has beaten me since we got married. I got married when I was 17 years old. My husband was a civil engineer and he used to beat me because of my ignorance³⁶.

The main factor that leads Raziye to participate in a literacy course is health condition of her husband.

My husband had a hearth attack last year in our home. He told me to call an ambulance. However, I did not know the number. When my husband lost his conscience, I was terrified and shouted out from the window to ask help from my neighbors. When ambulance arrived at our home, I was shocked and afraid. They took my husband to the hospital and the doctors requested me to fill some documents. I did not know how to write or read. I asked help from someone else to fill the documents for me. When my husband was taken to the operation, doctors told me to call his other relatives to come to the

³⁵ Babam çok saf bir adamdı. Hiç eğitim almamıştı. Sadece gelenek göreneklere göre hareket ediyordu. Eğer kızlar okula giderse, erkeklere aşk mektubu yazar ailenin namusu kirlenir diye düşünüyordu. 13 yaşındayken bizim köyde halı dokuma kursu açıldı. Bütün akranlarım bu kursa gidiyordu. Ben de gitmek istedim. Annem izin vermedi. Eğer kursa gidersem ağabeylerimin beni öldüreceğini çünkü kursa gider gelirken sokakta erkeklere oruspu gibi göz kırpağımı, ailemizi yıkacağımı söylardı. Anneme hiçbir şey diyemezdim. Kurallara itaat ederdim.

³⁶ Anneme çok büyük bir hıncım var. Bütün hayatım boyunca hep pasif kaldım. Çünkü annemin benim hakkında düşünceleri hep buydu. Okula ve halı dokuma kursuna gitmeme engel oldu. Beni yular takılmış bir hayvana çevirdi. Hakkımı hiçbir zaman koruyamadım, ne düşündüğümü hiçbir zaman söylemedim, kendi başıma hiçbir şey yapamadım. Kocam ben cahilim diye beni dövdüğünde ölmek istiyordum. Bunların hepsi annem yüzünden aldı. Kocam beni evlendiğimizden beri dövüyordu. Evlendiğimde 17 yaşındaydım. Kocam inşaat mühendisiydi ve ben cahilim diye sürekli beni döverdi.

hospital. However, I did not recognize the numbers to call our relatives. I again asked someone else to dial the numbers for me. After surgery my husband was in the intensive care unit and doctors told me to go home. I left from the hospital and walked to the bus station, however I could not read bus plates and there were no people around the bus station. I had to go back to the hospital but I waited until dawn at the yard of the hospital, because I ashamed to ask help from doctors. So, after a couple of months I decided to participate in a literacy course to avoid such a horrible day and night³⁷.

There are many positive outcomes for Raziye. Self-confidence, empowerment, and better communication with other family members are the basic ones.

I was like brindled animal; I could not protect my rights. After I joined literacy courses I turned into a panther to protect my zone. No one can violate my rights, no one can beat me anymore, and no one can humiliate me. I can read bus plates, I can dial the phone numbers, and I can do anything on my own. All of these make me feel better. I am a complete human now, may be a super human³⁸.

Elif

Elif is 24 years old and she was born in İstanbul. Her family migrated from Diyarbakır in 1975 because of economic distress. Elif has four brothers and one sister. All of her brothers have graduated from high school and set up their business. Elif and her sister did not go to school because of their mother's attitude.

³⁷ Geçen yıl kocam evde kalp krizi geçirdi. Ambulans çağırmamı istedi. Ama numarayı bilmiyordum. Arayamadım. Kocam kendinden geçtiğinde çok korktum ve komşulardan yardım istemek için pencereden bağıryordum. Ambulans geldiğinde hem korkmuş hem de şoka girmiştim. Kocamı hastaneye götürdüler. Orada doktorlar bazı belgeleri doldurmamı istedi benden. Ama okuma yazma bilmediğimden ben de başkasından yardım istedim. Kocam ameliyattayken akrabaları varsa çağırmamı istediler. Ama ben hiç kimsenin numarasını bilmiyordum ve rakamları tanıımıyordum bile. Ben yine başkalarından yardım istemek zorunda kaldım. Ameliyattan sonra kocamı yoğun bakıma aldılar. Bana da eve gitmemi söylediler. Hastaneden çıkıp otobüs durağına gittim ama eve nasıl gideceğimi bilmiyordum. Otobüs tabelalarını okuyamıyordum. Etrafta soraca kimsede yoktu. Hastaneye geri dönmek zorunda kaldım. Bahçede güneş doğana kadar bekledim. Doktorlardan yardım istemeye utanıyordum. Bu olaydan birkaç ay sonrada okuma yazma kursuna gelmeye karar verdim. O zaman ki gibi korkunç bir gün ve gece geçirmek istemiyorum artık.

³⁸ Eskiden yular takılmış bir hayvan gibiydim, haklarımı koruyamazdım. Bu kursa katıldıktan sonra pantere döndüm. Kendi alanımı şimdi koruyorum. Hiç kimse haklarımı çiğneyemez veya beni dövemez artık. Kimse beni küçük düşeremez artık. Otobüs tabelalarını okuyorum, telefon numarasını kendim çeviriyorum, ne istersem onu tek başıma yapabiliyorum artık. Tüm bunlar daha iyi hissetmemi sağlıyor. Şimdi tam bir insan oldum, belki de süper insan.

My parents have migrated to İstanbul about thirty-five years ago. My father has worked in construction sites for a while and he has set up his own business a couple of years later. My all brothers have graduated from high school and they have their own business as well. I and my sister could not go to school because my mother is a very conservative woman. She believes that girls should go to Koran courses instead of school³⁹.

Headscarf issue is still a problem for Elif and her family. If girls take off her headscarf this would be a disaster for the family.

My mother believes that headscarf is the symbol of purity for girls. She said that girls should be trained according to Islamic rules in the house and society. Schools are not Islamic institutions and headscarf is forbidden in schools. I do not agree with this view. I define myself as a Muslim girl and I had a headscarf but I can take it off in schools and I can protect my fate in the same time. However, neither my mother nor my older brothers support me in this situation and I could not find a chance to go to school⁴⁰.

Elif is angry with her family especially her mother. There were many problems she faced with because of illiteracy and lack of a diploma.

I have many problems in my life. First of all I want to work, however no one provide me a job because of my illiteracy. I have applied to many job positions but they eliminated me because I do not have a diploma. My family does not want me to work but I am not obeying them anymore. I want to take control of my life. Secondly, I want to continue my education until I receive a university degree. I am aware that it is very difficult but I believe that I can do my best. When I decided to participate in literacy course my mother told me not to go. I said this is my life and I will not allow her to destroy it. I have self-confidence now⁴¹.

³⁹ Ailem 35 yıl önce İstanbul'a taşınmış. Babam bir süre inşaat işlerinde açılmış. Sonra kendi işini kurmuş. Bütün ağabeylerim lise mezunu ve hepsinin kendi işi var. Ben ve kız kardeşim ise okula gidemedik çünkü annem çok muhafazakar biriydi. Ona göre kızlar okul yerine kuran kursuna gitmeliydi.

⁴⁰ Annem göre başörtüsü kızların saflığının sembolüdür. Kızlar İslami kurallara göre evde ve toplumda eğitim almalı. Okullar İslami kurumlar değil ve başörtüsü ise okullarda yasak. O yüzden kızlar okula gitmemeli. Ben annem gibi düşünmüyorum. Ben kendimi Müslüman bir kız olarak tanımlıyorum ve başörtüsü takıyorum. Ama okulda bunu çıkarabilir ve yine namusumu koruyabilirim. Ne annem ne de ağabeylerim benim okula gitmem konusunda bana destek olmadılar. Böylelikle de okula gidemedim.

⁴¹ Hayatımda pek çok sorun var. İlk bir yerde çalışmak istiyorum ama kimse bana iş vermiyor çünkü okuma yazma bilmiyorum. Pek çok yere başvurduğum ama diplomam olmadığı için beni elediler. Ailem benim çalışmamı istemiyor ama artık onlara itaat etmeyeceğim. Hayatımın kontrolünü elime almak istiyorum. İkinci olarak, üniversiteye kadar okumak istiyorum. Bu belki çok zor bir şey bunun farkındayım ama elimden gelini yapacağımı da biliyorum. Buraya geleceğimi söylediğimde annem izin vermeyeceğini söyledi. Ben bunun

Elif did not get any support from her family and friends. She felt loneliness until she met other participants in the literacy course.

It was hard when I started to participate in the literacy course. My family and friends were against my decision and they were distant to me. I did not know anybody from the course at the beginning, and felt lonely. I knew that I must resist this emotion and I had to keep moving. After a couple of weeks, I got used to new friends in the literacy course and I started to feel better⁴².

There are some positive outcomes of participation in literacy course for Elif. Higher self-confidence and psychological well being are the most important ones.

I have a different relationship with my mother now. She knows that she has to listen to what I say. I broke her influence on our family with my rebellious behavior. I believe I can do whatever I want. Moreover, I was living in an isolated place before I start to the literacy course. I did not have many friends, I did not know the outside world, and I could not tell anyone my personal problems. When I started to the literacy course I felt better, I found new friends who have different backgrounds, and I can talk about my problems. It is a kind of psychological rehabilitation⁴³.

Themes

The themes in this study are conceptualized as common factors which have directed adults to the literacy course. Each theme is related to others, especially those grouped under the participation process. Discussion themes were divided under two thematic

benim için önemli olduğunu söyledim ve hayatımı yıkmasına izin vermeyeceğimi söyledim. Kendime güveniyorum çünkü.

⁴² Buraya ilk başlarken çok zorluyordum. Ailem ve etrafımdaki insanlar buna karşılardı ve herkez benden uzaklaştı. Buradaki hiç kimseyi tanıımıyordum ve yalnızlık hissettim. Bu duyguya karşı koymalıydim ve yoluma devam etmem gerekiyordu. Birkaç hafta sonra yeni arkadaşlara alıştım ve kendimi daha iyi hissetmeye başladım.

⁴³ Annemle daha farklı bir iletişimimiz var şimdi. Ne söyledığımı mutlaka dinlemesi gerektiğini biliyor. İsyankar tavırlarımla onun aile üsütündeki gücünü de kırdım. İstedğim her şeyi yapabileceğimi biliyorum. Ayrıca, kursa başlamadan önce izole edilmiş bir yerde yaşıyordum. Çok arkadaşım yoktu, dışarıdaki dünyayı bilmiyordum, kişisel problemlerimi kimseye söyleyemiyordum. Buraya başladıktan sonra daha iyi hissetmeye başladım. Farklı altyapılara sahip insanlar tanıdım, sıkıntılarımı anlatabiliyorum. Burası bir nebze psikolojik iyileşme yeri gibi.

categories. The first category is participation process of adult literacy education consisting of age, gender discrimination, altruism, anger, lack of school, and school age problems, psychological well-being, acquiring new skills, and getting a diploma. The second category is effects of literacy course on participants' lives, and consisted of self-confidence and empowerment, and improved communication skills.

Participation process of adults in literacy courses

Themes that emerged in the participation process of adults are age, exposure to gender discrimination, self-sacrifice or altruism for gaining acceptance by the family, anger that arises in adulthood toward family, lack of school and school age problem in adults' childhood periods, psychological well-being after participation in literacy courses, skills acquired during literacy courses, and getting a diploma in order to apply for driver's license or finding a job.

Themes related to the participation process can be divided into two main categories. The first category covers themes which are related to childhood experiences as results of familial dynamics like gender discrimination, altruism, and anger. The second category covers themes which emerge in adulthood period like psychological well being, acquiring new skills, and getting a diploma.

Age

The age of participants is an important determinant in both expectations from the literacy course and the reasons for participating. The age of participants in this study can be divided into two categories. The first category is older participants who ranged from 50 to 62 years old. Second group is younger participants who ranged from 16 to 24 years old. Each group has their own unique dynamics in terms of

motives behind their participation decisions. The older group suffered from psychological issues resulting from isolation in new places after migration and negative memories when they asked help from strangers related with literacy skills in their daily lives. They believe that the literacy course may provide an environment where they may be relieved by meeting others who are like them and looking to learn basic literacy skills in order to cope with daily life. Almost all older participants could not obtain formal education because of a lack of school or patriarchal power structures where they lived during their childhood. When a school was built, their age became a problem for starting primary education. I have observed that the lack of a school and the school age problem were not problems that participants could not overcome but, they accepted the situation as the way it was. However, when they were oppressed by patriarchal power, they grew anger toward their parents especially mothers. The reason behind their anger toward their mothers is about lack of protection from patriarchy. The younger group, on the other hand, expected to find a job after getting their diploma. Participants from this group had a very positive attitude toward their current position and they believed that they can improve their life conditions after graduation from literacy courses. Some of them were working as a clerk in restaurants and other participants were looking for a job. Both groups believed that literacy courses had impacts on their lives such as increased self-esteem and better communication skills before their participation in literacy courses. According to older participants, literacy skills are crucial in transportation, in hospitals and when they had to fill a document. All these provide a power that they never had by themselves. Halime explained the situation that she experienced.

I was just doing housework after we moved to Istanbul. I never went to a cinema or a tea-garden by myself. I got sick two years ago and doctors said that it was not physical but psychological. They said that I should go out and get new friends. One of my neighbors talked about people's education center

and invited me to go there with her. I came here once and I observed all women doing something fun like painting, carpet weaving, learning how to write and read, etc. I decided to participate in painting and literacy courses. I felt good and stronger now⁴⁴.

Younger participants believed that literacy courses are just the beginning in their future plans. Merve's words were a good example of younger participants' views.

I am still young and I thought that I can continue my education until at least high school level. When I get my high school diploma, I can apply for governmental jobs⁴⁵.

Gender Discrimination

Almost all women participants believed that if they were a boy, their families would allow them to start to primary school. According to their opinions, the conservative or patriarchal power structure of the society is the main reason behind their illiteracy. Some of them have expressed their wish to go to school to their family, however they have been ignored. I found it interesting when participants in the sample spoke out their mothers' role in their discrimination. Three of the participants blamed their mother directly because they said that if their mothers provided protection from patriarchal power they could go to school. Elif's story indicates that patriarchal power could emerge from her mother's views and thoughts depending on the space where the family's dynamics affected by cultural regulations.

My mother believes that headscarf is the symbol of purity for girls. She said that girls should be trained according to Islamic rules in the house and

⁴⁴ Buraya taşındıktan sonra sadece ev işleriyle uğraşıyordum. Sinemaya ya da çay bahçesine hiç gitmedim. İki yıl önce hastalandım. Doktorlar psikolojik sorunların var dediler, yani aslında hasta değildim. Dışarıya çıkmamı yeni arkadaşlar bulmamı söylediler. Bir komşum bana halk eğitim merkezinden bahsetti ve onunla bir sefer gitmemi istedi. Buraya bir sefer geldim. Baktım ki kadınlar burada eğlenceli şeyler yapıyorlar. Resim çiziyorlar, halı dokuyorlar, okuma yazma öğreniyorlar. O gün ben de kaydımı yaptım. Resim kursuna ve okuma yazma kursuna yazıldım. Şimdi kendimi daha iyi, daha güçlü hissediyorum.

⁴⁵ Daha gencim ve liseye kadar okuyabilirim diye düşünüyorum. Lise diploması aldığımda devlet memurluğu için başvuracağım.

society. Schools are not Islamic institutions and headscarf is forbidden in schools⁴⁶.

In the case of Raziye, on the other hand, patriarchal power emerged as strict regulations implemented by mother. It was also observed that, when women participants recalled their memories and started to talk about their schooling experiences, their facial expressions were sad and their voices were getting lower.

My father was a naïve person. He had not any education background. He only followed oral culture and the traditions. He believed that if girls learned how to write, they would write a love letter to boys, and this would be a humiliation for the family. When I was thirteen years old, a carpet weaving course has established in our village. All my peers have participated in this course and I wanted to go too, but my mother did not want me to go there. She said that ‘your brother will kill you if you participate in the carpet weaving course, because you will be seen as a prostitute who blinks at boys when you walking on the street⁴⁷.

As can be seen, they blame their mothers, the social and cultural structure and patriarchal order. Yet they fail to resist or play a more active role in order to change, something which I relate to altruism.

Altruism

Altruism is another common theme for almost all adults’ participation process in the literacy course. There are two common issues that need to be considered about altruism. Firstly, participants whose reasons of not being able to go to school due to their altruistic choices are the first or second child in their family. Secondly, altruism

⁴⁶ Annem göre başörtüsü kızların saflığının sembolüdür. Kızlar İslami kurallara göre evde ve toplumda eğitim almalı. Okullar İslami kurumlar değil ve başörtüsü ise okullarda yasak.

⁴⁷ Babam çok saf bir adamdı. Hiç eğitim almamıştı. Sadece gelenek göreneklere göre hareket ediyordu. Eğer kızlar okula giderse, erkeklere aşk mektubu yazar ailenin namusu kirlenir diye düşünüyordu. 13 yaşındayken bizim köyde halı dokuma kursu açıldı. Bütün akranlarım bu kursa gidiyordu. Ben de gitmek istedim. Annem izin vermedi. Eğer kursa gidersem ağabeylerimin beni öldüreceğini çünkü kursa gider gelirken sokakta erkeklere oruspu gibi göz kırpacığımı söylerdi.

emerges among those participants as contributing to their family economically, like working in the fields as a workforce.

Altruism is defined as follows:

“...in the absence of reciprocal or anticipated benefits, some of behaviors are influenced by the operation of social rules, internalized standards of conduct. People sometimes act altruistically because this is the right thing to do in a given situation (p.65).⁴⁸”

Participants, who talked about their own altruism (seven out of nine participants), believed that someone had to do duties in the family. There are roles for men and women shaped by social and cultural rules. Ahmet, for example, had to work in another city and provide economical input, money, to family.

We were a very crowded family living in a small village. In the winter, our village loses contact with outside world. Sometimes, this situation lasts for six months. So, we as the older children had different duties in the village in order to survive. We had used to work outside for ten hours a day for six-seven months. So, we could not go to school. My little siblings went to school, because they were too young to work in the fields or in the barn⁴⁹.

Selin, on the other hand, worked in the fields and did housework.

I am the second child in the family. I have an older brother and two little siblings who are students in primary school. My older brother and I could not find a chance to go to school. There is an oral agreement between my older brother and me. I am taking care of my mother who is sick since my childhood; and my older brother works with my father in order to increase income level of the family. So, my whole life focuses on my mother's needs⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Berkowitz, L. 1972. *Social Norms, Feelings, and Other Factors Affecting Helping and Altruism*, Academic Press, New York.

⁴⁹ Küçük bir köyde kalabalık bir aileydik. Kışın bizim köyün dünyayla bağlantısı kesilir. Bazen bu durum altı ay falan sürer. Ailenin çocuklarının yaşamak için çeşitli görevleri vardır. Altı yedi ay boyunca günde on saat çalıştığımız olurdu. Okula falan gidemezdik. Ancak çalışamayacak kadar küçük olanlar okula giderdi.

⁵⁰ Ben ailede ikinci çocuğum. Benden büyük bir abim birde iki küçük kardeşim var ilkokula gidiyorlar. Ben ve abim okula gidecek fırsatı bulamadık. Abimle aramızda sözlü bir anlaşma vardı. Ben anneme bakacaktım o da babamla birlikte çalışacaktı. Benim annem çocukluğumdan beri hasta. Ailenin durumu da iyi değil. Abim de o yüzden babamla birlikte çalışıyor daha çok para kazanmak için. Benim hayatım hep annemin ihtiyaçlarına göre oldu.

Anger

Some of the participants also mentioned their anger toward their families. The interesting fact is that all participants who are angry with their families are women and their anger is related to the different attitudes of the families about permission to go to school due to gender discrimination. Another interesting fact worth being discussed is that the target of their anger is not the fathers but the mothers. Three of the participants, Raziye, Zeynep, and Selin, directed their anger at their mothers and one of them at her father. The reason of the emergence of their anger is about the passive attitudes of mothers where they did not protect or help their daughters in the schooling process.

Raziye:

I have a great vengeance to my mother. I was passive during my entire life because of her attitudes and thoughts about me. She was against my enrollment in the school and participation in carpet weaving courses. She turned me into a brindled animal. I could never protect my rights, explain myself, and do anything by myself. All of these happened because of my mother⁵¹.

Zeynep:

I was angry with my father and still I am. My mother was a naïve and modest housewife. I did not share my feelings and thoughts with her. She was like a shadow in the house⁵².

Selin:

Sometimes I asked myself what my fault was. If there is a God, I want to ask him where his justice is. My mother is sick, our economic conditions are awful, I sacrificed myself in order to assist my family, and I could not go to school. I could not even play in playgrounds when I was a child. I believe all

⁵¹ Anneme çok büyük bir hıncım var. Bütün hayatım boyunca hep pasif kaldım. Çünkü annemin benim hakkında düşünceleri hep buydu. Okula ve halı dokuma kursuna gitmeme engel oldu. Beni yular takılmış bir hayvana çevirdi. Hakkımı hiçbir zaman koruyamadım, ne düşündüğümü hiçbir zaman söylemedim, kendi başıma hiçbir şey yapamadım. Kocam ben cahilim diye beni dövdüğünde ölmek istiyordum. Bunların hepsi annem yüzünden oldu.

⁵² Ben babama çok kızmıştım halen de kızgıyım. Annem ise saftı, sıradan bi rev hanımıydı. Onunla hiç birşeyimi paylaşmazdım ne duygularımı ne de ne düşündüğümü. Aslında annem evde bir gölge gibiydi benim için.

problems are related with my mother. Those problems that I faced with would not have happened if my mother had been healthy. I had lost my hope for a better life. I was lost myself and wanted my mother die. Can you image that a child wanted her mother die. I felt terrible. I treated my mother terribly⁵³.

I thought that participants in this group have faced severe problems in their adulthood like humiliation, violence, and isolation. They did not have any mechanism to overcome such problems and they linked their disappointments and anger with their past. There were seven participants who talked about their anger resulting from past experiences before they participated in literacy courses. When they started to participate, their stress level and anger started to decrease but did not disappear. Literacy courses in the people's education center also affected the psychological dynamics of participants in a positive way. Participants have found and met other people with similar experiences and they could form a peer group to express themselves in order to feel a little better.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well being is the most important reason in participation to literacy courses in the sample of this study. No matter what the ages of adults, everyone in the sample felt relief in the courses with having to know others who had similar experiences. Each person in the sample expresses her/himself in the group and learns how to cope with problems in daily routine in the light of group's thoughts and directions.

⁵³ Bazen benim suçum neydi diye soruyorum. Eğer oralarda bir yerde Allah varsa, ona sormak istiyorum nerede adaleti diye. Annem çok hasta, ekonomik durumumuz çok kötü, ben ailem için kendimi feda ettim ve okula hiçbir zaman gidemedim. Hatta çocukken parka oyun oynamaya bile gidemedim. Bence bütün problemler annemle ilgili. Eğer annem sağlıklı olsaydı karşılaştığım hiçbir problemde olmazdı. Ben daha iyi bir yaşam için umudumu kaybettim. Kendimi kaybettim ve annemim ölmesini istiyordum. Hayal edebiliyor musun bir çocuk annesinin ölmesini istiyor. Kendimi o kadar kötü hissediyordum ki. Anneme o kadar kötü davrandım ki.

All participants in this study have a sort of psychological damage related to their schooling experiences in their childhood, and their adulthood experiences due to their illiteracy. It may be considered that the participants' psychological well-being has improved in terms of their self-confidence and that the literacy courses function as a rehabilitation process.

First of all, ashame, humiliation, isolation from the outside world, and stress are the most common expressed feelings by the the participants related with their illiteracy as Raziye and Halime indicated. After they attended the literacy courses and attained new skills like reading, writing and calculating, the participants stated that their life started to be easier, such as going outside and travelling on their own, dealing with official documents without help of others. As a result of this situation, the participants' self-confidence increased and almost the all participants stated that they feel better.

Raziye:

When my husband beat me because of my illiteracy, I used to wish I would die rather than be humiliated. My husband has beaten me since we got married. I got married when I was 17 years old. My husband was a civil engineer and he used to beat me because of my ignorance⁵⁴.

Halime:

I came here once and I observed all women doing something fun like painting, carpet weaving, learning how to write and read, etc. I decided to participate in painting and literacy courses. I feel good now and my doctor even reduced my drug dosage⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ Kocam ben cahilim diye beni dövdüğünde ölmek istiyordum. Bunların hepsi annem yüzünden aldı. Kocam beni evlendiğimizden beri dövüyordu. Evlendiğimde 17 yaşındaydım. Kocam inşaat mühendisiydi ve ben cahilim diye sürekli beni döverdi.

⁵⁵ Buraya bir sefer geldim. Baktım ki kadınlar burada eğlenceli şeyler yapıyorlar. Resim çiziyorlar, halı dokuyorlar, okuma yazma öğreniyorlar. O gün ben de kaydımı yaptım. Resim kursuna ve okuma yazma kursuna yazıldım. Şimdi kendimi daha iyi, daha güçlü hissediyorum. Hatta doktorlar benim ilaçlarımı da değiştirdiler daha iyisin diyorlar.

Secondly, the participants who have traumatic backgrounds in their childhood and adulthood have found a space to express their feelings in literacy courses and they have met with others who have similar backgrounds with them. At this point, the literacy courses turn into some kind of rehabilitation group in which people who have similar histories share their experiences and realize that they are not alone. This process may be considered as another factor affecting the participants' well-being positively.

Elif:

When I started to the literacy course I felt better, I found new friends who have different backgrounds, and I can talk about my problems. It is a kind of psychological rehabilitation⁵⁶.

Lack of School and School Age Problem

All of the participants older than 50 years of age have the same experience. There was no school in their village and when the school was established in the village, their age had exceeded the school age, so they were not accepted to the school. Most of them told me that if they had had a school, their parents would probably have sent them to the primary school.

Zeynep:

There was no school in our village, so all children went to school in the nearest village. My parents did not want to send me to school because I had to work in fields and do housework. My brothers, including the oldest one, went to school with the other children in the village. My younger sisters were (babies) so young. When a school was established in our village, I wanted to go to school. My father allowed me to go to school. However my age was bigger than the other new starters and school principal refused to accept me⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Buraya başladıktan sonra daha iyi hissetmeye başladım. Farklı altyapılara sahip insanlar tanıdım, sıkıntılarımı anlatabiliyorum. Burası bir nebze psikolojik iyileşme yeri gibi.

⁵⁷ Bizim köyde okul yoktu. Köydeki bütün çocuklar yakındaki başka bir köyün okula giderlerdi. Annem babam beni okula göndermek istemedi. Ben hem tarlada çalışıyordum hem de ev işlerine yardım ediyordum. Abim ve diğer küçük erkek kardeşlerim köydeki diğer çocuklarla birlikte okula gidip geliyorlardı. Benden küçük olan kız kardeşlerimde çok küçüktüler zaten. Bizim köyde okul

The Acquisition of New Skills Related to Daily Life

The most common expectation from the literacy courses is to get new skills in order to deal with daily life activities on their own. All participants had a negative memory about reading bus plate, dialing phone numbers, filling a document, and getting an appointment from a hospital. They all asked someone for help and they all believed that asking help to read bus plate is a kind of humiliation for them.

Halime:

I think I can express myself better than before. I know what I am talking and what I am referring. I know numbers so I can get my appointment from the hospital by myself and I can find where the doctors' offices are in the hospitals. Finally, I feel complete. I do not need any help while I am doing something⁵⁸.

Ruken:

My nephew is sick and we generally visit his doctor twice a week. We need to get an appointment by phone for our every visit. I did not recognize the numbers and I could not catch what they said on phone. I get into trouble in this situation every time. Also, when I go to the banks or municipality, they request me to fill a form. However I could not do it and I need someone to fill the forms for me⁵⁹.

Getting Diploma

Getting a diploma is an expectation related to the ages of the participants. The younger ones see the diploma as a step that leads safer environment in the future by having a desirable job. They believe that if they get a higher degree as much as

açıldığında ben çok heves etmiştim. Babamla okula gittik ama ordaki müdür yaşıma diğer yeni başlayanlardan büyük diye beni okula kabul etmedi.

⁵⁸ Kendimi daha iyi ifade ediyorum eskiye göre. Ne konuştuğumu biliyorum, ne demek istediğimi de biliyorum. Rakamları artık tanıyorum. Hastaneden kendi randevumu kendim alıyorum. Hastanede doktorların nerede olduğunu kendim buluyorum. Artık tam insan olduğumu hissediyorum. Bir şeyler yaparken kimseden yardım istemiyorum.

⁵⁹ Benim yeğenim hasta ve her hafta iki sefer doktora gidiyoruz. Doktora gitmeden önce mutlaka telefonda randevu almanız gerekiyor. Ben rakamları bilmiyordum bir de telefonda söyledikleri şeylerden anlamıyordum. Her seferinde problem yaşıyordum bu yüzden. Birde banka da ya da belediyede bir işim olduğunda benden bir şeyler doldurmamı istiyorlardı. Yazmam olmadığı için yapamıyordum. Birilerinden sürekli yardım istiyordum.

possible they will be paid better in jobs. All of younger participants in this study stated to continue their education until they graduated from high school level. The older participants, on the other hand, have stated that they would not continue because of their ages. Literacy courses for older participants have served as a space for relaxation, sharing, and learning environment. Younger participants in the sample of this study have conceptualized the purpose of literacy education as a necessary skill to perform well in economic production as functionalist view of literacy education has suggested.

Ahmet:

After I get my diploma, I am going to apply for a certificate which is important for waiters in order to work in five star restaurants. Moreover, I want to get a driver's license for my military service in order to find a position in driver class in the army, since I think soldiers who are in driver class have easier tasks during military service⁶⁰.

Merve:

If I were a literate person, I am sure that I would find another job easily. Sometimes, I want to resign from this restaurant but I am afraid that I can not find another one. So, I have to be patient. When I get my diploma I am going to search better jobs⁶¹.

How Does Adult Literacy Education Affect the Lives of the Participants?

In this part, themes that emerged from the interviews about the effects of literacy courses from the views of participants will be presented. These are higher self-confidence and empowerment, and improved communication skills.

⁶⁰ Diplomamı aldıktan sonra garsonluk için bir kursa yazdıracak beni. Beş yıldızlı lokantalarda garson olabilmek için bu kurs. Birde askerliğimi rahat yapmak için şoför olmak için başvuracağım. Ehliyet içinde diploma istiyorlar.

⁶¹ Eğer okumam yazmam olsaydı başka bir yerde çok daha rahat iş bulurdum. Bazen buradan istifa etsem diyorum ama kimse de bana iş vermez çünkü okuma yazma bilmiyorum. O yüzden sabırlı olmam lazım. Diplomamı alır almaz başka işlere bakacağım.

Increased Self-Confidence and Empowerment

All of the participants stated that their emotions about the problems in their daily life started to change in a more confident, decisive and less hesitant way. As for the change in relations with their family members, participants had become more proactive compared to their past and they became more optimistic about their future. Increasing self-confidence level has brought on social participation, economic contribution, and psychological well being.

Ruken:

When I fill a document by myself or get an appointment from a hospital, I felt that I can handle with whatever I need to do. I feel that my self-confidence increases⁶².

Zeynep:

I feel I am changing. During the literacy course I force myself to produce examples related to our study texts. If I produce plenty of them I feel stronger. I can express myself better than before I attended literacy course. I have better communication with my children and relatives. I learned to listen them and they learned to listen what I am saying. I feel happier⁶³.

Halime:

I think I can express myself better than before. I know what I am talking about and what I am referring to. I know numbers, so I can get my appointment by phone from the hospital by myself and I can find where the doctors' offices are in the hospitals. Finally, I feel like a complete human being. I do not need any help while I am doing something. I can go to the cinema or a tea-garden with my friends now⁶⁴.

⁶² Tek başıma bir form doldurduğumda ya da hastaneden randevu aldığımda her şeyi yapabilirim gibi hissediyorum. Kendime güvenimin arttığını hissediyorum. Bir de yeğenime masal kitabı okuduğumda kendimi çok iyi hissediyorum. Yeğenim de çok mutlu oluyor.

⁶³ Değiştiğimi hissediyorum. Kursta okuduğumuz şeylerle ilgili örnek vermek için kendimi zorluyorum. Çok örnek verebilirsem kendimi iyi hissediyorum, güçlü hissediyorum. Okuma yazma kursuna katıldıktan sonra kendimi daha iyi ifade edebiliyorum. Çocuklarımla ve komşularımla daha iyi iletişim kurmaya başladım. Onları dinlemeyi öğrendim, onlarda benim ne dediğimi dinlemeye başladılar. Kendimi daha mutlu hissediyorum.

⁶⁴ Kendimi daha iyi ifade ediyorum eskiye göre. Ne konuştuğumu biliyorum, ne demek istediğimi de biliyorum. Rakamları artık tanıyorum. Hastaneden kendi randevumu kendim alıyorum. Hastanede doktorların nerede olduğunu kendim buluyorum. Artık tam insan olduğumu hissediyorum. Bir şeyler yaparken kimseden yardım istemiyorum. Arkadaşlarımla sinemaya veya çay bahçesine gidiyoruz.

Raziye:

I was like brindled animal; I could not protect my rights. After I joined literacy courses I turned into a panther to protect my zone. No one can violate my rights, no one can beat me anymore, and no one can humiliate me. I can read bus plates, I can dial the phone numbers, and I can do anything on my own. All of these make me feel better. I am a complete human now, may be a super human⁶⁵.

Improved Communication Skills

The participants believe that their communication skills have improved when they were able to read since they have learned how to use a word and make a sentence.

They also developed their interpersonal communication skills when on break during the course periods. So, older participants especially became much more talkative and started to produce their own ideas about an issue in the family.

Zeynep:

I can express myself better than before I attended literacy course. I have a better communication with my children and relatives. I learn to listen and they have learned to listen what I said⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Eskiden yular takılmış bir hayvan gibiydim, haklarımı koruyamazdım. Bu kursa katıldıktan sonra pantere döndüm. Kendi alanımı şimdi koruyorum. Hiç kimse haklarımı çiğneyemez veya beni dövemez artık. Kimse beni küçük düşeremez artık. Otobüs tabelalarını okuyorum, telefon numarasını kendim çeviriyorum, ne istersem onu tek başıma yapabiliyorum artık. Tüm bunlar daha iyi hissetmemi sağlıyor. Şimdi tam bir insan oldum, belki de süper insan.

⁶⁶ Okuma yazma kursuna katıldıktan sonra kendimi daha iyi ifade edebiliyorum. Çocuklarımla ve komşularımla daha iyi iletişim kurmaya başladım. Onları dinlemeyi öğrendim, onlarda benim ne dediğimi dinlemeye başladılar. Kendimi daha mutlu hissediyorum.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study examines the effects of adult literacy courses on the participants' life. In order to reach the aim of this study, personal history of participants was analyzed. Moreover, reasons and process of literacy course participation of each subject included into the study.

There are similarities and differences between this study's findings and other preliminary studies. Yazlık (2008), Yıldız (2006), and Kalkan (1996) have found increasing self-confidence, empowerment and improving communication skills to be the effects of adult literacy courses. This study has found similar results in terms of effects of adult literacy education. Previous studies, on the other hand, did not focus on participation process of adults which is a very important input for understanding the effectiveness of adult literacy courses. This study has found that age, psychological status, past experiences, and altruism were common point of participants.

The age of participants plays a crucial role in adult literacy education in more than one way. Reasons of participation, effects of courses, and perception of the self during the course process were affected by participant's age. Older participants tended to acquire basic survival skills which allow them to operate daily activities by their own. They can travel alone by reading bus plates, get appointments from health services by dialing phone, or read storybooks to their grand children. As Yazlık (2008), Yıldız (2006), and Kalkan (1996) noted, reasons of adult literacy participation were associated with the acquisition of skills required by environments. On the other hand, younger participants of literacy courses tended to shape their future by getting diploma and finding an appropriate job. As a result, reasons of participation change between older and younger adults in terms of time notion where

the older group focuses on present and the younger group focuses on future time in order to improve their life conditions.

The poor life experiences of older adults, the present events have negative impacts on their daily life such as not being able to read bus signs, make appointments for hospitals, fill forms and disappointments that they experienced throughout their life have significant effects on their misuse of time concept. However, it should be noted that their primary focus is the endurance against their daily life problems instead of growing future expectations due to their old age. The younger group, on the other hand, sees the literacy course as the first step in shaping their future life. The young adults will pursue their education after graduating from the literacy courses, which means a rise in their level of skills which increases their chances of getting a job. The age group of adults is a factor in determining the effects of literacy courses on the participants. The older group indicates that their level of self-esteem increases after being able to conduct daily affairs on their own whereas, the younger group feels more powerful since they believe they can shape their futures.

Gender discrimination is the most significant obstacle that stands in front of women in accessing school. The fact that almost all of the participants of literacy courses of the Public Education Center where this study was conducted, are women proves the reality of gender discrimination. Being from six different regions of Turkey, women from different age groups and different ethnic backgrounds are all victims due to their gender. Women's statement that they could go to school if they were born as a man proves gender discrimination.

It is an interesting finding that women who participated in this study indicated that the most important figure in the process of discrimination was their mother. The

reason behind this argument is that their mother would not protect them against dominant social power. Even though the patriarchal society takes its power from men, there can be an explanation of women's not blaming men but women for their subjection to discrimination. Children are born into an existing social structure which protected by various mechanisms. Internalized rules, statuquos, acceptences and responsibilities are turned to unquestionable and unchallenged facts. This is the point where the reason of women's blaiming their mothers lies. The thought, authority and position of father are never questioned hence the anger is directed to secondary power, to mother. Since mother/woman is easily criticized, it seems inevitable to be the anger directed subject. Education or any other personal transformative tool cannot undermine this structure.

Another important factor in participants' life stories and in process of participation is altruism. Altruism is an important theme for this study because I believe it is a coping mechanism while they were not allowed to go to school. By doing so, they could cope with their disappointment and they somehow protect their inner balance pertaining schooling experiences in their childhood. There is another interesting point about altruism. Participants, who talked about altruism, were the first or second children of the family. It may mean that to be the first or second child in the family in a village requires a higher level of responsibility, will of accomplishing the duties, and loyalty to the family. Young participants in the sample like Ahmet and Selin have underlined that the only way to get the acceptance of the family and society that they live was through self-sacrifice. Sending boys out for earning money and making girls stay at home doing housework tells us that social dynamics form expectations with respect to gender roles. What children need to do is

to obey and fulfill their duties. If these duties demand devotion and children are taught to be proud of this dedication.

All of the participants of literacy course of Public Education Center in which this study is conducted indicated that they felt well psychologically. Especially older adults after they migrated to Istanbul, they stated that they had been isolated, their travelling possibilities had been limited, and they faced difficulties in accessing health institutions and that all of these had consumed them psychologically. There are two underlying variables in the relief of participants' psychology. The first one is adults who have similar life stories listen to each other as if they constitute a share group. In this scenario, people who have been subjected to domination and negativity realize that they are not alone when they hear similar stories. When they share their stories, they relieve. On the other hand, the younger participants start to look their life more positively since they feel that they can pursue their education and find a job after graduating the literacy program and getting a diploma.

The most significant and concrete asset of literacy programs for the younger participants acquires diploma or certificate. The perceived importance of diploma is related to the organic bond between diploma and working life. This perception very much in line with the neoliberal globalization's attributed function of education, which is about making illiterate adults into literate ones in order to include them in economic production and keep them under control. Neoliberal policies' reorganization of educational services in parallel to expectations of market and vitalizing the competition in educational systems, lead individuals to desire an endless qualification. An illiterate person faces many difficulties in approving him/herself as a respectable persona and s/he finds mainly jobs that demand bodily efforts.

There are some studies about the relation between politic action and adult literacy education program. According to Stromquist (2005) self-confidence, or one's assessment of one's worth, can be considered a personal condition that precedes social and political action. An individual's heightened sense of confidence can lead to incipient forms of political behavior; it functions as an invisible armor that prepares people to undertake behaviors that may introduce risks but also intended results. Accessing to public sphere decision-making appears to require personal attributes that permit the individual to develop feelings that one can influence one's environment this implies a combination of sense of personal efficacy and self-esteem in the psychological sense. However, distinction between Stromquist's assessment of empowerment and result of this study is about adults' participation on public sphere. Stromquist says that adults who have self-confidence show themselves in political participation in society. In this study, however, adults have become more visible in either economic participation by finding a job or they become more visible in the family relation by improving communication skills.

What should adult literacy courses aim at? What are the purposes of adult literacy education? Compared to MONE's aims the participants of this study have drawn a totally different picture. According to MONE (2007) main purposes of adult literacy courses are to teach Turkish language effectively and promoting democracy. Moreover, MONE (2007) provides a basic skill list which is expected to gain by participants during literacy courses. This list covers critical thinking, creative thoughts, problem solving, decision making, entrepreneurship, leadership, monitoring emotions of the self, and etc. Interestingly, participants of this study did not mention about neither values nor skills that MONE puts forward as aims and basic skills, which are expected to gain, of literacy courses. Firstly, all of the

participants of this study – nine out of nine – have aimed at learning Turkish language in a very basic level for reading bus tables or hospital signs. None of the participants expected to learn Turkish language effectively or none of participants of this study did attend the course in order to improve their Turkish language skills. Secondly, MONE says that one of aim of literacy course is promoting democracy in participants' lives. During all interviews that I made, none of the participants talked about democratic process of society which they live in. Promoting democracy was not a reason that participants of this study continue to literacy courses. Rather the most of participants – seven out of nine – have faced oppression, humiliation, isolation, and they have lost their independencies either in their childhood or in their adulthood. Participants of this study had dependent with other people in their daily lives in terms of finding appropriate bus or getting an appointment from health services. They were looking for to act independently in their daily life. Promoting democracy was not agenda of participants of this study. Beyond main purposes of literacy courses, basic skills list provided by MONE and skills which were gained by participants were not matching each other. However, skills that emerged after completion both literacy education levels were better communication and basic reading and writing knowledge. It may be considered as the agenda of participants of this study is to get necessary skills in order to survive. They do not interest in critical thinking, promoting democracy, using Turkish language effectively, leadership, and etc.

Critical approach to literacy is related to developing critical consciousness and skills that an individual is starting to interrogate the current social, economic, politic conditions. Oxenham (2008) conceptualized reading as interpreting, reflecting on, interrogating, theorizing, investigating, exploring, probing and questioning;

writing, on the other hand, is formulated as acting on and dialogically transforming. According to participants of this study, reading and writing conceptualized as basic skills to perform independently in society. Skills expected to emerge as critical approach stated were not mentioned by participants. However, people may be affected by social dynamics in different levels even if she/he oppressed. People may have different priorities than interpreting the world or starting to ask questions about her/his conditions. People may choose to survive. Although life stories of the participants of this study are similar; there is a clear distinction between them. They were not sharing same psycho-social dynamics. Every person has one's own unique conditions and affected by society in a different level. The common point for them is to survive in order to read bus tables or finding appropriate doctor in health service. So, the participants of this study have pointed out their personal dynamics which are affected on expectations from literacy course that critical approach does not mentioned. However, changes which emerged in the participants lives (i.e. increased self-confidence, being empowered, and improved communication skills) may support what critical approach conceptualized literacy. Effects of literacy education that I mentioned above, could establish a link between an adult who became conscience about her/his conditions or environment and society he or she lived in. On the other hand there was a clear link between reasons of participation to literacy courses and aims of adult literacy education defined by functional approach. According to functional approach the aim of literacy is to enable a person engage in all activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his/her group and community (UNESCO, 2006). The aims of the participants of this study were getting a diploma in order to apply or find a job, learning to read bus tables in order to travel or to find

appropriate health services in hospitals, and learning to write in order to fill a document to operate bank services.

The effectiveness of literacy courses, from the views of participants, concentrated on two points. The first one is about self-confidence and empowerment. The participants of this study believed that their self-confidence was gradually increasing while they actively participated in literacy courses. I thought that being literate is the way of being exist in the society for them especially when I consider their past humiliations, ignorance, and shamed related to their literacy skills. To participate in literacy courses may bring respect, support, and acceptance to participants. The second one is about gaining better communications skills while interacting with others. The participants have trained in using Turkish language in literacy courses in either orally or literary. However, even if they become familiar with words and they learn how to use the words in their daily lives, they aimed at using Turkish language in a basic level.

On the contrary of the related literature, I could not find any political effects of literacy courses. Instead, I found that participants consciously stay away from politics and they did not make a connection between literacy skills and politics. I believe that Turkish adult literacy education programs reflect functionalist view of literacy as UNESCO or OECD defined which focuses on the very basic writing and reading skills of illiterate adults. On the other hand, I found that similar social effects of literacy courses which are mentioned in related literature chapter. Increasing self-confidence, empowerment, and improved communication skills are the similar themes. Again, I found that there is not a clear connection between effect of literacy courses and personal economic improvement of participant; however it may effect on finding a job or improving job status of the participants along with certifications.

To conclude, it seems that Public Education Centers should provide psychological services for any participants of any course, especially those who participate in literacy courses. Psychologically supported individuals will feel more powerful in both adaptation of literacy and in coping with their own life problems. Therefore, it would be an important point in turning the literacy programs into a space in which grown ups express and transform themselves.

The most important point, in my opinion, that should be taken into consideration is that the literacy programs should be designed with respect to age groups since the effects of and the expectations from the courses are different between the age groups. Hence, it would be easy to focus on participants' needs and their personal development would be more fast and accurate as well. Moreover, MONE should design adult literacy education programs according to andragogy rather than pedagogy. Adults are trained with primary school textbooks and methods. This brought lower participation in class activities and increases drop-out level.

The majority of the participants of literacy courses indicate the lack of school in the village they live in. This is one of the main reasons of their illiteracy. It seems that most of them would have gone to school if they had a school to attend. It is of vital to raise the number of schools in the rural areas.

Limitation of the Study

The most important setback of this study is the limited number of men participating in the research. Uneven representation of women and men might influence the themes found. Besides, this study was conducted only in one of the public education centers with a limited number of participants. During the interviews, it should not be ignored that participants might have reacted in the ways that they believe are socially acceptable and wanted.

Suggestion for Further Studies

The number of studies especially academic ones concerning the influences of literacy courses on people's lives is very limited. The importance of literacy courses seems to be underestimated by both the members of society and the producers of empirical knowledge. It is an emergent need to focus on increasing the efficiency of literacy courses, precautions for promoting the participation of literacy courses and developing program contents that are more sensitive to their audiences.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

A. Background Information of Participants

Age:

Birth place:

Number and gender of siblings:

Educational backgrounds of parents and siblings:

(If born outside of Istanbul) When and why they moved to Istanbul:

Marital status:

(If have) Number and gender of children:

(If have) Educational background of children:

(If have) Educational background of spouse:

Work experiences:

Where and with whom they live:

Brief life history:

B. Participation Process

- a. Why she/he decides to participate in literacy courses?
- b. What was the reaction of her/his family against participation decision?

C. Effects of Literacy

- a. How literacy course effect her/his life?
- b. What she/he is going to do after gets her/his diploma/certificate?

Appendix B: Görüşme Soruları

A. Katılımcıların Demografik Bilgileri

Yaş:

Doğum yeri:

Kardeşlerinin cinsiyeti ve yaşları:

Ebeveynlerinin ve kardeşlerinin eğitimi:

(İstanbul dışında doğmuşsa) Ne zaman ve neden İstanbul'a geldi:

Medeni durumu:

(Varsa) Çocuklarının cinsiyeti:

(Varsa) Çocuklarının eğitim durumu:

(Varsa) Eşinin eğitim durumu:

İş deneyimi:

Nerede ve kiminle yaşıyor:

Kısa hayat öyküsü:

B. Katılım süreci

1. Okuma yazma kursuna neden katıldınız?
2. Kursa katıldıktan sonra etrafınızdaki insanların tepkisi ne oldu?

C. Okuma Yazma Kursunun Etkileri

1. Okuma yazma kursu hayatınız nasıl etkiledi/etkiliyor?
2. Diplomanızı/belgenizi aldıktan sonra ne yapmayı planlıyorsunuz?

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