

## Examination on Media Literacy Behaviors of Teacher Candidates: Ege University Example

(Öğretmen Adaylarının Medya Okuryazarlık Davranışlarının İncelenmesi: Ege Üniversitesi Örneği)

Gizem ENGIN<sup>1</sup>  
Salih Zeki GENC<sup>2</sup>

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### Abstract

The basic purpose of the study is to determine the media literacy levels of teacher candidates. Within the frame of this basic purpose, it is observed whether the media literacy levels of teacher candidates vary depending on the undergraduate program they study, their opportunities to access internet, to follow newspaper and magazines and their frequency of watching television. The study group of the research is consisted of total 332 teacher candidates in the academic year of 2013-2014 who study their last year at Ege University, Faculty of Education in the undergraduate programs of Primary School Teaching, Turkish Teaching, Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching, Pre-School Teaching, Social Sciences Teaching, Psychological Counseling and Guidance and Science Teaching. The data of the study is gathered with the “Media Literacy Level Determination Scale” developed by Karaman and Karataş (2009). In the analysis of the data; tests of average, standard deviation and Anova are used. In accordance with the findings of the research, significant diversity among teacher candidate’s level of media literacy, based on the undergraduate program they study, is found. Additionally, it is also found that the opportunities to access internet, to follow newspaper and magazines have also created significant diversity in teacher candidate’s level of media literacy.

**Keywords:** Media literacy, teacher candidates, faculty of education, internet access, media.

### Özet

Araştırmanın temel amacı, öğretmen adaylarının medya okuryazarlık düzeylerini belirlemektir. Bu temel amaç çerçevesinde, öğretmen adaylarının medya okuryazarlık düzeylerinin öğrenim gördükleri lisans programı, internet erişim olanağı, gazete ve dergileri takip edebilme, televizyon izleme sıklıklarına göre farklılaşma gösterip göstermediğine bakılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, 2013-2014 öğretim yılında Ege Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi’nde son sınıfta öğrenim gören Sınıf Öğretmenliği, Türkçe Öğretmenliği, Bilgisayar ve Öğretim Teknolojileri Öğretmenliği, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği, Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenliği, Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik ve Fen Bilgisi Öğretmenliği Lisans programlarındaki toplam 332 öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada veriler Karaman ve Karataş (2009) tarafından geliştirilen “Medya Okuryazarlık Düzey Belirleme Ölçeği” ile toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde ortalama, standart sapma, Anova testleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre öğretmen adaylarının öğrenim gördükleri lisans programına göre medya okuryazarlık düzeyleri arasında anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının internet erişim olanaklarının ve gazete, dergileri takip etme durumlarının medya okuryazarlık düzeylerinde anlamlı farklılık oluşturduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.


**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Medya okuryazarlığı, öğretmen adayları, eğitim fakültesi, internet erişimi, medya.

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<sup>1</sup> Res. Assist. Dr., Ege University, İzmir, Turkey, [gizem.engin@ege.edu.tr](mailto:gizem.engin@ege.edu.tr).

<sup>2</sup> Assoc. Prof. Dr., Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Turkey, [szgenc@yahoo.com](mailto:szgenc@yahoo.com)

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## Introduction

Soydan (2012, p.36) defines media as “the whole communication systems enabling the three basic functions of keeping the message and information in a society, transferring from a distance and update of cultural and political practices to be performed fully or partly”. İnceoğlu (2007), by transferring the view of Laswell that the “the media injects the messages through human skin”, has expressed that media has strong and direct effect on its followers. It is clear that in order for this effect on media followers to be positively reflected on the individuals and society, the media literacy level should be raised.

Although the concept of media literacy has been popular for 30 years in Western countries, it has only become a subject of interest since 2000s. The lesson of media literacy, the foundations of which have been laid by RTÜK and MEB cooperation, can be regarded as one of the major steps taken in this respect (RTÜK, 2005). Within this scope, on the website of RTÜK (<http://www.rtuk.org.tr/>), media reading and media writing are explained based on the four main skills that the media literacy should include. While the media-reading individual is expected to have advanced skills of access, analysis and assessment, media-writing individual is expected to have advanced skill of production. In other words, media-reading individuals should be able to reach the safe sources; to use Internet search engines, to question the source, content and purpose of the reached messages and they should be able to assess the messages in accordance with the context. Media-writing people, on the other hand, should have the qualification to produce their own messages.

Media, affecting the life in every aspect, has taken everything under its effect from the social relationships people establish to the clothes they choose, words they use, the way they think and express themselves. Affecting the individual and society to such an extent, media is directed by those holding the money and power and it directs the masses in a conscious way in terms of policy and economy (Okur-Berberoğlu, 2013). Doğan (2012) has supported the view of Okur (2013) by stating that the media has undertaken different functions when compared to previous years and that it sometimes even tends towards the functions that exceed the purpose in respect of the development status of the societies. Doğan (2012) has stated that the media has been longing to possess the function and responsibility of family, school and mosque and thus it has undertaken a heavy responsibility and that the media in Turkey is not meticulous and sensitive as it should be and he has stated that the media pulls the strings from politics to football. Media, which has such wide and important area of effect, is certainly important in raising the individuals who have gained media literacy.

Luke (1989) states that the literacy means more than reading and writing, and that it includes access, interpretation and production (Akt. Livingstone,2004). Aufderheide (1993), on the other hand, states that the media literacy includes the components of access, analysis, assessment and production which are not linear and dynamically support each other. Rushkoff (1996) has expressed that the children are now spending most of their day in front of screen (tv/computer/game console) and he has used the

term of “screen-agers” for them (Akt,Thoman and Jolls,2004). It is requisite for the future peace and welfare of the society to raise awareness among these individuals aging in front of the screen.

With this purpose, the media literacy level, which may raise awareness among screen-children, is very important for raising teachers with high conscious (Yeşil and Korkmaz, 2008; Deveci and Çengelci, 2008; İnan and Bayındır, 2009; Karaman and Karataş, 2009). Considine, Horton and Moorman (2009) have stated that media literacy is a very important subject in societies where multiculturalism is on the rise and they have exemplified some educational strategies (T.A.P model) that the teacher can use while doing this and highlighted the importance of teachers’ roles in functioning and correctly understanding the media messages. Thoman and Jolls (2004), also having highlighted the roles of teachers in the process, have listed the features of qualified media literacy applications as; focusing more on the process than the content, not only using the written message but also using the visual, auditory and oral messages for forming new ideas and making contacts and as being a questioning process. Thoman and Jolls (2004), stating that the five key questions determined by the Media Literacy center would lead the educators, has listed these questions as follows;

- 1) Who has produced this message?
- 2) Which creative techniques have been used to draw my attention?
- 3) How can people understand the messages different than me?
- 4) Which life styles, values and points of view are reflected?
- 5) Why is this message sent?

All these questions will serve to raise the individuals who do to accept the offered as it is and those who have learned to how to select, analyze, assess, think on and create idea on the offered.

### **Method**

In a universe consisted of many employees, this is a research in general survey model conducted on the whole universe or on a group to be taken, example or sample, aiming at reaching a general conclusion on the universe (Karasar, 2003).

### **Purpose of the Research**

In this research, it is aimed to study the media literacy levels of final year students at Ege University, Faculty of Education. Within the frame of this purpose, it is tried to determine whether the media literacy levels of teacher candidates depend on the undergraduate program they study, their opportunity to access internet, to follow newspaper and magazine and their frequency of watching television. In this respect, the following questions are searched for an answer;

- 1) What are the media literacy levels of teacher candidates?
- 2) Do the media literacy levels of teacher candidates change in accordance with the undergraduate program they study?
- 3) Do the media literacy levels of teacher candidates change in accordance with their opportunity to access the internet?

- 4) Do the media literacy levels of teacher candidates change in accordance with their following the newspaper and magazines?
- 5) Do the media literacy levels of teacher candidates change in accordance with their frequency of watching television? These questions are searched for an answer.

### **Study Group**

The study group of the research is consisted of total 332 teacher candidates in the academic year of 2013-2014 who study their last year at Ege University, Faculty of Education- as they are easily accessible- in the undergraduate programs of Primary School Teaching, Turkish Teaching, Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching, Pre-School Teaching, Social Sciences Teaching, Psychological Counseling and Guidance and Science Teaching.

### **Data Gathering Tool**

The data of the study is gathered with the “Media Literacy Level Determination Scale” developed by Karaman and Karataş (2009). The scale is consisted of 17 questions under 3 factors with the purpose of determining media literacy. The scaling tool is in the type of 5 point likert scale. In the scaling; “1=Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4=Frequently and 5= Always”. Croncach’s alpha coefficient calculated on all scale matters is found to be 840. Croncach’s alpha coefficient of the scale’s sub-dimensions is calculated as; having information (.72), being able to analyze and form reaction (.70) and being able to judge and recognize implicit messages (.68).

### **Analysis of Data**

On the data acquired via “Media Literacy Level Determination Scale”, average, standard deviation calculations and Anova test statistics are applied by using the SPSS statistics program.

### **Findings and Comments**

This part will include findings and comments acquired from the research data in the order according with the questions discussed within the scope of this research.

Regardless of the effect of variables, averages and standard deviations of the teacher candidates’ responses to the items related to existent media literacy level is give in Table 1.

Table 1

*Average and Standard Deviation Points that the Teacher Candidates Rated for the Items in Media Literacy Level Scale*

Factor	Item	X	SS
<b>Having Information</b>	I can decide on my own whether the messages in the mass communication tools are right or wrong.	4.14	.76
	I recognize the consumption culture, violence and such values produced by the mass communication tools.	4.08	.76
	I recognize with which purposes (social responsibility, consumption, informing, entertainment etc.) the messages are formed.	4.11	.67
	I determine the negative and positive sides in mass communication tools.	3.95	.78

	Item	X	SS
	I assess the messages from mass communication tools with a critical point of view.	4.03	.77
	I have the competence in the subject how much the mass communication tools affect the individuals.	4.00	.80
	I recognize that mass communication tools have political, economic, cultural and social priorities.	4.15	.82
<b>Being Able to Analyze and Form Reaction</b>	I react positively or negatively towards the messages from mass communication tools.	3.88	.96
	I make suggestions regarding the protection from the negative sides of broadcasts in mass communication tools.	3.38	1.00
	I know that the given messages are formed in different shapes in different mass communication tools.	3.92	.83
	I follow whether the mass communication tools abide by the rules of law and ethics in their broadcasts.	3.22	1.07
	I know how much I individually have effect on the production process in mass communication tools.	3.53	.94
	I immediately recognize if there is biased journalism in mass communication tools.	4.17	.82
<b>Being Able to Judge and Recognize Implicit Messages</b>	I recognize the hidden advertisement in mass communication tools.	3.78	.83
	I can observe the effect of the sponsors on the broadcast.	3.71	.95
	I recognize the implicit messages transferred via mass communication tools.	3.76	.79
	I have the competence to solve the meaning in the messages transferred via mass communication tools.	3.69	.91

As can be seen in Table 1, the averages of the items of teacher candidate’s media literacy scale, ranges between 3.22 and 4,17. It is revealed that the media literacy levels of teacher candidates are ( $X=4,06$ ) at the factor of “Having Information”, ( $X=3.68$ ) at the factor of “Being Able to Analyze and Form Reaction” and ( $X=3.73$ ) at the factor of “Being Able to Judge and Recognize Implicit Messages”. When looked at the general media literacy levels of teacher candidates, the total average is found to be 3,85.

Table 2

*Media Literacy Levels of Teacher Candidates According to the Undergraduate Programs They Study, ANOVA Results*

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P	Significant Difference (Tukey Statistic)
Inter-group	1928.953	6	321.492	4.222	.000	Pre-School Teaching $X=63.32$ and Social Sciences Teaching $X= 69.20$ between Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching $X=62.58$ and Social Sciences Teaching $X= 69.20$ between Computer Teaching $X= 62.58$ and Primary School Teaching $X=67.95$ between $p<0.05$
Intra-group	24745.899	325	76.141			
Total	26674.852	331				

Levene Statistics result: ,596

As can be seen in Table 2, significant difference is found between the media literacy levels of teacher candidates according to the undergraduate program they study [ $F(6-331)=4,222$   $p<0.05$ ].

According to the result of the Tukey statistics, it is seen that between Pre-School Teaching (PST)  $X=63,32$  and Social Sciences Teaching (SST)  $X= 69,20$  it is in countenance of the SST, between Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching (CITT)  $X=62,58$  and Social Sciences Teaching  $X= 69,20$  it is in countenance of SST and between Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching  $X= 62,58$  and Primary School Teaching (PST)  $X=67,95$  it is in countenance of PST.

Table 3

Media Literacy Levels of Teacher Candidates According to the Their Opportunity to Access Internet, ANOVA Results

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P	Significant Difference (Tukey Statistic)
Inter-group	1052.983	2	526.492	6.719	.001	Between teacher candidates who have constant internet access and those who do not, it is in countenance of those who have constant access $p=.006$ and $p=.001$ of differentiation between teacher candidates who have limited access to internet and those who do not have access, it is in countenance of those who have limited access at the level of $p<0.05$
Intra-group	24995.467	319				
Total	26048.450	321				

Levene Statistics result: .142

As can be seen in Table 3, significant difference is found between the media literacy levels of teacher candidates according to their opportunity to access internet  $[F(2-321)]=6,719$   $p<0.05$ . As a result of the Tukey statistics, it is seen that this significant difference between candidate teacher who have constant internet access and those who do not have access, it is in countenance of those who have constant access ( $p=.006$ ); between candidate teachers who have limited internet access and those who do not have access, it is in countenance of those with limited internet access ( $p=.001$ ).

Table 4

Media Literacy Levels of Teacher Candidates According to Their Following of Newspaper and Magazines, ANOVA Results

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P	Significant Difference (Tukey Statistic)
Inter-group	2062,294	2	1030.147	13.749	.000	Between teacher candidates who constantly follow newspaper and magazines and those who do not follow or limitedly follow, the difference is in countenance of those who constantly follow ( $p=.000$ . at the level of $p<0.05$
Intra-group	24275.284	324	74.924			
Total	26335.578	326				

Levene Statistics result: .517

In Table 4, significant difference is found between the media literacy levels of teacher candidates according to their following of newspaper and magazines  $[F(2-326)]=13.749$   $p<0.05$ . As a result of the Tukey statistics, this significant differentiation is seen as; between candidate teacher who constantly

follow newspaper and magazines and those who do not follow or limitedly follow, it is in countenance of those who constantly follow ( $p=.000$ ).

Table 5

*Media Literacy Levels of Teacher Candidates According to Their Frequency of Watching Television, ANOVA Results*

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Squares	F	P	Significant Difference (Tukey Statistic)
Inter-group	59.869	2	29.935	.369	.692	There is no significant differentiation between the groups. at the level of $p<0.05$
Intra-group	26602.548	328	81.105			
Total	26662.417	330				

Levene Statistics result: .260

As can be seen in Table 5, there is no significant differentiation in the media literacy levels according to teacher candidate's frequency of watching television [ $F(2-330) = .369$   $p > 0.05$ ].

### Result and Discussion

In this study, the aim of which is to determine the media literacy level of teacher candidates and study their media literacy according to various factors, it is seen that the media literacy of teacher candidates are above average. This finding is similar with the finding of Karaman and Karataş (2009) in which the media literacy levels of teacher candidates are high.

Another result is that there is a significant differentiation in the media literacy level between the students who have access to internet and those who do not. Media literacy level of teacher candidates who have constant internet access is higher than those who have limited access and the media literacy level of the candidate teachers with limited internet access is higher than those who have no internet access. The results of the study conducted by Som and Kurt (2012) and Karaman and Karataş (2009) have similarity with this finding. Som and Kurt (2012) assert that if the students with internet access use it for accessing information, researching, following the agenda, contacting, reaching different sources, their interaction with media tools increase. Additionally, Som and Kurt (2012) stated that if the students with internet access spend more time on the internet, it increases their level of consciousness, being aware of the dangers that may come from media tools and enable them to act more cautiously.

Between candidate teachers who constantly follow newspaper and magazines and those who do not follow or limitedly follow, it is in countenance of those who constantly follow ( $p=.000$ ). This result leads to the thought that the analyses of written messages are related to systematical follow-up. It is thought that in understanding what messages are given with which purpose and how it is given in the media organ that is read, it is thought to be important that the reader recognizes the approach of the newspaper and magazine on the subject. This view is supported by the study conducted by Ashley, Poepsel, Wills (2010). This study reveals that media literacy is important for reviewing the texts in detail. In the study they have conducted with journalism students, it is aimed to reveal the effect of having media

literacy information on assessing the written news. The study is conducted with 80 journalism students at the undergraduate level. While the experimental group was given training via informative texts on the positive and negative sides of media, in the texts given to the control group, this aim has not been sought. As a result, it has been seen that compared to control group students, experimental group students have been more critical, interrogator and skeptical towards media.

The fact that there is no significant differentiation between the teacher candidate's frequencies of watching television on their media literacy is thought to be related to the fact that television is easily reachable and the programs followed on television are mostly about entertainment. This view is supported by the results of study by Yeşil and Korkmaz (2008) which is conducted on teacher candidates studying their 1st and 4th year at the Education Faculty of Ahi Evren University regarding the subject of teacher candidate's television addiction, their literacy level and educational value of television. As a result of this study, it is determined that there is a harmony between the television channels that the teacher candidates find to be educational and those they prefer to watch; however, there is no relationship between the programs considered educational and the programs that are watched. So to say, teacher candidates do not consider the criteria of being educational while choosing the television channel and program. Similarly, Genç and Güner (2010) have found out that the students studying at 7th and 8th grade tend to prefer the television series the most. Additionally, according to the study conducted by Genç and Güner (2014), it is expressed by the teachers that the most trusted source of secondary school students is television. It is stated, the fact that the television programs are supported by Radio and Television Supreme Council might affect this.

When the analysis results are considered, it is seen that the highest media literacy averages belong to teacher candidates who study at the undergraduate programs of Social Sciences Teaching and Primary School Teaching. Despite the expected, teacher candidates studying at the undergraduate program of Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching has had lower level on the point averages displaying the media literacy levels of teacher candidates. It is seen that in the undergraduate program of Social Sciences Teaching, besides many compulsory courses such as "current world problems, science, technology and social change, sociology, economy, philosophy", there are also elective courses such as "media literacy". Similarly, it is seen that in the undergraduate program of Primary Education Teaching, besides the compulsory courses such as "Sociology, Education Philosophy", there are elective courses such as "science, technology and science" and "media literacy". As for the courses in the undergraduate program of Computer and Instructional Technologies Teaching, there is no compulsory or elective course directly including technology and society relationship or media literacy. According to the analysis results, it is thought that this situation might affect this (E.U.,2014). Deveci and Çengelci (2008), in order to determine the views of social sciences teacher candidates on media literacy, performed semi-structured interview with 20 social sciences teacher candidates. As a result of the study, teacher candidates explained the media literacy with various views such as following the agenda and interpreting the news and they have stated that the social sciences teacher candidates should be media literates. Additionally, teacher candidates have stated that during their undergraduate education, their course contents and current matters



are associated in order to gain the ingenuity on media literacy and they have also stated that it would be important for teacher candidates if the faculty administration conducts studies in order to gain media literacy.

Çetinkaya (2008) determined in his study that during the course of media literacy there are some problems, there are some insufficiencies in terms of hardware and that there are important problems in raising the students about the media production process.

The information blast can be seen as one of the important problems for the education policies applied in the world. For a long time, schools are organized to help students mark the right answers on the test questions in the name of teaching world facts. Currently, this organization has fallen from favor with the information blast and rapid advancement in technology. Today, students have the necessity not to memorize the information piles not to know how to reach to which information, to question the information they reach, to analyze this information and interiorize it upon assessment (Jols and Thoman, 2008).

Education Faculties, as the establishments raising teachers, will make great contributions in the society by raising conscious and competent teacher candidates in terms of media literacy. With this purpose, there should be courses for media literacy at the level of undergraduate, post-graduate and doctorate. As there are elective media literacy courses in schools, the teachers currently teaching these courses should have a in-service training and they should be supported with regularly offered qualified publications in order to increase the education quality (Altun, 2009).

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