

## Children's Right to Acquire Information and Be Protected from Injurious Publications in Textbooks\*

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**ABSTRACT.** The purpose of this study is to put forth to what extent the issues of the children's right to acquire information through mass media and their right to be protected from injurious publications have been given place in elementary school 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Life Sciences (LS) textbooks and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Sciences (SS) textbooks that are published and distributed to schools by the Ministry of National Education in the 2006-2007 educational year in Turkey. In the study, qualitative research method was preferred and all the themes of textbooks were studied by use of the content analysis method. Frequencies and percentages were used in the analysis of data. In all the textbooks, the topic of the child's right to acquire information through mass media were given more place than the topic of the child's right to be protected from injurious publications.

**Key Words:** Right, children's rights, acquiring information, injurious publication, textbooks.

### INTRODUCTION

A child is a developing and growing being. The development of the child is influenced by both his own characteristics and the environment. The process of changes caused by the environment in behaviors is qualified as learning (Bayhan & Artan, 2004). Learning is also defined as acquiring information and receiving news (Turkish Language Association, 1998).

Mass media has a great role in children's learning and accessing information. But in spite of such efficacies, they can also have some harm. In this study, first, the role of the written, visual and audio mass media in a child's life was accentuated; then, the legal bases of children's rights to acquire information through mass media and to be protected from injurious publications were discussed and finally the data obtained were interpreted based on the objective of the research.

### The Role of Mass Media in the Development of Child

Within the social structure, one of the most important functions of the mass media is the "education" function. When it is considered that the 'informing' function can be provided by the mass media, the importance of the provision of the education function by the mass media can be understood better. The provision of the education function by the mass media is possible through the use of educational programs in the broadcast presented as well as giving news. For the mass media to be able to fulfill the education function, great care needs to be taken with regard to the content and presentation of the messages oriented towards all spectators, mainly children. While in some countries, instructive programs oriented towards children can remove the flaws of formal education; in some others, they are of an enriching and complementary quality (Aziz, 1982).

Today, there are many views on the many positive influences of mass media, such as informing, on children as well as their negative influences. The influences of the written and visual-audio mass media on children, the titles of which are listed below, will be discussed.

### The Role of Written Mass Media in the Development of Child

Books hold the first place among the tools that have roles in children's education. In addition, magazines and newspapers are also among the printed mass media that are important in children's learning. Books that are prepared according to every age phase and that are finely constructed with various themes not only improve the individual's linguistic taste, but they also enrich the language in

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terms of concept (Alpay, 1989). Children need to be introduced with books at an early age for them to enjoy reading in the future. A child with a reading habit will enjoy understanding and reading, read without feeling bored, and thus, he or she will both acquire new information easily and be successful at school thanks to his linguistic development and reading skills (Alpöge, 2003).

Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions (Vygotsky, 1978). Written materials have a great importance on the development of children. Especially the works of children literature contribute to the development of mother tongue of children (Aslan, 2007a). To make children gain the habit of reading and acquiring information from the press in daily life, reading newspapers, books, and magazines etc. in the company of a child, taking them to bookstores, book fairs and libraries etc. from infancy, giving books as presents on special occasions along with other presents can yield very good results (Yılmaz, 2004 & Alpay, 1989).

### **The Role of Visual and Audio Mass Media in the Development of Child**

When the child's acquiring information is considered, the importance of television, radio and computer is indisputable. Especially with the television, the "interpretation age", which was based on writing culture, was replaced by the "show age", and thus, this tool which appeals to both the eyes and the ears has arisen (Sayın, 1999). Among the main functions of television, its entertaining and teaching qualities can be listed. Besides, television is a device that sets the environment suitable for the individuals to recognize themselves and improve their personalities and sometimes gives them the opportunity to think and criticize. Television has a stronger influence than the written mass media since it is closer to visual communication but its influence generally appears once the program is over. Because of this special feature of television, in developing countries where the literacy rate is low, the likelihood of television's being watched is higher than the likelihood of the written mass media being used (Kocadaş, 2002).

Today, as soon as a child opens his eyes, he begins to communicate not only with his parents but also with television which has almost become a member of the family. Television is an attractive entertainment tool with its narration methods such as short narration, rapid action, fast plans, flashes, colors and music. However, families need to consider television not as a device in front of which a child spends all his day, but as a device that helps children to acquire information and impression about various issues they may encounter in daily life (Akbulut & Kartopu, 2004).

In the World Communication Report published by UNESCO, it is stated that "Turkey is in the second place following the USA with regard to the number of TV-viewing hours". In the report where the Americans is in the first place with an average of three hours 59 minutes TV-viewing per day, Turkish television spectators hold the second place with an average of 3 hours 36 minutes. In a research conducted by RTÜK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) on 5.360 people, it was noted that 98,9% of children in Turkey watch television, and school children spend 77,3% of their spare time watching television (Kebapçı, 2001).

While television offers constructive services since it is an influential mass media tool addressing visual and auditory senses, if not evaluated well, it may cause negative results (Yavuzer, 1996). From many points of view, children are more unprotected in front of television when compared to adults (Çaplı, 2001). For instance, the child's sitting still in front of television for hours hinder his healthy physiological growth. Television causes alienation, fear and insecurity in people (Kurt, 2001).

Television keeps children away from games and the company of their friends, which are of great importance in terms of their social and psychological development. Sometimes, these negativities may leave a mark that will be effective all their adult life long (Arslan, 2004). Television may also influence children's linguistic development negatively. In a research conducted by Gökçay and Köklük (2003), it was found out that 21% of children begin watching television before six months old. In this research, 50% of children who watch television more than 2 hours a day and 31% of children who watch television less than 2 hours a day live through delays in their linguistic development, and also delays occur in their personal and social development (Akbulut & Kartopu, 2004).

In addition to the above mentioned negativities that are caused just by watching television, sometimes the contents of the programs presented can also involve some negative elements. Particularly acts of violence are presented as a part of life everywhere and all the time on television from news to films and from serial films to cartoons. In this case, it can be said that television increases tendency

towards aggressiveness and frequency of exhibiting aggressive behavior in children (Arslan, 2004). Programs that involve violence, aggressiveness and sexuality may push children towards psychological problems and may cause them to become introverted, quarrelsome, and have a tendency towards acts of exploitation and violence. Over-stimulation of sexual and aggressive behavior drives at early ages may create a negative conditioning and cause sexual perversion and sadistic emotions to arise in children (<http://www.temizekran.com>).

Another influence of television on children is that it is provocative. The hero or the character who children admire is usually the ones they want to become when they grow up. In this way, a child wants to become like the character he watches not with his personal consciousness, studies or talents but with completely different influences (<http://www.temizekran.com>).

Television advertisements greatly influence especially children's consumption tendencies. Children have become a significant target for advertisement industry specifically presented through television. Happy lives are promised under the slogans and messages used in advertisements and it is expressed that the only way to reach that life is to have that product. These messages, which influence even the adults most of the time, have a stronger influence on children who are yet to socialize and become adults. Therefore, children are made to believe the thought that one becomes happy merely through consumption instead of many standards of judgment at a humane level such as studying, being successful, being virtuous etc. (<http://www.temizekran.com>). It is also argued that advertisements cause thinking, criticizing, discussing and deciding using free will to atrophy in children (Akyüz, 2000).

The relationships between television beer advertising and drinking knowledge, beliefs, and intentions were investigated in a survey of schoolchildren (Grube & Wallack, 1994). This research was guided by a theoretical model specifying that awareness of advertising, and not mere exposure, is necessary for it to have an effect on beliefs or behaviors. The findings suggest that alcohol advertising may predispose young people to drinking. As a result, efforts to prevent drinking and drinking problems among young people should give attention to countering the potential effects of alcohol advertising.

According to Story and French (2004) In recent years, the food and beverage industry in the US has viewed children and adolescents as a major market force. As a result, children and adolescents are now the target of intense and specialized food marketing and advertising efforts. Food marketers are interested in youth as consumers because of their spending power, their purchasing influence, and as future adult consumers. Multiple techniques and channels are used to reach youth, beginning when they are toddlers, to foster brand-building and influence food product purchase behavior.

While small changes are apparent, advertisements during children's television are still dominated by those for foods of questionable nutritional value, in a manner designed to engage attention and emotional response. That overweight children appeared more influenced by their personal enhancement message, suggests the value of further work identifying who is most influenced and by what features of advertising (Lewis & Hill, 1998).

Today, computers have also started to play an important role in the education of children. Especially the internet, which is accepted as a wonder of technology, functions as an informative tool used for communication. As the internet provides easy access to various information, it attracts the children and the young. However, though it has many benefits, when it is not used properly, it can do great harm on children. For instance, when surfing on the internet, children can access many websites used by the adults and they do not encounter any blockages when doing so (Kızıldağ, 2003).

The entrance of internet with its postings, chats, forums to our communication habits has negative effects on especially written language. Words are abbreviated and written directly as in spoken language, and spelling mistakes were done frequently. Emails are seemed as if they were kinds of post-its written quickly, illegibly and carelessly. Punctuation marks are not taken into consideration and few people address each other as "Mr.", "Mrs.", "Miss" or "Dear ...". Polite statements are less included and diminishing. Moreover, in postings of forums lots of abbreviations and writing mistakes are made and no capital letters emphasizes and punctuation marks are used. Means such as emails and chats have changed structures of texts entirely since they provide quick access to establish a communication in short time. Since the establishment of communication done synchronously and with spoken language but via written form, this usage makes language structures and styles interfere with each other. Since means such as facial expressions, gestures and stress, harmony that cannot be separated from the verbal communication in facial communication are ignored in written internet setting, in other words, that emotions cannot be transferred via these means force users to search new means (Aslan, 2007b).

It is also observed that in recent years, computer games involving elements of aggression and violence have a negative influence on the young. It is known that most of the computer games that are sold without any inspection involve aggression, violence and blood. That the person who is playing such a game is in a position where he is actually the one performing and managing violence and that a direct correlation can not be established between the dimensions of violence and the rates and results of the influence are the reasons for a decrease in sensitivity against violent behaviors and thus, such behavior gains an ordinary quality (<http://www.annelergrubu.com>).

### **The Legal Grounds for Children's Rights to Acquire Information through Mass Media and to be Protected from Injurious Publications**

Under this title, the legal grounds in national and international texts for children's rights to acquire information through mass media and to be protected from injurious publications were discussed.

#### **International Legal Grounds**

As per the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), a child, regardless of the boundaries of the country, has the right to acquire information and impart his ideas to others (a. 13). Article 17 of the Convention holds the states parties responsible for the child's making use of mass media and having access to a diversity of national and international sources aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. The final paragraph of the article assigns the state the duty of the protection of the child from information and documents that can be injurious to his well-being.

As per the 7<sup>th</sup> article titled "Responsibilities of the Broadcaster" of the "European Convention on Cross-Border Television", it is foreseen that the broadcast programs should not be indecent, should not contain pornography, and programs that may injure children's and adolescents' physical, mental and ethical promotion should not be broadcast at times when they could be watching.

As per the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) dated 1990, it is foreseen that the mass media should be encouraged to ensure that young persons have access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources (a. 40). Besides, it has been decided that the mass media generally, and the television and film media in particular, should be encouraged to minimize the level of pornography, drugs and violence portrayed and to display violence and exploitation disfavorably, as well as to avoid demeaning and degrading presentations, especially of children, women and interpersonal relations (a. 43).

#### **National Legal Grounds**

The child's right to acquire information through mass media and to be protected from injurious publications has been guaranteed also by the national law.

As per the 1982 Constitutional Law, everyone has the right to impart and disseminate his or her opinions and beliefs in words, writing, and picture or through other means alone or collectively. This freedom covers the freedom to impart or receive news or opinions without any intervention by public authorities. This provision does not preclude subjecting transmission by radio, television, cinema and similar means to a system of licensing (a. 26). Individuals and political parties have the right to use mass media and means of communication other than the press owned by public corporations. The law may not impose restrictions preventing the public from receiving information or forming ideas and opinions through these media, or preventing public opinion from being freely formed on grounds other than safeguarding national security, public order, public morals and public health (a. 31).

Law on the Protection of Children from Obscene Publications (1927) no. 1117 contains decisions to the end of the protection of the young from periodicals and other publications that are not classified as periodicals that are considered to be potentially injurious to the morals of the ones below 18.

As per the decisions of the Law on the Establishment and Broadcast of Radio and Television Channels dated 1994 on broadcast principles, programs that may negatively influence children's and adolescents' intellectual, mental, spiritual and ethical promotion can not be broadcast (a. 4). No advertisement can be misleading or be of quality that harms the benefit of the consumer; in advertisements addressing children, no element that may harm their benefits can be found, children's private emotions should be kept in mind (a. 19).

As per the Law on the Protection of Consumers' Rights (1995), advertisements and public notices that may cheat or mislead the consumers, or exploit the consumers' lack of experience and knowledge, endanger their life or property safety, cause them to want to perform acts of violence and commit crimes, impair public health, and exploit the ill, the old, children and the disabled can not be used (a. 16).

As per the Law on the Prevention of the Damages of Tobacco Products (1996), advertisement and introduction of tobacco and tobacco products using names, brands or signs (symbols) in any way or organization of campaigns that encourage their use is prohibited (a.3).

As per the Press Law (2004), those who publish articles and images which can encourage sexual assault, murder or suicide beyond the limits of furnishing information on such activities shall be sentenced to pay a major fine ranging from one billion to twenty billion TL (a. 20).

As per the Law on the Evaluation, Classification and Supporting of Movies (2004), the evaluation and classification of movies are performed by the Evaluation and Classification Council constituted within the body of the Ministry. For the purpose of the safeguarding of human honor, public order, general morals, and the mental health of the children and the young, the Ministry may send the movies that involve violence, pornography and images and effects that contrast with human honor to the Evaluation and Classification Council for re-evaluation (a.4).

In the final paragraph of the 226<sup>th</sup> article of the New Turkish Punishment Law, it is stated that persons who publish or mediate in the publishing of the contents of products that include obscene images, writings or words through press and media or persons who lets children see such images, listen to such words or read such writings shall be sentenced to imprisonment from six months to ten years.

As per the Regulations on the Inspection of Cinema, Video and Music Works (1986), display and performance of films, videos and music works which are, by the commissions and councils, found to have a potential negative effect on the mental and physical health and growth of children to the ones below 16 are prohibited (a.12).

As per the Regulations on Radio and Television Organizations Advertisement and Broadcast Principles and Systems and Payment of Advertisement Income Higher Council Shares (1994), no elements that may damage the physical and psychological promotion of children can be found in advertisements. Broadcasts inclined towards the exploitation of sexual emotions can not be made (a. 10).

As per the 5<sup>th</sup> article of the Regulations on the Essentials and Methods of Radio and Television Broadcasts (2003), broadcasts that are inclined to exploit sexual emotions, that display individuals as sexual merchandise, that reduce human body to an element of sexual incitement, that involve intimate words or acts that can not be displayed in the social circle, that make the individuals and the society insensitive against violence, and that direct or encourage people to act violently should not be made. Programs that may damage the physical, mental and moral promotion of the young and the children should not be broadcast at times when the groups to be protected might be watching. The interesting persons or characters in the broadcast should not be displayed in a way that might affect their emotional, moral and social improvement negatively by inciting the children and the young. In advertisements addressing children and in which children are used, no elements that may damage their benefits should be found and children's private emotions should be kept in mind (a. 6).

As per the "Press Profession Principles" set forth by the Press Council, "broadcasts encouraging violence and extortion are avoided" (a. 13) In the "Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities of Turkish Journalists" published by the Turkey Journalists' Association under the "Fundamental Duties and Principles of a Journalist" title, it reads "The journalist can not make publications that vindicate, encourage or incite violence".

### **Purpose of the Research**

The objective of this study is to put forth to what extent the issues of the children's right to acquire information through mass media and their right to be protected from injurious publications have been given place in elementary school 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Life Sciences (LS) student textbooks and 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Social Sciences (SS) student textbooks that are published and distributed to schools by the Ministry of National Education in the 2006-2007 educational year in Turkey.

## METHOD

In the study, qualitative research method was preferred and all the themes of elementary school 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade LS student textbooks and all the units of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade SS student textbooks were studied by use of the content analysis method. The reason for choosing elementary school LS and SS textbooks was to suppose that generally the subject of children’s rights specially the subject of children’s right to acquire information through mass media and their right to be protected from injurious publications were allocated in these textbooks, so they were appropriate to collect data for the purpose of research.

In the research, the analysis units were determined as “Children’s Rights to Acquire Information through Mass Media” and “Children’s Rights to be Protected from Injurious Publications”. Both analysis units fall into main categories within themselves as “Written Mass Media” and “Visual and Audio Mass Media”. The main category of written mass media falls into “Book”, “Magazine” and “Newspaper” sub-categories within itself and the main category of visual and audio mass media falls into “Radio”, “Television” and “Computer (internet and computer games)” sub-categories within itself.

The sentence was selected as the context unit and at what frequency each sub-category was mentioned in each sentence was determined. Both the open and the implied content were taken into consideration during the counting process. More explicitly, the words that correspond to sub-categories in each sentence; expressions that explain the stated sub-categories and the sentences that directly give the meaning were counted. The weight of each topic in the sentence was evaluated as one point. Category composition, identification and coding processes were performed by the researcher herself.

For the sake of the reliability of the study, the sub-categories in a textbook that was selected randomly were coded once again by a separate specialist. When both textbooks’ coding performed by the researcher and the specialist were compared, it was found out that a consensus of an average of 87% was reached. For the reliability of the research, there should be a consensus of minimum 70% among the ones performing the coding process (Hall & Houten, 1983). Since this number is exceeded in this study, it was concluded that the categories in the textbooks were evaluated reliably.

To secure the validity of the study, from among the books on which an analysis was performed, all the books from which samples were not taken were examined without excluding any parts (except for the contents, references and glossary parts). Thus, it was concluded that the measurement tool, which is the first condition of validity, actually did measure the characteristic that it was supposed to measure and the validity of the study was ensured.

Frequency and percentages were used in the analysis of data.

## FINDINGS

In this part, first, to what extent the issues of the children’s right to acquire information through mass media have been given place in elementary school LS textbooks (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) and SS textbooks (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade) that are published and distributed to schools by the Ministry of National Education in the 2006-2007 educational year was discussed (Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Dissemination of the Analysis Unit “Children’s Right to Acquire Information through Mass Media” According to Sub-Categories in the Textbooks*

Textbooks	Children’s Right to Acquire Information through Mass Media													
	Written Mass Media						Visual and Audio Mass Media						Total	
	Book		Magazine		Newspaper		Radio		Television		Computer			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
LS 1	9	60.0	1	6.7	1	6.7	1	6.7	2	13.3	1	6.7	15	100
LS 2	36	35.6	9	8.9	18	17.8	11	10.9	15	14.9	12	11.9	101	100
LS 3	30	14.6	43	21.0	21	10.2	9	4.4	43	21.0	59	28.8	205	100
SS 4	38	28.6	3	2.3	20	15.0	5	3.8	46	34.6	21	15.8	133	100
SS 5	66	29.5	81	36.2	49	21.9	10	4.5	10	4.5	8	3.6	224	100

In the study, in addition to the extent to which children's right to acquire information through mass media is given place in the textbooks, how much place the children's right to be protected from injurious publications is given was also discussed (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Dissemination of the Analysis Unit "Children's Right to Be Protected from Injurious Publications" According to Sub-Categories in the Textbooks

Textbooks	Children's Right to Be Protected from Injurious Publications													
	Written Mass Media						Visual and Audio Mass Media						Total	
	Book		Magazine		Newspaper		Radio		Television		Computer			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
LS 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LS 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	50	1	50	2	100
LS 3	2	5.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	75.7	7	18.9	37	100
SS 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	100	-	-	13	100
SS 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	100	-	-	2	100

### Life Sciences 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Textbooks

LS students' textbooks consist of three themes. These themes are; "My Excitement about School", "My Unique Home" and "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". However, these themes split into different sub-topics according to the level of the book that is being taught.

According to the values obtained as a result of the analysis applied to LS 1 textbook, that statements about "children's right to acquire information through mass media" topic (15) are more frequently mentioned than the statements about "children's right to be protected from injurious publications" category (0) attracts attention.

The highest rate in LS 1 textbook about children's right to acquire information through mass media belongs to the book sub-category (%60.0). This is followed by the television (%13.3) sub-category. Then come the magazine, newspaper, radio and computer sub-categories with the same rate (%6.7) (Table 1).

The following can be given as examples to the statements seen in LS 1 textbooks about children's right to acquire information through mass media:

- From which communication tools do we learn about the damages of natural disasters? (p. 55)
- (The television talks) What do you need to be careful about to use me safely? (p. 102)

No explanations are found in LS 1 textbooks about the children's right to be protected from injurious publications.

According to the values obtained as a result of the analysis applied to LS 2 textbook, it is seen that statements about "children's right to acquire information through mass media" topic (101) are more frequently mentioned than the statements about "children's right to be protected from injurious publications" category (2).

The highest rate in LS 2 textbook about children's right to acquire information through mass media again belongs to the book sub-category (%35.6). This is sequentially followed by the newspaper (17.8%), television (%11.9), computer (11.9%), radio (10.9%) and magazine (8.9%) sub-categories (Table 1).

The following statements can be given as examples to the statements seen in LS 2 textbooks about children's right to acquire information through mass media:

- Atatürk considered human rights and liberty very important. Turkish nation succeeded in getting many rights and liberties brought along with the republican government. The right and liberty to receive education, the right and liberty to vote and to be elected and freedom of communication are some of these. (p. 49)

—Where can we find books from which we can obtain information? ... Information is found in books and books are found in libraries... Ömer obtained some information about the topic he was studying by making use of the source book... (p. 58)

—Culture and Literature Club decides on the project to publish a journal. They determine the sections of the journal. The clubs make a task distribution in order to prepare one page each. (p. 59)

—The first Monday of October is the World's Children's Day. The World's Children's Day is universal. It is celebrated in United Nations member countries on the same day. The importance of this day is narrated on the radio and television in the whole world... (p.66)

—You can access information on this topic at [www.biltek.tubitak.gov.tr/cocuk](http://www.biltek.tubitak.gov.tr/cocuk). (p.83)

On children's right to be protected from injurious publications topic, there are two statements in LS 2 textbooks to draw children's attention to harmful messages communicated through television (one statement) and computer (one statement) (Table 2). The sentence "They determined the rules about the use of television and computer" (p.106) is an example to those statements.

According to the values obtained as a result of the analysis applied to LS 3 textbook, it is seen that again statements about "children's right to acquire information through mass media" topic (205) are more frequently mentioned than the statements about "children's right to be protected from injurious publications" category (37).

The highest rate in LS 3 textbook about children's right to acquire information through mass media belongs to the computer sub-category (28.8%). This is followed by the magazine and television sub-categories again with a high rate (21.0%). Then come the book (14.6%), newspaper (10.2%) and radio (4.4%) sub-categories (Table 1).

The following statements can be given as examples to the statements seen in LS 3 textbooks about children's right to acquire information through mass media:

—Keep in mind that all the sources that take us to information are information technologies... such as books, encyclopedias, educational tools ... (p.44)

—Dear friends, we can manage to publish a journal on children's rights. Let's bring pictures, cartoons and articles from newspapers, magazines and other sources about our rights. "Children's Rights Students' Club" managed to publish a journal titled "Our Rights". (pp.49-51)

—Press and media organs tell about his (Atatürk's) personality, his services to the Turkish nation. (p.56)

—Have you watched the news programs presented on television for hearing impaired persons? (p.80)

—After she came back from school, Seda watched television until the evening. Eda studied and when her favorite program started, she took a break. (p.84)

—I enjoy watching documentaries on television (p.138)

—Newspapers have an important place in written communication. The most important mass media used today are the television, radio, newspapers, books, magazines and computers. (pp.150-151)

—Computer programs that improve intelligence should definitely be used under parent supervision. The time a child spends in front of the computer should be limited. (p.152)

—They reached various information about this disaster in newspapers, magazines and on the internet (p.173)

Among the textbooks examined, the highest rate about the children's right to be protected from injurious publications belongs to LS 3 textbook (Table 2). In this book, statements about the protection of children from injurious broadcasts on television are very frequently found (75.7%). The following can be given as examples to those statements:

—We use advertisements to introduce a product, make it approved and increase its sales. Do not be cheated by the package, color and the free gifts of the product that is being advertised! (p.98)

—(Friends are talking among themselves) "I will buy the game the advertisement of which I saw on television yesterday"... "I have money but I am confused since they are all fantastic"... "It is not as good as it is said in the advertisements, it was exaggerated"... (pp.98-99)

About the protection of children from injurious publications, the television sub-category is followed sequentially by computer (18.9%) and book (5.4%) sub-categories in the LS 3 textbook.



## Social Sciences 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbooks

SS 4 students' textbook consists of eight units. These units are: "Who am I?", "I Am Learning My Past", "Where We Live", "From Production to Consumption", "I Am Glad It Exists", "All Together", "People and Management" and "My Friends Away".

According to the values obtained as a result of the analysis applied to SS 4 textbook, it is seen that again statements about "children's right to acquire information through mass media" topic (133) are more frequently mentioned than the statements about "children's right to be protected from injurious publications" category (13).

The highest rate in SS 4 textbook about children's right to acquire information through mass media belongs to the television sub-category (34.6%). This is followed by the book (28.6%), computer (15.8%), newspaper (15.0%) and radio (3.8%) sub-categories (Table 1). The sentences below can be given as examples to the statements found in SS 4 textbook about children's right to acquire information from mass media:

—As far as we follow from the newspapers and the television, weather forecast is considered to be successful in our country in recent years. (p.71)

—Today we can learn how the weather will be tomorrow by watching weather forecast reports on televisions. But in years when communication tools such as television were not present, how did people learn the weather forecast? (p.72)

— (During an earthquake) Do not keep the phone lines busy, use your phones only in an emergency. To receive information, listen to the radio or watch television (p.70)

—Bairam is about to come. I saw a very beautiful pair of shoes advertised on television last night. They were red. I wish my father bought those shoes for me for Bairam. (p.89)

—The students would do a research on their relatives' first encounter with a communication tool. Ecem chose television. She obtained a lot of information about the invention of television and its arrival in Turkey using source books. (p.116)

—Internet is a means that makes it possible for us to access all kinds of information easily and in the fastest manner. Internet is a computer network that connects the government institutions, organizations and individuals worldwide. (pp.120–121)

—They decided to start a campaign to collect books all together. They started the campaign under the name "Why don't you, too, give away a book?"... and from the thank you letters they received after some time, they understood that they were performing a useful activity... (p.134)

About children's right to be protected from injurious publications, statements only about television sub-category are given place in SS 4 textbooks (Table 2). The sentences below that are found in SS 4 textbook contain examples about both the benefits and the harms of television.

—Is television really a cruel monster that causes violence and consumption as some people claim? Or is it a tool that informs, entertains and teaches people about what is going on at the remotest places in the world? (p.117)

—The researches conducted show that television brings the images that a child can not reach around himself/herself and thus enriches his/her circle, develops his/her imagination and increases his/her knowledge. However, watching television all the time weakens the children's imagination, causes them to go to bed late and sleeplessness, when watched very closely, tires eyes and impairs sight, effects physical development negatively since it causes immobility, and it alienates children from their families and friends. (p.117)

SS 5 students' textbook consists of eight units. These units are: "I Am Learning My Rights", "Turkey Step by Step", "Let's Learn About Our Region", "Our Products", "Dreams That Have Come True", "Those Who Work for the Society", "A Country A Flag" and "It Is Our World".

According to the values obtained as a result of the analysis applied to SS 5 textbook, it is seen that again statements about "children's right to acquire information through mass media" topic (224) are more frequently mentioned than the statements about "children's right to be protected from injurious publications" category (2).

The highest rate in SS 5 textbook about children's right to acquire information through mass media belongs to the magazine sub-category (36.2%). This is followed by the book (29.5%), newspaper (21.9%), radio (4.5%), television (4.5%) and computer (3.6%) sub-categories (Table 1). The sentences below can be given as examples to the statements found in SS 5 textbook about children's right to acquire information from mass media:

—After the lessons are over at school, I attend the school journal meeting. We all work voluntarily for this journal which comes out once a month free of charge. We raise the money necessary for the publishing of our journal by the advertisements we place in our journal. In our journal, mostly cultural and artistic news are included ... (p. 18)

—To be successful ... read newspapers, magazines and books... (p.19)

—Let's do a research on the internet... There is a web site I know. We can check it out there. (p.26)

—Atatürk was a leader who read and explored a lot. Even at times when the war was very brutal, he did not neglect reading books on the front. In his library, he had around ten thousand books... (p.52)

—Başkent Elementary School Journal. It is a monthly educational, investigative student paper... We inquired for you... Do not miss this news... Scientists, who contribute in humanity, ... (p.121)

—I opened the "Contents" part of this book and examined the topics included. When I found the topic I was searching for, I immediately started to read and study... (p.122)

—Thanks to this, he offered this very important invention of his which still serves mankind, that is, the radio, for use ... (p.125)

—First of all, I checked over the works in which I could find information about him (Prof. Dr. Gazi Yaşargil). However, I knew that could find a great deal of information about him in the papers since he was a contemporary person. I searched many papers thoroughly and summarized the information about him... (p.126)

—After we finished doing our assignment, Ahmet showed me the magazine titled "Bilim Çocuk" to which his elder sister Canan had subscribed. He told me that his elder sister had been a subscriber of that magazine for two years. When I was going through the magazine with Ahmet, I was very surprised. Very interesting topics were being explained in the magazine in an excellent manner... (p.132)

—Zeynep and her family were watching television in the evening. There was a piece of news about the "Haydi Kızlar Okula" (The Girl's Education Campaign) project. According to that news, girls were not sent to school. Zeynep was interested in that situation... (p.161)

In SS 5 textbook, there are expressions about the television sub-category about the children's right to be protected from injurious publications, though very few (Table 2).

When all the textbooks are considered generally, it is seen that topics about acquiring information through books (66), magazines (49) and newspapers (49) are found mostly in SS 5 textbook; topics about acquiring information through radio (11) are found mostly in LS 2 textbook; topics about acquiring information through television (46) are found mostly in SS 4 textbook and topics about acquiring information through computer (59) are found mostly in LS 3 textbook (Table 1).

Again when all the textbooks are considered generally, while the topics about the protection of the child from articles that contain injurious messages in books (2) are found only in LS 3 textbook, it draws attention that topics about the protection of the child from broadcasts that contain injurious messages on television (28) and from injurious effects of computer (7) are mostly found again in LS 3 textbook. The topic about the protection of the child from articles and broadcasts that contain injurious messages in magazines, newspapers and on radio is not found in any of the textbooks examined (Table 2).

When a general evaluation is made, it can be seen that in all of the textbooks examined, children's right to acquire information through mass media (92.6%) is included more than children's right to be protected from injurious publications (7.4%). About children's right to acquire information, the topic of acquiring information from written mass media (62.7%) is included more than the topic of acquiring information from visual and audio mass media (37.3%) in textbooks. It draws attention that in the textbooks examined, children's acquiring information from books (24.5%) is dwelled upon the most, and this is sequentially followed by acquiring information magazines (18.7%), television (15.8%), newspapers (14.9%) and computer (13.8%). In the textbooks, radio (4.9%) is mentioned the least as the source of acquiring information (Table 3).

When the explanations about children's right to be protected from injurious publications in the textbooks are examined, it is seen that the most information about this topic is about protection from injurious broadcasts on television (6.0%). In the textbooks, while few topics about protection from injurious effects of computers (1.1%) are included, no explanation is found about protection from articles and broadcasts in magazines, newspapers and on radio (Table 3).

**Table 3.** *Dissemination of All Sub-Categories in All Textbooks*

Analysis Units	Main Categories	Sub-Categories	Total	
			f	(%)
Children's Right to Acquire Information through Mass Media	Written Mass Media	Book	179	24.5
		Magazine	137	18.7
		Newspaper	109	14.9
	Visual and Audio Mass Media	Radio	36	4.9
		Television	116	15.8
		Computer	101	13.8
		Total	678	92.6
Children's Right to be Protected From Injurious Publications	Written Mass Media	Book	2	0.3
		Magazine	-	-
		Newspaper	-	-
	Visual and Audio Mass Media	Radio	-	-
		Television	44	6.0
		Computer	8	1.1
Total	54	7.4		
Total			732	100

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

All mass media have significant roles in children's acquiring information. At the end of this study which intends to determine at what level this issue is included in the Life Sciences and Social Sciences books written by the Ministry of National Education for the first five years of elementary school, it was observed that different textbooks emphasize the topic of acquiring information from different mass media at a different level, in other words, the textbooks that were examined did not include this topic at the same level. As known, textbooks are prepared as committed to the curriculum of the related lessons, and most probably, the reason for the inclusion of the topics about acquiring information through mass media at different levels is the result of the difference in the inclusion of this topic in the educational curriculum.

On the other hand, when the statements about children's right to acquire information through mass media in the textbooks are examined, it is seen that the textbooks try to draw attention to this topic, especially to the topic of making use of the mass media when performing a research. It also attracts attention that the textbooks emphasize the importance of especially written mass media in child's accessing information more than the visual and audio mass media. From this, it can be concluded that the use of libraries, where many books, magazines and newspapers are found, that is, accessing the origin of the resource, is encouraged rather than the use of the computer, one of the recent communication technologies (and even the television and the radio).

The determination of the level of inclusion of children's right to be protected from injurious publications in mass media in textbooks is among the objectives of this study. Another truth that attracts attention at this point is that in all the textbooks, the topic of children's right to acquire information through mass media tools is included much more than the topic of children's right to be protected from injurious publications in mass media. Today, where the importance of bringing some emotions such as philanthropy, patriotism and humanitarianism and certain social values to the fore especially on television serials; giving the children the opportunity to think on various topics and enabling them to synthesize, and make interpretations and comparisons when necessary is emphasized (Yavuzer, 1996), children should not be left as an unprotected target for the negative effects of advertisements and

especially programs that involve violence, aggressiveness and sexuality and they should be protected from such programs and their physical, emotional, intellectual and moral improvement should be assisted (Akyüz, 2000). Only families' being sensitive to the negative effects of injurious publications is not enough. For this reason, more messages about the negative effects of injurious publications should be included in the textbooks and it should be ensured that children are more alert to such issues and improve their skills of protecting themselves from the negative effects of injurious publications. In short, warning children against publications that are injurious for children should be done through textbooks. Moreover, it would be useful to include activities that will encourage children to improve their critical thinking skills by making them criticize the present programs and even to write letters that praise or criticize the program to channels according to their opinions (Karatay & Keskin, 2004).

In order to make comparisons, it would be useful to conduct researches to set forth the level of inclusion of children's rights to acquire information through mass media and to be protected from injurious publications in other textbooks prepared for elementary school students and in the textbooks of all courses.

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## Ders Kitaplarında Çocuğun Bilgi Edinme ve Zararlı Yayınlardan Korunma Hakkı

**ÖZ.** Bu çalışmanın amacı, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından 2006-2007 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılında okutulmak üzere basılan ve okullara dağıtılan ilköğretim 1., 2. ve 3. sınıf Hayat Bilgisi (HB) öğrenci ders kitapları ile 4. ve 5. sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler (SB) öğrenci ders kitaplarında çocuğun kitle iletişim araçları yoluyla bilgi edinme hakkı ile zararlı yayınlara karşı korunma hakkı konusuna ne düzeyde yer verildiğini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi tercih edilmiş olup ders kitaplarının tüm üniteleri içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde frekans ve yüzde kullanılmıştır. Ders kitaplarının tümünde çocuğun kitle iletişim araçlarıyla bilgi edinme hakkı konusuna çocuğun zararlı yayınlardan korunma hakkı konusundan daha fazla yer verilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hak, çocuk hakları, bilgi edinme, zararlı yayın, ders kitapları.

### ÖZET

**Amaç ve Önem:** Çocuğun bilgiye ulaşmasından kitle iletişim araçlarının önemi büyüktür. Çocuk Hakları Sözleşmesi'ne göre taraf devletlerin; çocuğun kitle iletişim araçlarından yararlanmasını, toplumsal, ruhsal ve ahlâkî esenliği ile bedensel ve zihinsel sağlığını geliştirmeye yönelik çeşitli ulusal ve uluslar arası kaynaklardan bilgi edinmesini sağlama yükümlülüğü vardır. Ancak kitle iletişim araçları ve özellikle bu araçlar ile iletilen mesajlar bazen çocuk için zararlı olabilmektedir. Sözleşme devlete, çocuğu esenliğine zarar verebilecek bilgi ve belgelere karşı koruma görevini de vermiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından 2006-2007 Eğitim-Öğretim Yılında okutulmak üzere basılan ve okullara dağıtılan ilköğretim 1., 2. ve 3. sınıf Hayat Bilgisi (HB) öğrenci ders kitapları ile 4. ve 5. sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler (SB) öğrenci ders kitaplarında çocuğun kitle iletişim araçları yoluyla bilgi edinme hakkı ile zararlı yayınlara karşı korunma hakkı konusuna ne düzeyde yer verildiğini ortaya koymaktır.

**Yöntem:** Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi tercih edilmiş olup ilköğretim 1., 2. ve 3. sınıf HB ders kitaplarının tüm temaları ile 4. ve 5. sınıf SB ders kitaplarının tüm üniteleri içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Araştırmada analiz üniteleri “Çocuğun Kitle İletişim Araçları Yoluyla Bilgi Edinme Hakkı” ve “Çocuğun Zararlı Yayınlardan Korunma Hakkı” olarak belirlenmiştir. Her iki analiz ünitesi kendi içinde “Yazılı Kitle İletişim” ve “Görsel ve İşitsel Kitle İletişim” olarak ana kategorilere ayrılmıştır. Yazılı kitle iletişim ana kategorisi kendi içinde “Kitap”, “Dergi” ve “Gazete” alt kategorilerine; görsel ve işitsel kitle iletişim ana kategorisi de “Radyo”, “Televizyon” ve “Bilgisayar” alt kategorilerine ayrılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde frekans ve yüzde kullanılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Ders kitaplarının tümünde çocuğun kitle iletişim araçlarıyla bilgi edinme hakkı konusuna çocuğun zararlı yayınlardan korunma hakkı konusundan daha fazla yer verilmiştir. Ayrıca, ders kitaplarında çocuğun yazılı kitle iletişim araçlarından bilgi edinme konusuna, görsel ve işitsel kitle iletişim araçlarından bilgi edinme konusundan daha fazla yer verilmiştir.

**Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler:** Bu çalışma sonunda farklı ders kitaplarının farklı kitle iletişim araçlarından bilgi edinme konusuna farklı düzeyde vurgu yaptıkları, diğer bir deyişe bu konuya incelenen tüm ders kitaplarında aynı düzeyde yer verilmediği görülmüştür. Kitle iletişim araçları yoluyla bilgi edinme hakkı ile ilgili konulara aynı düzeyde yer verilmemesi büyük ölçüde derslerin programlarında bu konuya yer vermenin farklılığından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ders kitaplarının, çocuğun bilgiye ulaşmasında özellikle yazılı kitle iletişim araçlarının önemini, görsel ve işitsel kitle iletişim araçlarından daha fazla vurgulanması da dikkat çekicidir. Bu konuda yeni iletişim teknolojilerinden olan bilgisayardan (ve hatta televizyon ve radyodan) yararlanmaktan çok kitap, dergi ve gazetelerin yer aldığı kütüphanelerin kullanımının, daha doğrusu kaynağın aslına ulaşmanın teşvik edildiği sonucu çıkarılabilir. Ayrıca ders kitaplarının hepsinde, çocuğun kitle iletişim araçları aracılığıyla bilgi edinme hakkı konusuna, çocuğun kitle iletişim araçlarındaki zararlı yayınlara karşı korunması hakkı konusundan çok fazla yer verildiğidir. Ders kitaplarına zararlı yayınların olumsuz etkilerine ilişkin daha fazla mesajlar konularak, çocukların bu konulara karşı daha uyanık olmaları ve zararlı yayınların olumsuz etkilerine karşı kendilerini koruyabilme becerilerini geliştirebilmeleri sağlanmalıdır. Kısacası, çocuklar için zararlı olan yayınlara karşı çocukları uyarmak da başta ders kitapları yoluyla olmalıdır. Bunun da ötesinde, ders kitaplarında çocukların mevcut programları eleştirmelerini sağlayarak eleştirel düşünme becerilerini geliştirmeleri ve hatta düşünceleri doğrultusunda program kanallarına programı öven ya da eleştiren mektuplar yazmalarını teşvik eden etkinliklere yer verilmesinde yarar vardır.