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The Importance of New Media Literacy in The Post-Truth Era*

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ABSTRACT

In the Post-Truth era, where people's personal values and thoughts are accepted as reality and there is no need to try to reach the truth by rational reasoning, people aim to produce, spread and have their own reality accepted by using the power of new media tools in line with their beliefs, emotions and sensitivities. Every news content produced in the media is created for an ideological or commercial purpose. In this regard, new media actors aiming to determine people's ideas and opinions use many methods such as disinformation and fake news. Therefore, in the post-truth era, it becomes even more important for users in the new media ecosystem to have new media literacy skills. This research is significant in emphasizing that individuals can only become aware of the cognitive biases preventing them from accessing the truth by developing new media literacy skills. In this study, 528 university students with different demographic characteristics were included in the study by adopting the maximum diversity sampling approach. The new media literacy levels of the participants were examined using the Relational Screening Model, which is a quantitative research design. The aim of the study is to determine which demographic characteristics significantly differ in terms of new media literacy skills. While interpreting the data, an attempt was made to prepare suggestions for the solution of the problem by making inferences about the future of the post-truth era, the social threats it may cause, and the efficiency of efforts to reduce these threats.

Keywords : Post Truth, New Media, New Media Literacy, Post-Modernism, Fake News

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Post Truth Çağda Yeni Medya Okuryazarlığının Önemi

ÖZ

İnsanların kişisel değer ve düşüncelerinin gerçeklik olarak kabul edildiği ve rasyonel akıl yürüterek gerçeğe ulaşma çabasına ihtiyaç duyulmayan Post-Truth çağda insanlar inançları, duyguları ve hassasiyetleri doğrultusunda yeni medya araçlarının gücünü kullanarak kendi gerçekliğini üretme, yayma ve kabul ettirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Medyada üretilen her haber içeriği ideolojik ya da ticari bir amaç doğrultusunda oluşturulur. Bu doğrultuda insanların fikir ve kanaatlerini belirlemeyi amaçlayan yeni medya aktörleri dezenformasyon ve sahte haber gibi pek çok yöntemi kullanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla hakikat ötesi çağda, yeni medya ekosisteminde yer alan kullanıcıların yeni medya okuryazarlığı becerilerine sahip olması çok daha önem kazanmaktadır. Bu araştırma insanların hakikate ulaşmalarını engelleyen bilişsel önyargılarının farkına varabilmeleri ancak yeni medya okuryazarlığı becerilerini geliştirmeleri ile mümkün olabileceğini vurgulaması açısından önemlidir. Çalışmada farklı demografik özelliklere sahip 528 üniversite öğrencisi maksimum çeşitlilik örneklem yaklaşımı benimsenerek çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Nicel bir araştırma deseni olan İlişkisel Tarama Modeli kullanılarak katılımcıların yeni medya okuryazarlığı düzeyleri incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı yeni medya okuryazarlığı becerilerinin hangi demografik özelliklere göre anlamlı farklılık gösterdiğini tespit etmektedir. Veriler yorumlanırken post truth çağın geleceğine yönelik tahminlere, yol açabileceği toplumsal tehditlere ve bu tehditleri azaltmaya yönelik çabaların verimliliğine ilişkin çıkarımlar yaparak, sorunun çözümüne ilişkin öneriler hazırlanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Post Truth, Yeni Medya, Yeni Medya Okuryazarlığı, Post-Modernizm, Sahte Haber

INTRODUCTION

Unlike traditional mass media such as books, newspapers, radio and television, which are subject to editorial review, it is not known exactly from what sources internet data is collected, making it very difficult to distinguish which information is reliable and which is not. In the Post-Truth era, people's individual values and thoughts are considered the basis of reality, and rational reasoning processes are not needed to reach the truth. In this period, every user has the opportunity to produce, disseminate, and have their own realities accepted, based on their own perspective, by taking advantage of the power of new media tools.

Keyes (2017) explains post-truth as: "Situations related to or indicating that objective facts are not as effective in shaping public opinion as appealing to emotions and personal beliefs." Although the concept of post-truth includes lies, it does not mean the same as outright lying. The real problem is those who think they already know the truth and act arrogant about it because such people act based on mistakes (McIntyre 2019, p. 28).

The post-truth phenomenon is not a process in which the truth is consciously tried to be eroded or eliminated from a single center. Post Truth refers to a situation where the truth

is ignored and becomes unimportant. This indicates that Post Truth is not a situation where it spreads from a single center, but rather a multi-centered structure that emerged thanks to the technical possibilities created by the new media atmosphere. Therefore, while Post Truth struggles with the era, central measures and precautions may be insufficient. Therefore, the aim of the study is to reveal that new media literacy skills are the most important and useful instrument that can be used to resist the post-truth order, by touching on the measures and steps taken by states, social media companies, news verification organizations and other actors to stand against Post Truth discourses in the new media. Another aim of the study is to explain which demographic characteristics of people vary according to new media literacy skills.

1. FAKE NEWS AND INFORMATION DISORDER IN THE POST TRUTH ERA

The history of fake news actually dates back to when the concept of "news" emerged. In his article "The Long and Brutal History of Fake News", Jakob Soll (2016) emphasizes that after Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in 1439, fake news began to circulate along with real news. Soll underlines that since no ethical rules had developed in terms of journalism at that time, readers in search of truth had to be much more careful. Media companies, which later became institutionalized, aimed to attract their readers by investing in diversity, objectivity, and information of public interest. However, the new understanding of journalism that has risen with the internet has ignored these principles and brought fake news to the fore again.

The use of concepts such as fake news and disinformation for propaganda purposes is not unique to today. In many periods of history, fake news has been used for many reasons such as misleading the public, shaking the power of governments, or creating panic in the stock markets. What is new today is that misleading or false content can be easily created by anyone with the help of technology, and the spread of these contents has reached maximum levels (Wardle 2020, p.10).

While examining the relationship between lies and politics, Arendt approaches the subject from two different perspectives: classical lie and modern lie. In the classical lie, the lie is not completely spread to all areas and the person telling the lie is aware of this. This situation causes the liar to live uneasily. Therefore, the classical lie is more harmless than the modern lie. The modern lie, on the other hand, aims for organized and global manipulation. That's why lies have the potential to spread to all areas. Unlike the classic lie, even the person telling the lie may no longer be able to recognize what is the truth and what is not. Manipulation of facts by modern methods involves dangers that are likely to cause ultimate damage to reality. Through manipulations, facts are destroyed and an image is invented. In the classical lie, only the truth is hidden, but in the modern lie, there is an act of destruction and creation. For this reason, people who are called liars in modern times are people who act because they not only hide the truth but also aim to reveal a new truth (Arendt 1996, p.304).

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Users who follow the news in digital environments and, more importantly, members of the media who ensure that this news is conveyed to the public should not ignore the possibility that any information can be played on and manipulated. Because it must be acknowledged that there are already many individuals or entities willing to carry out these manipulations. In this regard, the reliability of the content encountered on digital platforms should not be evaluated based on their appearance. For example, externally visible data such as the number of retweets of a content, and the number of likes and comments of a post can be easily and frequently manipulated. Therefore, both journalists and ordinary users should not forget that they can become a target in media manipulation and operations carried out to spread false information and take part as an actor in the spread of misinformation or disinformation at any time (Silverman 2020, p. 7).

It can be stated that new media platforms cause disinformation to spread more effectively through artificial intelligence technology. Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, emphasizes that one of the most important problems of today is that artificial intelligence technologies used for advertisements predict people's weaknesses based on their behavior and thus produce disinformation. Manipulative content designed by artificial intelligence to feed people's existing prejudices can make disinformation even more believable. For this reason, Schmidt emphasizes that disinformation is a transnational problem and human civilization is under threat as artificial intelligence technologies are predicted to gradually develop (Desai 2021).

Disinformation does not always have to consist entirely of lies or false information. In fact, the most effective and convincing disinformation are those that contain some truth (Wardle 2020, p.10). For example, presenting an event that happened in the past as if it just happened is a frequently used method to direct the agenda. However, distorted data or analyzes disconnected from context can be served for disinformation purposes. In addition, misinformation is often designed to stimulate users' emotions, and by this method, the element of credibility is tried to be increased (Brady et al. 2020).

In the report titled "Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policymaking" prepared for the Council of Europe in 2017, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) defined three types of misinformation: mis-information, dis-information and mal-information and they named the general set of difficulties arising from the types of misinformation and misinformation as "information disorder".

It can be said that the concept of disinformation, defined as the production and dissemination of false information in order to harm a person, group, institution, organization or state, is the most common type of information disorder. The prominent feature of disinformation is that the person or group that spreads incorrect information does so

deliberately and with the aim of causing harm. For this purpose, disinformation is supported with the help of visual and audio content created to manipulate people partially or completely. Conspiracy theories that are frequently seen in new media tools or rumors that can suddenly become a trending topic are evaluated within the concept of disinformation. Thanks to the ability of new media to accelerate the production and dissemination of information, disinformation can be easily presented to people. Journalists, politicians, or forces outside the country who want to establish a narrative based on disinformation, especially with trolls and bot accounts, make their own discourses more prominent in the new media environment (Erdoğan et al. 2022, p.10-12).

Misinformation, unlike disinformation, is defined as the spread of false information without the intention of causing harm. As stated, when defining the concept of Post-Truth, people generally accept the information they encounter as correct, and they perceive the information according to whether it is compatible with their emotions and their own views (Shane, 2020). Therefore, a user who spreads misinformation does not actually think that information may be false (Buchanan, 2020). Users may even think that they are doing a favor to those around them when they spread false information that they consider to be true. Especially in crisis environments, the possibility of disinformation deliberately put into circulation during a situation that can affect a significant part of society (natural disasters, pandemics, etc.) increases as soon as it meets the users (Erdoğan et al. 2022, p.14). When people share information, they encounter online without thinking, it can lead to misinformation (Fazio et al. 2015). Moreover, almost all disinformation, whether used to gain profit or power, is the product of a purposeful effort to make people react to the misleading information it puts forward (McIntyre 2019, p.105).

Some research on false and harmful news suggests that directing people's attention to accurate news can reduce online misinformation and its impact. In a study conducted in the USA, subjects were shown some fake news and only 15% of the subjects said that this news could be true. However, 51% of the participants stated that they could share the same news. These findings show that people can share news regardless of whether it is true or not if it aligns with their political views. At this point, it can be predicted that people convince themselves of lies based on concepts such as "confirmation bias" or "cognitive dissonance" regarding the content they encounter. However, according to the results of this research, people can share the news without convincing themselves of these lies. However, in the same study, it was determined that subjects were not willing to share disinformation when they were asked to review a true news before a news containing disinformation (Pennycook et al, 2021, pp. 593-94).

A study conducted by MIT in 2018 found that fake news is more interesting to people, and therefore the probability of a false news being retweeted on Twitter is 70% higher than a real news. In parallel with this information, misinformation spreads 6 times faster. In the

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research, it was first thought that bot accounts were responsible for the spread of incorrect content, and a technology that could detect these bot accounts was used, and the content shared by bot accounts was removed from the research, but the result did not change (Vosoughi et al. 2018). This situation is very important in terms of revealing the role and responsibility of individuals in the spread of fake news and misinformation and the importance of new media literacy skills.

2. THE ROLE OF NEW MEDIA LITERACY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POST-TRUTH

The fact that new media literacy, along with media literacy, is now one of the most important competencies to have in the 21st century, becomes more evident day by day. The concept of new media literacy can be briefly explained as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and also create digital media messages in various ways (Livingstone, 2004; Law et all 2018). †

In a cultural environment dominated by new media technologies, literacy refers not only to the ability to access the media environment and consume content, but also to produce and share content. The courses taught in schools alone may not be sufficient to provide such education. It is necessary to plan an education that includes not only young people and children, but also their families and the elderly population, with special training for the media and technology sector, politicians, and public institutions (Hobbs 2010).

As political leaders and parties try to set the agenda by actively participating in social media platforms, wars are broadcast live on both television and new media tools, and digital wars emerge, media literacy plays an important role in helping citizens share their ideas on social issues and preparing to be a part of these issues. (Jols and Thoman 2008, 11).

As citizens and news consumers, we need to be aware of our individual responsibility in the spread of post-truth discourses. It is up to the user not to be deceived by click baits and to look and research the content before sharing the news. Changing our tendency to believe and share content we agree with and distinguishing between real and fake news is directly related to media literacy (Ball 2017). It is essential for every individual in the new media eco-system, which is built on people's weaknesses, to have knowledge about how this system works and what it aims for.

Large-scale public spaces such as new media and the internet need to be structurally transformed to serve the interests of citizens. Global and large-income media companies turn

† In the research conducted by UNESCO (2018), it is stated that the concept of new media literacy has common features with concepts such as computer literacy, digital literacy, and information literacy and can be used interchangeably.

users' usage practices into commercial commodities and generate economic income for themselves through users' content. For this reason, demanding the entry into force of online agreements that respect user rights will contribute to the development of democratic citizenship. Structural transformations realized in this way will enable the emergence of more egalitarian public spaces. If the new media environment is evaluated in this way, it can be said that digital literacy, which improves production and creativity since the internet environment reveals horizontal communication, should be in a format and content that covers the functioning of the political economy (Murdock, 2016).

Another issue that should be emphasized regarding new media literacy is that the content in the media consists of fictional content that does not reflect the real world. In Daniel Kahneman's book "Thinking, Fast and Slow", various scientific studies support the fact that bad interactions are 5 times more powerful than good interactions (Kahneman, 2015). Since the human brain tends to select negative content first and considering that the media includes the most negative content on the agenda, it is necessary to be aware of this issue in order to use media literacy skills efficiently. The aim of creating this awareness is not for people to ignore the truths that are considered negative, but for the frustration of constantly being exposed to negative feeds to paradoxically detach people from the truth. For example, the reason why most of the news about artificial intelligence or robots creates content such as "robots will take over the world" or "robots will take all the jobs of people" is an attempt to arouse curiosity in the readers by activating the feeling of fear.

Similarly, Gerbner explains with the help of cultivation theory that television affects viewers' ideas and attitudes about reality. Gerbner stated that the perception of reality of people who watch television for long hours is formed directly by the messages they receive through television. Based on this, he emphasized that people in the real world are afraid of the real world because they see characters and violent events on television that they almost never encounter in their daily lives, and he explained the "cruel world syndrome" in which these people see the world as a more unsafe environment and people as more unreliable than the real world. (Gerbner et al., 1982). The reason for this is that the media wants to attract people's attention by using fiction to reach more viewers. It can be said that the ideas Gerbner mentioned for television are also valid for the new media environment. Algorithms are becoming more and more specialized in highlighting negative and bad content, which receives more interaction, and in parallel, unhappy, and hopeless communities of people emerge in the new media environment. Therefore, to develop new media literacy skills, it is necessary to internalize the knowledge that our minds give priority to bad news. Because there is a need to make more efforts to find the good and the truth in the new media atmosphere. Because it is necessary to make a mental effort for critical thinking. New media literacy skills should not be confused with concrete skills such as the ability to use tools. In other words, knowing how to use computers and other communication technologies well does not mean that one can be

critical of the messages coming from them. That's why critical thinking is essential for efficient new media literacy.

3. METHOD

Although institutions try to protect their citizens from this negative atmosphere by taking various precautions, it becomes very difficult for people who have placed the new media at the center of their daily lives to protect themselves from the negative effects of the media. In addition to states, private institutions are also taking some precautions by creating news verification platforms and trying to provide confirmed and accurate information to the public. However, it can be claimed that the news that these platforms choose to correct is chosen in line with an ideology. Studies show that the cognitive biases held by fact-checkers can influence the fact-checking process, and the impact of these cognitive biases may be misleading in the evaluation of news veracity (Masotina, Musi, Federico, & Yates, 2023, p. 17). In this context, it is extremely important for new media users to acquire critical approach skills towards media messages in an atmosphere full of uncertainties created by the post-truth era. The main purpose of this study is to demonstrate that new media literacy skills are the most important instrument for resisting the post-truth order.

For these purposes, it is aimed to determine whether students' new media literacy levels differ significantly according to their gender, income level, education level, internet usage time, and education level.

3.1. Research Design

Relational Screening Model will be used as the research design in this study. Relational screening research aims to determine the existence and degree of change between two or more variables. The Relational Screening Model allows for a relational analysis of the variables between which a relationship is to be sought. Descriptions in relational screening models aim to determine differences between situations such as individuals and objects, rather than trying to find measurements of what exists that meet certain standards (Karasar 2015, p. 81-82).

3.2.Data Collection Tools

"New Media Literacy Scale for University Students" developed by (Koç and Barut, 2016) was used as a data collection tool in the research. The reason for choosing this data collection tool is the assumption that New Media literacy knowledge is directly proportional to the ability of new media users to distinguish real and fake information. The development of media literacy is possible with evaluation with a critical perspective.

In addition to these scales, questions were asked in the personal information form developed by the researcher to collect demographic information of the participants such as

gender, age, educational status, and place of residence. The survey form was prepared to be online.

The scale, prepared in a five-point type, consists of 35 questions collected under 4 factors. The first factor of the scale is called "Functional consuming (FC)" and contains 7 items. The second dimension of the scale is called "Critical Consuming (CC)" and contains 11 items. The third factor of the scale is called "Functional Prosuming (FP)" and consists of 7 items. The last factor of the scale is called "Critical Prosuming (CP)" and consists of a total of 10 items. The total amount of variance it explains is 55% (Koç and Barut, 2016). In social science research, 40% of the total variance explained is considered sufficient (Kline, 1994). The internal consistency coefficient of the scale is .95. When the internal consistency coefficients were examined in terms of sub-factors, they were calculated as .85 for the 1st Factor, .87 for the 2nd Factor, .89 for the 3rd Factor, and .93 for the 4th Factor. These findings meet the acceptable level of internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha 0.70) for scale development (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, it indicates good internal consistency.

3.3.Sample Selection

528 people participated in the research. A maximum diversity sampling approach was adopted to select participants. University students from all geographical regions of Türkiye were tried to be included in the study. The maximum diversity sampling approach explains how to determine different situations related to the problem examined in the universe and carry out the research based on these situations. Although there is no generalization concern in this sampling approach, important clues about universe values are obtained by including different situations related to the problem in the sample. The main purpose of the maximum diversity sampling approach is to reveal the common and different aspects and patterns between consistently determined different situations and thus to describe the problem in a broader framework (Büyüköztürk et al. 2010). In this study, the maximum diversity sampling approach was preferred to detect broader and different situations about the relationship between post-truth and new media.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Categories	(n) frequency	% (percent)
Gender	Female	332	62,9
	Male	196	37,1
Educational Background	Associate degree	289	54,7
	Bachelor's Degree	201	38,1
	Postgraduade	38	7,2
Geographical Area	Karadeniz	211	40,0
	İç Anadolu	87	16,5
	Doğu Anadolu	69	13,1
	Marmara	45	8,5
	Ege	57	10,8
	Güney Doğu Anadolu	35	6,6

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Where the family lives	Big city centre	283	53,6
	County town	182	34,5
	Village/small town	63	11,9
Daily Internet usage time	1-2 hours	74	14,0
	3-4 hours	190	36,0
	5-6 hours	178	33,7
	7-8 hours	55	10,4
	9-10 hours	30	5,7
Family Income Level	0-5000	145	27,5
	5000-10000	222	42,0
	10000-20000	84	15,9
	20000 and above	74	14,0

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were collected with demographic questions and selected scales created by the researcher. The collected data were processed into the SPSS-21 statistical program and the differences between the participants' new media literacy levels regarding the calculated total scores were interpreted. Differences between participants' demographic characteristics such as place of residence, gender and education level, and average daily internet use were analyzed comparatively.

Independent samples t-test and ANOVA analyses were performed. T-test is used to test the significance of the difference between the means obtained from two independent samples. ANOVA analysis is a tool used to test whether there is a statistically significant difference between the averages of independent groups. Independent-sample T-test analysis, one of the parametric testing methods, was conducted to test the differences in new media literacy according to the gender and education levels of the participants. Differences between new media literacy levels according to variables were tested with One-Way ANOVA (One-Way ANOVA) analysis, one of the parametric test methods.

3.4.1. The Relationship Between Students' Educational Status and New Media Literacy Levels

Table 2 summarizes the findings regarding the relationship between New Media Literacy levels of students according to their educational background.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of New Media Literacy Scale Scores by Education Level

Scale	Educational Background	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
NML	Associate degree	289	3,8505	,65484
	Bachelor's Degree	201	3,9391	,64423
	Postgraduade	38	4,2271	,53096
	Total	528	3,9113	,64896
FC	Associate degree	289	3,9362	,70064
	Bachelor's Degree	201	4,0114	,72483
	Postgraduade	38	4,3684	,56035
	Total	528	3,9959	,70835
CC	Associate degree	289	3,9994	,71723
	Bachelor's Degree	201	4,0401	,68561
	Postgraduade	38	4,3612	,58286
	Total	528	4,0410	,70122
FP	Associate degree	289	3,8452	,83387
	Bachelor's Degree	201	4,0179	,80424
	Postgraduade	38	4,4361	,49593
	Total	528	3,9535	,81703
CP	Associate degree	289	3,6304	,80836
	Bachelor's Degree	201	3,7221	,75257
	Postgraduade	38	3,8342	1,00815
	Total	528	3,6800	,80445

According to the analysis results, it is seen that the postgraduate education level has the highest average among the students' education status according to their new media literacy levels (NML: $\bar{X}$= 4.2271). When the average scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale are examined, it is seen that the New Media Literacy levels of students with postgraduate education are high in the sub-dimensions. When Table 2 is examined, students' New Media Literacy levels differ according to their educational status. One Way Anova test was applied to examine whether these differences were significant. Data regarding the results of this test are given in Table 3.

Table 3: ANOVA Test Results of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to Educational Status

Scale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant difference
NML	Between Groups	5,012	2	2,506	6,065	,002*	Associate's degree-Postgraduate Bachelor's Degree - Postgraduate
	Within group	216,937	525	,413			
	Total	221,949	527				

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FC	Between Groups	6,353	2	3,177	6,462	,002*	Associate's degree- Postgraduate Bachelor's Degree - Postgraduate
	Within group	258,074	525	,492			
	Total	264,427	527				
CC	Between Groups	4,397	2	2,199	4,531	,011*	Associate's degree- Postgraduate Bachelor's Degree - Postgraduate
	Within group	254,734	525	,485			
	Total	259,131	527				
FP	Between Groups	13,071	2	6,535	10,130	,000*	Associate's degree- Postgraduate Bachelor's Degree - Postgraduate
	Within group	338,720	525	,645			
	Total	351,791	527				
CP	Between Groups	1,970	2	,985	1,525	,219	
	Within groups	339,070	525	,646			
	Total	341,040	527				

*p <0.05 significant

When Table 3 is examined, students' New Media Literacy levels vary according to their education level (F(2,506)= 6,065). Since students' New Media Literacy levels showed a significant difference according to their education level, a post-hoc analysis was conducted. According to the post-hoc test results, a significant difference was observed between all educational levels. Postgraduate students have higher New Media Literacy levels than bachelor's degree and associate degree students. When the sub-dimensions of the scale were examined, it was seen that all sub-dimensions, except the Critical Prosuming sub-dimension, had a similar result to the whole scale. Accordingly, postgraduate students have higher and more significant levels of Critical Consuming, Functional Consuming, and Functional Prosuming than bachelor's degree and associate degree students.

3.4.2. The Relationship Between Where Students' Families Live and New Media Literacy Levels

Table 4 summarizes the findings regarding the relationship between students' New media literacy levels according to where their families live.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to Where Students' Families Live

Scale	Where the family live	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
NML	0	283	3,9810	,61302
	County town	182	3,9070	,67806
	Village/small town	63	3,6109	,64378
	Total	528	3,9113	,64896
FC	Big city center	283	4,0443	,67924
	County town	182	4,0149	,74292
	Village/small town	63	3,7234	,68410
	Total	528	3,9959	,70835
CC	Big city center	283	4,1226	,66952
	County town	182	4,0286	,69742
	Village/small town	63	3,7101	,76069
	Total	528	4,0410	,70122
FP	Big city center	283	4,0036	,75918
	County town	182	3,9914	,88503
	Village/small town	63	3,6190	,79787
	Total	528	3,9535	,81703
CP	Big city center	283	3,7652	,78733
	County town	182	3,6385	,83504
	Village/small town	63	3,4175	,73299
	Total	528	3,6800	,80445

According to the analysis results, it is seen that the Big City Centers have the highest average among the places where the students' families live, according to the students' New media literacy levels (NML: $\bar{X}$= 3.9810). When the average scores obtained from all sub-dimensions of the scale are examined, it is seen that the New Media Literacy levels of students whose families live in Big City Centers are high in the sub-dimensions. When Table 4 is examined, students' New Media Literacy levels differ depending on where their families live. One Way Anova test was applied to examine whether these differences were significant. Data regarding the results of this test are given in Table 5.

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Table 5: ANOVA Test Results of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to Where Students' Families Live

Scale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant difference
NML	Between Groups	7,063	2	3,531	8,628	,000*	Big City Center County Town Village/Small Town
	Within group	214,886	525	,409			
	Total	221,949	527				
FC	Between Groups	5,410	2	2,705	5,482	,004*	Big City Center County Town Village/Small Town
	Within group	259,017	525	,493			
	Total	264,427	527				
CC	Between Groups	8,809	2	4,404	9,238	,000*	Big City Center County Town Village/Small Town
	Within group	250,322	525	,477			
	Total	259,131	527				
FP	Between Groups	8,018	2	4,009	6,122	,002*	Big City Center County Town Village/Small Town
	Within group	343,773	525	,655			
	Total	351,791	527				
CP	Between Groups	6,710	2	3,355	5,268	,005*	Big City Center County Town Village/Small Town
	Within group	334,331	525	,637			
	Total	341,040	527				

*p <0.05 significant

When Table 5 is examined, students' New Media Literacy levels vary depending on where the students' families live (F(3,531)= 8,628). Since students' New Media Literacy levels differ significantly depending on where the students' families live, a post-hoc analysis was conducted. According to the post-hoc test results, a significant difference was observed between all living places. Students whose families live in the Big City Center have higher New Media Literacy levels than students whose families live in district centers and Villages/Towns, and students whose families live in district centers have higher New Media Literacy levels than students whose families live in Villages/Towns. When the scale sub-dimensions were examined, it was seen that all sub-dimensions had a similar result to the whole scale. Accordingly, students whose families live in the big city center have higher and more significant levels of Functional Consuming, Functional Prosuming, Critical Consuming and Critical Prosuming than others.

3.4.3. The Relationship Between the Geographical Regions Where Students Live and Their New Media Literacy Levels

Table 6 summarizes the findings regarding the relationship between students' New media literacy levels according to the geographical regions they live in.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to the geographical regions they live in.

Scale1	Geographical Regions	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
NML	Karadeniz	211	3,9645	,65601
	İç Anadolu	87	3,8904	,63143
	Doğu Anadolu	69	3,8688	,63184
	Marmara	45	4,0726	,60819
	Ege	57	3,8789	,64264
	Güney Doğu Anadolu	35	3,8261	,65395
	Total	504	3,9290	,64280
FC	Karadeniz	211	4,0264	,70330
	İç Anadolu	87	4,0194	,64050
	Doğu Anadolu	69	3,9917	,70918
	Marmara	45	4,1778	,71178
	Ege	57	3,8897	,73343
	Güney Doğu Anadolu	35	3,9224	,76095
	Total	504	4,0113	,70203
CC	Karadeniz	211	4,1000	,71000
	İç Anadolu	87	3,9908	,68624
	Doğu Anadolu	69	4,0253	,70861
	Marmara	45	4,1582	,64066
	Ege	57	3,9777	,70987
	Güney Doğu Anadolu	35	4,0154	,66433
	Total	504	4,0564	,69578
FP	Karadeniz	211	3,9897	,80476
	İç Anadolu	87	3,8987	,86123
	Doğu Anadolu	69	3,8716	,75440
	Marmara	45	4,2984	,69708
	Ege	57	3,8972	,77486
	Güney Doğu Anadolu	35	3,8694	,94404
	Total	504	3,9666	,81058

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CP	Karadeniz	211	3,9897	,80476
	İç Anadolu	87	3,7545	,79589
	Doğu Anadolu	69	3,6839	,78472
	Marmara	45	3,6087	,78567
	Ege	57	3,7467	,86513
	Güney Doğu Anadolu	35	3,7499	,69320
	Total	504	3,5200	,91645

According to the analysis results, it is seen that students living in the Marmara region have the highest average among the geographical regions they live in according to their New media literacy levels (NML: X̄= 4.0726). When the average scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale are examined, it is seen that the New Media Literacy levels of the students living in the Marmara region are high in all sub-dimensions (FC, FP, CC) except the CP (Critical Prosuming) dimension. When Table 6 is examined, students' New Media Literacy levels differ according to the geographical regions where the students live. One Way Anova test was applied to examine whether these differences were significant. Data on the results of this test are given in Table 7.

Table 7: ANOVA Test Results of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to the Geographical Region Where Students Live

Scale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant difference
NML	Between Groups	2,087	5	,417	1,010	,411	
	Within group	205,751	498	,413			
	Total	207,838	503				
FC	Between Groups	2,446	5	,489	,993	,422	
	Within group	245,456	498	,493			
	Total	247,902	503				
CC	Between Groups	1,722	5	,344	,709	,617	
	Within group	241,788	498	,486			
	Total	243,511	503				
FP	Between Groups	6,696	5	1,339	2,060	,069	
	Within group	323,797	498	,650			
	Total	330,493	503				

CP	Between Groups	2,587	5	,517	,814	,540
	Within group	316,353	498	,635		
	Total	318,939	503			

*p <0.05 significant

When Table 7 is examined, students' new media literacy levels do not show a significant difference according to the geographical regions they live in (F(,417)= 1,010). When the scale sub-dimensions were examined, it was seen that all sub-dimensions of the scale had a similar result to the whole scale.

3.4.4. The Relationship Between the Time Students Spend on the Internet and their New Media Literacy Levels

Table 8 summarizes the findings regarding the relationship between students' new media literacy levels according to the time they spend on the Internet.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to the Time Students Spend on the Internet

Scale	Time Spent on the Internet	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
NML	1-2 hours	74	3,7099	,69386
	3-4 Hours	190	3,9288	,62679
	5-6 Hours	178	3,8977	,64469
	7-8 Hours	55	4,0233	,59710
	9-10 Hours	30	4,1488	,68739
	Total	527	3,9099	,64877
FC	1-2 Hours	74	3,7973	,68858
	3-4 Hours	190	4,0391	,70430
	5-6 Hours	178	3,9639	,69999
	7-8 Hours	55	4,0152	,71633
	9-10 Hours	30	4,3333	,68802
	Total	527	3,9940	,70767
CC	1-2 Hours	74	3,8343	,84546
	3-4 Hours	190	4,0810	,66598
	5-6 Hours	178	4,0068	,66724
	7-8 Hours	55	4,1455	,61074
	9-10 Hours	30	4,2758	,77304
	Total	527	4,0391	,70064
FP	1-2 Hours	74	3,7375	,86753
	3-4 Hours	190	3,9382	,80268
	5-6 Hours	178	3,9728	,82297
	7-8 Hours	55	4,1455	,75717
	9-10 Hours	30	4,0867	,77241
	Total	527	3,9518	,81685
CP	1-2 Hours	74	3,4925	,79833

3-4 Hours	190	3,6774	,79113
5-6 Hours	178	3,6787	,83178
7-8 Hours	55	3,8091	,71057
9-10 Hours	30	3,9233	,85407
Total	527	3,6796	,80515

According to the results of the analysis, according to the students' new media literacy levels, it is seen that those with the highest average time spent on the internet are those who use a Mean of 9-10 hours (SMÖEİ: X= 4.1488). When the average scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale are examined, it is seen that the situation is similar to the whole scale in the other sub-dimensions except FU (Functional Prosuming). In the FP sub-dimension, it is seen that the new media literacy levels of students who use the internet for 7-8 hours are high. When Table 8 is examined, students' new media literacy levels differ according to the time students spend on the internet. One Way Anova test was applied to examine whether these differences were significant. Data regarding the results of this test are given in Table 9.

Table 9: ANOVA Test Results of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to Students' Internet Usage Duration

Scale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant difference
NML	Between Groups	5,474	4	1,369	3,309	,011*	9-10 1-2
	Within group	215,917	522	,414			
	Total	221,391	526				
FC	Between Groups	6,890	4	1,723	3,505	,008*	9-10 1-2
	Within group	256,526	522	,491			
	Total	263,417	526				
CC	Between Groups	5,927	4	1,482	3,066	,016*	9-10 1-2
	Within group	252,283	522	,483			
	Total	258,209	526				
FP	Between Groups	6,122	4	1,530	2,317	,056	
	Within group	344,851	522	,661			
	Total	350,973	526				
CP	Between Groups	5,296	4	1,324	2,059	,085	

Within group	335,696	522	,643
Total	340,992	526	

*p <0.05 significant

When Table 9 is examined, post-hoc analysis was conducted since the students' new media literacy levels showed a significant difference according to the time they spent on the internet. According to the Post-Hoc test results, a significant difference was observed between the students' internet usage time (F(1,369)=3,309). Students whose average internet usage time is 9-10 hours have a higher New Media Literacy level than students whose average internet usage time is 1-2 hours. When the scale sub-dimensions were examined, it was seen that the FC (Functional Consuming) and CC (Critical Consuming) sub-dimensions had a similar result to the whole scale. No significant difference was observed in the FU (Functional Prosuming) and CU (Critical Prosuming) sub-dimensions.

3.4.5. The Relationship Between Income Levels of Students' Families and New Media Literacy Levels

Table 10 summarizes the findings regarding the relationship between students' new media literacy levels according to their families' income levels.

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to the Income Levels of Students' Families

Scale	Family Income Level	N	$\bar{X}$	SS
NML	0-5000	146	3,7770	,65879
	5000-10000	223	3,9290	,67292
	10000-20000	84	3,9510	,57661
	20000 and above	75	4,0758	,59309
	Total	528	3,9113	,64896
FP	0-5000	146	,71524	,05919
	5000-10000	223	,72317	,04843
	10000-20000	84	,66735	,07281
	20000 and above	75	,64902	,07494
	Total	528	,70835	,03083
CC	0-5000	146	3,9199	,73523
	5000-10000	223	4,0373	,73578
	10000-20000	84	4,0952	,57908
	20000 and above	75	4,2267	,61246
	Total	528	4,0410	,70122
FP	0-5000	146	3,7896	,85207
	5000-10000	223	3,9706	,82858
	10000-20000	84	4,0068	,72059
	20000 and above	75	4,1619	,76692
	Total	528	3,9535	,81703
CP	0-5000	146	3,5644	,76273
	5000-10000	223	3,7195	,83622
	10000-20000	84	3,6833	,80568
	20000 and above	75	3,7840	,77513
	Total	528	3,6800	,80445

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In the analysis results, when the income levels of their families are examined according to the new media literacy levels of the students, it is seen that those with the highest average income are those with an average income of 20 thousand and above (NML: X̄= 4.0758). When the average scores obtained from the scale sub-dimensions are examined, it is seen that the new media literacy levels of students whose families have an income of 20 thousand or more are high in all sub-dimensions except FC (Functional Consuming). In the FC (Functional Consuming) sub-dimension, it was observed that students whose families' income levels were 0-5000 and 5001-10000 had higher averages than students whose families' income levels were 10001-20000 and 20001 and above. When Table 10 is examined, students' new media literacy levels differ according to their families' income levels. One Way Anova test was applied to examine whether these differences were significant. Data regarding the results of this test are given in Table 11.

Table 11: ANOVA Test Results of New Media Literacy Scale Scores According to the Income Level of Students' Families

Scale	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p	Significant difference
NML	Between Groups	4,867	3	1,622	3,916	,009*	20001 and above 0-5000
	Within group	217,081	524	,414			
	Total	221,949	527				
FP	Between Groups	6,013	3	2,004	4,064	,007*	20001 and above 0-5000
	Within group	258,414	524	,493			
	Total	264,427	527				
CC	Between Groups	4,975	3	1,658	3,419	,017*	20001 and above 0-5000
	Within group	254,155	524	,485			
	Total	259,131	527				
FC	Between Groups	7,482	3	2,494	3,796	,010*	20001 and above 0-5000
	Within group	344,309	524	,657			
	Total	351,791	527				
CP	Between Groups	3,111	3	1,037	1,608	,186	

Within group	337,929	524	,645
Total	341,040	527	

*p <0.05 significant

When Table 11 is examined, it is determined that the new media literacy levels of the students differ significantly according to the income levels of their families (F (1,622) = 3,916). When the sub-dimensions of the scale were examined, it was seen that all sub-dimensions except the EM (Critical Prosuming) sub-dimension had a similar result to the whole scale. Post-Hoc analysis was conducted because students' new media literacy levels showed a significant difference according to their families' income levels. According to the Post-Hoc test results, it was seen that students whose families have an income of 20 thousand and above have higher new media literacy levels than students whose families have an income of 0-5000 in the entire scale, except for the EU sub-dimension.

CONCLUSION

No significant difference could be detected between the new media literacy levels of the participants according to the gender variable. The fact that there is a significant difference in favor of female students only in the sub-dimensions of critical prosuming and simplicity and accuracy of social media-based information in the applied scales may explain that women pay more attention to legal and ethical rules when producing content and can approach the information provided by the media more critically compared to men. When we look at the studies in the literature, they are partially consistent with the studies (Tuğtekin and Mercimek, 2022) in which no significant difference could be detected in terms of the gender variable. Similarly, (Kahne et al. 2012) found in their study that female students had a higher level of new media literacy than male students. They detected a significant difference in favor of male students in the critical prosuming dimension of the gender variable, although not in the overall scale. There are also studies in the literature that conclude that the gender variable is in favor of male students throughout the scale (Üstündağ, 2021). The reason why no significant difference was detected according to the gender variable in this study can be explained as technological developments reducing the differences between gender and new media literacy levels. It can be concluded that the easier access and use of digital technologies every day prevents the differentiation of media literacy skills in terms of gender.

Gerbner tries to explain the effect of the media on the audience's perception of social reality through the Cultivation Theory. Stating that educational status directly affects media consumption and approach to media content; Using the concept of cruel world syndrome, he explains that the masses with low education levels are exposed to media content for a longer period of time, and therefore, the stories presented by the media become the reality of these masses after a while. Therefore, a correlation can be established between media literacy and educational status. A significant difference was detected between the participants' new media

literacy levels according to their educational background. It appears that graduate students have higher media literacy skills than undergraduate and associate degree students. These findings are compatible with the data obtained by (Erdoğan and Topçu, 2022), which examined the media literacy levels of associate and undergraduate students.

These studies are consistent with the findings of the study. There are many studies and reports showing that as the level of education increases, media consumption times and the tendency to be skeptical of media content increase (Şencan and Kalkan, 2019), (Sarı et al. 2019). Livingstone and Helsper (2007) conducted a study on digital participation and the digital divide among children and young people. The article states that there is a relationship between education level and media literacy. Researchers define the concept of "digital participation" as referring to children and young people's access to, use of, and skills in digital technologies and their knowledge and understanding of digital media. This concept is especially used to examine the relationship between education level and digital literacy. Researchers have found that children and young people with lower levels of education have lower levels of digital engagement and lower digital skills. They also stated that children and young people with higher education levels have higher levels of digital participation and higher digital skills. This shows that the level of education affects the relationship between digital literacy and digital participation level. As the education level increases, the level of digital literacy and digital participation also increases. Therefore, increasing the level of education is important to reduce the digital divide and increase digital inclusion (Van Deursen and Van Dijk, 2014). Examining the attitudes and behaviors of Generation Y regarding fake news (Kutlu and Doğan, 2020), they found a significant difference between the variables of education level and suspicion towards social media news. These findings are compatible with the research conducted. Many studies in the literature discuss the differences in new media literacy skills among Internet users, the impact of education level on these differences, and issues such as media literacy and digital citizenship, and discuss the relationship between the level of trust in information obtained through new media and the level of education. These studies show that there is a positive relationship between the education level of internet users and their trust in the information they obtain through new media. Since individuals with higher education levels generally have higher media literacy skills, it is stated that these individuals are more competent in accessing reliable information through new media. However, different factors (age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, etc.) may also have an impact on this relationship. Some studies show that highly educated individuals have more access to the internet and social media platforms than lower-educated individuals. (Hargittai, 2010; Mason at al. 2018). Therefore, the relationship between educational attainment and trust in information obtained through new media depends on broader social and cultural factors. Regardless of their level of education, all people encounter unproven, misleading or

misleading content on social media. The important thing at this point is to learn to use new media literacy skills as a shield against such manipulative content.

Within the scope of this study, the relationship between students' new media literacy levels according to where their families live was also examined. The reason for this is to investigate whether the places where students' families live (village-town, district center, big city center) have an effect on their access and use of new media technologies. In this regard, students whose families live in the Big City Center are compared to students whose families live in district centers and villages/towns; It has been observed that students whose families live in district centers have a higher level of new media literacy than students whose families live in villages/towns. The literature reveals that people living in rural areas are more disadvantaged in accessing information and communication technologies than families living in cities (Gül and Demïryürek, 2020; Huffman 2018). There are also studies showing that the difference between genders has disappeared, but the digital gap between people living in rural areas and cities still continues (Fidan and Şen, 2015). These findings are parallel to the data of the study. Contrary to these findings (Yiğiter and Ata 2022), in their study, they examined the places where students lived according to the variables of homestay, student house, private dormitory, and state dormitory and did not observe any significant differences. (Saçan and Adıbelli 2016) found in their study that there was no significant relationship between variables related to whether university students lived in city centers or rural areas and their media literacy levels. These findings do not coincide with the data of the study. In this study, when the relationship between the regions where students live in Türkiye and their new media literacy is examined, it has been determined that there is no significant difference between the students' new media literacy levels according to the geographical regions they live in. When we look at TÜİK's 2022 statistics, the rate of households with internet access in geographical regions in Türkiye is 94.1%. The mean geographical region in Türkiye is quite close to the mean Türkiye in general. Therefore, it is understandable that no significant difference emerged.

When the relationships between the time spent on the internet and media literacy levels were examined, it was observed that students whose internet usage time was 9-10 hours had a higher New Media Literacy level than students whose internet usage time was 1-2 hours. When we look at the studies in the literature, these results show that those who use the internet for 6 hours or more are more likely than those who use the internet for 1-2 hours (Tuğtekin and Mercimek 2022), those who use the internet for 6-9 hours a day are more likely than those who use the internet for 1-2 hours and those who use the internet for 1-2 hours are more likely than those who use the internet for 1-2 hours (Yiğiter and Ata 2022). This is parallel to studies (Erdoğan and Topçu 2022) showing that students who spend a lot of time on the Internet have a high level of new media literacy, less than 30 minutes and between 30 minutes and 1 hour. At the same time, there are studies emphasizing that as the frequency of internet use increases, there is an increase in the level of trust in the news received from social media and newspaper news sites (Algül 2015). As people's daily lives become more complex day by day in modern

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societies, the need for media increases. As explained in media addiction theory, people use media to understand the social events and issues they live in and need media messages to achieve their goals. For this reason, being able to constantly receive information becomes important and the need for media increases (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976). Therefore, it is possible to say that the modern individual, who tries to make sense of his environment, increases his media consumption time with his need for more media, while at the same time developing addiction to media (RTÜK 2022). In the research on young people's media use and digital literacy, it was determined that 37.7% of young people between the ages of 19-21 are addicted to screens, and the addiction of those who use the internet every day is high. However, it was emphasized that 33% of young people with a high level of digital literacy are those who use the internet for 6 hours or more. These results show that the quality of time spent on the internet, rather than the duration of internet use, determines the level of media literacy. The era we live in directs people to use the internet while working, having fun or doing research. Therefore, it would be a wrong perspective to consider the time spent on the internet as a mere leisure activity. Like every technology, new media tools have the possibility of shaping human life. The way to communicate healthily with these technologies is to have new media literacy skills.

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