

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TEACHER CANDIDATES' OPINIONS ON THE NECESSITY OF RECEIVING NEW MEDIA TRAINING AND THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR OWN EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

For education to be of high quality, teachers must play a guiding role in preparing future generations to critically navigate new media. The extent to which teacher candidates are sensitive to this responsibility remains unclear and requires further investigation. Equipping students with skills such as critical thinking, creative problem-solving, scientific reasoning, demands a transformation. Media literacy emerges as a crucial competency. However, there is evidence suggesting that teacher candidates often lack sufficient proficiency in this area. This study aims to explore teacher candidates' perspectives on their educational needs concerning new media literacy. The research was conducted using semi-structured interviews with teacher candidates enrolled in a faculty of education at Anadolu University. Findings indicate that although participants exhibit a high level of awareness regarding the importance of media literacy, their actual skills do not align with their self-expectations. Participants reported that the single-semester media literacy course offered in their final year is inadequate in developing theoretical understanding and practical competencies. The study emphasizes the need to expand media literacy education in teacher training programs. Integrating more comprehensive content throughout the undergraduate curriculum may foster the development of teacher candidates who are capable of cultivating these skills in their future students.

Keywords: Education, media literacy, competency, teachers, attitudes

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ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ MEDYA EĞİTİMİ ALMALARININ GEREKLİLİĞİNE YÖNELİK GÖRÜŞLERİ VE KENDİ YETERLİLİKLERİNE İLİŞKİN TUTUMLARI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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ÖZET

Eğitimin yüksek kalitede olabilmesi için öğretmenlerin gelecek nesilleri yeni medyayı eleştirel bir şekilde kullanmaya hazırlamada yol gösterici bir rol oynamaları gerekmektedir. Öğretmen adaylarının bu sorumluluğa ne ölçüde duyarlı oldukları henüz net değildir ve daha fazla araştırma gerektirmektedir. Öğrencileri eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcı problem çözme, bilimsel akıl yürütme gibi becerilerle donatmak bir dönüşüm gerektirmektedir. Medya okuryazarlığı önemli bir yeterlilik olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Ancak, öğretmen adaylarının genellikle bu alanda gerekli yeterliliğe sahip olmadıklarını gösteren kanıtlar bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının yeni medya okuryazarlığı ile ilgili eğitim ihtiyaçlarına ilişkin bakış açılarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi'ne kayıtlı öğretmen adaylarıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, katılımcıların medya okuryazarlığının önemi konusunda yüksek düzeyde farkındalık göstermelerine rağmen, gerçek becerilerinin kendi beklentileriyle uyuşmadığını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar, son yıllarında sunulan tek dönemlik medya okuryazarlığı dersinin teorik anlayış ve pratik yeterliliklerin geliştirilmesinde yetersiz olduğunu bildirmişlerdir. Çalışma, öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin genişletilmesi ihtiyacını vurgulamaktadır. Lisans müfredatına daha kapsamlı bir içerik entegre edilmesi, gelecekteki öğrencilerinde bu becerileri geliştirebilecek öğretmen adaylarının gelişimini destekleyebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eğitim, medya okuryazarlığı, yeterlilik, öğretmen, tutum

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INTRODUCTION

With the formation of the industrial society, developing technologies have affected culture and therefore life. Continuous change and development have brought about the necessity of adaptation and being close to the current issues. It was not expected that the changing lifestyle with widespread use of computer systems, which was previously used only for defense and research, would not change the culture and education system with computer systems age that is now open to everyone, and even interactive, simultaneous, fast, easy and less costly. As Avcı et al. (1993) predicted more than three decades ago, the changing teacher profile in the information society, with the use of new technologies, allows the teacher to take on the responsibilities of planning education and monitoring the success of the implementation of plans in the classroom. Therefore, teachers are constantly retrained so that they do not fall behind the rapidly changing structure of society (Avcı et al. 1993, p. 177).

The transformation of information and communication technologies has redefined not only how knowledge is produced and shared, but also the role of educators in the learning process. The increasing dominance of digital media in everyday life requires educators to acquire new literacies that go beyond traditional teaching skills. Among these, media literacy has emerged as a critical competence for teacher candidates who are expected to navigate, interpret, and guide students through an increasingly complex media environment (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2010).

Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media content across a variety of platforms (Aufderheide, 1993). As digital technologies permeate both formal and informal learning contexts, teachers are now positioned as key agents in fostering critical thinking and digital responsibility among students. This shift necessitates a reconceptualization of teacher education curricula, integrating media literacy not as an optional skill but as a foundational pedagogical tool.

Research suggests that teacher candidates often recognize the importance of media literacy but report limited self-efficacy and practical training in this area (Karaman & Karataş, 2009; Potter, 2013). While some education faculties have introduced media literacy courses, these are frequently elective and theoretical, lacking opportunities for experiential learning and digital content creation.

The purpose of this study is to explore teacher candidates' perceptions regarding the necessity of media literacy training and their attitudes toward their own media-related competencies. By employing a qualitative research approach with semi-structured interviews, the study aims to provide insights into how future educators perceive their roles in the digital age and what institutional support they require to fulfill them effectively. In order for the education system to provide students with the opportunity to develop their potential and play an active role in the development of the country, the content and methods of education should be rearranged in a way that will provide them with skills such as critical thinking, creative thinking, scientific thinking, relational thinking, and reasoning (Özden, 2005). Certain regulations require teacher candidates to have certain literacies as well as field knowledge in order for the teaching profession to progress in line with the innovations of the age. One of the basic duties of the teaching profession is not only to provide information to students, but also to educate students on how to use the information they have acquired, how to make choices among various information, and how to use these choices as an enlightened person, and is a person who can teach children and young people how to use multimedia in a beneficial way (McNeil, 1997, p. 40).

The emergence of a new electronic communication system that combines all means of communication and has the potential for mutual interaction is constantly changing and will change local culture and values (Castells, 2008, p. 441). Today, the boundless progress of the information age requires teachers to be aware of and competent in many different subjects and areas.

The educational programs of the information age society must be designed in a flexible structure that can respond immediately to developments in science and technology, take into account individual differences, meet the varying interests and needs of the individual with social needs, and relate the needs of the individual and society. Such a program will direct both teachers and students to the core content and give them the freedom to participate in the cultural development process (Hesapçioğlu, 2001).

According to Marshall McLuhan, a communication scientist who proposed the Media Ecology Theory, it is impossible to reach a conscious level of awareness and interact with the world we live in without media knowledge. Media Ecology, expressed by Marshall McLuhan in 1960, focuses on the effects of media and the messages conveyed. Media ecology, which is evaluated in the context of the effects of media on communication

processes and dimensions depending on technological advances and the reflection of technology on human relations, basically focuses on emotions, thoughts, values and behaviors. In this context, media ecology means explaining media through a new network of relations by revealing the effects of technological development. Therefore, the concept of media ecology is an interdisciplinary approach that points to the role of media in individual and social change processes (Kloock, 1997, p. 44 as cited in Alver, 2004).

Postman, who was a speaker at the National Council of Teachers of English, created the media ecology academic program after defining media ecology in his speech and over time, studies under the name of media ecology tradition gained momentum. In 1971, Postman's Media Ecology Doctorate Program, which he prepared for the New York University School of Education, officially started operating. Postman included the media ecology doctorate program within the school of education because the existence of a relationship between the teacher departments that train people and the media ecology that studies the transactions between people is important (Strate, 1999).

Media and New Media Concepts

Today, media texts can be visual (static or moving), auditory (sound, music or speech) and written language. Media education, which aims to raise awareness in individuals against media messages transmitted in various ways, aims to develop a very broad-based competence. This competence is generally defined as a form of literacy and is used in its modern sense as media literacy (Buckingham, 2003, p. 4). Historically, due to the media's entry into our lives through television, radio, newspaper and the internet and its deep impact, intensive studies have been conducted to understand the media and its effects. In fact, since 2006, the Media Literacy course has been given as an elective course in schools in Turkey on the grounds that children have difficulty understanding the messages given through the media and distinguishing between reality and fiction. Within the scope of the course, the content given under the titles of Introduction to Communication, Mass Communication Tools, Features of Media, Television, Radio, Newspaper, Internet and the adequacy of the course towards media literacy are questioned by subject matter experts.

With the internet's faster and more powerful infrastructure and the media's development into a more widespread and interactive form, the concept of media has

begun to be defined as new media. The concept of new media, which dates back to the 1980s and refers to a media structure and environment that is fundamentally indexed to computer technologies, is used to express many practices and phenomena (Chandler and Munday, 2018, p.447). Richard Rogers lists the three main features of new media as follows: (Geray, 2003, p. 18)

- **Interaction:** The existence of interaction is required in the communication process. In this way, both the receiver and the sender are affected by each other.
- **Demassification:** It can be demassifying enough to allow private message exchange with each individual in a large user group. In this way, different messages can be sent to everyone.
- **Asynchrony:** New communication technologies allow individuals to send or receive messages at any time. It eliminates the need for simultaneity.

With the evolution of media into new media, new literacies have also been needed. New literacies, which are considered as sub-fields of media literacy, include different areas such as news literacy, advertising literacy, information literacy and social media literacy. With people spending a lot of time on social media and social media rapidly replacing mainstream media, social media literacy has gained importance. In addition, since the age of social media use is quite low, social media literacy is important in terms of the development of society and the more accurate adoption of technological innovations (Sezgin & Ünal, 2022, p. 94).

While media literacy is a necessity for target audiences bombarded with messages through traditional media, today, due to the rapid development and impact of digital media that has reached a level higher than traditional media, and the speed, interaction area, power and now double-sided content creation features of new media, the new environment needs to be analyzed correctly.

The Need for Media Literacy for Teacher Candidates

In recent years, the increasing integration of digital technologies into everyday life has heightened the importance of media literacy, particularly in educational contexts. Media literacy enables individuals not only to access and interpret media content but also to critically evaluate its purpose, accuracy, and impact. Given the rapid proliferation of misinformation, cyberbullying, and manipulative digital content, equipping future teachers

with robust media literacy skills has become a pedagogical and ethical imperative (Livingstone et al., 2021). These skills are essential for guiding students through a digital landscape filled with both opportunities and risks.

Contemporary research highlights that many teacher education programs do not adequately address media literacy, leading to a gap between awareness and practice. For example, Mihailidis and Thevenin (2020) argue that while pre-service teachers recognize the value of media literacy, they often lack the practical competencies needed to implement it effectively in their classrooms. This disconnect limits their ability to foster critical thinking, ethical media use, and digital citizenship among students. Consequently, scholars emphasize the urgent need to incorporate comprehensive, practice-based media literacy training into teacher education curricula (Ranieri & Fabbro, 2021).

Furthermore, studies show that media literacy is not only about protecting students from harm but also about empowering them to be active and responsible participants in digital culture. When teachers are equipped with strong media literacy skills, they can support students in becoming creators of content, not just passive consumers.

It is imperative that new media be understood and used correctly by the educators due to the characteristics of the digital world such as its speed, power, interaction and widespread impact. For quality and effective education, it is necessary for teachers to be educated in the field of new media, who will create awareness on the subject and guide the next generation in a sense to develop and protect themselves. Whether there is sufficient sensitivity in this regard is an issue that needs to be examined.

In the digital age, media literacy has evolved from an optional enrichment into a fundamental pedagogical competence. Teachers are no longer solely knowledge transmitters; they are now expected to be facilitators of critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and digital citizenship. The rapid expansion of digital technologies, social media, and algorithm-driven information systems necessitates that teacher candidates not only consume media critically but also guide their future students in understanding, questioning, and producing media content responsibly (Aufderheide, 1993; Hobbs, 2010). Media literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms (Potter, 2013). For teacher candidates, this encompasses understanding the ideological nature of media texts, recognizing bias, and using digital tools to foster participation and engagement in the learning process. As Buckingham (2003) emphasizes,

media literacy education is about more than just protection from harmful content; it is about empowerment and active citizenship.

Teachers serve as mediators between students and the media-saturated world. Their capacity to critically assess media and teach these skills in classrooms directly affects students' cognitive autonomy and democratic awareness (Kellner & Share, 2007). Without proper training, teachers risk reproducing dominant media narratives unconsciously, potentially reinforcing stereotypes or misinformation (Potter, 2013).

Empirical research supports the urgency of integrating media literacy into teacher training. Karaman and Karataş (2009) found that Turkish teacher candidates who had received media literacy instruction demonstrated greater sensitivity to consumer culture and media influence. Similarly, Çöplü and Yıldırım (2017) highlight the value of practical components—such as media production—in shaping teachers' confidence and competence.

Moreover, the global shift to hybrid and digital learning environments has further exposed gaps in teacher preparedness. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for adaptable, media-literate educators who can curate digital content, facilitate online discussions, and model ethical behavior in digital spaces (Redecker, 2017). As such, developing media literacy among teacher candidates is not a peripheral task but a foundational investment in quality education.

In this context, teacher education programs must move beyond offering media literacy as an elective or one-time course. Instead, they should embed it across the curriculum, aligning it with subject-specific pedagogy and field experiences. Media literacy should be framed as both a critical literacy and a digital pedagogy, blending analytical, ethical, and creative dimensions.

Ultimately, teacher candidates who internalize media literacy principles are better equipped to cultivate students who are not passive consumers but active, thoughtful participants in the information society. This alignment with democratic values and lifelong learning goals underscores the central role media literacy plays in 21st-century teacher education.

In the context of rapid technological advancement and the increasing prevalence of digital content, media literacy has emerged as a fundamental competence for educators. Media literacy encompasses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce media in

a variety of forms (Aufderheide, 1993). For teacher candidates, this competence is not only essential for navigating their own media environment but also for guiding students toward critical and responsible media use.

Several scholars argue that media literacy education should be an integral part of teacher preparation programs. According to Hobbs (2010), teachers serve as mediators between students and media culture, and therefore require the tools to both deconstruct and reconstruct media messages in educational settings. Hobbs emphasizes that “educators need to understand the power of media to shape public perceptions and cultural norms, and they must be equipped to help students navigate this landscape” (p. 19).

Moreover, Potter (2013) highlights that without formal training, teachers may unconsciously transmit media messages to students without critical reflection, which can perpetuate stereotypes, misinformation, and biased narratives. Thus, teacher candidates’ ability to critically engage with media content is foundational to fostering democratic values, critical thinking, and civic engagement among learners.

In the Turkish context, media literacy has been recognized as a necessary component of teacher education, particularly with the introduction of elective courses in some faculties of education (Karaman & Karataş;2009 Kellner & Share 2007). Karaman and Karataş (2009) suggest that teacher candidates who receive media literacy instruction demonstrate greater awareness of media bias, consumer culture, and social influence mechanisms.

Furthermore, Çöplü and Yıldırım (2017) found that teacher candidates view media literacy as crucial for combating disinformation and for integrating media effectively into pedagogical practices. Their findings support the idea that teacher education programs should not only include theoretical instruction but also offer practical opportunities for candidates to develop media production skills.

Overall, the literature strongly supports the notion that media literacy is not a peripheral skill, but a central element of contemporary teacher professionalism. As students become increasingly immersed in digital environments, the need for teachers who are media literate—and who can teach media literacy—is more urgent than ever.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of this study is getting the views of students studying to be teachers at education faculties regarding the necessity of new media education and their own competence. This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically adopting a phenomenological approach to explore teacher candidates' perceptions regarding the necessity of new media education and their self-assessed competencies in media literacy. Phenomenology was chosen as the appropriate method because it allows for an in-depth examination of participants' lived experiences, attitudes, and interpretations regarding a specific phenomenon—in this case, their engagement with media literacy and digital education (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Sampling Method and Participants

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which is commonly used in qualitative research to identify individuals who are especially knowledgeable or experienced with the phenomenon under investigation (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample consisted of 10 teacher candidates enrolled in the Faculty of Education in Anadolu University, including students from various departments such as Social Studies Teaching, Mathematics Education, and English Language Teaching. To ensure relevant insights, only third- and fourth-year students were selected, as they are close to graduation and have completed at least one course in media literacy.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in that it addresses a critical gap in teacher education: the insufficient integration of media literacy into undergraduate curricula. As digital environments continue to evolve rapidly, there is a growing need for teachers who are not only media literate themselves but are also equipped to cultivate these skills in their students. By foregrounding the voices of teacher candidates, this research provides empirical insight into how current programs can be improved to better meet the demands of digital-age education.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility to explore participants' responses in depth while maintaining a consistent thematic structure. Interview questions were developed based on expert consultation and literature review, covering three main areas:

1. The necessity of media literacy education for teacher candidates,
2. Self-assessment of participants' media literacy skills,
3. Understanding of new media concepts.

Each interview lasted approximately 30–40 minutes and was conducted in a quiet setting to ensure participant comfort and data quality. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, supported by descriptive analysis techniques (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Thematic coding was applied to identify recurring patterns and categories related to participants' perceptions, competencies, and suggestions. This dual approach allowed both the quantification of recurring themes and the contextual interpretation of participant responses. Direct quotations were included in the findings to ensure transparency and to retain the authenticity of participants' voices.

To enhance trustworthiness, the following strategies were employed:

- Triangulation of data sources (departmental variation in participants),
- Peer debriefing to validate coding categories,
- Member checking by returning transcripts to participants for confirmation.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Anadolu University (Approval No: 839569, dated 23.01.2025).

FINDINGS

Table 1. Demographic Information of Students

GENDER	GRADE	DEPARTMENT
S1Female	3rd Grade	Department of Social Studies Teaching
S2 Female	4th Grade	Department of Mathematics Education
S3 Male	4th Grade	Department of Social Studies Teaching
S4 Male	4th Grade	
S5 Female	4th Grade	English Language Teaching Department
S6 Female	4th Grade	Department of Social Studies Teaching
S7 Male	3rd Grade	

The students of the Faculty of Education who participated in the study were selected especially from among the students who are close to graduation. Their views on their needs and competencies for media literacy education just before starting their profession are important. Another reason for selecting the participants (10) from among the senior students (7) and third year students (3) is to determine whether sufficient education is provided in the faculty on the subject before starting teaching.

Table 2. Participants' views on whether media literacy skills are necessary for prospective teachers.

Necessary Not Necessary	Categories of reasons why media literacy skills are necessary			
Necessary: S1,S2,S3, S4,S5,S6, S7,S8,S9, S10	1.Distincting Disinformation	2.Preventing addictive screen use	3.Raising awareness among parents and students about abuse	4. Creating a filter against manipulations

	S2,S3,S4,S6,S7 ,S8,S9,S10	S1,S3,S4,S5,S6,S7 ,S10	S2,S5,S8	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S9
Not Necessary	none	none	none	none

When the participants' views on whether media literacy skills are necessary for teacher candidates are examined, it was determined that all participants found media literacy skills necessary. Being able to distinguish disinformation, preventing addictive screen use, creating awareness among parents and students about abuse, and creating filters against manipulations were given as the skills that teacher candidates need in terms of media literacy.

None of the participants find media literacy skills unnecessary. One participant stated the following:

S7: Media literacy is an indispensable part of today's education system for education faculty students and teacher candidates. Skills such as being able to critically analyze media messages, creating a sense of security and ethics in the digital world, and being able to recognize media manipulations support not only teacher candidates' own development but also their students' healthy relationship with the media.

The participants show that they are highly about the need for efficacy for media literacy.

Table 3. Views on Media Literacy Skills of Education Faculty Students

THEME	CATEGORY	CODES ₃	PARTICIPANTS ₄	FREQUENCY
	2			
UNDERSTANDING MEDIA CONTENTS 1	POSITIVE	READING BETWEEN THE LINES	S ₃ S ₅ S ₂	3
	NEGATIVE	NOT SEEING THE MANIPULATION	S ₁	1
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	POSITIVE	SEEING THE HIDDEN PURPOSE OF THE CONTENT	S ₂ S ₃ S ₆ S ₉	4
	NEGATIVE	NOT NOTICING THE DISTORTED INFO	S ₁ S ₄	1
ABILITY TO VERIFY THE CONTENT	POSITIVE	AWARENESS of DISINFORMATION	S ₃ S ₅ S ₆ S ₉	5
CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS	POSITIVE	QUESTIONING	S ₃ S ₅ S ₆ S ₇ S ₉ S ₁₀	6
DIGITAL LITERACY	POSITIVE	PRIVACY and SECURITY	S ₃ S ₅ S ₁₀	3
	NEGATIVE	AWARENESS	S ₁ S ₄	2
	NEGATIVE	DIGITAL INFO SEARCH SKILLS CONTENT PRODUCTION SKILLS	S ₁ S ₂ S ₄ S ₅	4

The views of the education faculty students and teacher candidates regarding their media literacy skills show that their awareness of the subject is high but their skills are not as positive as they would like. It is argued that the media literacy course they take only for one semester in their senior year is not sufficient to provide theoretical and practical competence on the subject. Compared to the fact that such a course was not compulsory

in previous years, giving the course even for one semester creates significant awareness and results in some improvements in digital content preparation and design. In particular, there is a need for more comprehensive training in digital information search skills and digital content preparation skills in digital literacy.

Some of the participants' statements are as follows:

S8: Today, students can be exposed to security threats and unethical content on digital platforms. Thanks to the media literacy skills of teacher candidates, they can inform their students about the risks they may encounter in the digital environment and guide them correctly. This makes future teachers not only information providers but also guides with ethical responsibilities in the digital world.

S5: "Although we are aware of how important media literacy is in today's digital world, I don't think our training has prepared us well enough. We took only one media literacy course, and it was too short and too theoretical. We need more practical experiences and continuous exposure to digital tools and content. As future teachers, we are expected to guide our students through the risks of the internet, but I personally feel unprepared to take on that role effectively. Media literacy should not be treated as an optional skill—it should be a fundamental part of teacher education."

S1: "I realized that I struggle with preparing digital content. We weren't given enough hands-on training during our coursework. I feel like I lack the technical skills to design engaging and age-appropriate materials for students."

Thus, those remarks state the need for media literacy skills for the teachers of the teachers.

DISCUSSION& CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that teacher candidates generally perceive new media training as necessary and express a positive attitude toward receiving such education. This result is consistent with the current literature emphasizing the need for 21st-century teachers to possess not only pedagogical skills but also digital competencies (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Redecker, 2017).

Differences in participants' self-efficacy perceptions regarding their digital skills suggest that previous experience and exposure to technology play a significant role. According to Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, individuals' beliefs about their

capabilities significantly influence their willingness to engage in specific behaviors—including the use of new media tools. Therefore, candidates with low self-efficacy tend to be more hesitant when it comes to integrating technology into their future classrooms.

Similarly, as emphasized by Tondeur et al. (2017), without a structured and intentional approach to technology integration in teacher education programs, it becomes difficult for teacher candidates to internalize and apply digital tools in pedagogically meaningful ways. The findings of this study suggest that new media education should not merely focus on technical skills but must also emphasize how these tools can be pedagogically integrated.

Interestingly, although some teacher candidates actively use new media platforms for personal purposes, they report being less confident when applying these tools in educational contexts. This aligns with Ala-Mutka's (2011) discussion on the pedagogical dimension of the digital divide. Such a gap indicates the need for teacher education programs to foster a “digital teaching identity” among candidates.

In this context, media literacy is not merely an individual skill but also an integral part of the teaching profession. Buckingham (2003) emphasizes that media literacy enables individuals to understand, evaluate, and develop a critical attitude toward media content. Furthermore, the way teacher candidates interact with media directly influences their digital pedagogical competence and their ability to communicate effectively with students. Therefore, it is essential that teacher education programs incorporate both theoretical and practical media literacy courses in a more comprehensive manner.

In sum, the attitudes and perceptions of teacher candidates regarding both the necessity of new media training and their own efficacy highlight a need to revise current teacher education curricula. Strengthening digital pedagogical content, increasing opportunities for hands-on practice, and creating supportive learning environments could enhance candidates' preparedness to teach effectively in digitally enriched environments. With the rapid development of technology and the inseparable parts of digital media tools in daily life, media literacy has become one of the fundamental components of the modern education process. When education faculty students and teacher candidates gain media literacy skills, they not only support their own teaching processes but also their students in establishing a healthy relationship with the media. In this article, an examination will be

made from various perspectives on why media literacy skills are necessary for education faculty students and teacher candidates.

Media literacy is a skill that enables individuals to understand, analyze, evaluate and develop a critical attitude towards media messages. This skill involves understanding how media is produced, who shapes it and for what purposes it is presented, rather than just passively consuming media content. Media literacy also enables individuals to use media tools consciously and creatively.

It is very important for education faculty students and teacher candidates to have media literacy skills in today's digital age. Media literacy allows teacher candidates to develop critical thinking skills. Critical thinking in education allows students to not only receive information, but also to have the ability to question and analyze this information. Analysis of media messages allows teacher candidates and students to be aware of the different perspectives and ideological effects of the media. This expands their perception of the media and provides a more balanced perspective. In addition, teacher candidates' ability to communicate with the media is not limited to understanding media content. It also allows them to communicate effectively with their students and use digital materials and teaching tools more efficiently. Teacher candidates can create course materials on digital platforms and provide students with the opportunity to benefit from various digital resources. This skill helps both the professional development of the teacher and students to establish a healthy relationship in the digital world.

Similarly, media can sometimes be used as manipulative tools to manipulate society. Media literacy allows prospective teachers to recognize hidden ideologies, distortions, and manipulations in media messages. This skill allows teachers to provide a critical perspective when presenting media content to students and to help students understand disinformation in the media. Individuals who are vulnerable to the effects of the media become more open to misinformation and manipulation. Prospective teachers raising awareness on this issue will contribute to future generations becoming more conscious media consumers.

Another important aspect to consider is the role of teacher educators in shaping the attitudes and competencies of teacher candidates. The success of media literacy integration in teacher education programs depends not only on the curriculum design but also on the expertise, interest, and modeling behavior of faculty members. If instructors

themselves lack confidence or knowledge in digital media use, they may fail to provide the support and inspiration candidates need to develop their skills. As suggested by Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010), the beliefs and practices of teacher educators significantly influence pre-service teachers' intentions to use technology in their own classrooms.

Moreover, the study points toward a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application. While participants acknowledged the value of media literacy conceptually, their limited experience with producing or critically evaluating media content highlights a practice gap. To bridge this gap, education faculties should adopt more project-based and participatory approaches that encourage the creation, critique, and ethical use of digital content. This aligns with Hobbs' (2010) argument that digital and media literacy instruction should blend critical thinking with production skills to foster empowered and active media users.

A further consideration is the socio-cultural context in which teacher candidates are situated. In Turkey, where access to digital infrastructure and exposure to media content can vary by region and socioeconomic status, uniform expectations for digital competence may be unrealistic. Teacher education programs must account for these disparities and provide equitable access to resources and support for all candidates. This could include offering supplemental workshops, open-access online modules, or partnerships with digital literacy organizations.

In addition, media literacy must be understood not only as a set of technical or cognitive skills but also as an ethical and civic competence. Teacher candidates must be prepared to engage students in discussions about privacy, online behavior, hate speech, misinformation, and digital well-being. These dimensions are particularly important in today's climate of information overload, fake news, and algorithmic bias, where students are often exposed to manipulative or harmful content. As highlighted by Buckingham (2003), media literacy must foster a sense of responsibility and active citizenship.

The findings also suggest that integrating media literacy into multiple courses—rather than confining it to a single elective—may result in deeper learning and greater transferability. Embedding media literacy in subject-specific pedagogy courses (e.g., science, social studies, or language education) could allow candidates to contextualize their learning and develop strategies for incorporating media content into their future classrooms. This

interdisciplinary integration supports the idea that media literacy is not just an add-on, but a core teaching competence.

Finally, the global shift toward digital learning—accelerated by events like the COVID-19 pandemic—has underscored the urgency of equipping teacher candidates with robust digital pedagogical skills. Teacher education programs that fail to prepare candidates for this blended reality risk producing graduates who are under-equipped for the demands of modern teaching.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Günümüz dijital çağında eğitim fakültesi öğrencileri ve öğretmen adayları için medya okuryazarlığı becerilerine sahip olmak oldukça önemlidir. Medya okuryazarlığı, öğretmen adaylarının eleştirel düşünme becerilerini geliştirmelerine olanak tanır. Eğitimde eleştirel düşünme, öğrencilere yalnızca bilgi almalarını değil, aynı zamanda bu bilgiyi sorgulama ve analiz etme becerisine de sahip olmalarını sağlar. Medya mesajlarının analizi, öğretmen adaylarının ve öğrencilerin medyanın farklı bakış açılarının ve ideolojik etkilerinin farkında olmalarını sağlar. Bu, medyaya ilişkin algılarını genişletir ve daha dengeli bir bakış açısı sağlar. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının medyayla iletişim kurma becerileri yalnızca medya içeriğini anlamakla sınırlı değildir. Aynı zamanda öğrencileriyle etkili iletişim kurmalarını ve dijital materyalleri ve öğretim araçlarını daha verimli kullanmalarını sağlar. Öğretmen adayları, dijital platformlarda ders materyalleri oluşturabilir ve öğrencilere çeşitli dijital kaynaklardan yararlanma fırsatı sunabilir. Bu beceri hem öğretmenin mesleki gelişimine hem de öğrencilerin dijital dünyada sağlıklı bir ilişki kurmasına yardımcı olur.

Hızla gelişen dijital dünyasında, medya okuryazarlığı yalnızca öğrenciler için değil, aynı zamanda gelecek nesillere dijital medyanın bilinçli ve etik kullanımında rehberlik etmesi beklenen eğitimciler için de temel bir beceri haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının yeni medya eğitimi alma gerekliliğine ilişkin algılarını ve medya okuryazarlığı konusundaki öz değerlendirme yeterliliklerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Nitel bir araştırma deseni uygulayan çalışma, Anadolu'daki bir üniversitenin eğitim fakültesi bünyesindeki çeşitli bölümlerden öğretmen adaylarının görüşlerini analiz etmektedir.

Mevcut medya okuryazarlığı derslerinin farkındalıkları ve pratik becerileri üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmek için son sınıf ve üçüncü sınıf öğrencileri arasından seçilen on öğretmen adayıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşme verileri, içerik ve

betimsel analiz teknikleriyle analiz edilerek ortak temalar ve bireysel bakış açılarındaki farklılıklar belirlenmiştir.

Bulgular, tüm katılımcıların medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin öğretmen adayları için olmazsa olmaz olduğunu düşündüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu gerekliliğin temel nedenleri arasında yanlış bilgileri ayırt edebilme, ekran bağımlılığını önleme, öğrenciler ve veliler arasında dijital istismar konusunda farkındalık yaratma ve manipülatif içeriği filtreleme becerisi yer almaktadır. Katılımcılar, medya okuryazarlığı eğitimine sınırlı maruz kalmanın kendilerine sağladığı yüksek farkındalık düzeyini kabul etmiş, ancak dijital içerik oluşturma ve doğrulamada gerekli pratik becerileri geliştirmek için bir dönemlik eğitimin yeterli olmadığını vurgulamışlardır.

Öğretmen adayları, kendi medya okuryazarlığı yeterlilikleri konusunda farklı düzeylerde güven ifade etmişlerdir. Eleştirel düşünme, gizlilik farkındalığı ve söylemi analiz etme becerisine yönelik olumlu tutumlar bildirirken, özellikle dijital içerik hazırlama ve bilgi arama becerilerinde zayıflıklar tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuçlar, öğretmen eğitimi müfredatlarında medya okuryazarlığına daha kapsamlı ve sürekli bir yaklaşımın gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır.

Çalışmanın teorik temeli, McLuhan'ın (1960) medya ekolojisi perspektifine ve Hobbs (2010), Potter (2013) ve Buckingham (2003) gibi akademisyenler tarafından vurgulanan pedagojik çıkarımlara dayanmaktadır. Medya okuryazarlığı yalnızca bireysel bir beceri olarak değil, aynı zamanda öğretmenlerin öğrencilerinde eleştirel farkındalık, yurttaşlık sorumluluğu ve dijital etik geliştirmelerine olanak tanıyan pedagojik bir gereklilik olarak da sunulmaktadır. Literatür, hedefli bir eğitim olmadan öğretmen adaylarının bilinçsizce medya önyargılarını ve yanlış bilgileri pekiştirebileceğini öne sürmektedir (Potter, 2013).

Ayrıca, Bandura'nın (1997) öz yeterlilik teorisine göre, bireylerin kendi dijital yetenekleri hakkındaki inançları, eğitim ortamlarında teknolojiyle etkileşim kurma isteklerini önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları bu çerçeveye tutarlıdır; çünkü dijital ortamlarda daha yüksek öz yeterliliğe sahip katılımcılar, medya araçlarını pedagojik olarak entegre etmeye daha hazır olduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, genç öğrencilerin sürekli olarak algoritma odaklı içeriklere maruz kaldığı bir çağda, öğretmen adaylarının dijital rol model olarak rolü daha da kritik hale geliyor. Geleceğin eğitimcilerini hem teorik bilgi hem de uygulamalı dijital üretim deneyimiyle donatmak, daha güvenli, daha eleştirel ve etik açıdan bilinçli sınıf ortamları oluşturmalarını sağlayacaktır.

Politika açısından bakıldığında, Türkiye'deki öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının mevcut yapısı, medya okuryazarlığının disiplinlerarası ve pratik niteliğini henüz yeterince ele almamaktadır. Medya okuryazarlığı bazı eğitim fakültelerinde seçmeli ders olarak sunulsa da, çalışma, uygulamalı medya prodüksiyonu ve içerik değerlendirme alıştırmalarını içeren zorunlu, çok dönemli bir eğitime ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir. Medya okuryazarlığı bazı eğitim fakültelerinde seçmeli ders olarak sunulsa da, bu dersler genellikle teorik ağırlıklı olup uygulamaya dönük yeterli beceri kazandırmamaktadır. Bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının medya içeriklerini hem eleştirel biçimde değerlendirebilmesi hem de etkili dijital içerikler üretebilmesi için çok dönemli, zorunlu ve uygulama temelli bir medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Böyle bir yaklaşım, medya okuryazarlığını öğretmenlik mesleğinin ayrılmaz bir parçası hâline getirerek, adayların dijital ortamlarda daha bilinçli ve yetkin bireyler olarak yetişmesini destekleyecektir.

Sonuç olarak, çalışma, öğretmen adayları arasında medya okuryazarlığı farkındalığının yüksek olmasına rağmen, yetersiz deneyim ve uygulama nedeniyle gerçek yetkinliğin sınırlı kaldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin geliştirilmesi, yalnızca geleceğin eğitimcilerinin mesleki gelişimi için değil, aynı zamanda öğrencileri dijital çağda eleştirel medya becerileriyle donatma gibi daha geniş bir hedef için de hayati önem taşımaktadır. Öğretmen yetiştirme programları, müfredatlarını çağdaş medya ortamlarının gerçeklerini yansıtacak şekilde gözden geçirmeli ve hem teorik anlayışı hem de dijital medya kullanımında uygulamalı becerileri vurgulamalıdır. Çalışma, bir üniversiteden alınan sınırlı bir örneklemeyle sınırlıdır ve bu durum bulguların genellenebilirliğini kısıtlamaktadır. Ancak, medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin öğretmen eğitiminde nasıl etkili bir şekilde kurumsallaştırılabileceği konusunda daha fazla araştırma için değerli bir başlangıç noktası sunmaktadır. Gelecekteki çalışmalar daha geniş ve daha çeşitli örneklemeleri kapsamalı ve medya okuryazarlığı eğitiminin öğretim uygulamaları üzerindeki uzunlamasına etkisini araştırmalıdır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Eğitim, Medya Okuryazarlığı, Yeterlilik, Öğretmen, Tutum

Limitations

This study is limited to participants from a faculty of education in Anadolu University.

Ethics Approval

The study was conducted after receiving approval from Anadolu University Social Sciences Research Institute ethics committee on 23.01.2025 with the number 839569.

Çıkar Çatışması/Conflict of Interest	Yazarlar çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir. /The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.
Yazar Katkı/Author Contribution	Yazarın da çalışmaya katkı oranı %100'dür.. / The contribution rate of the single author to the study is 100%.

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