Chapter 11
Digital Media Literacy:
In-Depth Interview With the Parents of the Students Who Use Digital Media

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ABSTRACT

Since the new generation called "digital natives" uses digital media extensively more than the traditional media, the necessity of the evolution of the traditional media literacy to digital media literacy has emerged. The traditional media literacy courses, which are based on the examination of television and newspaper contents, cannot be effective in the media education of youngsters who are surrounded by digital media. Recent research reveals that TV watching hours have decreased among youngsters but online video watching and computer game playing times have increased rapidly. In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with the parents of 12 elementary school students, and the study aimed to reveal the necessity of digital media literacy. In-depth interviews were conducted with the parents, and media usage times of the students, their state of being influenced by media, and their purposes of using digital media in their daily lives were all examined, and as a result, the necessity of the evolution of traditional media literacy to digital media literacy will be discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Today's changing communication technologies have changed experiences. In this process, media literacy education is needed for youngsters to accommodate themselves to this change. However, different from the traditional media literacy, media literacy should be in rapport with changing technologies. In Turkey, media literacy has been added to the curriculum as an elective course, and social studies teachers teach the course. The course content is limited to examinations of newspapers, television programs, and news during lectures.

Recent research points out the decreasing TV watching hours and increasing online video watching and online game playing times. The digital natives who are the participants of the digital age actively use the Internet and apparently are not as interested in the traditional media as before. That is why me-

dia literacy should be seen within the frame of digitalization and lessons of media literacy should be addressed in this respect.

This paper reveals the importance of media literacy in the evaluation process of media to digital media. The purpose of this study is to uncover the necessity of a transformation from media literacy to digital media literacy. Since digital media literacy is a new concept, there is a limited number of relevant studies and articles. In this regard, a contribution to the field is aimed. By examining the digital media usage habits of digital natives with the interviews conducted with their parents, the study exhibited that children and youngsters have undergone change with the rapidly developing technologies and it revealed the necessity of a new media literacy education in this process.

In order to determine the current situation, "descriptive research model" was used, and "literature review" and "in-depth interview" methods were utilized as the data collection tool.

At the present time, media tools and products have been diversified but in addition, new distinctions have emerged like traditional media and new media. However, within this process, the existing structure has started to get more complicated. For example, watching TV used to be an act that could only be performed in the living room of a house but today, it has become an act which can be performed everywhere due to new tools like computers, tablets, mobile phones, etc. In this regard, the scope and intended population of media literacy have to be gradually broadened. The study discusses the necessity of children using the Internet more consciously and effectively along with the traditional media and how this can be ensured, and by doing these, the research tries to attract attention to the necessity of the digital media literacy to be developed.

BACKGROUND

As Negroponte (1996) stated, mass media has been redefined with customized information and attractions. The new media is seen as an important socialization medium because it gathers different ethnic and cultural groups. Thanks to the interactivity feature of digital media, which was indicated before, discussion groups, forums, blogs, e-mail and instant messaging are the possibilities. Thus, we can remark that digital media is a new tool of socialization. The spectator/user can reach their own culture and personal experience to many people. In this regard, the rooted structure of mass communication should be thought again, and this reveals the necessity of media literacy to undergo a change for the new users who have become individual producers.

The transformation process of new information and communication in the digital media literacy education should be properly understood, and students should be made to understand this transformation. In our day, the borders of education and entertainment have started to get fuzzy. The computer is seen as the basic time spending tool and people generally use it for entertainment purposes. Families hope that their children study with their computers in their rooms. However, computers are generally used for entertainment purposes. At the times when people spent their spare times in the living room, this used to contribute to education as well. Television and computers have dispossessed the educator task of families. At the present time, interactive media has caused that these social relationships have become blurred. Digital media literacy should focus on how children and parents will use this new system and turn it into an active learning system. Learning processes should be adapted to modern day (Livingstone, 2002: 215-216).

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