



## **Examining Attitudes and Behaviours of Secondary School Students in Terms of Internet Use and Media Literacy Process<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Özet**

Television and internet, two important media, have many negative effects on physical, psycho-social, moral and cognitive development of youth who do not have media literacy skills. The researcher developed Inventory of Attitude and Behaviour towards the Internet and Television - Student (Internet ve Televizyon Tutum ve Davranış Ölçeği-Oğrenci) [ITTO-O] to examine secondary school students' usage of television/internet and the social problems they faced. The research involved 1,302 children attending grades 6 to 8 in Central Kutahya. The researcher used percentage, frequency, t-Test, ANOVA and X<sup>2</sup> to analyze the data. The findings of the research show that many of the students' usage of internet and television is intense. However, those students are found to have a lack of media literacy skills. These students are under the risk of negative effects of internet and television. According to the findings of the research, students demonstrated the following problems: uncontrolled internet and television usage, freely sharing personal information in social media, internet addiction, difficulty in seeking help from parents, trusting all information found on internet, encountering internet fraud, internet gossiping about himself-herself and so on.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Television, Internet, Social Sciences, Secondary School

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of "Media Literacy" is defined as the ability to get access to, decipher, evaluate and convey the message in various written and unwritten formats like TV, video, cinema, advertisements and internet (Aufderheide, 1993). From the time this concept was included into the Turkish education system, application of Media Literacy through lifelong internalization in courses has been supported. However, since 2006, when Media Literacy started as an elective course at secondary schools in Turkey, the number of the research showing that this course has changed the behaviours of students towards mass media positively has been so few.

Many researchers warn the society about the negative impacts of mass media on children and teens (e.g. Byrne & Lee, 2011). Current research show that such common mass media as television and internet affect children and teens physically, psychosocially, morally and cognitively. Despite the negative effects of television and

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internet, today, the young individuals between the ages of 8 and 18 spend about 6,5 hours daily in front of mass media after school (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2005). Today, when such technological gadgets as television and computers have entered children's bedrooms, it is unfortunately inevitable for children to be exposed to mass media for 6,5 hours daily. However, efforts to develop Media Literacy skills required to cope with the negative effects of mass media are still insufficient.

### **Effects of Media and Media Literacy**

Children and teens deprived of Media Literacy skills are vulnerable to the negative effects of the new and conventional mass media. These negative effects can be grouped under four headings: physical, psychosocial, moral and cognitive. For example, i) Effects on the physical development: visual impairments, posture and skeletal structure impairments, negative effects of the radiation emitted by the computer, carpal tunnel syndrome (Shields & Behrman, 2000); aggressiveness (Kızmaz, 2006; McBrien, 1999; Purugganan, Stein, Silver & Benenson, 2000); gender role and body image disorders, obesity, cigarette, alcohol and substance addiction (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011); sleeping disorders (Bülbül et al., 2010). ii) Effects on the psychosocial development: Being dissatisfied with their body (Snapp et al., 2012); believing in the images imposed by visual mass media (e.g., visual image of people belonging to a certain religion) (Watt, 2012); psychological pressure and psychological bullying (Walker, 2010); adopting a negative, hostile attitude (Saleem, Anderson & Gentile, 2012); being affected by prejudices (Babad, Peer & Hobbs, 2012); addiction (Üneri & Tanıdır, 2011). iii) Effects on the moral development: Corruption of social values, interfering and/or violating personal lives, displaying exaggeration in programs, biased broadcasting, showing falsified news (Elma et al., 2010); entering indecent websites, not giving moral values properly (Domine, 2009); buying wastefully, negative consumption habits, extravagancy, brand addiction, admiring such features as magical, being exposed to unethical displays, perception disorders, negative effects on imagination-creativity (Karaca, Pekyaman & Güney, 2007; Tüzün, 2002); cultural alienation, corruption of the language, negative effects on relations with parents, prevention of identity development freely and individually, losing childhood and innocence (Kuruoğlu, 2013). iv) Effects on the cognitive development: Effects on reading, thinking and success (Kuruoğlu, 2013); negative effects on attention development (DeGaetano, 1998); possessing a perception of a crueller and more dangerous world, a perception of more violence and fear of crime (Taylan, 2011); prevention of other activities, being sedentary and having difficulty in forming relations with other children (Büyükbaykal, 2007). Çelen, Çelik and Seferoğlu list the risks children might come up against through the internet as follows: Technical damages, exposure to illegal content, personal information of the children, teens and their families falls into the hands of third parties through e-mails, chat rooms, etc. in online environments, buying online on their parents' credit cards without their consent, getting in touch with malevolent elder peers (Çelen, Çelik & Seferoğlu, 2011: 3).





On the other hand, when Media Literacy skills are gained, it is possible to get rid of the negative effects of mass media and to get maximum advantage from media. For example, a research found that even after a short term Media literacy training, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary students watch less TV, play less PC games and display fewer aggressive oral and physical behaviours towards their peers (Robinson et al., 2001). Today, when mass media have become an inevitable part of our daily lives, instead of abstaining from them, in order to become their conscious producers and consumers, every age group should have Media Literacy education so that they can interpret what the media dictate with a critical perspective. In this way, maximum gain can be achieved from mass media.

According to Kellner and Share (2007: 60), "Critical Media Literacy is an educational reaction aiming to extend literacy perspective in such a way to encompass mass communication, popular culture and different types of novel technologies. Critical Media Literacy is to extend the potential of literacy education to analyse the relations between mass media and users and between knowledge and power critically." Critical Media Literacy aims that individuals can produce their alternative texts to the messages in the dominant discourses in the media. Critical Media Literacy is also a participatory and joint project as in democracies (Kellner & Share, 2007). In order to achieve a democratic society, there is a common view that it is indispensable for citizens to have Media Literacy skills (Jones, 2006; Schudson, 2003) because Critical Media Literacy aims that citizens have research skills, self-expression and criticizing skills that they need in democratic societies (Thoman & Jolls, 2008); otherwise, it is inevitable to have narrow-minded citizens who are vulnerable to the prejudices imposed by the media, who cannot criticize, assess or even vote consciously.

The need for Media Literacy has been acknowledged by many countries and efforts have been made to train each and every age group. Roberts (2010) mentions the following as the countries where Media Literacy has improved: the USA, China, Kenya, Nigeria, Republic of South Africa, France and Russia. These tendencies encompassing a wide range from arousing a simple awareness to being a participant and media producer show discrepancies depending on cultural, social, political and economic factors. Existence of such discrepancies is considered normal within the process of Media literacy education and it is even emphasized that just one "appropriate" program might not be valid for every mass. Canadian, Australian and European researchers emphasize the need for training critical and free individuals through Media Literacy while in such countries as India, Brazil and South Africa, which cannot be classified as western, the necessity that Media Literacy should emphasize such matters as freedom, social development and social justice for everyone stands out (İnceoğlu 2007). As one can see, Media Literacy not only shows flexibility according to the needs and demands of the society it emerges in but its content and scope are also shaped according to the society.

As watching TV for long hours has become more prevalent in Turkey, one of the most frequently discussed matters has become advertisements and their effects





on children. Maybe the period when the first seeds of Media Literacy conscious were spread is this period when critics on advertisements started. At that time, when the TV was not common yet and so there wasn't a generation raised by the TV yet, Tokgöz (1979: 109) said: "The findings of the field study point out that advertisements became a new dimension in socialization of the child in Turkey. However, there wasn't yet a generation raised by the TV and television hadn't encompassed the whole Turkey yet. Only when the TV achieves such advanced prevalence level as the radio, can we talk seriously and precisely about what television advertisements have brought or taken." As is seen, even during the 70s, when the TV had just started to penetrate into Turkey, researchers started to come up with discreet projections on the matter, but now we have a generation raised by the TV or even by the internet and so this is a critical time to give Media Literacy skills.

The researchers of *European Online Children Research Project-Turkey* interpret their results as follows: "The increase in the opportunities of online access and use has also given rise to the increase in related online risks. However, despite the negative experiences, while applying various strategies and methods to decrease the risks, children's online opportunities shouldn't be interfered or their facilities to cope with the risks at a certain level shouldn't be limited. On the other hand, as well as various required regulations to prevent children and teens from being affected negatively by online activities, efforts to make them more conscious about the matter should be carried out" (Çelen, Çelik & Seferoğlu, 2011: 1). All in all, as Çelen, Çelik and Seferoğlu emphasize, the protectionist approach in Turkey to protect children and teens from the negative effects of the internet isn't sufficient alone and thus efforts to improve their Media Literacy skills should be increased and reinforced.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The course of Media Literacy has been an elective course at secondary schools all around Turkey since 2007-8. In order to protect the students from the negative effects of the media and to enable them to be conscious individuals, conferences and in-service training have been conducted and educational materials, Media Literacy promotion films and educational websites have been supplied. However, literature review shows that current research to determine the students' attitudes and behaviours towards the television and the internet- two important mass media in Turkey- and the negative experiences of the children through these two mass media is inadequate as well as the fact that there isn't a related scale yet.

In order to fill this gap in the literature even partially, *Inventory of Attitude and Behaviour towards the Internet and Television - Student (Internet ve Televizyon Tutum ve Davranis Olcegi-Ogrenci) [ITTO-O]* was developed by the researcher and using this scale, the case of secondary school students' using the television and the internet and their negative effects on the students' social lives were studied. The answers to the following questions were sought:

- i) what is the effect of the internet on the students' social lives and personal interactions?





- ii) what aspects of the social media don't the students like?
- iii) what are their ideas about the reliability of the information in the internet?
- iv) what is the parent supervision like in terms of TV watching and internet use?
- v) what is their self-supervision like in terms of TV watching and internet use?
- vi) what are the negative cases they are subject to through internet?
- vii) what are the negative behaviours they display through internet?
- viii) do their attitudes and behaviours towards internet and television use show discrepancies in terms of gender and class level?

## **METHOD**

In this study, Survey Model, one of the descriptive research methods, was used to determine the types or amounts of the variables one by one. The sampling was composed of 1302 students at 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes of 1 private and 11 state secondary schools chosen through simple random sampling method among 12351 students at total 41 secondary schools at the city centre of Kütahya. *ITTO-O*, developed by the researcher, was conducted on these 1302 students to determine the students' attitudes and behaviours towards the internet and television.

### **The Sections of *ITTO-O* and Validity and Reliability Studies**

As a result of literature review by the researcher, a question pool was formed to build the scale questions in line with the predetermined aim. During this process, the related literature, the report of the research carried out by Ofcom in England on the media use of children and their attitudes (Ofcom, 2011) and the report of the research carried out by European Union between 2009 and 2011 in 25 countries on 25.000 children (EU Kids, 2012) were used. As a pilot study, *ITTO-O* was conducted on 250 students at 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes in 2 different schools. Factor analysis was used for construct validity.

In the first part of *ITTO-O*, 22 questions to find out the students' such demographic characteristics as gender, age and class and, afterwards, their using the internet and the television were given as multiple choice.

In the second part of *ITTO-O*, there are 14 questions to determine the students' attitudes towards the internet and the place of the internet in their social lives and personal interactions. This part is a 5-Likert type scale coded as: Totally agree(5), Partially agree(4), Undecided(3), Disagree(2), Totally disagree(1). In this part, 4 articles are about "The situations the students don't like," 4 articles are about "The place of the internet in the students' social lives," 3 articles are about "The effect of the internet on the students' personal interactions" and 3 articles are about "The students' opinions about the reliability of the information on the internet."

In the third part of *ITTO-O*, there are 15 questions to determine the negative cases the students are exposed to through the internet, parent supervision on internet





and television use, their self-supervision on internet and television use and their negative behaviours through the internet. This part is also a 5-Likert type scale coded as: Always (5), Often (4), Sometimes (3), Rarely (2), Never (1). In this part, 5 articles are about "The negative cases they are exposed to through the internet," 4 articles are about "Parent supervision on their internet and television use," 3 articles are about "Their self-supervision on internet and television use" and 3 articles are about "Their negative behaviours through the internet." So as to balance the answering tendencies of the students, the articles were listed according to randomness rule.

In order to determine whether *ITTO-O* is accumulated in the same factors as the dimensions suggested by the researchers had done through the pilot application and to achieve the construct validity of the scale, factor analysis was conducted and *Varimax Rotation method* was used. This method is generally used in social sciences to find out which dimension the articles in the scale measure (Büyüköztürk, 2008).

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of *ITTO-O* 2, as a result of *Principal Components Analysis*, *Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) value* was found 0.730. This test is used in Factor analysis to test whether the sampling size is appropriate. *Bartlett test* is, on the other hand, used to test whether the data come from normal distribution as with more than one variable. As a result of *Bartlett test*, if the significance value is smaller than 0.05, then it is considered that the data come from multi-variable normal distribution and factor analysis can be conducted (Büyüköztürk, 2008: 126). In the pilot application, *Bartlett test* result was found 503,404 ( $p < 0,05$ ), which denotes that the sampling size was sufficient for the analysis.

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of *ITTO-O* 3, the *KMO* value was found 0.701 and as a result of *Bartlett test*, the significance value was determined as 570,861 ( $p < 0,05$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that for *ITTO-O* 3, the sampling size was sufficient and that the data showed normal distribution, both of which mean that the sampling size was sufficient and that the data were appropriate for factor analysis.

As a result of *Cronbach's Alpha* reliability test for *ITTO-O* 2, the values were 0,706 for pilot application and 0,825 for actual application. As a result of *Cronbach's Alpha* reliability test for *ITTO-O* 3, the values were 0,748 for pilot application and 0,886 for actual application, all of which are interpreted as sufficient for the reliability of the scale.

### **Data Analysis**

In the research, for the analysis of the data acquired from 1302 students using *ITTO-O* scale whose validity and reliability tests had been completed, different statistical techniques were used. The students' demographic information, their cases of using computer, internet and television and every factor composing the scale were described using percentage (%) and frequency. Attitudes and behaviours of the students towards internet and television were tested using *t-test* at two-variable level and using *ANOVA* in the case of 3 and more variables. The difference between the classified variables was found using  $X^2$ .





## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

According to the findings acquired through ITTO-O, almost all of the participants have a TV at home. Also, 15% of the students have a TV in their rooms. The rate of the students who have a computer is seen to be 85%. Almost half of the students have their own computers. It is seen that 2/3 of the participant students have internet connection at home. According to the findings, it is determined that almost 2/3 of the students use the internet at home. Also, more than half of those using the internet at home use it in their own rooms. These findings show that in this research with participants from 1 private and 11 state education institutions, the access level of the great majority of the students to traditional and novel mass media like the TV, computer and internet is at a high level.

Considering the TV watching rate of the students, almost half of them watch TV for 1-2 hours daily, 1/3 do it on average for 3-4 hours. It is determined that one in every ten students watches TV for 4 hours or more daily. In terms of TV watching time, it is seen that girls do it more than boys. On the other hand, in terms of the students' daily average internet use, it is seen that 1/3 use the internet for 1-2 hours daily and almost half use the internet for 3-4 hours daily. One in every five students is found to use the internet for 4 hours or more daily. Comparing the internet using and television watching durations together, it is seen that the students are occupied with mass media for such a time varying from 2 to 8 hours or more daily. It is determined that the students spend most of their time apart from such daily activities as school in front of mass media. In the studies abroad, despite the negative effects of the internet and television, it is revealed that young individuals between the ages of 8 and 18 spend nearly 6,5 hours daily in front of mass media after school (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2005). This research is seen to coincide with the others in the literature in terms of media occupancy time of students.

Results of the research show that the students watch TV between 7 and 28 hours weekly. Shields and Behrman (2000) mention about the negative effects of sitting for a long time in front of computer. They emphasize that especially those spending a long sedentary time in front of the computer suffer from visual impairments, posture and skeletal structure impairments, negative effects of the radiation emitted by the computer and carpal tunnel syndrome due to spending a long time using a computer. Çamurdan (2007) points out that excessive use of such mass media as television, film, video games, radio, computer and internet poses serious threat to body and spiritual health of children and adolescents. Çamurdan states that excessive use of mass media leads to diet disorders, obesity, psychosocial problems, a decrease in success at school, learning difficulties, asocial behaviours, sexual behaviour disorders, violent behaviours, indifference to violence, nyctophobia, anxiety, depression, posttraumatic disorders, sleeping disorders and fear of getting hurt. DeGaetano (1998) argues that children shouldn't be allowed to be exposed to television for more than 5-7 hours daily in order for their attention development not to be affected negatively. DeGaetano (2010) adds that children who





are not Media Literate cannot make use of the screen wisely, watch TV or play video games aimlessly for hours. Considering that the research results show that the students watch TV between 7 and 28 hours weekly, it can be proposed that serious malfunctions might occur in children's attention development accordingly.

According to the research findings, 80% of the students have social media accounts. According to a research by EU Kids Online (2012), 85% of the children have a Facebook profile. There are parallels between the findings of this research and those of EU Kids Online research carried out in Turkey.

The rate of parents with a social media account is 46,6%. While 67,4% of the participant parents state that they check what their children write in social media, almost 1/3 are unaware of who their children get in touch with or what they write. Whereas 36,5% of the participant parents say that their children inform them when they come up against a problem in the internet, 2/3 are not informed about such problems in the internet. When the same question is addressed to the students, 58,3% say that they inform their parents whereas 1/5 are seen to not mention about any problems they encounter in the internet to anybody.

**Table 1:** *Do you have a social media account?*

	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	599	46,6
No	687	53,4
Total	1286	100,0

**Table 2:** *Do you check what your children write in their social media account?*

	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	791	67,4
No	382	32,6
Total	1173	100,0

While 60% of the students with a Facebook account are seen to put limitations to their accounts to prevent others from accessing their private information, 40% are found to put no such limitations. Also, the rate of those sharing their private information with everybody in the internet is determined to be 14%. 89% of the parents think that their children use the internet safely. However, according to the research findings, it is true that the rate of the students encountering various internet-related problems is higher than this rate. Because the social media have been so common among students and used so unconsciously and uncontrolled, serious problems have occurred. Besides the psychological problems and those encountered in their social lives due to using social media, it is seen that such problems as identity theft, defraud, account theft and etc. are also prevalent because of lack of sufficient security precautions. Children use the social media more actively than their parents and the rate of those who do not share the problems they encounter with their parents is high. It is determined that parents lag behind in monitoring the media and supervising their children in this respect.







**Table 3: Do you put limitations to your accounts?**

	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	754	60,8
No	486	39,2
Total	1240	100,0

The second part of *ITTO-O* aims to reveal the situations students don't like in social media, the place of the internet in their social lives and personal interactions and how reliable the information in the internet is.

The first factor is related to the findings about "The Situations Students Don't Like in Social Media," which can be listed as follows: "I don't like it when someone writes negative things about me in social media," "I don't like it when others send harmful messages to one another through social media," "I don't like it when someone tries to get in touch with me through social media by pretending to be my age," "I don't like it when my photos and videos are shared through social media without my consent." Also, the overall mean of the factor shows that 80% of the participant students are uncomfortable with the negative experiences through social media while 20% are not troubled with those negative experiences.

**Table 4: The situations students don't like in social media**

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
30) I don't like it when others send harmful messages to one another through social media.	1287	4,13	1,50
31) I don't like it when someone tries to get in touch with me through social media by pretending to be my age.	1287	4,06	1,52
32) I don't like it when someone writes negative things about me in social media.	1285	4,24	1,43
33) I don't like it when my photos and videos are shared through social media without my consent.	1284	4,01	1,48

Analysing the second factor related to the findings about "The Place of Internet in Students' Social Lives," it is seen that the students agree with the item "Reading others' comments and advice in the internet helps me decide about various matters" at the highest level. Also analysing the means of the students' replies to the questions in the second factor, it is seen that students generally do not feel bad when they are not in the internet but one in every five students do. As one of the indicators of internet addiction, the case of feeling bad when not in the internet is experienced by 20% of the students, which shows how serious the situation is.

**Table 5: The place of internet in students' social lives**

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
25) Compared to real life, I feel more confident in the internet.	1293	2,18	1,34
26) Reading others' comments and advice in the internet helps me decide about various matters.	1292	3,06	1,39
28) I use the internet and social media to solve my personal problems.	1294	2,19	1,36
29) I feel bad when I do not use Internet.	1292	2,02	1,33





It is seen that students do not generally use the internet or social media to solve the problems they encounter in their daily lives; however, it is also determined that one in every five students uses the internet and social media actively to solve their personal problems.

The majority of the students state that compared to real life, they feel more confident in the internet but one in every five students reveals that they feel more confident in the internet than real life. One in every two students agrees with the item that “reading others’ comments and advice in the internet helps me decide about various matters.” It is crystal clear that students use the internet in their social life in decision processes. It is seen that the internet has become an important tool for students to decide about various matters. Students shape their behaviours with advice and information in the internet and especially in the social media by accessing such diverse information as what to wear, where to entertain themselves and how to behave in their personal lives.

The third factor of the scale aims to determine “the effect of the internet on the students’ social lives and personal interactions.” According to the research findings, it is determined that the students agree with the item “I can express myself better in the internet than face-to-face” at the highest level. In terms of the related means of the replies to the related items, it is seen that the rate of those who are more comfortable in the internet than face-to-face while speaking about personal matters is 23%. Also, the rate of those who say that they express themselves better in the internet than face-to-face is 34%, which indicates that one in every three students prefer talking before a screen to talking face-to-face. One in every four students feels more comfortable before a computer. Considering the fact that expressing oneself comfortably by looking at the eyes of the listener is regarded as an important element of interpersonal communication, it will be a serious problem in the future if students lose their effective communication skills.

**Table 6:** *The effect of the internet on the students’ social lives and personal interactions*

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
23) I can express myself better in the internet than face-to-face.	1285	2,77	1,42
24) I can discuss my personal issues with others better in the internet.	1298	2,17	1,38
27) I care about communicating with their friends through the internet.	1286	2,61	1,39

The rate of the students who care about communicating with their friends through the internet as much as in real life is determined to be 30%, which indicates that almost one in every three students is in the opinion that they cannot sustain their daily interpersonal communication adequately without internet connection. The internet, fast and allowing accessing numerous people at once, has started to take the place of face-to-face communication, which will deprive students of experiencing the real friendship returns.

The fourth factor aims to reveal “the opinions of the students about reliability of the information in the internet.” According to the research findings, it is determined





that the rate of those who believe accuracy of the information they read in the social media is 23%. Moreover, it is revealed that 51% believe in the accuracy of the information they find in the internet for their homework and assignments while 45% believe the news they read in news websites.

**Table 7:** *Reliability of the information in the internet*

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
34) I believe accuracy of the information I read in the social media.	1283	2,48	1,24
35) I think all the information related to my homeworks and research found in the internet is accurate.	1288	3,33	1,21
36) I think all the news related to my country and the world found in the internet is accurate.	1290	3,22	1,21

One of the most important problems in internet-based information is actuality and accuracy of the information. Either to follow up the agenda or to do homework and research, students use internet-based information; however, this information might be incorrect, missing or misleading. Pointing out that the news they read in news websites might also generally be incorrect or manipulative, Clemmitt (2008) adds that when critical reading skills are not given at schools, individuals cannot judge whether any information they encounter is true or false. It can then be argued that when students regard everything they read in news websites true, they will not only be vulnerable to be manipulated by false news but also not be able to come up with correct homework or assignments due to the false information they have accessed to.

Analysing the findings of the third part of the research aiming to reveal "the negative situations students are exposed to in the internet," it is determined that 6% of the students have encountered defraud through the internet at least once. Identity theft, one of the most common defraud methods through the internet, means that someone uses others' credit card and internet banking information, passwords, e-mails, MSN passwords and similar important personal information for his/her own personal interest. The root of this problem lies in the fact that students do not have adequate information about internet security.

29% of the students state that they encounter gossips being spread about them in the internet at various times. Mass media might also be a breeding ground for psychological pressure and cyberbullying. It was revealed in a research in the USA on teenagers visiting social websites that 32% of the teenagers became victims of gossip and mockery while 10% suffered from malignant (Walker, 2010). Gossip, mockery and malignant rumours are cyberbullying and are as harmful as physical violence. The fact that almost one in every three students in the research revealed that s/he came up against such cases means that the cases have become such critical levels at schools that they should be dealt with immediately. Besides, considering the rate of agreeing with the statement "My friends spread gossips about me through the internet," a difference stands out between those who put limitations on their social media accounts and those who don't. This finding can be interpreted as that more





gossip is spread through the internet about those who don't put limitations on their social media accounts.

32% of the students state that they encounter threats, abuse or disturbances through the internet by strangers at various times. 35% of the students state that their photos and videos are shared by their friends without their consent while 43% reveal that photos and videos that they don't want or haven't approved are sent to them.

**Table 8:** *The negative cases students are exposed to in the internet*

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
45) I encounter threats, abuse or disturbances through the internet by strangers.	1302	1,51	,84
46) Photos, videos or texts about me are shared by my friends with others through the internet without my consent.	1302	1,66	1,03
47) I encounter gossips being spread about me in the internet.	1296	1,45	,82
48) They try to defraud me through the internet.	1293	1,12	,55
44) Through the internet (via E-mail, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) photos, videos or texts (containing violence-sex etc.) that I don't want or approve are sent to me.	1301	1,70	1,00

The findings show that the means of the negative cases students are exposed to in the internet vary depending on the people they share their personal information through the social media with. Accordingly, in terms of the level of agreeing with the statement "Through the internet (via E-mail, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) photos, videos or texts (containing violence-sex etc.) that I don't want or approve are sent to me," there is a significant difference between those who say "I share my personal information with everyone" and those saying "I share it with no one." This can be interpreted as that those who share their personal information with everyone through the internet are exposed to more photos, videos or texts (containing violence-sex etc.) that they don't want or approve than those who don't share their personal information. This shows that when one is Media Literate, many problems can be eliminated.

In terms of the level of agreeing with the statement "Photos, videos or texts about me are shared by my friends with others through the internet without my consent," there is a significant difference between those who say "I share my personal information with those in my friend lists" and those saying "I share it with no one." This finding can be interpreted as that more photos, videos or texts about those who share their personal information through the internet with the people in their friend lists are shared by their friends with others through the internet without their consent than those who don't share their personal information through the internet.

In terms of the level of agreeing with the statement "They try to defraud me through the internet", there is a significant difference between those who say "I share my personal information with everyone" and those saying "I share it with no one." This finding can be interpreted as that those who share their personal information



with everyone are exposed to more defraud through the internet than those sharing it with no one.

Analysing all the means in the factor of negative cases students are exposed to, it is found that those who do not share their personal information with anyone encounter fewer negative cases through the internet than the others.

In the third part of the research, "Parent Supervision of TV and Internet Use of Students," it is seen that the rate of those who use the internet under parent supervision at home is almost % 21 and that almost % 64 of the students mostly use the internet without parent provision. Besides, almost half of the participant students state that they aren't accompanied by adults while watching TV. The rate of the parents who never or rarely warn their children about TV watching duration and about which programs to watch is found about 30%. The rate of the parents who never or rarely warn their children about the duration they stay connected to internet and about not visiting inappropriate websites is determined 26%. These findings reveal that one in every two students conducts their TV watching and internet browsing activities without parent supervision and that one third of the parents do not conduct any supervision over their children's TV watching or internet use activities.

**Table 9:** *Parent supervision of TV and internet use of students*

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
39) My parents warn me about TV watching duration and about which programs to watch.	1292	4,00	1,30
40) I am accompanied by adults while watching TV at home.	1296	3,59	1,10
41) My parents warn me about internet using duration and about internet use activities.	1279	4,06	1,34
43) I use the internet with parent provision.	1266	2,44	1,26

The findings of the third part "Self-supervision of the Students about Using the Internet and Watching TV" are as follows; almost 50% of the students say that they always themselves decide which programs to watch on TV. Almost 43% of the students state that they themselves decide the TV watching duration while 38% say that they themselves decide the internet browsing duration. It is seen that the students conduct their own preferences in terms of watching TV and using the internet. In terms of the durations of watching TV and using the internet, it is seen that they are exposed to mass media for longer than the average. This finding might be interpreted as that students have insufficient self-supervision over using the internet and television.

**Table 10:** *Self-supervision of the students about using the internet and watching TV*

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>Ss</i>
37) I always myself decide which programs to watch on TV.	1299	3,52	1,20
38) I myself decide the TV watching duration.	1296	3,27	1,32
42) I myself decide the internet browsing duration.	1286	3,04	1,39

According to the findings of the fourth factor "The Negative Behaviours of Students through the Internet," 14% of the students state that they send their photos



or videos to those who they do not know. 28% of the students say that they sometimes get in touch with others by using nicknames instead of their real names while 33% state that they add those who they don't know to their friend lists. Such cases as getting touch with strangers, sending them personal videos and photos and chatting with nicknames are seen as important weaknesses in terms of internet security. It should be noted that if students display such behaviours, there might be negative consequences.

**Table 11:** *The negative behaviours of students through the internet*

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	Ss
49) I add those who I don't know to my friend list.	1290	1,61	1,09
50) I sometimes get in touch with others on the internet by using nicknames instead of my real name.	1286	1,57	1,09
51) I send my photos or videos to those who I do not know.	1294	1,28	,84

## CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

According to the research results, the television and internet occupy a great part of students' time after school. Students make maximum use of mass media, but due to uncontrolled or unsupervised use, they sometimes suffer from various problems. Most of the students have accounts in the social media. The findings show that students' access to mass media is at a high level; however, Media Literacy of these children is limited and so they are at risk of the negative effects of the television and internet.

A great majority of the students do not have any limitations on their social media accounts and therefore share their personal information with everyone. For these reasons, students are vulnerable to crucial internet-based problems. According to the research findings, students are faced with such important problems as uncontrolled or unsupervised watching TV and using the internet, sharing their personal information with everyone in the social media, internet addiction, not seeking parent help, believing actuality and accuracy of the information acquired from the internet, defraud through and spreading of rumours and gossips about them. Due to negative experiences with the social media, there are some points students don't like about the social media; however, despite all the negative experiences, it is revealed that students cannot do without the social media.

Students use the internet frequently in their social lives and personal interactions. Internet has become an indispensable part of their daily life and so they care a lot about being connected to their friends through the internet. Among the students exists a group who feel uncomfortable when not online. Regarded as indicative of internet addiction, this case is crucial. Feeling more confident and comfortable during interactions through the internet is determined among the students, which leads to a decrease in their face-to-face communication.

There are important problems in actuality and accuracy of the information acquired from the internet. Researches show that the internet-based information





students access for their homework, assignments and following the agenda might be substantially inaccurate, missing or misleading. In this research, it is determined that a great majority of the students consider the internet-based information accurate. Therefore, students should be informed about the methods to test the internet-based information.

The research also shows that some of the students are subject to online defraud. It is inevitable for the students lacking sufficient information about internet security to be faced with such cases. It is also indicated by the research that students also suffer from such negative cases as spreading of gossips and rumours about them online. Exposing students to psychological and social problems, this case arises especially from unconscious use of social media. For this reason, students should be made aware of the ethical principles in using the social media.

Besides, students not only experience threats, abuse and disturbances through the internet but their photos and videos are also shared by others without their consent. What is more, these go beyond the internet and might lead to more serious problems. One of the reasons for such problems is that students get in touch with strangers through the internet. However, it is possible to prevent such problems through parent provision and putting limitations on social media accounts.

It is seen that parent supervision in terms of students' use of the internet and TV is at a low level. In case of watching TV without parent supervision, it is inevitable that students will be exposed to negative images and thus being affected by them negatively. Likewise, due to lack of parent supervision in terms of television watching time and duration, problems might arise. Auditing internet using duration and checking which sites have been visited are crucial for students not to suffer from internet-based problems.

According to the findings about self-supervision of students, in terms of duration of watching TV and using the internet and of the programs they will watch or follow, they can themselves be the determiners. It should be noted that they may not always be able to give the right decision about duration and program choice.

Students display such behaviours in the internet that can lead to problems some of which are getting touch with others with nicknames, showing personal videos and photos to strangers and adding strangers to friend lists. Students should be well informed that individuals displaying such behaviours might suffer from serious problems.

### **Suggestions**

- The research findings show that in this research with participants from 1 private and 11 state education institutions, the access level of the great majority of the students to traditional and novel mass media like the TV, computer and internet is at a high level. Therefore, Media Literacy education should be planned so as to contain all children from the state school to the





private and from the city to the country. After all, all children in Turkey are at risk of the negative effects of the television and internet.

- Considering the fact that Media Literacy education is not only an elective course for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, but rather a lifelong process and philosophy, it should be noted that this education should continue from preschool times to after school adult training.
- Effective Media Literacy education programs should be developed peculiar to Turkey encompassing all kids, teenagers, parents and educators from preschool times.
- Considering the effect of the popular culture on the young population, more permanent solutions than censor should be put forward by enabling integration of Media Literacy education into general education system (Heins & Cho, 2003).
- Media Literacy education shouldn't be limited to any precautions against programs with violence or obscene content, but instead, the main objective should be furnishing the young population with critical Media Literacy skills (Heins & Cho, 2003).
- For Media Literacy education, financial support should come from non-profit organizations and the state but any support from such profit organizations as media holdings should not be accepted (Heins & Cho, 2003).

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## **Medya Okuryazarlığı Sürecinde Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Televizyon ve İnternet Kullanımlarına İlişkin Tutum ve Davranışlarının İncelenmesi**

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### **Genişletilmiş Özet**

**Amaç:** Medya Okuryazarlığı kavramı; televizyon, video, sinema, reklamlar ve internet gibi yazılı ve yazılı olmayan farklı formatlardaki iletilere erişim, onları çözümleme, değerlendirme ve iletme yeteneği (Aufderheide, 1993) olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu kavramın Türk eğitim sisteminin içerisine dâhil olmasıyla birlikte, Medya Okuryazarlığının, ders kapsamında, hayat boyu içselleştirerek uygulanması desteklenmeye başlanmıştır. Ancak, Türkiye’de Medya Okuryazarlığının ortaokullarda seçmeli bir ders olarak işlenmeye başlandığı 2006 yılından bu yana bu dersin, öğrencilerin kitle iletişim araçları konusundaki davranışlarını olumlu yönde değiştirdiğine dair çok fazla araştırmaya rastlanamamaktadır. Medya Okuryazarlığı becerilerine sahip olduğunda, kitle iletişim araçlarının olumsuz etkilerinden korunmak ve maksimum fayda elde etmek mümkündür. Kitle iletişim araçlarının hayatın kaçınılmaz bir parçası olduğu günümüzde, kitle iletişim araçlarından kaçınmak yerine, bilinçli üreticileri ve tüketicileri olmak için her yaş grubuna Medya Okuryazarlığı eğitimi vermek ve bireylerin medyanın dikte ettiklerini eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla yorumlamasını sağlamak şarttır. Böylece kitle iletişim araçlarından maksimum fayda elde edilebilecektir. Ancak birçok araştırmacı, kitle iletişim araçlarının medya okuryazarlığı becerilerine sahip olmayan çocuklar ve gençler üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerine karşı toplumu uyarmaktadır.

**Metot:** Kitle iletişim araçlarından televizyon ve internet, Medya Okuryazarlığı becerilerine sahip olmayan çocukları fiziksel, psikososyal, ahlaki ve bilişsel açıdan olumsuz etkilemektedir. Televizyon ve internete yönelik öğrenci tutum ve davranışlarının ortaya konulabilmesi ve bu kitle iletişim araçları vasıtasıyla çocukların yaşamış olduğu olumsuz durumların tespit edilmesi için araştırmacı tarafından, İnternet ve Televizyon Tutum ve Davranış Ölçeği-Öğrenci [İTTÖ-Ö] ölçeği geliştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini Kütahya merkezde 6., 7. ve 8. sınıflarına devam eden 1302 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Verilerin analizinde yüzde, frekans, t-Testi, ANOVA ve X2 kullanılmıştır.





**Bulgular ve Tartışma:** Bulgular göstermiştir ki, öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun kitle iletişim araçlarına erişimleri üst düzeydedir. Ancak bu çocukların Medya Okuryazarlığı becerileri kısıtlıdır ve bu çocuklar televizyon ve internetin olumsuz etkilerine karşı risk altındadır. Araştırma bulgularına göre, öğrenciler, kontrolsüz ve denetimsiz televizyon seyretme ve internet kullanma, sosyal medyada kişisel bilgilerini herkesle paylaşma, internet bağımlılığı, ebeveynden yardım isteyememe, internette elde edilen bilgilerin güncelliği ve doğruluğuna inanma, internette dolandırılma, haklarında dedikodu yayılması gibi önemli sorunlarla karşı karşıyadır. Türkiye’de Medya Okuryazarlığının ortaokullarda seçmeli bir ders olarak işlenmeye başlandığı 2006 yılından bu yana bu dersin, öğrencilerin kitle iletişim araçları konusundaki davranışlarını olumlu yönde değiştirdiğine dair çok fazla araştırmaya rastlanamamaktadır ve bu araştırma da göstermiştir ki, ortaokul öğrencileri bu seçmeli derse rağmen, medyaya ilişkin ciddi problemler yaşamaktadır.

**Öneriler:** İleride yapılacak araştırmalar ile bu seçmeli dersin içeriği, yöntem ve teknikleri irdelenmeli, daha detaylı çalışmalarla dersin verimliliğini ve işlevini artıracak öneriler getirilmelidir. Ayrıca, bu dersi veren öğretmenlerin yeterlilikleri üzerine çalışma yapılabilir ve yaşadıkları sıkıntıları aşmaları için hizmet için eğitim gibi çözümler üretilebilir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Ortaokul, Medya okuryazarlığı, Televizyon, İnternet, Sosyal bilimler,

