



AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP LEVELS OF PRE-SERVICE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND THEIR DEMOCRATIC VALUESⁱ

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Abstract:

This study seeks to investigate the relationship between digital citizenship levels of pre-service primary school teachers and their democratic values. The research was designed in descriptive survey model. The research was conducted with the participation of 346 pre-service primary school teachers (juniors and seniors) from Adnan Menderes University and Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University. "Digital Citizenship Scale" developed by İşman and Güngören (2014) and "Democratic Values Scale" developed by Çermik (2013) were used as the data collection tools. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and t-test while the unrelated samples were analyzed through one-way analysis of variance. Also, the relationship between the variables was analyzed by using correlation analysis. The results of the analyses reveal that there is a statistically insignificant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of the variables of gender and class. As for the democratic values scores, it is observed that there is a statistically significant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' scores in terms of gender, having access to the Internet connection, the duration of the Internet use experience, and the duration of daily Internet use. There is also a statistically significant difference among the digital citizenship scores in terms of having the Internet connection, the duration of the Internet use experience, the duration of daily Internet use, and perceived level of the Internet using skills. Democratic values scores differ significantly in terms of class and perceived level of the Internet using skills. When the scores taken from the digital

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citizenship and democratic values scales are analyzed, it is observed that there is a weak positive correlation between these two variables.

Keywords: digital citizenship, democratic values, primary school education, pre-service teachers

1. Introduction

In modern-day societies, citizenship education has become more of an issue. A steady maintenance of democracy, social progress, and national development often correspond with the citizens' knowledge, skills, and values.

The unprecedented speed of developments in science and technology in our age underlines current needs in education. New developments reveal that the primary function of education is to provide an individual with a far-reaching and life-long learning process. Democratic education calls for democratization of social order and education. These developments in education preserve the persistence of democracy. This persistence can only be possible with the democratization of education, giving students more responsibilities, and taking their interests and skills into consideration (Büyükkaragöz, 1995).

When individuals acquire awareness of good citizenship as well as a democratic attitude and values, the society can prosper by keeping up with the necessities of time. According to Gürbüz (2006), children that are educated within a democratic atmosphere are likely to develop a democratic personality in the future society, know their duties, responsibilities, rights and civil liberties as a good citizen, and set an example in helping their countries improve.

One of the most important elements of democracy in terms of people and societies is communication. It is necessary to build an efficient network of communication in the democratization process because individuals, in their everyday life, must learn to respect and tolerate other people's perspectives in order to build a democratic society. Therefore, contemporary communicative skills bring richness and distinction both into the individual's and the society's life (Cüceloğlu 1991).

Information and communication technology is widely used in everyday life and has a considerable impact on behavior. Nowadays a new citizenship concept has emerged as a result of intensive use of technology. This concept is considered digital citizenship. A digital citizen can be defined as someone who uses technology information and communication technology efficiently, legitimately and safely. Individuals with democratic values can be defined as ones who are beneficial to the

society on the basis of their democratic rights and who follow certain rules. In this regard, it can be said that there is a relationship between digital citizenship and democratic values and this relationship needs to be investigated.

1.1. Digital Citizenship

Before examining the concept of digital citizenship, we need to focus on the issue of "citizenship." There are various definitions of citizenship.

Altunya (2003) differentiates between the dictionary definition, which states that citizenship is the shared status of being a member of a state, and the term of law, which defines a citizenship both as the allegiance to a state and a person owing an allegiance to a state. In another definition, citizenship is described as a legal and social relationship between the individual and the democratic community s/he inhabits. For the democracy to operate efficiently in this relationship, the citizen is required to fulfil various duties and responsibilities (Patrick, 1999 qtd. in Ersoy, 2007).

Doğan (2005) describes the contemporary status of citizenship:

"At the age of human rights a citizen becomes a person who protects not only their personal rights, but also other people's rights and liberties. As well as being interested in the events that are happening around them, a citizen is sensitive and attentive towards recent developments in their community and in the world, being a conscious witness to the age. Being a witness to the age is not only becoming an entity that is allegiant to their country by means of humanitarian and social responsibilities, but also an intellectual merit and virtue that can transform the individuals and the world. Witnessing the age is the process of observing the new values and the standards prescribed for people by these new values, and to put these standards into practice."

Information and communication technologies have become more and more developed and the media used by these technologies are now widespread. Thanks to these media, information can be found everywhere and every individual is able to communicate with any citizen of any country in the world. The concept of digital citizenship has emerged as a result of these developments. In other words, the fact that the Internet removes the national borders in terms of communication and correspondence and globalizes the world creates this concept. A digital citizen is someone who knows how to use technology and digital media correctly, respects codes of conduct and individual rights on a digital platform, and uses the media with a sense of security and responsibility. Digital citizenship is briefly defined as the norms of responsible behavior considering the use of technology by digital citizens (Mossberger,

Tolbert, & S. McNeal, 2007). According to Vizenor (2013), digital citizenship is a person's using technology for social, communal, and political goals. According to Farmer (2010), digital citizens are the individuals who appear at the digital area by selecting and sorting the electronic information appropriately and use the information both for social and personal development. In ISTE International Society for Technology in Education Standards (2007) report, digital citizenship is defined as "[to] *advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology.*" According to Ribble and Bailey (2007: 10), "*digital citizenship can be described as the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use.*"

Ribble (2015) defines digital citizenship as "*a concept which helps teachers, technology leaders and parents to understand what students/children/technology users should know to use technology appropriately.*" Digital citizenship is not a result of constitutional or official rights, but rather a product of technology-society acculturation (Şendağ and Uysal, 2010). Ribble (2009) investigates digital citizenship in terms of nine themes: digital access, digital commerce, digital communication, digital literacy, digital etiquette, digital law, digital rights and responsibilities, digital health and wellness, digital security.

1.2. Democratic Values

Education has a function to contribute to the development of a country. Education is expected to introduce new information and skills as well as particular values to an individual's life. Individuals with particular values and skills to transform these values into behaviors have great importance for the advancement of society.

Values are the elements that control people's behavior and actively shape their lifestyles throughout their lives. Because values have great importance for explaining human behavior, they have attracted the attention of social scientists. Values are important both theoretically and socially considering that they are a particular concern to our society due to the rapid advancement of technology. An efficient execution of particular practices, which appeared as a result of socio-economic developments in a social order, depends on compatibleness between a person's values and the practices. A value is defined as an opinion, goal, moral principle or belief shared and considered to be right and necessary by the majority of a social group or a society with the aim of maintaining their existence and functioning (MEB, 2005).

According to Kuçuradi (2003), the value of a thing is its special place among the similar things. Therefore, value is the special meaning that a person attributes to a thing or the special relationship between a person and this thing due to its particular place among its counterparts. According to this definition, then, a value is a belief, opinion,

generally-accepted judgment, and attitude as to which behavior, situation, incident, and phenomenon is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable among people.

Democracy is a system of values. With the inherent values, democracy differs from other systems, so it has a privilege. There is not a consensus on the definition of democracy as there is not a universally-accepted list of democratic values. In democratic societies, an individual is equipped with democratic values and norms. This is important not only for social welfare but also for the individual's comfort and happiness. These values can be briefly summarized as love, respect, equality, participation, free negotiation and voting, convention of reconciliation, avoiding violence, establishing an environment of liberty, tolerance, freedom of thought and speech, political pluralism, state of law, plurivocality, and solidarity (Elkatmış, 2009). Democratic values are the ones to be embraced by people for a functional democracy (Uygun and Engin, 2014).

The fact democracy is a system of values systemizes democracy and increases its efficiency. These values concern individuals, the society, and the state. The importance of these values for individuals originates from dignification of people and providing people with a culture of democratic values instead of a climate of fear. This indicates that individual personalities and their democratic developments are valued (Gürbüz, 2006).

The societies which have internalized democratic values aim at raising good citizens and individuals who can think independently, use scientific methods in problem-solving, act honestly towards themselves and to others, embrace open-mindedness, accept sincerely that every opinion deserves respect, accept that they can be mistaken in their thoughts and actions, understand cause and effect relation between incidents, accept scientific truths, act humbly, demand proof for any given information (Büyükkaragöz, 1994).

In today's world, the perception of good citizenship is parallel to being a good digital citizenship as communication and transfer of information happens through digital media. This creates the necessity to act consciously, safely, and efficiently while using technological devices not only in real life, but also in the virtual environment, which makes an impact as the real life does (Çubukcu and Bayzan, 2013).

According to Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal (2008), the reasons for the popularity of digital citizenship concept are equal economic opportunities created by the Internet access and use, facilitation of democracy and participation of individuals within society, and creation of disadvantages by the Internet access and use policies on the part of the less educated individuals. In this regard, this study investigates the

relationship between digital citizenship and democratic values from the viewpoint of pre-service primary school teachers.

2. The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between digital citizenship levels of pre-service primary school teachers and their democratic values. In accordance with this purpose, this research tries to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference among the digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of gender, class, possession of the Internet connection, the duration of the Internet use experience, the duration of daily Internet use, and perceived level of the Internet using skills?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between digital citizenship levels of pre-service primary school teachers and their democratic values?

3. Material and Methods

The research was designed in descriptive survey model. Descriptive research describes a given situation as accurately and meticulously as possible (Büyüköztürk, 2014). The research was conducted with the participation of 346 pre-service primary school teachers from Adnan Menderes University and Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University. "Digital Citizenship Scale" developed by İşman and Güngören (2014) and "Democratic Values Scale" developed by Çermik (2013) were used as the data collection tools. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and t-test while the unrelated samples were analyzed through one-way analysis of variance. Also, the relationship between the variables was analyzed by using correlation analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the research have been presented as sub-titles in this chapter.

4.1. Results of the First Sub-goal

In accordance with the sub-goal of the research, the digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers were analyzed according to a number of variables. The results have been presented below.

Table 1: t-test results of digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of gender

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Digital citizenship	Female	229	110.56	12.13	343	.166	0.87
	Male	116	110.31	14.93			
Democratic values	Female	229	74.10	8.55	344	.175	0.86
	Male	117	74.26	8.38			

As Table 1 indicates, there is a statistically insignificant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship and democratic values scores in terms of gender.

Table 2: t-test results of digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of class

	Class	N	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Digital citizenship	3	79	109.66	12.81	343	.630	0.53
	4	266	110.72	13.22			
Democratic values	3	79	72.45	8.57	344	2.034	0.04
	4	267	74.65	8.41			

As Table 2 indicates, is a statistically insignificant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of class. As for democratic values scores, there is a significant difference among those of juniors.

Table 3: t-test results of digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of having the Internet connection

	Internet Connection	N	\bar{X}	S	Sd	t	p
Digital citizenship	Yes	317	111.06	12.96	343	2.828	0.00
	No	28	103.82	13.30			
Democratic values	Yes	318	74.39	8.48	344	1.778	0.07
	No	28	74.43	8.18			

As Table 3 indicates, there is a statistically significant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of having the Internet connection. Students with the Internet connection have higher digital citizenship scores. There is an insignificant difference among the democratic values scores.

Table 4: Anova results of digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of the duration of the Internet use experience

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	p	Significant Difference
Digital citizenship	Inter-group	2532.725	3	844.242	5.087	0.00	Between 1-2 years and over-5-years
	Intra-group	56257.018	339	165.950			
	Total	58789.743	342				
Democratic values	Inter-group	100.337	3	33.446	.461	0.71	
	Intra-group	24685.186	340	72.603			
	Total	24785.52	343				

Analysis results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of the duration of the Internet use experience [F (3,339)= 5.09, p<.01]. According to Scheffe test results, which are supposed to indicate what groups differ from the others, the pre-service teachers with more than 5 years of experience (\bar{X} =111.76, S=13.25) have a higher digital citizenship score average (p<0.01) than the ones with 1 to 2 years of experience (\bar{X} =101.23, S=12.76).

Table 5: Anova results of digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of the duration of daily Internet use

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	p	Significant Difference
Digital citizenship	Inter-group	1490.22	3	496.674	2.934	0.03	Between less than 1 hour and more than 5 hours
	Intra-group	57716.019	341	169.255			
	Total	59206.041	344				
Democratic values	Inter-group	174.215	3	58.072	.806	0.49	
	Intra-group	24652.666	342	72.084			
	Total	24826.882	345				

Analysis results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of the duration of daily Internet use [F (3,341)= 2.934, p<.05]. According to Scheffe test results, which are supposed to indicate what groups differ from the others, the pre-service teachers who use the Internet for more than 5 hours on a daily basis (\bar{X} =113.79, S=11.33) have a higher digital citizenship score average (p<0.05) than the ones who use the Internet less than 1 hour on a daily basis.

Table 6: Anova results of digital citizenship and democratic values scores of pre-service primary school teachers in terms of the perceived level of the Internet using skills

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	p	Significant Difference
Digital citizenship	Inter-group	9706.517	2	4853.259	33.532	0.00	Between low and high, medium and high
	Intra-group	49499.523	342	144.735			
	Total	59206.041	344				
Democratic values	Inter-group	566.431	2	283.216	4.004	0.01	Between low and high
	Intra-group	24260.450	343	70.730			
	Total	24826.882	345				

Analysis results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of the perceived level of the Internet using skills [F (2, 342)= 33.53, p<.01]. There is a significant difference among the democratic values average scores in terms of the perceived level of the Internet using skills [F (2, 343)= 4.004, p<.01].

According to Scheffe test results, which are supposed to indicate what groups differ from the others, the pre-service teachers who have higher levels of the Internet using skills (\bar{X} =117.71, S=13.84) have a higher digital citizenship score average (p<0.05) than the ones who have low levels (\bar{X} =101.58, S=11.13).

4.2. Results of the Second Sub-goal

Table 7: Results of regression analysis for digital citizenship and democratic values

Variant	B	Standard Error B	β	t	p
Invariant	65.682	5.741	0.390	11.442	0.00
R= 0.390	R ² = 0.152				
F ₍₁₋₃₄₃₎ = 61.678	p=0.00				

When the correlation between digital citizenship and democratic values is analyzed, it is observed that there is a weak positive correlation between these two variables (r=0.390, p <0.01). When regression analysis results are analyzed, it is observed that digital citizenship is a significant predictor of democratic values variable (R²=0.152, F₍₁₋₃₄₃₎=61.678, p <0.01). 15 % of the total variance of democratic values can be explained by digital citizenship variable.

5. Conclusion

The results of the analyses reveal that there is a statistically insignificant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' digital citizenship scores in terms of the variables of gender and class. In similar studies by İşman and Güngören (2013) or by Bardakçı, Akyüz, Samsa-Yetik and Keser (2014) also conclude that there is an insignificant difference in terms of gender. Kocadağ (2012) concludes in a study with pre-service teachers that there is a significant difference among digital citizenship scores in favor of male participants. As for the democratic values scores, it is observed that there is a statistically significant difference among the pre-service primary school teachers' scores in terms of gender, having access to the Internet connection, the duration of the Internet use experience, and the duration of daily Internet use. Similar results can be observed in other studies ((Karadağ, Baloğlu and Yalçınkayalar, 2006; Can, 2004; Zencirci, 2003).

There is also a statistically significant difference among the digital citizenship scores in terms of having the Internet connection, the duration of the Internet use experience, the duration of daily Internet use, and perceived level of the Internet using skills. These results prove that using technology contributes to pre-service teachers' digital citizenship levels. Similar results can be observed in other studies (Sakallı and Çiftçi, 2016; İşman and Güngören, 2013). Democratic values scores differ significantly in terms of class and perceived level of the Internet using skills.

When the pre-service primary school teachers' scores taken from the digital citizenship and democratic values scales are analyzed, it is observed that there is a weak positive correlation between these two variables and digital citizenship is a significant predictor of democratic values variable. This result emphasizes the importance of digital citizenship concerning the acquisition of democratic values. Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal (2008) state that digital citizenship encourages people for active participation and democracy. Sakallı and Çiftçi (2016) conduct a research with pre-service primary school teachers and reach similar results which reveal a relationship between digital citizenship and cyber-bullying. This similarity proves that digital citizenship is a significant predictor of other variables. It can be suggested that studies with different variables with regard to teacher and student standards mentioned in ISTE (2007) report would contribute to the literature.

Further studies to raise awareness about the digital citizenship and democratic values on the part of pre-service primary school teachers can be conducted. In order to strengthen the perception of digital citizenship, pre-service teachers can be informed about using the Internet consciously, safely, and efficiently. Further studies which are

aimed at taking the opinions of school administrators, students, and parents about digital citizenship and values in education can be conducted.

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