

# Examining Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers\*

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## Abstract

As in many other countries, following the 2007-2008 education year when media literacy courses began to be included in the curricula, media literacy has become one of the discussion topics among educators and decision makers in Turkey. Discussion topics related to media literacy have included who is going to give the media literacy courses, what qualifications will be sought out in media literacy education teachers, what will be included in the media literacy curriculum in terms of its content, and at what level the media literacy course will be given.

The current study which aims to examine media literacy levels of prospective teachers utilized the survey method. The sample of the study included prospective teachers (480) attending Elementary School Education, Social Studies Education and Turkish Language Education departments in the Education Faculty at the Dumlupınar University in the 2008-2009 education year.

The results of the study showed that prospective teachers have a low level of reaction to media messages, do not educate people around enough about the effects of media, but make use of different sources of media to gain information, and are cognizant of media literacy.

**Keywords:** Media Literacy, media education, critical media literacy, social studies

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## Introduction

The process of forming an information society and using the information transferred by media accurately are among the crucial problems of 21st Century. Every individual in the society is heavily exposed to message overload by mass media. These messages can by no

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\* This article is driven from the author's unpublished MA thesis entitled "Media Literacy Levels and Perceptions of Prospective Teachers."

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means be claimed to be impartial or objective. Being Media Literate has a significant impact on solving these problems.

This uncontrolled, intensive and effective information through mass media especially affects kids and teens because they get the messages unconsciously without sorting. Moreover, television prevents children from exploring the world through their own experience. It, instead, provides them with an already-structured and fictionalized life (Ertürk & Gül 2006: 2).

In the literature, the concept of "Media Literacy," which is also called "Media Education" or "Media Awareness" (Thoman & Jolls 2008), although very new in Turkey, has been widespread in such countries as the USA, England, Canada and Australia for almost 50 years ever since mass media entered and started to affect human life.

Education and communication experts are in favour of the fact that individuals should be able to take full advantage of mass media and use them consciously. In this context, while positioning Media Literacy into the education system, experts regarded it not only as a course, but also as a philosophy, and even a lifelong learning process.

Ever since 2007-2008 education period, when Media Literacy course started as a selective course in Turkey, several topics about Media Literacy have been a matter of debate among the related experts in Turkey just as in the whole world including who will give the Media Literacy course, what qualifications the teachers should possess, what should exist in the content and scope of the course and at what level it should be given.

Considering that the teachers to give the course didn't have Media Literacy training during pre-service period, it is essential to examine knowledge level of the prospective teachers, their opinions and readiness about Media Literacy.

#### *Conceptual Framework*

Media Literacy has been subject to various approaches and definitions by domain experts in different countries considering the realities and priorities in each country. Aufderheide (1993) defines Media Literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms like television, video, cinema, advertisements, Internet and so on.

Hobbs (1998) draws attention of academicians and educators to two points in Media Literacy; the first one is the critical analysis of media messages and the second one is how an individual learns to create his/her own messages. While Hobbs refers to critical Media Literacy in the first dimension, she stresses the ability to create media messages in the second dimension.

All studies and evaluations so far have revealed that children who are exposed to visual, auidial and written media as vulnerable receivers should be made conscious of media from pre-school years onwards. Thanks to being Media Literate, children will be able to receive the messages of mass media through a critical judgement and decode the messages of media as active individuals instead of being passive receivers (RTUK, 2007).

Kartal (2007) states in his study on secondary school students that these students spend 2-3 hours daily in front of the television and 3-4 hours in Internet. Kartal also adds that these students read 4-7 newspapers weekly which are 2-3 different types.

De Gaetano (2010) states that the following five basic characteristics will be observed in children and teenagers if they are cognizant of Media Literacy:

1. Be conscious and make use of screen technology appropriately.

2. Be able to criticize visual messages and cognizant of their emotional and cognitive effects.
3. Be able to express the realities, ideas and well-structured opinions about media scenes.
4. Be able to grasp the media production techniques like camera angles and lights so as to understand how the messages affect individuals.
5. Be able to use all forms of screen technology efficiently.

Media Literacy also aims to furnish children who are the most vulnerable group to the effects of the television with a skill to distinguish between fiction and reality in what they watch on TV. This course involves explaining how and why the media convey messages in certain ways so that children can be raised as conscious receivers who can look at the media from a critical perspective from primary school years.

Hobbs (1994) reveals that teachers have the main responsibility in equipping children with Media Literacy and therefore they should be well-prepared for this mission through well-established pre-service and in-service training by saying: Future of Media Literacy depends primarily on a long-termed, intensive and intellectual development in training of the teacher.

Kıncal and Kartal (2009) point out that through Media Literacy education, individuals develop awareness of media and media messages and gain critical skills. They also add that Media Literate individuals question media texts and thus come up with their own media messages.

A lot of studies in Turkey and all around the world emphasize that prospective teachers should have Media Literacy training during their training process. For example, it was determined in a qualitative study of Deveci and Çengelci (2008: 41) on prospective teachers of social studies that all the prospective teachers should be Media Literate. Deveci and Çengelci suggested prospective teachers who participated in their study that they can do such activities in their faculty to promote Media Literacy as preparing a news board, leaving newspapers on canteen tables.

In another study carried out to determine the attitudes of students towards Media Literacy course, it was found that the students didn't find the activities and methods of their Media Literacy teacher adequate and didn't like the way their teacher conducted the lesson (Elma et al., 2009: 105). In this study, it was also stated that the students shared what they had learned in the lesson with their families and friends, which created positive effects on both the families and the friends. Considine (2002) reveals in his study that in order for teachers to conduct Media Literacy education efficiently, teachers should be exposed to the developments in Media Literacy in both pre-service and in-service period through workshops.

In his study, Kıncal (2007) states that Media Literacy develops critical thinking in individuals and enhances the skill of active participation. Thus, the power of giving response to media messages can be regarded as one of the indispensable components of Media Literacy. In the same study, however, Kıncal (2007) says that prospective teachers convey their reactions and criticism towards positive or negative messages in the media to relevant authorities at a very low level.

Haider and Dall (2004), while defining a Media Literate individual, emphasize that this individual should be able to evaluate media messages by getting them from different sources in different formats. They also add that an individual called Media Literate should follow the developments in media technologies, have information about their development

history even at a basic level and have the skill to evaluate and analyze the manipulative messages of the media.

In the process of forming a Media Literate society, the campaign of The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) called "Smart Signs" is especially important for parents. This is an informative classification system about the content of TV programs. In the study conducted by Belviranlı et al. (2008) to determine the level of use of "Smart Signs" system by mothers, it was found that the mothers found the system useful at the rate of 84.2% but adequate only at the rate of 24.9%. The study also determined that the rate of making use of the system increased as the education level rose.

#### *Research Problem*

Family and school form the two pillars of Media Literacy conscious. Experts emphasize that in order to develop critical Media Literacy conscious in individuals, a school based formal education is necessary. Teachers, in this context, by all means have a pivotal role in every action to achieve a Media Literate society.

Considering the fact that teachers in charge of giving Media Literacy lesson at primary school level don't themselves have a Media Literacy course at Education Faculties during their pre-service training period, the readiness level of prospective teachers in terms of Media Literacy becomes crucial. It is a known fact that these prospective teachers have various courses on communication like Effective Communication, Human Relations and Communication and so on during their undergraduate education at university, but Media Literacy is not one of them. At this point, it is doubtful whether a prospective teacher responsible for a subject that she/he wasn't trained for can carry out the necessities of that course.

#### *Purpose*

The aim of the research is to determine the Media Literacy levels of prospective teachers.

For the sake of the efficiency of the course, it should be given by such teachers who can be called Media Literate individuals, follow the media, look at the media through a critical perspective, inform the people around about the media and produce media.

Besides this general aim, answers for the following questions are sought.

- 1- Do the Media Literacy levels of prospective teachers show difference depending on gender and department variables?
- 2- Do the media follow-up attitudes of prospective teachers show difference depending on gender and department?

#### **Method**

This descriptive research aiming to determine the Media Literacy levels of prospective teachers used survey method. Survey method is defined as a research method that tries to define a case as it is (Karasar, 2005). According to Karasar, in survey method, in order to get a general judgement about a population composed of multiple members, there are survey arrangements on the whole population or on a group/sample taken from that population.

#### *Target Population of the Study*

The target population of the study was composed of the students of Elementary School Education, Social Studies Education and Turkish Language Education Departments in Education Faculty at the Dumlupinar University during the 2008-2009 academic period.

Among the total 557 students of Education Faculty, 480 were reached. Since the majority of the students attending Education Faculty were reached, no sampling was taken and the group was considered as the target population.

#### *Data Collection Tool and Process*

During the data gathering tool development process, the literature on Media Literacy was surveyed first and a question pool of 65 questions was formed to determine the Media Literacy levels of the prospective teachers. In order to test the content validity of the questions, expert opinions were sought, upon which seven of the questions were left out due to the criticism of three different experts.

The survey form composed of total 58 questions was applied to 80 prospective teachers who weren't included into the research and 5 other items were excluded because they weren't regarded adequately functional. After further rearrangements, the data gathering tool was finalized in 4 sections composed of 53 questions. The alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .85.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the survey and sub-factors were determined for the sections. According to factor analysis results, there are 4 factors with eigenvalue over one for determining Media Literacy levels of prospective teachers.

#### *Data Analysis*

Several statistical techniques were used in data analysis. Media follow-up levels of prospective teachers were described by using percentage (*P*) and frequency (*f*). The difference between the Media Literacy levels of the subjects was tested by t-test at two-variable level and by ANOVA at three-variable level and above. The difference between nominal variables was analyzed using  $\chi^2$ .

### **Results**

In this part of the research, the data acquired from the Media Literacy Survey conducted on prospective teachers were analyzed and interpreted.

#### *Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers*

**Table 1.** *t-Table for Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers*

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>t</i>
<i>I would make a judgement on the subject after I check different TV channels and newspapers.</i>	<i>Female</i>	269			
	<i>Male</i>	207	4.08	.78	-1.83
<i>I would follow the news in different media sources.</i>	<i>Female</i>	270			
	<i>Male</i>	207	4.02	.91	-1.82
<i>I would exchange information with my family about the programs I watch on TV.</i>	<i>Female</i>	270			
	<i>Male</i>	206	3.38	1.07	4.78*
<i>I would exchange information with my friends about the programs I watch on TV.</i>	<i>Female</i>	270			
	<i>Male</i>	205	3.82	.85	.63
<i>I would exchange information with my family about the news I read on newspapers and magazines.</i>	<i>Female</i>	269			
	<i>Male</i>	205	3.33	1.10	4.61*

\**p* < .05.

**Table 1 (Continue).** *t*-Table for Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers

		N	M	Sd	t
<i>I would exchange information with my friends about the news I read on newspapers and magazines.</i>	Female	269			
	Male	206	3.87	2.16	-1.38
<i>I would contact with the TV channel to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the program I watch on TV (via phone-email-mail etc).</i>	Female	270			
	Male	207	1.42	.84	-.39
<i>I would contact with RTUK to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the program I watch on TV (via phone-email-mail etc).</i>	Female	268			
	Male	207	1.32	.70	-.32
<i>I would contact with newspaper agents to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the news I read on newspapers (via phone-email-mail etc).</i>	Female	270			
	Male	207	1.38	.713	-1.93*
<i>I would contact with the manager of related web-site on Internet to show my reaction and tell my criticism about what I see on Internet (via phone-email-mail etc).</i>	Female	270			
	Male	207	1.73	1.04	-1.54
<i>I would caution people around me about the negative sides and negative effects of Media.</i>	Female	270			
	Male	206	3.54	1.02	1.01
<i>I would take smart signs into consideration while I watching a program on TV.</i>	Female	270			
	Male	207	3.44	1.19	3.78*
<i>I would caution and encourage children around me to caution their own parents about Smart Signs.</i>	Female	270			
	Male	207	3.32	1.15	1.40

\* $p < .05$ .

The table presents the t-test results that show the agree level of the subjects to the statements and whether there is a difference depending on gender. Accordingly, it can be said that in terms of the statement "I would exchange information with my family about the programs I watch on TV," the prospective teachers have information exchange with their families about programs at the low level. Analyzing the means depending on gender, it is seen that females ( $M=3.58$ ) have more information exchange with their families for programs than males ( $M= 3.11$ ) [ $t_{(475)}= 4.61, p < .05$ ].

It is found in the statement "I would exchange information with my family about the news I read on newspapers and magazines" that the prospective teachers discuss the news they read in newspapers and magazines with their families at a low level. Analyzing the means depending on gender, differences exist in the agree rates on the statements (Female:  $M= 3.52$ ; Male:  $M= 3.06$ ). The difference between the means is statistically significant [ $t_{(472)}= 4.78, p < .05$ ].

In terms of the answers to the statement "I would contact with newspaper agents to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the news I read on newspapers (via phone-email-mail etc)", it is seen that the prospective teachers do not react upon their critical thoughts about the news they read in newspapers. However, analyzing the means depending on gender, it is revealed that males ( $M= 1.44$ ) react more than females ( $M= 1.32$ ) [ $t_{(475)}=1.93, p < .05$ ].

The prospective teachers stated with 3.44 mean that they agree with the statement "I take smart signs system into consideration while watching a program" at "sometimes" level. Analyzing the means depending on gender, it can be said that compared to males ( $M= 3.20$ ), females ( $M= 3.62$ ) take smart signs system more into consideration [ $t_{(475)}=3.78, p<0.05$ ].

**Table 2.** Descriptive Data for Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>
1. I would make a judgement on the subject after I check different TV channels and newspapers.	Elementary	163	3.88	.84
	Social	195	4.16	.76
	Turkish	121	4.23	.66
	Total	479	4.08	.78
2. I would follow the news in different media sources.	Elementary	163	3.93	.96
	Social	195	4.01	.94
	Turkish	122	4.16	.76
	Total	480	4.02	.91
3. I would exchange information with my family about the programs I watch on TV.	Elementary	163	3.27	1.0
	Social	195	3.46	1.0
	Turkish	121	3.41	1.11
	Total	479	3.38	1.07
4. I would exchange information with my friends about the programs I watch on TV.	Elementary	163	3.68	.87
	Social	195	3.91	.85
	Turkish	120	3.85	.80
	Total	478	3.82	.85
5. I would exchange information with my family about the news I read on newspapers and magazines.	Elementary	162	3.20	1.11
	Social	193	3.44	1.11
	Turkish	122	3.31	1.07
	Total	477	3.33	1.10
6. I would exchange information with my friends about the news I read on newspapers and magazines.	Elementary	162	3.66	.91
	Social	194	3.89	.87
	Turkish	122	4.13	4.01
	Total	478	3.87	2.16
7. I would contact with the TV channel to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the program I watch on TV (via phone-email-mail etc).	Elementary	163	1.48	.97
	Social	195	1.47	.86
	Turkish	122	1.28	.60
	Total	480	1.42	.84

According to Table 2, there is a difference between departments on Media Literacy levels of prospective teachers. ANOVA was carried out to test whether the differences in favour of Turkish Language and Social Studies Departments were statistically significant.

**Table 3.** ANOVA Results for Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers According to Departments

		Sum of square	df	Mean of square	F	P	Difference
d1	Between Groups	10.43	2	5.21	8.71	.000	Elementary-Social Elementary-Turkish
	Within Groups	285.05	476	.59			
	Total	295.49	478				
d2	Between Groups	3.61	2	1.80	2.17	.115	
	Within Groups	396.08	477	.83			
	Total	399.70	479				
d3	Between Groups	3.32	2	1.66	1.43	.240	
	Within Groups	552.44	476	1.16			
	Total	555.77	478				
d4	Between Groups	5.19	2	2.59	3.62	.027	Elementary-Social
	Within Groups	340.69	475	.71			
	Total	345.88	477				
d5	Between Groups	4.70	2	2.35	1.92	.147	
	Within Groups	578.96	474	1.22			
	Total	583.66	476				
d6	Between Groups	15.08	2	7.54	1.60	.201	
	Within Groups	2228.62	475	4.69			
	Total	2243.71	477				
d7	Between Groups	3.32	2	1.66	2.31	.100	
	Within Groups	342.26	477	.71			
	Total	345.59	479				

Analyzing the descriptive data (Table 3), differences in favour of Turkish Language Education and Social Studies Education Departments stand out. Whether this difference between the means is statistically significant was tested using ANOVA. According to ANOVA results, the difference between the departments is statistically significant [ $F_{(2-476)} = 8.71, p < .05$ ]. Scheffe test was conducted to determine between which groups these differences were. Accordingly, in terms of agree levels to the statement "I would make a judgement on the subject after I check different TV channels and newspapers," significant differences were found between Elementary School Education and Social Studies Education and between Turkish Language Education, which can be interpreted as the fact that those in departments of Social Studies Education and Turkish Language Education form a judgement on a current matter after following it on different TV channels and in different newspapers.

A difference was found between departments in terms of agree level to the statement "I would exchange information with my friends about the programs I watch on TV". Whether this difference between the means was statistically significant or not was tested using ANOVA. According to ANOVA results, the difference between the means of the departments is significant [ $F_{(2,475)} = 3.622, p < .05$ ]. According to Scheffe test conducted to determine between which groups these differences were, in terms of agree levels to the statement "I would exchange information with my friends about the programs I watch on TV," there is a significant difference between the means of prospective Elementary School teachers and Social Studies teachers in favour of the latter. This finding can be interpreted as the fact that compared to prospective Elementary School teachers, prospective Social Studies teachers have more information exchange with their friends about the programs they watch on TV.

Despite the differences between the means of the items "d<sub>2</sub>, d<sub>3</sub>, d<sub>5</sub>, d<sub>6</sub>, d<sub>7</sub>" in the scale, they are not statistically significant.

**Table 4.** Descriptive Data for Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Sd</i>
8. I would contact with RTUK to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the program I watch on TV (via phone-email-mail etc).	Elementary	161	1.28	.69
	Social	195	1.43	.83
	Turkish	122	1.19	.45
	Total	478	1.32	.70
9. I would contact with newspaper agents to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the news I read on newspapers (via phone-email-mail etc).	Elementary	163	1.30	.54
	Social	195	1.47	.80
	Turkish	122	1.36	.73
	Total	480	1.38	.71
10. I would contact with the manager of related web-site on Internet to show my reaction and tell my criticism about what I see on Internet (via phone-email-mail etc).	Elementary	163	1.60	.93
	Social	195	1.79	1.06
	Turkish	122	1.80	1.13
	Total	480	1.73	1.04
11. I would caution people around me about the negative sides and negative effects of Media.	Elementary	163	3.43	1.00
	Social	194	3.71	1.02
	Turkish	122	3.43	1.03
	Total	479	3.54	1.02
12. I would take smart signs into consideration while I watching a program on TV.	Elementary	163	3.49	1.08
	Social	195	3.50	1.25
	Turkish	122	3.28	1.21
	Total	480	3.44	1.19
13. I would caution and encourage children around me to caution their own parents about Smart Signs.	Elementary	163	3.27	1.16
	Social	195	3.46	1.14
	Turkish	122	3.18	1.14
	Total	480	3.32	1.15

According to Table 4, Media Literacy levels of prospective teachers showed differences depending on departments. Whether these differences were statistically significant or not was tested using ANOVA.

**Table 5.** ANOVA Results for Media Literacy Levels of Prospective Teachers According to Departments

		Sum of square	df	Mean of square	F	P	Difference
d8	Between Groups	4.43	2	2.21	4.46	.012	Social-Turkish
	Within Groups	235.95	475	.49			
	Total	240.38	477				
d9	Between Groups	2.87	2	1.43	2.84	.059	
	Within Groups	241.04	477	.50			
	Total	243.92	479				
d10	Between Groups	3.92	2	1.96	1.79	.167	
	Within Groups	519.94	477	1.09			
	Total	523.86	479				
d11	Between Groups	8.80	2	4.40	4.22	.015	
	Within Groups	495.88	476	1.04			
	Total	504.69	478				
d12	Between Groups	4.13	2	2.06	1.46	.233	
	Within Groups	674.45	477	1.41			
	Total	678.59	479				
d13	Between Groups	6.29	2	3.14	2.38	.093	
	Within Groups	629.70	477	1.32			
	Total	635.99	479				

According to Table 4 and 5, a significant difference was found in agree rate to the statement "I would contact with Radio and Television Supreme Council RTUK to show my reaction and tell my criticism about the program I watch on TV (via phone-email-mail etc)" between prospective Social Studies teachers and Turkish Language teachers in favour of the former. According to ANOVA results, this difference is statistically significant [ $F_{(2-475)} = 4.463, p < .05$ ]. Accordingly, it can be said that prospective Social Studies teachers react to the programs they watch critically more than prospective Turkish Language teachers.

Despite the differences between the means of the items "d<sub>9</sub>, d<sub>10</sub>, d<sub>11</sub>, d<sub>12</sub>, d<sub>13</sub>" in the scale, they are not statistically significant.

The reactions of prospective teachers when they are disturbed by scenes in TV programs are given below.

**Table 6.** First Reaction

	f	P	Total P
I would change the TV channel	333	76.7	76.7
I would continue watching since such images does not bother me	40	9.2	85.9

**Table 6 (Continue).** *First Reaction*

	<i>f</i>	<i>P</i>	Total <i>P</i>
I would continue to watch even though I am bothered	26	6.0	91.9
I would turn off TV	13	3.0	94.9
I would caution people about how harmful it is	13	3.0	97.9
I would move to somewhere else different	4	.9	98.8
I would complain to RTUK	4	.9	99.8
I would show my reaction by calling the TV channel	1	.2	100.0
Total	434	100.0	

**Table 7.** *Last Reaction*

	<i>f</i>	<i>P</i>	Total <i>P</i>
I would complain to RTUK	114	27.3	27.3
I would turn off TV	79	18.9	46.2
I would caution people about how harmful it is	78	18.7	64.8
I would continue watching since such images does not bother me	44	10.5	75.4
I would move to somewhere else different	39	9.3	84.7
I would show my reaction by calling the TV channel	26	6.2	90.9
I would continue to watch even though I am bothered	23	5.5	96.4
I would change the TV channel	15	3.6	100.0
Total	418	100.0	

Table 6 and 7 show the first and last reactions of prospective teachers as percentage and frequency when they are disturbed by scenes in TV programs. According to the Table, 3/4 (76.7%) of the prospective teachers stated that the first thing they do is to change the channel when they encounter a disturbing scene on TV. To the question asked to prospective teachers to reveal their final reaction, 27.3% of them replied that they complain to RTUK about the program. The reaction ranking the second is as "I would turn off TV."

**Table 8.** *Media Production Levels of Prospective Teachers*

Department			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Elementary	<i>f</i>		42	120	162
	<i>P</i>		25.9	74.1	100.0
Social	<i>f</i>		72	123	195
	<i>P</i>		36.9	63.1	100.0
Turkish	<i>f</i>		54	68	122
	<i>P</i>		44.3	55.7	100.0
Total	<i>f</i>		168	311	479

Table 8 presents data about whether the prospective teachers attempt to do any kind of media production (bringing out school paper or magazine, writing for any paper or magazine, doing a radio program, using a camera or making a film etc.). According to Table 8, 1/4 of prospective Elementary School teachers (25.9%), 36.9% of prospective Social Studies teachers and 44.3% of prospective Turkish Language teachers have been involved in a sort of media production. Accordingly, it can be said that compared to the other departments, prospective Turkish Language teachers have been involved in a sort of media production more.

*Media Monitoring Habits of Prospective Teachers*

**Table 9.** Daily TV Watching Rates of Prospective Teachers

Watching rates	f	P	Total P
Never	136	28.3	28.3
Less than 1 Hour	115	24.0	52.3
1-2 Hour/s	132	27.5	79.8
2-3 Hours	55	11.5	91.3
3+ Hours	42	8.8	100.0
Total	480	100.0	

Table 9 presents daily media monitoring habits of prospective teachers. Accordingly, it is seen that almost 1/3 of the prospective teachers (28.3%) don't watch TV while 24% watch TV for an hour daily and 27.5% watch TV for 1-2 hours. Consequently, it can be said that half of the participant prospective teachers watch TV up to two hours daily.

**Table 10.** Newspaper Reading Frequency of Prospective Teachers

Frequency of Newspaper Reading	f	P	Total P
Daily	186	39.1	39.1
Every other day	106	22.3	61.3
Once a week	127	26.7	88.0
Once a month	40	8.4	96.4
Never	17	3.6	100.0
Total	476	100.0	

Table 10 presents the newspaper reading frequency of prospective teachers. According to Table 10, 39.1% of the prospective teachers read a newspaper a day regularly whereas 22.3% read a newspaper every two days and 3.6% never read a newspaper. Accordingly, it can be said that more than half of the prospective teachers read a newspaper at least every two days regularly.

**Table 11.** How Many Different Newspapers Are Read

How many different newspapers	f	P	Total P
1	300	66.7	66.7
2	114	25.3	92.0
3	16	3.6	95.6
4	9	2.0	97.6
5	5	1.1	98.7
6+	6	1.3	100.0
Total	450	100.0	

Table 11 presents how many different newspapers the prospective teachers read a day. According to Table 11, 2/3 of the prospective teachers (66.7%) read only a newspaper a day whereas 25% read two newspapers and the remaining 8% read 3 or more newspapers a day. Accordingly, it can be said that the majority of the prospective teachers follow the printed media through just one source.

### **Discussion**

In this part of the research, a discussion is presented by comparing the findings of the analyses to the literature.

Evaluating the answers of the prospective teachers to the questions asked to determine their Media Literacy levels, the statement "Do the prospective teachers have a critical/responsive approach?" show that the prospective teachers do not inform either the relevant channel or RTUK about their response or criticism for the programs they watch. At the same time, it is seen that they don't demonstrate a critical/responsive approach towards the news they read in newspapers. However, it is found that, though partially, they show a critical/responsive approach towards the news they encounter on Internet. This kind of an attitude shows similarities to the findings of the research of Kincal's (2007) on prospective teachers. Kincal states that only 21% of the prospective teachers call a TV channel to show their response to any negativity they encounter in a program; that 13.4% of them call a newspaper to show their response and that this rate is 36.6% in the case of Internet. Kincal also states that a Media literate individual should possess a skill of active participation. In the research, it is seen that the prospective teachers do not have this skill. The level of the prospective teachers to convey their criticism and responses to relevant authorities about the news on TV and in newspapers is rather low. The fact that this level is a bit high in terms of Internet might be due to the fact that it is technologically easier for them to convey their criticism and responses on Internet.

Evaluating the answers of the prospective teachers to the questions asked to determine their Media Literacy levels, it is seen that their habit of monitoring different media sources and their skill to evaluate the news through different sources are at a high level, which corresponds to the opinion of Haider and Dall's (2004) while they are defining a Media Literate individual- that this individual should receive the media messages from different sources in different formats and evaluate them accordingly.

It is also found in the research that the prospective teachers take Smart Signs system into consideration and warn the people around about taking them into consideration at a low level. Belviranlı et al. (2008), in their research to determine the level of use of Smart Signs system, state that mothers find this system useful at the rate of 84.2% but make use of the system at the rate of 24.9%. They also add that the rate of making use of the system increases as education level rises. The fact that the prospective teachers use this system at a low level but females use this system at a higher level than males shows parallelism with the research of Belviranlı et al.

Analyzing the responses of the prospective teachers to negativity they encounter on TV, it is determined that their first reaction is to change the channel followed by complaining to RTUK. Although the order of responses in these findings is considered to be accurate, it conflicts with another finding about their levels of complaining to RTUK. Considering that the prospective teachers state that they never complain to RTUK, this does not correspond to their statement that they complain to RTUK as a second response. In a research by Kincal (2007), it is stated that prospective teachers respond to the negativity in the media by turning the TV off, stopping reading a newspaper, not visiting a web site again but these are

passive actions and an active attitude is required instead. It is understood here that complaining and warning the people around are considered to be active attitudes.

Dealing with media production is considered to be a dimension of Media Literacy. Hobbs (1998) claims that unless teenagers experience such things in Media Literacy process as taking photos, planning and organizing their thought through storyboard, writing texts and performing in front of the camera and designing their own web pages, they cannot become the real critical consumers of mass media. Kincal and Kartal (2009) also mention about the importance of media production in media education. In the study, it is found that most of the prospective teachers cannot achieve media production. The level of media production in Turkish Language Education is found to be a bit higher than that in Elementary School Education and Social Studies Education. However, in general, media production dimension of Media Literacy in the prospective teachers is found to be at an insufficient level.

While determining the media monitoring rates of the prospective teachers, it is found that the rate of watching TV is much lower than the Turkish and international means. Considering that the Turkish TV watching mean is 4-5 hours and the international mean is 2-3 hours (RTUK, 2007: 37-38), the prospective teachers are seen to watch TV at a low level. In Kincal's (2007) research on prospective teachers, the rate of never watching TV is 6,5% whereas this rate is determined as 28,3% in this research. The TV watching levels of the prospective teachers for 1 hour and for up to 2 hours show similarities to Kincal's research. Findings of Yeşil and Korkmaz's research (2008) on TV addiction of prospective teachers that Social Studies teachers have more TV addiction than the other department teachers and the findings of this study about TV watching rates of Social Studies prospective teachers show parallelism.

In terms of "the frequency of reading a newspaper regularly" dimension of media monitoring levels, it is seen that the frequency of prospective teachers reading a newspaper regularly is above the average found in Turkey. Odabaş (2008) states that the rate of newspaper reading regularly in Turkey is 25%. This rate is almost 40% among the prospective teachers. In Kincal's research (2007) on prospective teachers, the level of reading a newspaper regularly every day is about 40%. The findings of the study, therefore, are seen to be parallel to those in Kincal's research.

According to the research findings, 2/3 of the prospective teachers state that they read just one newspaper a day while 1/3 state this number to be 2 or more. Considering the fact that following the news from different sources is crucial in Media Literacy, it is revealed that most of the prospective teachers do not demonstrate this attitude. Also, this finding contradicts with the "generally" answer of the prospective teachers to the statement that "I form a judgement after following the news through different sources."

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

In this part of the research, the conclusion based on the findings and the suggestions of the researcher based on the conclusion are presented.

As result of the research, it is revealed that the prospective teachers do not sufficiently respond to every kind of message they encounter in the media by conveying their positive or negative responses, criticism or comments to the relevant authority (media institutions and those to inspect the media) either by virtue of citizenship consciousness or in accordance with being a teacher. In terms of achieving one of the features striven for by Media Literacy; being a conscious, active, critical media consumer, it is seen that the prospective teachers haven't been able to develop this conscious sufficiently.

The main feature of an individual, in order to be called Media Literate, should analyze the media messages from news sources of different formats and afterwards forming a judgement taking different points of view into account. Considering this kind of attitude, it can be stated that the majority of the prospective teachers in the current study can be concluded as Media Literate.

The Smart Signs System that aims to inform the families about the programs with negative content to protect their children from them has a crucial function of achieving Media Literacy conscious in the society. Teachers have an indispensable role in explaining and encouraging this system. However, in the study it is found that prospective teachers themselves neither take this system into consideration sufficiently nor, as prospective teachers, warn the people around them about paying attention to this system.

Changing the channel and complaining to RTUK when the prospective teachers encounter disturbing scenes in TV programs can be regarded as the right attitude. However, although this reaction should be put into action as stated by the prospective teachers, when their replies to the item "I complain to RTUK" are analyzed, it is revealed that they hardly ever do it themselves. Accordingly, the first and last reactions stated as changing the channel and complaining to RTUK turn out to be what they want but what they don't do themselves.

Media production has a crucial place in Media Literacy. Besides critical Media Literacy, media production is a complementary element for the education of prospective teachers. It is hardly possible to form a judgement on media messages without seeing and practicing what steps media messages go through. At this point, media production steps in the research shows that the prospective teachers have deficiency in the matter.

Media monitoring dimension of Media Literacy is considered as a complementary element. The research shows that TV watching rates of the prospective teachers are below the average in Turkey. While evaluating a conscious viewer, apart from duration, the content of the programs, whether different sources are sought and whether they give importance to such technical points as scenario-set up are also important factors. Accordingly, the prospective teachers can be said to be in "conscious TV viewers" category.

Analyzing the newspaper reading findings of the prospective teachers, their reading rate above the Turkish average corresponds to the definition of Media Literate individual. However, in terms of reading various newspapers, it is clear that the majority read one type of newspaper, which contradicts with the criteria of critical Media Literate and forms a negative effect on Media Literacy of the prospective teachers.

#### *Suggestions*

- Media Literacy Education should be regarded as a whole system; it should be given to children and teenagers from pre-school period to primary and secondary school periods not only as a separate course but also integrated into other related courses.
- Courses in Media Education can be provided for all departments in Education Faculties, especially Social Studies teachers, responsible for Media Literacy course.
- In order for Communication Faculty graduates to give Media Literacy course, there should be Media Literacy Non-thesis master's programs in which they can get teaching formation certificate.
- Media Enterprises can be encouraged to support Media Literacy education.
- In-service training opportunities can be provided for teachers in Media Literacy.



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