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Developing Media Literacy through Activities

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Abstract: The goal of the study is to reveal the effect of activity-based media education on students' critical media literacy levels. A case study with fifth grade students was used in the study. A total of 18 students from a public school were participants. The data was gathered by a rubric and semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed that students have media literacy ability. Based on the result of the study, it can be suggested that either an independent media literacy course or a media literacy education integrated into other courses should be provided from the first grade. Furthermore, because of the fact that media literacy is closely related to critical thinking, teaching methods and activities in which students can gain critical questioning and thinking skills should be preferred.

Keywords: Media literacy, critical thinking, social studies lesson.

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Introduction

Consistent developments in science, technology and communication also change the characteristics that individuals are expected to have. Some of these characteristics are literacy skills developed in various fields. One of these literacy fields is media literacy (Snaveley & Cooper, 1997). Media literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, critically evaluate and transmit media messages such as television, video, cinema, internet and advertisements in a variety of formats, both written and unwritten (Inceoglu, 2005; Onal, 2007). What is aimed with media literacy is to raise individuals who are consciously analyze the media messages by reading them correctly, are aware of their democratic rights while using the media, are sensitive to social problems, and are equipped against media manipulation (Balaban-Sali et al., 2008; Kurt & Kurum, 2010).

It can be said that media literacy aims to make individuals become consumers who have critical thinking skills. Likewise, individuals' awareness should be raised about media messages that are encoded in different ways and delivered through various channels, from television advertisements to lyrics on CD's, from newspaper articles to the slogan printed on a t-shirt (Pekman, 2007). In this regard, the characteristics that individuals should have in order to build media awareness, to gain a critical perspective by analyzing media messages, and thus to become media literate, can be listed as follows (Afacan & Ozbek, 2019; Algan, 2005; Hobbs, 1998):

- To be able to use the media consciously, effectively and for their own benefits,
- To be able to search for alternative sources of information, and evaluate the accuracy of information obtained from different sources,
- To be able to comprehend the impact of media on the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors and values of individuals and societies,
- To be able to realize that the media generates ideas, information and news from someone else's point of view,
- To realize that media messages are produced in various contexts such as economic, social, political, historical and aesthetical,

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- To see media as a source of understanding culture and its elements,
- To be aware of the fact that media has its own unique language,
- To be able to take a critical attitude towards the media,
- To know ethical and legal subjects in accessing information.

Today, since numerous messages are transmitted from many different sources, the correct analysis, interpretation and usage of media messages, in other words, approaching them from a critical point of view, is very important for individuals to be a conscious media consumer. For example, we can say that the biggest risk group today is children between the ages of 5 and 15, because the effects of advertisements, cartoons and television serials and technologies such as the internet and mobile phones and many other factors on children have still been discussed nowadays. On the other hand, since the risk which this age group can be faced is not noticed by their parents, and the fact these age-group-children are exposed to television and the internet much more, their being aware of media literacy becomes more important.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s declaration on Media Education in 1982 included a proposal to start and support comprehensive media education programs from preschool to higher education and adult education with the aim of developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will ensure the criticism among media users (Binark & Bek, 2007). Accordingly, the individual who becomes conscious about media literacy can make critical analysis of media messages, evaluate the reliability of the message source, become conscious of its effects, and have the will to choose different channels and programs. Media literacy has attracted attention in Western countries in the past forty years. The developments in Turkey began with the Communication Council on Media Literacy organized by the Supreme Board of Radio and Television. It has appeared that children who are vulnerable to visual, auditory and written media should be raised awareness towards the media starting from preschool education. In this context, the research aims to contribute to the awareness levels of students about critical media literacy in the Social Studies course. In line with this purpose, the research question was determined as follow:

- How does the activity-based media education have an effect on students' critical media literacy levels?

Method

The research model was designed as a case study. Case study is a research method that examines a studied current case in its own life frame, and the boundaries between the case and its environment are not specific, and a lot of evidences or data sources are used as much as possible (Bassey, 1999; Yildirim & Simsek, 2004). In this research, since an in-depth study was aimed, more than one data source was used.

Sample and Data Collection

The study group of the research consisted of 18, 5th grade students studying at a public school in Istanbul in the 2019-2020 academic year. 6 of the students participating in the study are females and 12 of them are males.

The data of the study were collected using rubrics prepared to evaluate the activities performed by the students. Rubrics are measurement tools that allow graded-evaluation of activities and products in terms of the specified criteria (purpose, organization, grammar etc.). It provides criteria that describe student performance in various degrees of competence and openly demonstrates the quality of each criterion, from perfect study to poor study (Rincker, 2002). The data was collected with a semi-structured interview technique and rubrics. Voice recording was made in the interviews with the students. A semi-structured interview form was prepared in order to determine the students' awareness development and their opinions about the study. The interview can be defined as a way of gathering information through a mutual and interactive communication process by using questions related to predetermined purpose (Yildirim & Simsek, 2004). Furthermore, interviews were done with parents to evaluate the activities of students in terms of parent dimension. A total of 6 parents (3 mothers and 3 fathers) were interviewed in order to evaluate the activities done by students in terms of parent dimension. As the one done with students, voice recording was used to interview with the parent. Interviews with parents were done during and after the parents' meeting in the school in the fall term of 2019-2020 academic year. All interviews (done with students and parents) were then transcribed by the researcher.

In the semi-structured interview technique, the researcher prepares the interview form including the questions that s/he plans to ask in advance. On the other hand, depending on the flow of the interview, the researcher can change the flow of the interview with different follow-up or sub-questions and enable the person to expand her/his answers and give details (Turnuklu, 2000). Since it is thought that defining the process of the research will clarify the data collection process of the research better, the process of the research is summarized below.

Research Implementation

First of all, 5th grade Social Studies lesson "Individual and Society" learning area "I Learn My Rights" unit was selected as the focus of the research and it was studied with drama and caricature interpretation techniques. Then, different activities were organized within the framework of "Children's Rights in the Media through the Eyes of a Child" in order to strengthen the students' acquisitions in this unit. Two of these activities included student observations under the themes of "Children and children's rights featured in newspapers" and "Children and children's rights featured on television." These observations continued for a month and were carried out through observation forms prepared by the researchers. Another activity is the newspaper preparation activity on children's rights. In this activity, the participants were asked to create a unique perspective by reflecting the information obtained during the observation process. The activities implemented were evaluated through the "Rubric of children's rights in the media", the "Rubric of children's rights in the newspaper" and the "Rubric of group work." With the use of analytical rubrics in process evaluation and holistic rubrics in final evaluation, a task was evaluated with both analytical and holistic rubrics. While creating rubrics, opinions were received from the classroom teacher and the assessment and evaluation specialist. Students analyzed television programs for a month. The analyzes were then processed into rubrics and scored.

Treske (2005) stated that turning the action of watching television into a consciously preferred action is a habit that should be gained at a younger age, emphasizes the importance of the media literacy education which will be given at children's developmental age for raising an individual who is conscious about how to evaluate the message s/he is exposed to, and who can evaluate the text/message presented to him/her with a critical perspective. This individual is important for the development of civil democracy. Children are the most sensitive and vulnerable group to interact with television. One of the dangers of children's openness to television messages is the fact that children perceive what they see as "reality" and believe that everything they see on television is "possible". In this research, it is seen that the activities performed by the students lead to positive results in terms of critical media literacy.

Analyzing of Data

The data gathered in the study was analyzed by content analysis. Content analysis, which is a method of analyzing written, verbal and visual communication messages, was previously used to analyze newspapers, magazines, articles, advertisements and political speeches (Bengtsson, 2016). As a research method, content analysis means systematically and objectively identifying and evaluating any phenomenon (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). In this research, the phenomenon of media literacy, critical thinking, and children's rights in the media are tried to be analyzed systematically and objectively. To achieve this, we mostly used the data gathered from the interviews. We categorized the main themes from the data according to their positive or negative perspectives.

Findings

Findings from the research were classified as "Data obtained from student activities", "Data obtained from student interviews" and "Data obtained from parent interviews."

Data Obtained from Student Activities

The data obtained from the student activities are presented in two main titles as the findings obtained from the "Children's Rights in the Media through the Eyes of a Child" activity and the findings from the "I am Preparing a Newspaper" activity.

Findings from the activity of "Children's Rights in the Media through the Eyes of a Child"

The activity of "Children's Rights in the Media through the Eyes of a Child" was planned as two separate activities under the themes of "Children and children's rights featured in newspapers" and "Children and children's rights featured on television." The findings with respect to these categories were summarized at below.

Findings from the activity of "Themes about Children and Children's Rights in Newspapers"

Two observation forms, the "Themes in which the Children are Featured in Newspapers" (Table 1) and "Children featured in Newspapers" (Table 2) were prepared by the researchers for the activity of "Themes about Children and Children's Rights in Newspapers" and the students analyzed the newspapers for one month through these observation forms. The observations conducted by students through these forms are presented below in tables.

Table 1. Data Obtained from the activity of "Themes in which the Children are Featured in Newspapers"

	Observation Themes	f
POSITIVE	Children who are studying at school	(37)
	Children who are cheerful	(33)
	Children who have healthy living conditions	(24)
	Children who are loved by their families	(20)
	Children who are playing games	(18)
	Children whose disability rights are protected	(16)
	Children whose private lives are guaranteed	(15)
	Children who get rewarded	(12)
	Children who have equal rights	(11)
	Children who are living in peace	(8)
	Children who are able to express their opinions	(5)
	Total	(199)
	NEGATIVE	Children who are sad
Children with unhealthy living conditions		(47)
Children whose private lives are not guaranteed		(32)
Children who cannot study at school		(30)
Children in a war environment		(19)
Children who are discriminated		(17)
Children whose disability rights are not protected		(14)
Children who are the faces of an advertisement brand		(14)
Children of unhappy families		(13)
Children who are under the State protection		(12)
Orphans-abandoned children on the street		(12)
Children who get punished		(11)
Children involved in mass media		(9)
Children who are working		(7)
Children who cannot express their opinions		(5)
Children who have to migrate		(4)
Total		(278)
OTHER	Positive News	(1)
	Negative News	(38)
	Total	(39)

As a result of the newspaper observations conducted by the students in Table 1, it is seen that they mostly reached the news about the children who are sad, whose private lives are not guaranteed and who have unhealthy living conditions. It is also noticed that negative observations that the students encounter are seen more than positive observations.

The table below shows the findings obtained by the students in the process of their observing the children's rights themes in the newspapers.

Table 2. Findings obtained from the observations of "Children rights in the newspapers"

Observation Themes	f
Rights to education	(47)
Rights to life	(46)
Right to benefit from health care services	(35)
Right to live in peace	(30)
Right to be treated humanely	(26)
Right to protection of private life	(25)
Right to have fun and play	(23)
Right to protection of children with disabilities	(20)
Right to live with the family	(17)
Right to protection of children's rights by the State	(14)
Right to protection by one's family	(12)
Equality	(11)
Right to communication	(9)
Right to express one's views freely	(8)
Right to express one's feeling and thoughts freely	(7)
Right to be protected from the damage of mass media	(6)
Right to have an identity	(3)
Other	(9)

As can be seen in Table 2, the students determined that the majority of the news featured in the newspapers were about "Right to education, Right to life, Right to benefit from health care services, Right to live in peace and Right to be treated humanely", and the less featured news were about "Right to explain one's feelings and thoughts, Right to be protected from the damage of mass media and Right to have an identity."

Findings from the Activity of "Themes about Children and Children's Rights on Television"

Two observation forms, "Themes in which the Children are Featured on Television" (Table 3) and "Children's Rights Featured on Television" (Table 4) were prepared for the activity of "Themes in which the children are featured on Television", by the researchers and students analyzed the television programs for one month through these observation forms. The observations conducted by students through these forms are presented below in tables.

Table 3. Data Obtained from The Activity of "Themes in which the Children are Featured on Television"

	Observation Themes	f
POSITIVE	Children who are cheerful	(17)
	Children who get rewarded	(14)
	Children who are playing games	(13)
	Children who are studying at school	(13)
	Children who are loved by their families	(11)
	Children who have healthy living conditions	(10)
	Children who have equal rights	(10)
	Children who are living in peace	(8)
	Children whose disability rights are protected	(7)
	Children whose private lives are guaranteed	(6)
	Children who are able to express their opinions	(6)
	Total	(115)
	NEGATIVE	Children with unhealthy living conditions
Children who are sad		(23)
Children who are the faces of an advertisement brand		(22)
Children who cannot study at school		(21)
Orphans-abandoned children on the street		(17)
Children of unhappy families		(14)
Children who are working		(14)
Children who are discriminated		(14)
Children who are under the State protection		(13)
Children in a war environment		(12)
Children whose private lives are not guaranteed		(12)
Children who get punished		(11)
Children involved in mass media		(8)
Children whose disability rights are not protected		(6)
Children who cannot express their opinions		(4)
Children who have to migrate	(1)	
Total	(224)	
OTHER	Positive News	(2)
	Negative News	(20)
	Total	(22)

In Table 3, it is seen that the students mostly found the news about the children who have the unhealthy living conditions, who are sad and who are the faces of an advertisement brand. They also found the negative news about the children who committed theft, not treated equally, under pressure, died or whose rights were not protected under the 'other' section mentioned in the observation form by the researchers.

When the whole distribution in the table is analyzed, it is noteworthy that the negative news about children is more intense than the positive news. When the fact that the data obtained from television news is in parallel with the data obtained from newspaper news is drawn attention, it is noticed that students' critical perspectives are consistent.

Again, the findings obtained by the students by examining the children's rights themes featured on the television programs are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Findings Obtained from the Themes Of “Children’s Rights on Television”

Observation Themes	f
Right to life	33
Right to benefit from health care services	28
Rights to education	24
Right to have fun and play	21
Right to live with the family	18
Right to protection by one’s family	17
Right to be treated humanely	16
Equality	20
Right to live in peace	13
Right to protection of private life	13
Right to protection of children with disabilities	13
Right to protection of children’s rights by the State	11
Right to have an identity	8
Right to communication	8
Right to express one’s views freely	8
Right to express one’s feeling and thoughts freely	5
Right to be protected from the damage of mass media	5

As seen in Table 4, the students examining the television programs in terms of children’s rights determined that the majority of the news featured on television were about “Right to life, Right to benefit from health services, Right to education”, and the less featured news were about “Right to explain one’s feelings and thoughts, Right to be protected from the damage of mass media and Right to express one’s opinions freely.” It is seen that these results have similar characteristics with the students’ newspaper observations.

Findings Obtained from the Activity of “I am Preparing a Newspaper”

In this activity, students were asked to prepare a newspaper containing the content of “children’s rights” with a unique perspective. The performances in the newspaper preparation process were evaluated through the group study rubric and the newspaper that emerged as an output at the end of the process was evaluated through the newspaper rubric. The findings obtained are presented below under two headings as “the findings obtained from the newspaper rubric” and “the findings obtained from the group study rubric.”

Findings Obtained from “Newspaper Rubric”

The newspapers prepared by the students were evaluated in terms of various categories out of 4 points and summarized in the table below.

Table 5. Findings obtained from “Newspaper Rubric”

Categories	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
Outlook	18	-	-	-
Content	17	1	-	-
Heading	15	3	-	-
Use of items	18	-	-	-

As can be seen in the table, the vast majority of students scored high from the all categories of newspaper rubric. It is thought that these were the reflections of students’ previous activities on the emerging product. It is clearly seen in the products that students reveal their ideas about how a newspaper is, which news is featured, and which headings are attractive in their newspaper and television observations.

Findings Obtained from the “Group Study Rubric”

A rubric for group study was given at the end of the directive of the newspaper preparation task given to the students. In this way, it was aimed to inform the students in advance about how they should work in a group, and to have information about how they would be evaluated. It can be said that there is a relationship between media literacy and group work. It is aimed to search for the truth, analyze and evaluate. The group study of the students during the newspaper preparation process is summarized in the table below.

Table 6. Findings Obtained from the Group Study Rubric

Evaluation Criteria	Never	Rarely	Often	Always
Duty distribution was made justly in the group.	-	-	2	16
Group members enjoyed working together.	-	-	1	17
Group members fulfilled their individual responsibilities.	-	-	2	16
Group members helped each other.	-	1	2	15
The group members listened to each other's opinions.	-	1	2	15
Group members took care the right to speak to be shared fairly.	-	1	2	15
Group members respected each other's opinions and efforts.	-	-	2	16
Group members created a common opinion on the subject they were working on.	-	-	2	16
Group members worked by trusting each other.	-	1	1	16
Group members encouraged each other.	-	-	1	17
Group members enjoyed working together.	-	-	1	17

As it is seen in Table 6, the vast majority of students fulfilled their responsibilities in group study according to the criteria presented to them. The findings of the researchers who observed the students during the group study have also parallels with these data.

Findings Obtained from Student Interviews

A semi-structured interview form was applied to students in order to determine the critical media literacy activities on the awareness development of students and their views on the study. The findings are subjected to descriptive analysis and organized around specific themes and summarized in the table below.

Table 7. Findings Obtained from Student Interviews

Themes	Similar Student Statements
If I had a Television Channel	<p>...I would always show the children who are happy, are studying at school, are playing, are dancing, are drawing pictures on television. There would be tragedy in the series, but I would always keep the children away from the tragedy... I would like to show that children who are suffering and begging. Because I would like them to understand what children on the street are suffering. People must adopt orphan children, or immediately refer them to the Social Service and Children Protection Institution when they see a child on the street... I would like to show children who are healthier, are educated, can live with their family, and can express their thoughts and feelings freely on my television channel. Because I believe that every child should have these rights, and that the family and the state should protect their rights... I would interview with a child everyday and make her/him tell her/his dreams. This time I would present the events that children have achieved and are upset like on a news channel. In short, I would turn what was presented on a regular channel into children's versions... I would like to show the children in better places or when explaining their problems. Because it does not make sense for people to see the children suffering... I would show the children who are happy, smart and hardworking because they can set an example for other children and television audiences... I would show the children who are happy, healthy, cheerful and didn't see any wars... I would always show the children as they are happy and cheerful. Because I would show the children as happy, so that the child who played this role did not demoralize. Because I know that every child has the same rights... On television, I would like to show which rights of children are being violated.</p> <p>I would not want to show unhappy children on television. Because I don't want the audience to be upset. Happy news makes them happy. So I would like to show happy children... I would like all programs that contain violence to be removed. Because these programs affect the mental health of all children negatively... I would like to see the children happy. Because when I see them happy, I get happy. I can always achieve what I want... I would like children to be shown happy, in touch with nature, running and playing. For this, all the world needs peace.</p>

Table 7. Continued

Themes	Similar Student Statements
The Skills I Developed With This Study	... I think, in the sense of responsibility, I can notice and succeed more and I am happy that I have done this study... I think that my ability of following newspapers and television regularly has improved... I think my skills of researching, gathering information, archiving and using Turkish correctly have improved... In this study, I have learned to gather information I have and prepare files... I think my research skills have improved. I think I have improved my ability to find news from newspapers and television. My intelligence has developed... In this study, I think I have improved my ability to see how children in the media are featured... I had information about the media. I learned to study regularly, to take responsibility and to examine children in the media. My archiving ability has improved... This study improved my concentration and my ability to follow the events... My abilities to think, to develop imagination, design and present projects have developed... With this study, my doing research skills on a particular subject have improved. During this study, I followed the newspaper and television news more carefully. I read more newspapers now. I became conscious about children's rights. I can express myself better on this subject.
What I had Experienced Difficulty While Doing This Study	... I had no difficulty while performing anything. I performed them with fun... The newspaper section was very easy. But I had a hard time on the television section. Because I couldn't find anything about the children... I had a hard time finding any news about children's rights while performing this study. It was difficult to find the news of children, especially those who have healthy living conditions, are happy, whose rights protected by the state... I had difficulty while marking about what children in the newspapers did... The study was quite easy. I did it with pleasure... I had difficulty on the television section... I had difficulty cutting the newspaper... I think I experienced difficulties in finding news on television and transferring the news to the worksheet... There was almost no news about children in the newspaper that was posted to our house everyday. That's why I had a hard time finding news in the newspapers... I had a hard time distinguishing the news about children's rights. I had to think a lot... Frankly, I did not find this study difficult. It was not easy either. But it was enjoyable. There was very little news about children only.
What I Enjoyed While Doing This Study	... While performing this study, I liked to act as a detective for newspaper news... I took pleasure cutting newspaper news, writing the news I found on television and preparing my own research file, decorating my file... Archiving the newspaper news was fun... I enjoyed cutting and pasting the newspaper news and writing about the day of the newspaper and which newspaper it was... I enjoyed cutting the news about happy children in newspapers... I enjoyed finding the news about children's rights in the newspaper and then classifying them by reading these news... I enjoyed finding newspaper news the most. Because I think my file was very good.
If I had a Chance To Redesign This Study	... I would add a model. The model would be very effective... I would not take out anything. However, I would add something about the subject of television. Because I couldn't find much about it. I think it is insufficient... I want to investigate children's rights in other countries. For this purpose, I would get help from the children living in those countries... I would try to reduce the number of sad children, and increase the number of happy children... I would remove the research section on television, instead I would put the children in the book... I would take out the drawing pictures section and add poster production section... I would not take out anything, but I would prepare a slide presentation... I would add the cinema and theater section, I would remove the television programs section... I would remove the news about children's rights on television. I think children will experience difficulties in this part... I would not add or remove anything. Because I have liked this study very much... I wish we had a chance to review the newspapers of the world.
Children's Rights are Important to me, Because...	... I am also a kid. Maybe I would not be here if it were not my rights. Therefore, protecting my rights is my main duty... I care about my rights... I am the future of this country. However, we can be conscious of our responsibilities by protecting our rights... I would not have lived happily without my rights. I would have a difficult and bad life... Because anyone under the age of 18 is important... For the children to live their childhood... What is wrong with these people? I am a child, and they are children, too. I think what they have must be mine and what I have must be theirs, too... I would be deprived of life without my rights.

The students participating in the research stated that they did not want to see the children unhappy on television, this disrupted their psychology, but the children's problems should be reflected less sadly along with their successes. In addition, students stated that this research that they have performed for the purpose of developing critical media literacy improved their sense of responsibility, and information gathering and archiving skills. Similarly, through these

activities, students said that they have learned to follow newspapers and television regularly with a critical point of view, have started to read more newspapers and have gained more consciousness about children's rights.

Findings Obtained from Parent Interviews

Parents were interviewed to evaluate the activities of students in term of parent dimension, and the data obtained are presented in the table below.

Table 8. Findings from Parent Interviews

Theme	Similar Parent Statements
Interest in the news	... These studies helped my child show more interest in the news in the newspapers. In the past, while looking at the headlines and celebrity pages, s/he even has started reading the columns now... While reading the newspaper with my wife at the weekend, our son took the newspaper in his hand and said, "Dad, look at here! There is such a situation about children's rights in this news." We are very happy for this study to have been done... It made me very happy to see my daughter feel like a journalist herself and scan the newspapers every day. Our child had difficulties in finding television news at the beginning but he was relieved after you reminded him that it was enough to find at least three news.
Motivation on Learning	... He was very excited when he said they would publish a children's newspaper at school. When we heard his conversation with his friends on the phone, we also got excited for him... Our newspapers at home were full of holes, but I think it was worth it ... This study led our children to think and research... We did not help her to find anything. She found everything by herself...
Impact on student	... The children liked the applause they received about their sample student files in the classroom. When they came home on the day the files were examined, they told everything that happened in the classroom that day... This was a different study. Of course, we were very happy because at school you made our children do what we did not make them do as parents... In order to keep our son away from the bad effects of television, we didn't already watch much TV at home with my wife. But the situation was different for newspapers. Through this study, we have seen what our son was actually affected unwittingly...

As seen in the table above, the opinions of the parents about the critical media literacy activities of the students are very positive. The statements of parents indicate that their children have a high learning motivation during the activities. Again, the parents detected some positive changes in their children and expressed them using similar expressions.

Discussion

The effects of the activities on students' media literacy were investigated in the current study. Students clearly revealed their ideas about how a newspaper and television program was, which news was broadcast, and which headlines were attractive during their observations on newspaper and television. Accordingly, the number of negative news reported by students is higher than the number of positive news. A similar result was reached by Cangoz (2009). In this study, students found that the newspapers mostly contained news about the right to education, the right to life, the right to benefit from health services, the right to live in peace and the right to be treated humanely, but not about the right to express feelings and thoughts and to be protected from the harms of mass media. When the data obtained from television news were analyzed, it was determined that there were more negative news such as children who were not treated equally, who were under pressure, died or whose rights could not be protected, as was the case with newspaper analysis.

The students demonstrated a critical perspective thanks to their newspaper and television observations. They have developed awareness of media literacy. Media literacy aims to develop individuals' questioning, thinking and critical evaluation skills. In other words, media literacy is an awareness of why the texts/outputs exist there than to analyze the media texts, and this awareness is to know why, under which conditions and by whom they are produced, rather than what is produced (Binark & Bek, 2007). In this study, it was aimed for students to analyze text/outputs they encounter by improving their critical media literacy skills and to raise their awareness by questioning them. As a result, the current study reveals that media literacy skills of students can be improved positively and this development was noticed by their parents. Developing media literacy skills of developing students also helps them to demonstrate democratic behavior and attitude. Treske (2005) also reached a similar conclusion. In addition, in this study, media literacy activities increased students' skills and willingness to work together. In this respect, it is also effective to improve students' respect for different opinions and determinations.

One of the directives of the “Declaration of the Duties and Rights of the Journalist” by the Swiss Press Council is as follows. Children deserve a special protection whether they are children of a famous person or not. Because children constitute the most open and sensitive group in the face of media tools and their rights are valid and indispensable rights for all children. For this reason, children's rights should not be neglected in the media while mentioning the cases of violence involving children indirectly or directly (Morresi, 2006). The fact that children perceive what they see as reality causes them to believe that everything they see in the media is possible. In this study, we can say that the activities increased the students' awareness of reality. Therefore, it is seen that it has positive results in terms of critical media literacy, where students develop their questioning and perspective. Moreover, it is observed that news related to the right to live, the right to benefit from health services and the right to education in terms of children's rights are featured in television programs, but there is little mention of the right to express opinions freely and protection from the harms of mass media. The ability of students to make these determinations is also important in terms of media literacy skills. Yet, the finding of “Right to be protected from the damages of the mass media” is placed at the bottom contradicts these directives and this becomes a challenging issue for the students. It is also seen that students realized some critical issues during their newspaper observations. Kartal (2007) found that the media education that the students received improved their media literacy skills positively. In addition, the research of Wilksch and Wade (2009) revealed that long-term given media literacy education can be effective in overcoming students' eating disorders. This indicates that it is important for students to gain conscious awareness of the media, which can be effective in acquiring various positive or negative behaviours. Moreover, Kurt and Kurum's (2010) study highlighted the close relationship between media literacy and critical thinking skills, and concluded that media literacy skills can be gained through critical thinking skills. In addition, in order for future generations to become critical media literate and conscious receivers, it can be a correct approach to present both critical thinking skills and media literacy to students in an integrated form into the courses, starting from the first grade.

According to Hobbs (1998), the pedagogy of questioning, which is the act of asking questions about media texts, should be at the focal point of media literacy, and an open, interrogator, critical and intellectual stance towards symbolic texts should be the central pillar of the umbrella of media literacy. Since this research targeted students to question the media messages and to gain the ability to think critically, activities were organized for students to approach television and newspaper news in a questioning way and the most of the students were seen to have achieved this goal.

The participated students' opinions about the media literacy activities were quite positive. The students stated that they do not want to see children unhappy on TV, which this situation spoils their psychology, but the success of children should be given more attention and sad news should be reflected less. Furthermore, the students stated that the activities they carried out to develop critical media literacy primarily developed their sense of responsibility, research, information gathering and archiving skills. In addition, through these activities, the students stated that they learned to follow newspapers and television with a regular and critical perspective, began to read more newspapers and gained more awareness about children's rights.

Media literacy activities have improved the perspective and awareness of parents. Parents stated with similar expressions that students' motivation to learn increased and they observed some positive changes in students. Teachers are also responsible for the development of media literacy (Torres & Mercado, 2006). It can be said that raising the awareness of teachers about media literacy and designing activities improves students' media literacy skills. One of the most basic tools for developing students' inquiry pedagogy (asking critical questions about what you watch, see, read) is the development of media literacy skills (Alvermann & Hagood, 2009). In this study, it was seen that the activities applied for media literacy support the inquiry pedagogy.

Conclusion

In the current study, it was determined that the students' sense of responsibility, research, evaluation and archiving skills developed as a result of the activities they carried out to develop critical media literacy. Through these activities, it was determined that the students learned to follow media tools with a regular and critical perspective, started to read more about media tools and became aware of children's rights as a media literate.

Suggestions

In line with the results of the research and studies in the literature, the following suggestions can be made. First of all, teachers can use the activities in their classes to inform and improve their students' media literacy. Secondly, either an independent media literacy course or a media literacy education integrated into other courses can be provided from the first grade. Thirdly, workshops related to critical media literacy can be organized for in-service teachers. Last but not least, similar seminars can be arranged for parents to raise their awareness.

Limitations

Findings obtained from the research are limited as data obtained from student activities, data obtained from student interviews and data obtained from interviews with parents. Students in the study group are at the 5th grade level. This

research was done in a public school in Istanbul. This research is for media literacy and its effects in social studies. It can be expected to provide a positive contribution to the development and impact of social studies education in Turkey. These can be said as the limits of the research. Also, a similar study of this research can be done for different courses with a different working group.

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