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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE
IETC2012

Determining the Relationship between Media Literacy and Social Skills

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Abstract

In this study, determining the relationship between media literacy and social skill levels of the eighth grade primary school students, considering various variables, is aimed. With this design, the questions of whether the relationship between media literacy and social skill levels of the eighth grade primary school students differs significantly according to gender, having access to internet; as well as whether there is a relationship between media literacy and social skill levels are tried to be answered. This study is based on correlative survey model among general survey models. The study group consists of 947 eighth grade primary school students who study at the schools selected randomly from five different educational areas in the city center of Elazığ. Economical conditions and family profiles were considered in selection of those schools. In the study, two different assessment scales have been used to receive students' opinions. One of them is the "Level Determination Scale for Media Literacy" which was developed by Karaman ve Karataş (2009) and the other one is the "Social Skill Inventory", as translated into Turkish by Galip Yüksel in 2004, which was developed by Riggio in 1989. The study has showed that there is not a significant relationship between media literacy level and social skill level. Considering the relationship according to the sub-factors, it is observed that there is a relationship between some sub-factors; however this relationship is very weak. It is observed that gender of the students does not form a significant difference for media literacy but it does for social skill level. Furthermore, female students' social skill levels are found to be higher. It is observed that the school which the students attend affects neither media literacy nor social skill levels.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Social Skill, Social Development, Primary Education

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1. Introduction

1.1. Media Literacy

The purpose of media literacy is to develop individuals as citizens aware of their democratic rights as they are using media, warn them not to be unconcerned for social problems and make them more equipped against media manipulation (Cangöz, 2008). According to the defition by Europe's Information Society (2007), apart from having easy communication in all media, media literacy is the ability of accessing images, words or sounds in daily life; analysing and evaluating them. Gilster (1997), defined media literacy as having information and critical conception about the nature, technique and effect of mass media. When all these definitons are analysed as a whole it is seen that inquiry, or in other word criticism stands in the forefront. As the concept of media literacy is analysed critically it can be argued that it is comparatibility of the content presented in general with the reality in daily life (Apak, 2008).

When the development of media literacy in Turkey is investigated it is seen that it was first brought up in the Council of Communication in 2003, then with the advice of Radio and Television Suprime Council it was brought up again in 2004 in the final report of Media and Violence Working Group acting according to course of action. In accordance with these works media litearcy lesson was instructed in 2006-2007 academic year with the cooperation of Radio and Television Suprime Council and Ministry of National Education in five pilot cities (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Adana, Erzurum), then in 2007-2008 academic year it was instructed as optional lesson for the second grade of primary schools.

1.2. Social Skills

According to Hops (1983) social skill is the style of behavior in a social situation. Dowrick (1986:5) defines it as "skill of behaving in a useful and appropriate way for self, others and social norms in a certain situation". Gresham and Eliot (1990), defines it as "one's acceptable behaviors learnt socially that provide interaction with others by abstaning from socially unacceptable behaviors" (cited by Yüksel, 2004).

Various structures forming social skills have been developed based on these definitions. The structure created by Riggio (1989) is one of the most acceptable ones all around the world. Riggio (1989) states sub-factors forming social skills. In the Social Skilsl Inventory developed by Riggio social skills and stuctures forming social skills were approached as in the following: 1. Emotional expressivity, 2. Emotional sensitivity, 3. Emotional control, 4. Social expressivity, 5. Social sensitivity, 6. Social control.

There are social skills students in the first grade of primary education are supposed to acquire. Significant social risks may be emerged if they can't acquire these skills. The skills mentioned are as in the following (Yüksel, 2004): 1. Simple Skills of Communication. 2. Skills of Sharing. 3. Skills of Obeying Rules. 4. Skills of Enterprising and Cooperation. 5. Skills of Defining Objects and Making Decision.

The ages between 7 and 11 are among the most significant terms during which students' tendency for behaving as their teachers do is quite dense. Besides curriculum and child's social quality, primary school teacher's social qualities have an effect on children's social development (Yüksel, 2011). Teacher has an important role both as a teacher and as a model in the process during which children acquire basic social skills. Thus, primary school teachers' social skills and the reasons of the factors forming these skills are thought to be important. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between media literacy and social skills according to the variables of gender and having a computer.