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Gaps in Media Literacy Education in Turkey and Case Study on a Sample Project Implementation from the USA

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Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the current status of initiatives launched in the early 2000s in Turkey aimed at media literacy education. This evaluation focuses on the position of Media Literacy courses within the curriculum at different levels of education. Another study objective is to draw attention to the significant gap in this field while examining the policies and practices developed for media literacy education in Turkey. Following the assessment of Turkey, research on media literacy education in the United States has been summarized. In this research, conducted using the case study method, the project titled *ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in New York Public Schools*, initiated as part of Project Look Sharp (PLS) at Ithaca College, has been examined as a case example. Within the scope of the case study, discussions were held with the implementers of this exemplary project, direct participation was ensured in project workshops, records of various meetings related to the project were transcribed, and data were collected from media content related to the project. The aim was to provide an in-depth understanding of qualitative case study analysis. The researcher endeavors to build a model by evaluating the outcomes derived from the identified situation.

Keywords: media, literacy, media literacy, media literacy education, case study, information literacy, libraries, school libraries, school librarians, ML3 project.

1. Introduction

This research aims to evaluate approaches, policies, and practices concerning media literacy education in Turkey. Specifically, it examines the positioning of media literacy courses and their integration into the curriculum. Additionally, the study seeks to identify significant gaps in media literacy education policies in Turkey. Following the assessment of Turkey, a brief review of media literacy education research in the United States is conducted. Using a case study method, the analysis focuses on Project Look Sharp (PLS), operating as a media literacy initiative at Ithaca College since 1996, and the *ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy Project* initiated in 2021. The objective is to provide an in-depth understanding using qualitative case study methods. By evaluating the situation in Turkey, the research aims to construct a model for media literacy studies in the country, taking into account existing deficiencies.

The research questions/problems addressed in this study, starting from the title, can be articulated as follows:

– When compared with the sample project examined in the case study, does media literacy education in Turkey hold sufficient importance within current educational programs? Are there any gaps in this regard?

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- What is the level of media literacy education received by teachers currently teaching Media Literacy courses in Turkey and those who will become future teachers?
- How can an evaluation be made regarding school libraries and librarians in Turkey when compared with the sample project examined in the case study? Upon examination of the outputs of the sample project, what role can libraries and librarians play in the process of media literacy education?

Media and media literacy

The significance of media literacy stands out in societal life. Understanding its definition is crucial in comprehending its impact on daily practices. Media is typically defined as technological tools that convey messages, categorized as print or electronic mediums (Potter, 2004; Sperry, Scheibe, 2022). Media content should involve a message conveyed through language, visuals, or sound, produced via technology, and disseminated to large audiences. This definition indicates the frequent encounter with media content in everyday life.

When posed the question what is media to different groups, it is often described as a list containing mass communication tools. Media is characterized by the transmission of messages through visuals, language, or sound. These messages are distributed to large audiences collectively, and recipients and producers may be in different locations. Books and maps can also be considered as media. However, some technologies (e.g., personal emails, and text messages) may not fit this definition. Media literacy should focus on the content of the message (Scheibe, Rogow, 2012).

Media serves as a fundamental tool for cultural expression and communication today. Utilizing media is essential for active participation in public life, as it functions as a significant resource in managing relationships, interpreting them, and defining our identities. Media functions as a significant resource in managing relationships, interpreting them, and defining our identities (Butler, 2020). Therefore, media literacy and education are of vital importance.

Literacy is associated with effective communication and requires reading and writing messages using various symbols. Nowadays, every form of communication requires specific skills (Hobbs, Cooper Moore, 2013).

As media transforms us today, media literacy emphasizes analyzing and interpreting messages. These analyses should be based on practical analyses and integrated with various disciplines (Lewis, 2021). Media literacy education should be based on a multifaceted approach and integrated with different disciplines.

Media literacy education and current situation in Turkey

Media literacy education aims to reach broader goals beyond the skills of accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating media content, as defined in the concept of media literacy. C. Scheibe, F. Rogow (Scheibe, Rogow, 2012) noted that many media literacy educators primarily define their tasks as teaching media by emphasizing the analysis and critique of media messages. However, they also emphasized that media literacy education should encompass much more than just the ability to analyze various media formats and content. Rather than merely teaching media, it is crucial to foster questioning skills among students within the framework of media literacy's core objectives, enabling them to learn how to use new information effectively and providing an environment conducive to effective communication through various media content. In such a process, it can be said that students and teachers learn how to become literate in the media world from each other in a rich and integrated environment. This environment will also help to prevent potential mismatches between media literacy goals and classroom practices. This approach, which elaborates on the importance of media literacy education in contemporary times, can be observed in various countries, particularly through projects implemented in educational settings. However, this study first provides information about media literacy education in Turkey.

The inclusion of media literacy on the educational agenda in Turkey does not date back many years compared to global developments. It began with the organization of a Communication Summit in February 2003 under the auspices of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), with contributions from the Directorate General of Press and Information and the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). One of the recommendations presented was adding a Media Literacy Course to primary and secondary school curricula to raise awareness among children and youth and protect them from harmful content. Subsequently, in 2004, the issue was again raised within the Media and Violence Working Group established under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. In May 2005, the RTÜK, Ministry of National Education (MEB), and

Marmara University Faculty of Communication collaborated to organize the First International Media Literacy Conference, which also drew attention from academia (Sezer, Yılmaz Sert, 2019).

It is not incorrect to state that the initiation of media literacy education by state-affiliated institutions coincided with the rise of private television channels in Turkey, particularly during the 1990s, and the observed impact of their broadcasting activities and content. Until that period, the content transmitted by state television transformed, particularly with the introduction of entertainment and gossip-oriented content, as well as the portrayal of violence, prompting the need for preventive measures regarding its infiltration into household environments and emphasizing the imperative to protect children from harmful content.

In August 2006, a protocol signed between RTÜK and the Ministry of National Education's Board of Education designated Media Literacy as an elective course in the primary education curriculum in Turkey. Initially, the course was introduced as a one-hour elective for grades 6, 7, or 8, following a pilot implementation. The first pilot implementation in 2006 involved a four-day training session in Ankara for Social Studies teachers who would deliver the course, accompanied by school visits from experts to evaluate the course through surveys. Survey results indicated significant interest in the course, prompting a need for further content elaboration. During this process, an *Elementary School Media Literacy Course Teacher's Handbook* was prepared (Altun, 2008). In 2012, the course was integrated into the curriculum for grades 7 or 8, with two hours per week allocated as an elective. However, until 2013, it was found that the course, when taught by class teachers, Turkish language teachers, or Social Studies teachers, was not effectively delivered, leading to a decision in the 2014–2015 academic year to use instructional materials instead of textbooks (Altun, 2014). Presently, as of 2023, Media Literacy remains an elective course in the primary education curriculum in Turkey, albeit not extensively included in school programs in practice. The course is not included in the secondary education curriculum (MEB, 2023). A survey of private schools in Turkey revealed that some schools implement practices related to media literacy at the middle school level within the scope of Turkish language classes, while courses such as digital content design are offered as club activities at the middle school level (TED Istanbul College, 2023; Ari College, 2023).

In addition to discussing the current status of Media Literacy education in primary and secondary education programs in Turkey, statistics related to formal education in Turkey should be shared. This would enable a broader evaluation of the course's current position in formal education. According to the latest National Education Statistics-Formal Education Report released by the Ministry of National Education, in the 2021–2022 academic year, 19,155,571 students received formal education in Turkey. These students were educated in 56,200 public schools and 14,179 private schools (MEB, 2022). Therefore, given the 19 million students engaged in the education process, the accurate analysis and evaluation of media, which holds a critical position in today's world, are of utmost importance.

Media literacy course in education faculties in Turkey

Following the general evaluation of the position of Media Literacy courses in primary and secondary education programs in Turkey, it is important to focus on the educational levels of teachers who play an active role in teaching the course. Initially, arrangements were made for the course to be taught by social studies teachers (Altun, 2008). In this section, an assessment was conducted to examine the position of Media Literacy courses in Education Faculties since 2006, along with whether they are included in relevant undergraduate programs.

Media Literacy courses at the primary and secondary education levels are observed to be taught by teachers who have graduated from the classroom teaching, Turkish Language, and Social Studies Teaching Undergraduate Programs in initial implementations. According to the data from the Council of Higher Education (YÖKATLAS, 2023), as of March 2023, there are 102 Classroom Teaching programs in the Faculty of Education, Department of Basic Education; 66 Social Studies Teaching Programs in the Departments of Turkish and Social Sciences Education; and 104 Turkish Language Teaching Programs in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

The examination of the lesson plans of undergraduate programs in classroom teaching, Turkish Language Teaching, and Social Studies Teaching at the Faculty of Education first accessed the information from the Higher Education Council (YÖK) Education and Teaching Department sources, referred to as the Former Curriculum-Lesson Plan (YÖK, 2023a, 2023b, 2023b). In this research conducted on these plans, it was determined that the Media Literacy Course was not

included. These lesson plans, which were implemented before 2018, were replaced with the use of "new curriculum" plans after 2018.

Different faculties of education were selected for the new lesson plans, and the shared new curriculum plans of the relevant departments were examined. During this review, lessons were categorized as Vocational Knowledge (VK), Field Education (FE), and General Culture (GC). For example, in the undergraduate lesson plans of the Department of Classroom Teaching at Marmara University, the keyword media literacy was searched, and it was observed to be included in the Turkish Teaching course within the IV. Semester. Furthermore, the Media Literacy Course was included among the Elective General Culture Courses (Marmara..., 2023a). However, in the lesson plans of the Turkish Language Teaching undergraduate program in the same faculty, it was observed that the concept of media literacy or the course itself was not included (Marmara..., 2023b). In the lesson plans of the Social Studies Teaching undergraduate program at Bursa Uludağ University Faculty of Education, no information regarding media literacy was found (Bursa..., 2023). Some faculties of education in certain universities have a mandatory Media Literacy Course, which differs from the standard lesson plans (Anadolu..., 2023).

At this stage of the study, a general review has been conducted on the topics of media, media literacy, and media literacy education in Turkey. Subsequently, to establish a connection with the ML3 Project conducted by PLS in the United States and to enable a comparative evaluation, a literature review will be presented on the relationship between media literacy education and school libraries in Turkey, which has been selected as a case study.

School libraries, media literacy education and libraries in Turkey

In Turkey, school libraries have played a contributory role in the educational process. Particularly during the Republican era, this has been considered a significant topic and examined with the involvement of expert scholars in the field. For instance, in 1924, John Dewey from Columbia University, while examining the construction process of school buildings, emphasized the need to determine the locations of libraries. Similarly, in 1951, Professor Kate Wofford from the University of Florida highlighted the importance of libraries within the education system through her research on village primary schools. Furthermore, Dr. Lawrence Thompson, invited to Turkey by the Ministry of National Education between 1951 and 1952, prepared a report emphasizing the importance of school libraries in democratic life (Yılmaz, 2015). Along with these evaluations, it is now acknowledged that school libraries should not only serve as information centers but also undertake various other roles.

In recent years, along with debates about the concept of information literacy, the importance of libraries in schools has increased further. It is argued that school libraries have a positive impact on student performance and play an important role in increasing the rate of book reading (Lance, 2007). In Turkey, there are also research studies and legislative regulations on this issue.

The Regulation on School Libraries published in the *Official Gazette* in 2001 specifies the establishment of school libraries and classroom libraries in primary school institutions, the requirement for technological infrastructure readiness, and the appointment of a librarian in school libraries with a book count exceeding 3000 (Regulation..., 2001). When statistics on school libraries in Turkey are examined according to TÜİK 2021 data, there are 32,690 libraries in formal and non-formal educational institutions, and these libraries contain 34,325,612 books. According to the 2021–2022 Formal Education Statistics of the Ministry of National Education, there are 56,200 public schools and 14,179 private schools, totaling 70,379 (MoNE, 2023).

In addition to this information about school libraries in Turkey, problems encountered in practice should also be evaluated. As highlighted by the School Librarians Association in an interview, most schools lack libraries, and the physical facilities of existing libraries are inadequate (Education..., 2019).

When establishing a relationship between school libraries, librarians, and media literacy, it is necessary to involve teachers in an educational process. School libraries should support not only information literacy but also media literacy. Especially concerning accessing accurate content, school libraries should become important centers by bringing librarians and teachers together.

Media literacy education, policies, practices in US

In the United States, media literacy education has been attempted to be integrated into the curriculum aimed at teachers. These efforts have been supported by various organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English. The Institute of Media Education, established in 1993, has been one of the significant initiatives in this field. Efforts dating back to the 1970s have led to

the inclusion of media literacy elements in the educational standards of many states. However, efforts continue to inform more teachers and students (Kellner, Share, 2005).

Historically, G.M. Chen (Chen, 2007) has examined media literacy education in three stages since the 1960s: inoculation, confrontation, and transition. Educators initially adopted a protection-focused approach against the harms of media, later emphasizing the importance of a critical perspective. Since the 1980s, educators have engaged in national and international conferences to share media education curricula. Since the late 1980s, an increasing number of media education teachers and academics in the United States have been actively engaged in the global media literacy movement, participating in international, national, and regional conferences, and organizing meetings to share media education curriculum. The scale and scope of national conferences and media education have rapidly expanded during this period. In addition to organized groups in different states, the Aspen Institute, in 1992, convened the inaugural National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, bringing together educators to develop guidelines for enhancing media education in the United States. Alongside this development, various associations have begun to emerge nationwide (Chen, 2007).

In the United States, national conferences organized by institutions such as the Aspen Institute have supported the expansion of the media literacy movement. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) stands out as one of the most important organizations in this field, having published the Core Principles of Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, 2023).

Project Look Sharp (PLS) and ML3 Project

In this study, information will be shared regarding Project Look Sharp (PLS), which has been conducting its activities as a media literacy initiative of Ithaca College since 1996, within the framework of a case study methodology, focusing on the *ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in New York Public Schools* project that began in July 2021. PLS, a non-profit, mission-oriented social assistance program based at Ithaca College in New York, USA, aims to assist educators (K-16) in developing students' critical thinking and civic engagement through media literacy materials. Founded in 1996, PLS has become an internationally recognized organization by communicating with educators from different parts of the world after its initial focus on schools in the state of New York. The PLS team conducts activities to enhance learning through media literacy. Within PLS, experts in curriculum design, research, media production, psychology, social studies, environmental education, and project management continue their research (PLS, 2023a).

With the belief that fake news and media bias polarize the country and threaten the essence of democracy, PLS considers its work to be increasingly important in recent years. PLS prepares and implements projects to share its experience of over 25 years first in schools in the state of New York and then throughout the United States. The project titled *ML3: The ML3 Initiative – ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in New York Public Schools* is one of these projects (PLS, 2023b).

In July 2021, PLS initiated the ML3 project with a two-year grant from the Booth Ferris Foundation in collaboration with the School Library Systems Association (SLSA) of New York State. The project aims to empower librarians working in K-12 school libraries in the state of New York as leaders in media literacy education. The project also aims to ensure the integration of media literacy into the curriculum and to enhance critical thinking skills through collaboration between librarians and teachers. Initially, 19 school librarians were engaged to develop strategies and gain experience with the Constructivist Media Decoding (CMD) process. In September 2021, PLS issued a call for applications for school librarians to become ML3 librarians across the state. Within the first 5 days, over 100 school librarians applied for ML3. Initially, training sessions were conducted with the participation of 16 school librarians and 4 library managers. Throughout the remainder of the 2021/2022 academic year, participants continued to share their experiences and recommendations with ML3 Project Coordinator Susan Allen. School librarians continued to meet online and in person with PLS directors Cyndy Scheibe and Chris Sperry in small groups at different levels of education to produce lesson content on various topics discussed during the training sessions. During the project events, newspaper articles and podcasts related to the topic were shared, and a panel was organized in July 2022 (PLS, 2023b).

2. Materials and methods

In this study, the method of case study was employed, starting from the approach of qualitative research that focuses on understanding a single concept or idea (Creswell, 2013).

The case study, designed to investigate real-life contexts, was evaluated as a qualitative research method. It is emphasized that in a case study, the researcher should first review the literature related to the subject, evaluate the situation in relevant environments, determine the boundaries and objectives of the research, and then commence the study (Gillham, 2000). Another important aspect of case studies is determining research questions along with establishing a general research framework. Research questions are to be answered in environments related to the examined situation (Gillham, 2000). Within the scope of the research questions and the established research framework, a descriptive approach was adopted for the analysis of data aimed at evaluating the situation.

In this study, the process of gathering information through multiple sources was employed in conducting the case study. Accordingly, observations and in-depth interviews were conducted, and records and documents related to the situation were reviewed. Thus, the aim was to depict the situation (Creswell, 2013). R.K. Yin (Yin, 2009) indicated that researchers construct models or explanations as a result of case studies (cited in Creswell, 2013). In this study, descriptive analysis was conducted by the identified topics, aiming to develop a model.

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis aims to characterize the world or a phenomenon. In the analysis process, emphasis is often placed on causal understanding and causal relationships. Descriptive analysis plays an important role in the scientific process in general, and particularly in educational research. In descriptive analysis, researchers transform raw data into findings reported in a useful format aligned with the research objectives. Through descriptive analysis, the nature of the environment related to interpreting the findings can be defined. Researchers can interpret causal research findings through the analysis process and assist practitioners and policymakers in diagnosing issues (Loeb et al., 2017). Qualitative descriptive data analysis aims to summarize specific issues experienced by individuals in everyday terms. Qualitative descriptive analysis tends to examine a subject in its natural state as much as possible within the research field context. Additionally, in qualitative descriptive analysis, there is no intention to generate or create theory from the obtained data (Lambert, 2012).

In qualitative descriptive research, data collection focuses on exploring the nature of specific events under study. Therefore, data collection may include structured, open-ended, individual, or focus group interviews. However, data collection may also involve examining observations, records, reports, photographs, and documents. The data analysis of qualitative descriptive research does not use a pre-existing set of rules derived from the philosophical or epistemological stance of the discipline that forms a specific qualitative research approach, unlike other qualitative approaches (Lambert, 2012). In this study, the analysis of data collected through observation, interviews, and recorded data within the framework of research questions focuses on three main areas using the descriptive analysis method.

Data collection

In this study, the primary aim was to utilize the observational technique suitable for description. Data was collected through observational methods, focusing on predetermined evaluation and analysis criteria. In this context, participation was ensured in the "Teaching Students to Decode the World" workshop held at ERIE 1 Boces in Buffalo West Seneca, New York, on February 9, 2023, as part of the ML3 Project. Additionally, observations were conducted during the Media Decoding events held online on February 15-16, 2023, and the iEARN-2023 Digital Citizenship Virtual Exchange Program where Chris Sperry shared information about the ML3 Project on March 8, 2023.

In the case study, one of the data collection techniques, interviews, is typically conducted with a small number of individuals who hold significant views on the subject. Interviews generally involve open-ended questions and explanatory responses are evaluated as data (Gillham, 2000). In this study, interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with educators and coordinators of the ML3 Project. Additionally, discussions were held with stakeholders, including librarian Bridget Crossman and 6th-grade teacher Kelly Catarelli from Lake George School District, to gather information.

To protect the rights of participants in the interviews, informed consent was obtained before the discussions. Subsequently, these consents and details of the research were submitted to the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board in the Social and Humanities Sciences Field at Çukurova University, and approval was obtained from the relevant Ethics Committee.

Following the observations and interviews, three different video contents prepared for the ML3 Project were analyzed. These videos include a 2-minute 62-second video titled *Through Constructivist Media Decoding*, a 1-minute 20-second content titled *Librarians as Leaders for This Work*, and a 1-minute 26-second content titled *The Impact of This Work*.

3. Discussion

This study aims to offer a different perspective on the debates surrounding media literacy education in Turkey. Particularly, the inclusion of media literacy as an independent subject in the curriculum has been regarded as a significant step. However, in the present day, educational processes regarding media literacy and similar emerging literacy areas are undergoing renewal globally. In many countries, curriculum definitions of media literacy aim to enhance the creative and communicative capacities of young people. Additionally, during this educational process, they are encouraged to become critical media consumers. Media literacy also plays a significant role in defining the capacity of adults to function as citizens in media-saturated societies (Pangrazio, Sefton-Green, 2020). In recent years, particularly with the influence of social media, discussing popular media has also gained significant importance in the establishment and negotiation of social relationships (Buckingham, Sefton-Green, 2020).

The concept of media literacy also encompasses various other literacies within its scope as a comprehensive umbrella term. For instance, news literacy, health media literacy (Rasi et al., 2021), and advertising literacy are some of these literacies. The definition of media and information literacy by UNESCO has also provided a specific perspective on media literacy. Throughout history, media literacy has been used to define various educational practices. Each definition highlights different theoretical perspectives and diverse viewpoints remain prominent in contemporary media education programs (Leaning, 2019). However, beyond all these different definitions and approaches, the dominant role of media in everyday life necessitates a more comprehensive evaluation of media literacy education. In this context, it is emphasized that media literacy should be integrated into various subjects rather than being taught as a standalone course to students. Emphasis is placed on the need for practical infrastructure to enable individuals to analyze media content accurately and exhibit a conscious approach to producing content. In the sample project examined in the study, a questioning-based approach to media literacy has been adopted, highlighting critical thinking.

In this section, responses and recommendations have been formulated in the form of bullet points, along with the research questions of the study, with the aim of discussing these recommendations through relevant literature review.

The first research question of the study is stated as follows: Is media literacy education in Turkey considered to be of necessary importance within the existing curriculum frameworks when compared to the sample project examined in the case study? Is there a gap in this regard? The conclusion of the study indicates that media literacy education in Turkey is not considered to be of necessary importance within the existing curriculum frameworks, as this education does not find a place within these programs. There is a significant gap perceived in this regard. When offering recommendations for media education in the 21st century, H. Jenkins (Jenkins, 2009) has noted that defining the mission of education should, in general, focus on the idea of enabling all students to benefit from learning to fully participate in public, social, and economic life. Today, active participation in public, social, and economic life requires young individuals who can accurately interpret media content and are socially responsible content producers. Literacy is evaluated through a socio-cultural perspective, considering it not merely as an individual, psychological achievement but as evidence of participation in social and material practices. This perspective referred to as New Literacy Studies, posits literacy as a practice tied to community norms and suggests that multiple forms of literacy develop through various social practices (Manca et al., 2021).

Citizenship practices have now evolved and developed. While citizenship was previously limited to an individual's physical environment, advancements in digital technologies and Web 2.0 communication technologies have transformed citizenship practices into digital citizenship. Digital media tools also play a significant role in this transformation (Erdem et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding media content accurately is among the requirements of citizenship in the digital age.

Another research question of the study is as follows: What is the level of media literacy education received by current and future teachers who teach Media Literacy courses in Turkey?

Unfortunately, this question can be answered negatively, as reflected in the conceptual framework of the study. The education received by teachers who teach media literacy courses in Turkey, as well as future teachers, is extremely limited in this regard. Furthermore, the resources prepared in the form of course materials and teacher handbooks, which cover highly comprehensive topics and require regular updating, are insufficient in addressing the needs of this field.

In our era, media and information literacy signify much more than the ability to read text due to the dominance of visual images in media and information environments (Dame Adjin-Tetty, 2022). In this new environment, it is crucial for pedagogical knowledge related to media literacy to be imparted to teachers from all disciplines at some level of their education.

Teachers play a critical role in ensuring that students leave school with the necessary skills to be critical consumers of media and thoughtful and knowledgeable producers of mediated messages. To effectively teach media literacy to students, teachers must also have a solid understanding of media literacy education. Media literacy education goes beyond simple interpretation and analysis of messages. It should also encompass broader contexts that are part of digital culture (McNelly, Harvey, 2021).

When highlighting the importance of media literacy education in teacher training, the requirements of the digital age should also be emphasized. In teacher education, future educators should be equipped with digital skills that will support their use of new and emerging technologies in their classrooms (Falloon, 2020).

The study also aimed to answer the following research question regarding the sample project examined: How can school libraries and librarians in Turkey be evaluated, and what are their roles in media literacy education based on the outcomes of the sample project? The research findings for the conceptual framework of the study indicate that school libraries and librarians in Turkey constitute an important area requiring the development of numerous projects. Improvements such as the placement of libraries in schools to address the employment issue for graduates of the Information and Document Management Departments are among the significant elements of the proposed model. However, in these projects, prioritizing the evaluation of libraries as genuine information centers is essential. School libraries play a crucial role in various new literacies, including media literacy, visual literacy, news literacy, and information literacy. Therefore, there is a need for school librarians who have received education in these centers.

As observed in the examined sample project, it is generally expected that school librarians take on a literacy support role that may also encompass literacy education. Additionally, it is believed that qualified school librarians can have a positive impact on students' literacy achievements (Merga, 2020).

3. Results

Observational findings

Within the confines of the case study, the researcher participated as an observer in the ML3 Project's project workshops (both face-to-face and online workshops) to evaluate the project. By taking notes during these workshops, the researcher compiled observation reports to collect research data. Accordingly, it is appropriate to first provide the bibliographic details of the attended workshops (Table 1).

Table 1. ML3 Project face-to-face and online workshops (February-March 2023)

ML3 Project Workshop	Place	Date
Teaching Students to Decode The World	West Seneca Erie 1 Boces, NY	Feb 9, 2023
New Librarian Created Lessons for Integrating Media Decoding	Online	Feb 15, 2023
Online Media Decoding Activity	Online	Feb 16, 2023
iEARN -2023 Digital Citizenship Virtual Exchange	Online	March 8, 2023

The observational notes regarding participation in these events as an observer have been compiled in Table 2 in line with the aim of the case study to conduct in-depth exploration, and

these notes have been analyzed descriptively. These analyses have been associated with three themes identified within the research boundaries (Media and Media Literacy, Media Literacy Education, and Media Literacy Educators), aimed at constructing the model intended to be developed as a result of the case study.

Table 2. Workshops and observation notes

<p>Teaching Students to Decode The World:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The active role of librarians in education was emphasized throughout the workshop. - The mission of school libraries in terms of media and information literacy was emphasized by participants and the project team. - The aim of the project was stated as "integrating media literacy into the curriculum. - The importance of critical thinking about all media messages was emphasized. - The role of cultural perspective in media content analysis, the existence of different perspectives, and the utilization of evidence were highlighted, with librarians being noted as capable of being active in this regard. - Guidance on how to proceed according to different grade levels was provided. - Information was provided about the history of newspaper sources, and examples were given on how to analyze these contents. - Librarians shared their experiences with students. - Statistics on children and adolescents' social media usage were shared, and sample contents for media decoding were provided. - The second part of the workshop involved practical application. Discussions were held on possible analysis questions to be directed at students regarding prepared media content.
<p><i>New Librarian Created Lessons for Integrating Media Decoding:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four librarians, who work in schools at different education levels (primary and high school), participated in the online event. - The librarians conducted their presentations on media content analysis, which they had prepared in advance. - An example of "book cover analysis" prepared for primary school students was shared. - Participants asked Chris Sperry about copyright issues related to media content and how to approach the analysis of political content. - Consensus was reached on the production of lesson content for special occasions.
<p><i>Online Media Decoding Activity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The event, attended by school librarians from three different schools, commenced with examples from various subjects (art, mathematics, social sciences). - Chris Sperry provided recommendations to the participants regarding evidence-based media analysis. - It was conveyed that mere usage of media in lessons is insufficient, and during this usage, analyses that prompt questioning and critical thinking need to be conducted. - It was explained that in the preparation of analysis-based content, consideration should be given to the questions, objectives, and characteristics of the student group, and that content should be limited to a maximum of 7 minutes.
<p><i>iEARN-2023 Digital Citizenship Virtual Exchange</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chris Sperry served as a speaker at the seminar attended by teachers from Russia, Bolivia, Latin America, and the United States, providing information about the ML3 Project. - Video content prepared for the project was shared with the participants. - A media analysis activity was conducted with the participants, where a critical analysis was performed on a discount coupon purportedly distributed by Amazon.

During the observed events, no sharing was made regarding the technological capabilities of the libraries or the resources they possess; instead, the focus was on how librarians could actively utilize these resources in their relationships with teachers, centering on books. Similarly, during the online media analysis activities, librarians specifically focused on how to analyze content within lesson contexts, such as how a book cover could be analyzed within the scope of a Social Studies lesson.

It has been observed in all activities that librarians, who serve in school libraries, actively participate in the educational process to at least the same extent as teachers. They engage in

sharing with teachers, develop examples using their media literacy skills regarding lesson contents, and actively contribute to the process. In this context, when a comparative assessment is desired, it should be emphasized that in Turkey, media literacy education should not only be included as a mandatory course in the lesson contents of teacher candidates in the Faculty of Education but also the importance of librarians having an educational background in this field should be emphasized.

Findings from the interviews

Within qualitative research methods, interviews aim to gather information about events and activities that cannot be directly observed. The interview method, which allows for in-depth exploration of the researched topic, enables the researcher to collect data that cannot be obtained through observation (Taylor, 2015). In this study, interviews were conducted with project managers and stakeholders of the ML3 Project to obtain more detailed information about the project.

The first interview was conducted with Professor Cyndy Scheibe, the founder of Project Look Sharp. During the interview, questions were directed toward the establishment of Project Look Sharp, the application process for the ML3 Project, the advantages of PLS as a civil organization in the United States, and the challenges they faced during the project application process. Accordingly, the findings obtained from the interview, along with corresponding evaluations, can be presented in line with the research objectives as follows:

In the 1990s, discussions regarding the negative effects of media, especially television, on children have been ongoing in the United States. Contrary to the protective attitude developed against the effects of media during the establishment of PLS, there was a significant influence towards a perspective that encourages children to think critically about media content. Following the contact with NAMLE in 1996, PLS, supported by Ithaca College with a small budget, did not define its goals as "making changes to the system, regulating the curriculum, ensuring regulation in schools." Instead, PLS's goal was defined as "educating children as media literate individuals, providing them with education on this matter."

The ML3 Project started as a significant initiative developed by PLS to reach school librarians in the state. Furthermore, this project was considered a step towards reaching the entire United States. At the beginning of the ML3 Project, school librarians were considered important communication points to reach a larger audience for media literacy education.

The specific focus of the ML3 Project on school librarians was also associated with their active role in the information literacy process. The fact that school librarians are at the center of the information source in schools was considered highly effective in providing proper guidance in media literacy education. Therefore, the ML3 Project was regarded as a significant step in media literacy education.

The second interview was conducted with Chris Sperry, the Curriculum and Staff Development Director of Project Look Sharp, who played a significant role in the preparation of the ML3 Project. Due to Sperry's involvement in implementing the project activities, questions were aimed at gathering information about these implementations. Evaluations regarding the findings from the second interview can be outlined as follows:

- The importance of critical thinking and the analysis of media content through this thinking have been emphasized in the materials prepared for PLS over many years. The ability of these materials, which will serve as resources for curriculum lessons, to reach teachers is a significant achievement for PLS. In this regard, the ML3 Project has been considered a highly important project for enabling direct communication with school librarians who will reach out to teachers.

- School librarians hold a significant position in bringing together various disciplines within schools and can also lead the process of information literacy. Unlike teachers, they have the opportunity to access different topics and reach different students, rather than working on a limited group or a limited subject.

- Before the ML3 Project, various implementations were made with teachers regarding media literacy. However, in the implementations with school librarians, it was assumed that they could be more active in this regard compared to others.

- The feedback from school librarians in the ML3 Project implementations has positively influenced the success and sustainability of the project. Especially in CMD (Constructivist Media Decoding) applications, their ability to quickly analyze media content has been found quite impressive.

- In the project, beyond media literacy being an independent course or a unit topic within a course, the aim has been to integrate the analysis of media content and the ability to produce this content into all subjects within the curriculum.

The third interview was conducted with Professor Susan Allen, who has extensive experience as a school librarian and also serves as the Project Coordinator and project coach for school librarians in the ML3 Project. During the interview, questions were directed towards understanding how the ML3 Project was perceived by school librarians. Based on the responses obtained from the interview, the evaluation of the findings can be outlined as follows:

- School librarians can be identified as the most influential figures in media literacy in schools. The ML3 Project is a significant initiative aimed at reaching out to these individuals over a period of two years. Upon the announcement of the project in the state of New York, more than 100 school librarians expressed interest in joining the project.

- Throughout the project, it has been possible to observe the positive effects of continuous engagement with school librarians and conducting practical work. As a result of group activities, school librarians have become more proficient in the project's subject matter.

- School librarians also have a leadership role in guiding teachers during the educational process. While teachers specialize in specific disciplines and topics in their communication with students, school librarians possess expertise in various fields. In the United States, school librarians operate according to certain standards established by the American Association of School Librarians, many of which are related to a media literacy perspective.

- The ML3 Project has been a significant endeavor in imparting fundamental strategies of media literacy to school librarians. Consequently, school librarians will be able to guide all students and teachers, including disadvantaged students, in media literacy within schools.

The fourth interview in the study was conducted with Bridget Crossman, the school librarian at Lake George Elementary School located in the state of New York, and Kelly Catarelli, a 6th-grade teacher at the same school:

- When asked about their familiarity with media literacy, teacher Kelly Catarelli mentioned that she had not encountered coursework on this topic during her undergraduate studies. Bridget Crossman, on the other hand, mentioned being initially introduced to media literacy through the work of Project Look Sharp.

- Regarding the utilization of the school library by students and teachers at the institution where they serve, Kelly Catarelli began her response by stating that they were extremely fortunate. She particularly emphasized the availability of resources related to writing and reading in the school library, which support the curriculum. In her role as a school librarian, Bridget highlighted their continuous collaboration with teachers. She mentioned how their information literacy skills aided teachers in integrating curriculum topics, stating that they worked together to develop some units, reviewing them together at the beginning of each semester.

- Crossman indicated being informed about the ML3 Project through a conference she attended. Additionally, she participated in coaching sessions and training for school librarians by following the calls in the emails sent by PLS. Crossman mentioned working with teachers in various grade levels at the school where she currently serves to develop units on this topic, stating that teachers would now be able to take leadership roles in this area. At the same time, she would continue to provide support in the background. She also added her belief that teachers now possess sufficient skills to enhance the curriculum. This finding from the research highlights a significant difference between the two countries in terms of curriculum development. This approach highlights a significant difference in media literacy education between the two countries. When considering a model for Turkey, a more comprehensive approach may be necessary. Primarily, faculties of education must provide necessary training in media literacy.

- Kelly Catarelli shared her experiences with students after the ML3 Project, mentioning that in a lesson where they shared visuals related to Africa, the students' reactions were surprisingly insightful. She noted that after they realized their own biases, the lesson demonstrated to them the existence of different contexts. Bridget Crossman echoed a similar example, emphasizing the importance of teaching critical thinking and analysis, which they observed during this lesson.

Findings regarding recorded data

Analysis of recorded data or document analysis is less preferred compared to observation and interviews in case studies. However, recorded data can also be utilized to describe, enrich the context, and contribute to the analysis of topics in case studies. These data provide guidance to researchers in revealing policies, values, beliefs, and attitudes related to the research topic. Recorded data here refers to visual contents such as documents, bulletins, videos, and audio materials that can provide clues related to the situation (Simons, 2009).

The analysis of recorded data is generally considered useful as a precursor to observation and interviews to suggest potential issues that may be beneficial for the exploration of the situation and to provide a context for interpreting the data collected through interviews and observations (Simons, 2009). In this study, the latest data for the case study included three different video contents prepared with various headings after observation and interviews, including stakeholders' views on the ML3 Project.

The video content titled "Through Constructivist Media Decoding" features footage of classroom listening sessions of students at the K-12 levels reflecting their attitudes during media analysis activities. In the video content titled "Librarians as Leaders for This Work," the perspectives of school librarians on media literacy are conveyed through their own experiences in line with the information they have acquired from the project. The final content, titled "The Impact of This Work," is structured as the last of the three video contents. In this third video, students' views are included to assess the effects of the project. Representatively chosen students from different classes express their thoughts on the constructivist media decoding technique as described in the ML3 Project.

Upon examining the data related to three different contents, it was generally observed that information describing the objectives, target audience, topics, and impact of the ML3 Project was obtained. Accordingly, the following findings regarding the project can be specified based on the data obtained from the contents:

- The project aims to cultivate a generation capable of questioning, critiquing, and analyzing media content.
- To achieve the objectives of the ML3 Project, it primarily seeks to integrate media literacy principles into the educational process in schools across various subjects.
- It is believed that librarians, who hold significant positions in schools and are selected as representatives of information centers, will take the lead in integrating media literacy.
- Librarians are also considered crucial points of access for reaching teachers.

4. Conclusion

In Turkey, initial initiatives regarding media literacy education have been undertaken by governmental institutions. Upon examining local literature, it becomes evident that academic initiatives in various domains could also contribute to this effort. Implementing academic studies, alongside civil society involvement, may lead to a broader impact. Yet, modifying the current system may pose challenges regarding both time constraints and financial resources. A more effective approach may involve educational institutions directly reaching out to students and teachers, and developing customized content to meet their specific needs.

The Media Literacy Course should be included as a mandatory subject with diverse topics in the undergraduate education of teacher candidates. The inclusion of Media Literacy Courses as mandatory subjects should be implemented across all departments within Faculty of Education. In addition to receiving education on media literacy, teacher candidates must engage in project work and conduct applied research. It is crucial to monitor ongoing debates regarding the integration of Media Literacy Courses by graduates of Communication Faculties into schools in Turkey, and to devise appropriate solutions. Regarding media literacy education, it is recommended that students from both the Communication and Education faculties receive education on a common platform and that both academic units engage in mutually supportive practices.

With the advent of the 21st century, school libraries, redesigned as "collaborative learning" spaces, are now perceived not only as repositories of information but also as information hubs. School libraries, repositioned within schools, should be highlighted as spaces where students can freely express themselves, explore, and empower themselves to become more active and engaged participants in their daily lives (Mihailidis, Diggs, 2010). At this point, it is crucial to highlight two key functions of school libraries, particularly given the current context. One is to provide dynamic contexts for young people to learn with digital media and to offer opportunities for them to learn and apply new media literacy skills (Tripp, 2011). Given the convergence of information literacy and media literacy concepts, initiatives aimed at enhancing the infrastructure and resources of school libraries in Turkey are essential.

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