



The relationship between media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of prospective teachers of Turkish

Kadir Kaplan^a *

^a Gaziantep University, Faculty of Education, Campus, Gaziantep, Turkey

Abstract

21st century people inevitably need to critically take the content offered to them by the media they are in contact with. This situation requires individuals to have some competencies in terms of both media literacy and critical reading. In this study, the relationship between media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of teacher candidates of Turkish language was examined. New Media Literacy Scale for University Students and Critical Reading Self-Efficacy Scale were used as data collection tools. 445 participants studying at 14 different state universities in Turkey, participated voluntarily in the study. Statistical software program was used to analyze the data. Findings derived from the research illustrated that there was a positive significant relationship between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions. No significant relationship between the media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of Turkish teacher candidates was observed in terms of gender. The media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of Turkish teacher candidates differ in favour of the participants studying in the upper category compared to the participants studying at middle and lower category universities.

Keywords: Media literacy; critical reading; education; Turkish language teaching

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, great and radical changes have been experienced in the fields of science, technology and communication. On the one hand, these changes made human life easier; on the other hand, they brought some problems. With the advancing technology, access to information has become faster and easier than ever, and the diversity of information has increased; however, due to this diversity, the reliability of information sources has become controversial. Because of the developments in media and

* Corresponding author: Kadir Kaplan
E-mail: kadirkaplan007@gmail.com

communication technologies, the circulation of information in different dimensions between individuals and societies has accelerated, editorial control has been neglected in this process (Yüksel, 2014), and this has brought the issue of information pollution to the agenda. For this reason, in today's world, researching and discussing the accuracy of information has become as important as accessing information. All of these paved the way for critical media literacy to emerge as a necessity.

Media literacy is generally defined as the ability to critically analyze and evaluate the messages of written, visual, audio, digital, etc. texts edited by media producers; at the same time, the ability to create such texts (Hobbs, 2010; Koltay, 2011; Livingstone, 2004; Masterman, 1997; Potter, 2019, Siverblatt et al., 2014) and having these skills are considered to be essential.

Among the main reasons why media literacy and media literacy education are considered vital are as follows: Individuals are beginning to use media such as television and internet from an early age; at the same time, the time individuals spend in front of such media is increasing day by day (Balaban-Salı, 2012). Information presented in the media is often disseminated uncontrolled. Therefore, especially younger individuals may be exposed to the negative effects of the messages presented to them (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robison, 2006). The media presents new content to people using a unique language, and these contents might affect people in psychological, cultural and social aspects. For this reason, it is necessary to know the language used by the media in order to understand the media correctly and to realize the effect of the media on people (Fedorov, 2003). As a result, for the people of the 21st century who inevitably come into contact with the media and are exposed to messages that are mostly reconstructed for commercial purposes (Şahnin, 2019), having media literacy competencies has become one of the most basic needs.

There are studies in the literature that reflect different perspectives on media literacy competencies. In some of these studies, teachers' competencies in media literacy (Author, 2017; Çakmak, 2019; Öztemur & Avcı, 2020; Simons, 2017; Yıldırım, 2018); in some, students' competencies in media literacy (Schmidt, 2013; Semiz, 2013), and in others, the relationship of media literacy competencies with the social structure and the dimension of democratic participation (Barut & Yağbasan, 2019; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013), in some others, the theoretical dimensions of media literacy competencies (Mayo, 2015), etc. were investigated. In each of these studies, media literacy competencies have been evaluated from different angles, and when these studies are considered, the following common points come to the fore: To be aware of the positive and negative effects of media on individuals, to have a critical perspective, to distinguish between explicit and implicit messages, to have the ability to access and use reliable and unreliable information sources, to be able to distinguish the different functions of messages (information,

entertainment, etc.), to be aware of the real-fiction distinction, to be able to create (write) media messages, to be aware of persuasion and propaganda techniques in the media.

Having media literacy competencies is accepted as a requirement for language teaching in general and Turkish in particular. Media is an on-going process of interaction, and the audience begins to meet with the media much earlier than they start school, and after they start school, they spend most of their time communicating with the media (Altun, 2009). In this context, Kanatlı and Çekici (2013, p. 228) states that:

Considering the time spent by the students in front of the television; the necessity for listening / watching skills to include television emerges. At the same time, newspapers are an important educational tool in improving reading skills. It can be said that raising students who take a distant approach to what is watched on television and those read in newspapers, who can distinguish between reality and fiction, and who question what they listen to and read, are among the common goals of both courses. Therefore, it is inevitable to establish an interdisciplinary integrity between these courses.

Hence, the graduation of Turkish teacher candidates with media literacy competencies has a decisive importance in terms of the quality of language teaching.

Considering its theoretical foundations, main principles and competencies to be possessed, it is seen that media literacy is similar to critical reading in many respects and that there are common grounds between media literacy and critical reading. In addition, it is clearly stated in the "Media Literacy" lesson section of the program prepared by Higher Education Council [(YOK), 2020a] for the undergraduate level of Turkish Language Teaching Department that one of the competencies to be possessed is critical reading. Accordingly, the students of the Turkish Language Teaching Department must have sufficient knowledge and skills in terms of critical reading in order to be sufficient in media literacy course.

Critical reading, which is defined as the process of analyzing, interpreting and evaluating a text in the most general sense (Annunziata et al., 2004; Ateş, 2013; Wallace, 2003), has emerged from the need to critically analyze a large number of texts produced in connection with the developments in communication technologies, just like media literacy. Reading comprehension involves an active process of weaving together information contained within a text to construct a coherent and accurate representation of its meaning (Ober, Brooks, Plass & Homer, 2019). It is understood from all these that; critical reading is necessary and important. Numerous texts are produced in today's world, which is described as the information age. The information contained in these texts can be deliberately shaped and edited by the author of the text in order to guide and direct the reader (Çifçi, 2006). Based on this, it is understood that the texts are not neutral, because each text is edited by its author; it reflects the world view of the author and is ideological (Hoody, 2008). For this reason, from the moment of communication with the text, it is necessary to have critical reading competencies (Bardakçı & Çakır,

2014; Cervetti & Damico, 2001) and a sense of self-efficacy for critical reading (Karasakaloğlu, Saracaloğlu & Özelçi, 2012) in order to recognize the propaganda tools in the text and to reach a judgment about the text.

When the studies on critical reading skills and self-efficacy perceptions (Best, Floyd & Mcnamara, 2008; Karabay, 2013; Özensoy, 2011; Thomas, Yao, Wright & Kreiner, 2019; Ünal, 2006) are examined, the following common points come to the fore: To be able to evaluate what is implied in the text, distinguish the insignificant information from the important one, find the author's point of view and purpose, distinguish facts and opinions, distinguish the information in the text in terms of demonstrability, recognize prejudices and stereotypes; willingness to read, see oneself as an effective reader, achieve reading maturity, get information about the author of the text they read. These competencies and perceptions are closely related to the language teaching process.

Having critical reading skills and a sense of self-efficacy have an important place in Turkish teaching. In the 2006 Turkish curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education (MEB), there are critical reading skills in the comprehension-oriented dimension of the Turkish course and critical thinking skills in the focus of critical reading (MEB, 2020). For this reason, it requires endowing student teachers with critical reading skills in terms of language teaching. Aşlıoğlu (2008, p. 4) accentuates this issue as:

in order for the individual to adapt to the rapidly changing world and the society he/she lives in, instead of taking the information as it is, grasping it, using it in new situations, analyzing it by taking advantage of past experiences, making new syntheses and evaluating it by using some criteria.

In this regard, it is stated in the Turkish Teacher Special Field Competencies Program prepared by MoNE (MEB, 2020) that Turkish language teachers should have competencies to develop their students' critical thinking and reading skills. It is understood from all these that Turkish teacher candidates should graduate with critical reading competencies and critical reading self-efficacy.

When the related literature is examined, it is possible to say that there is a meaningful connection between media literacy competencies and critical reading competencies. In addition, LeCompte, Blevins and Ray (2017) stated that including current events in the media as a part of the curriculum and analyzing these events in the course helps students develop their language, vocabulary, reading comprehension, critical thinking, problem solving, oral expression and listening skills. In this context, a significant relationship is expected between media literacy competencies and critical reading competencies. There are studies focusing on the relationship both critical media literacy and critical reading in different variables in the literature (Belet, 2011; Güneş & Güneş, 2014; Kalan, 2010; Karadüz, 2010; Karaman, 2016; Kurt & Kürüm, 2010; Sadioğlu & Bilgin, 2008; Som & Kurt, 2012). However, it has been observed in the literature that the relationship between pre-service teachers' media literacy competencies and their critical

reading self-efficacy perceptions is not subject to any research yet. In this context, this research focused on the relationship between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions.

In addition, it was observed that gender is an important variable in studies on media literacy and critical reading. However, while statistically significant relationship was found in some studies (Gömleksiz, 2004; Tutkun, 2020; Yiğit, 2015), no statistically significant relationship was found in others (Aktaş, 2016; Bardakçı & Çakır, 2014; Özdemir, 2017). Representations and role models shown in media has a great influence on the gender perceptions of the society, and analyzing this perception process requires critical reading (Carter & Steiner, 2003; Söğüt, 2019). As is clear from the related literature, the gender variable was also investigated in the present study.

The purpose of this research was to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions. Based on this main purpose, answers for the following sub-problems were sought:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions?
2. Do the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates differ according to gender?
3. Do the critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of Turkish teacher candidates differ according to gender?
4. Do the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates differ significantly in terms of the universities they attended at?
5. Do the critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of Turkish teacher candidates differ significantly in terms of the universities they attended at?

2. Method

2.1. Research model

In the research, the relational screening model was used. The relational screening model aims to determine the presence or degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2019, p. 114). In this context, the study aimed to determine the relationship between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions through screening these variables of Turkish teacher candidates attending different universities across Turkey.

2.2. Study context and sampling

According to the Turkish Higher Education System, in order to become a student in the Turkish Language Teaching Department at a state university, it is necessary to take the University Entrance Exam administered by Student Selection and Placement Centre (OSYM) first. High School graduates who score above the average determined by YOK in this exam are accepted to the Department of Turkish Language Teaching. Students enrolled to the program take courses related to Professional Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Cultural Knowledge in a 4-year education period. After successful completion of the requirements determined by YOK, Turkish teacher candidates are then entitled as Turkish teachers with a diploma (YOK, 2020b).

The universe of the study consisted of 4th grade students studying in Turkish Language Teaching Departments of the state universities in Turkey during 2020-2021 academic year. The reason for determining the target audience as 4th grade students is that students have taken both media literacy and critical reading classes until they reach this grade level.

Stratified sampling was used in the study in order to increase the representation power of the universe.

Stratified sampling is a sampling technique that enables subgroups in the universe to be identified and represented in the sample with the same proportions they exist in the universe. The most important reason for using stratified sampling is the advantage it has in reducing the standard error of the sample (Özen & Gül, 2007, p. 402).

First, in order to determine target sample of the present study university entrance exam placement scores of the current 4th grade students studying at Turkish Language Teaching Departments in the 2020-2021 academic year were examined. According to the data of the YOK (2020b) in 2017, it was determined that there were a total of 64 education faculties accepting students to Turkish language teaching department and 3789 students were placed in Turkish language teaching department of these faculties. The universities in which these faculties are located are ranked based on their base scores of the university entrance exam and these universities were stratified according to the Normal Distribution Curve as 10 universities at the upper level, 10 at the lower level, and 44 universities at the middle level. The base scores of the Turkish teaching department of the education faculties in the upper level were in the range of 427.39-409.24, the base scores of those in the middle level were in the range of 406.67-374.94 and the base scores of those in the lower class are 374.69-357.40. Three universities from the upper level, 11 universities from middle and three universities from the lower were randomly chosen, and it was aimed to reach 364 participants in total with an error margin of 5% according to Israel's (1992) sample size formula. However, a total of 445 students voluntarily participated in the study. The distribution of the selected universities is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Randomly selected universities according to stratified sampling

Categories	Universities
Upper	Hacettepe University
	Gazi University
	Dokuz Eylül University
Middle	Gaziantep University
	Mersin University
	Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University
	Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
	Akdeniz University
	Afyon Kocatepe University
	Adıyaman University
	Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University
	Hatay Mustafa Kemal University
	Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University
Lower	Atatürk University
	Giresun University
	Kafkas University
	Bayburt University

2.3. Participants

Among the students invited to participate in the present study, 445 students voluntarily took part in the study. Since our target population was 4th grade students, all of the participants were senior students. The demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic information of the participants

(N= 445)		F	%
Gender	Male	164	37
	Female	281	63
University Categories	Upper	119	27
	Middle	295	66
	Lower	31	7

37% of the participants (N = 164) were male and 63% (N = 281) were female. 27% of the participants (N = 119) enrolled in an upper category state university, 66% (N = 295) at a middle category state university, and 7% (N = 31) at a lower category state university.

2.4. Data collection tool

In the research, a survey was used as the data collection tool. “The survey is a question paper in which the questions are prepared in order to determine the thoughts, opinions or tendencies of the people within the framework of a research are placed in a certain order; it is a research technique that aims to collect information in this way” (Aziz, 2018, p. 236). The New Media Literacy Scale consists of four factors as Functional Consumption (FC), Critical Consumption (CC); Functional Production (FP) and Critical Production (CP). According to the factor analysis by Koç and Barut (2016), the reliability coefficients of the scale were as follows: 0.85 for the Functional Consumption factor, 0.87 for the Critical Consumption factor, 0.89 for the Functional Production factor, 0.93 for the Critical Production factor and 0.95 for the whole scale. The Critical Reading Self-Efficacy Perception Scale consists of the following factors: Evaluation (E), Research-Examination (RE) and Visual (V). According to the factor analysis by Karabay (2013), the reliability coefficients of the scale were as follows: 0.69 for the assessment factor, 0.78 for the Research-Review factor, 0.91 for the visual factor, and 0.91 for the whole scale. These values showed that both scales were reliable.

2.5. Data analysis

To check the normality of the data, Skewness and Kurtosis tests were utilized for the whole sample. In social studies, Hair et al. (2010) and Byrne (2010) argued that data is considered to be normal if Skewness is between -2 to +2 and Kurtosis is between -7 to +7. According to this, it can be said that the data of the present study had a normal distribution. Subsequent analyses were conducted using parametric tests.

Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions. The independent samples t-test was used to determine the relationship between the sub-factors of the media literacy scale and the critical reading self-efficacy perception scale and the gender variable. Tukey post hoc comparisons test was administered to determine the relationship between sub-factors of the media literacy scale and the critical reading self-efficacy perception scale and university categories.

3. Findings

In this section, the findings obtained from the participants were presented and interpreted in tables within the framework of the research questions.

3.1. Relationship between Turkish teacher candidates' media literacy competencies and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions

Regarding the first research question, Pearson Correlation relationship was checked and the results related to the relationship between students' media literacy competences and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions was presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation relationship between Turkish teacher candidates' media literacy competencies and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions

	E	RE	V	CRSPS_MEAN
FC	.789**	.635**	.704**	.790**
CC	.850**	.682**	.786**	.854**
FP	.763**	.649**	.674**	.771**
CP	.708**	.730**	.643**	.750**
NMLS_MEAN	.845**	.741**	.765**	.862**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

According to findings in Table 3, positive and significant relationships between FC and the factors E ($r = .789$; $p < 0.01$), RE ($r = .635$; $p < 0.01$), V ($r = .704$; $p < 0.01$) were observed. The results also showed positive and significant relationships between CC and the factors E ($r = .850$; $p < 0.01$), RE ($r = .682$; $p < 0.01$), V ($r = .786$; $p < 0.01$). There were positive and significant relationships between FP and the factors E ($r = .763$; $p < 0.01$), RE ($r = .649$; $p < 0.01$), V ($r = .674$; $p < 0.01$). There were positive and significant relationships between CP and the factors E ($r = .708$; $p < 0.01$), RE ($r = .730$; $p < 0.01$), V ($r = .643$; $p < 0.01$). NMLS_MEAN and factors E ($r = .845$; $p < 0.01$), RE ($r = .741$; $p < 0.01$), V ($r = .765$; $p < 0.01$), CRSPS_MEAN ($r = .862$; $p < 0.01$). Analysis results revealed that there was a directly proportional relationship between media literacy efficacy and reading self-efficacy perception coefficients in all scale factors.

3.2. Relationship between sub-factors of the media literacy scale and gender

To check whether there was a statistically significant difference between genders independent samples t-test was conducted and the findings were given in Table 4.

Table 4. Independent samples t-test for the relationship between sub-factors of the media literacy scale and gender

Factors	Gender	N	X	SD	S	T	P
FC	Male	164	4.2201	.53109	443	1.119	.264
	Female	281	4.2779	.51478			
CC	Male	164	4.2430	.51184	443	.487	.626

	Female	281	4.2677	.52733			
FP	Male	164	4.1856	.62660	443	1.594	.112
	Female	281	4.2814	.58473			
CP	Male	164	4.1609	.61577	443	1.907	.057
	Female	281	4.2744	.58808			
NMLS_MEAN	Male	164	4.2035	.51628	443	1.396	.163
	Female	281	4.2744	.51848			

* Sig. < 0.05 significant

According to the analysis in Table 4, no statistically significant difference was found between male and female participants in terms of Turkish teacher candidates' scores on the media literacy scale ($t(443)=1.396$, $p>0.05$).

3.3. Relationship between sub-factors of the critical reading self-efficacy perception scale and gender

Independent samples t-test analysis was done to check the difference between male and female participants in terms of critical reading self-efficacy perceptions. The findings of the analysis were presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Independent samples t-test for the relationship between sub-factors of the critical reading self-efficacy perception scale and gender

Factors	Gender	N	X	SD	S	T	P
E	Male	164	4.3012	.54296	443	.298	.766
	Female	281	4.2852	.54817			
RE	Male	164	4.1779	.60798	443	1.165	.244
	Female	281	4.2473	.60149			
V	Male	164	4.3125	.59295	443	.026	.979
	Female	281	4.3110	.53089			
CRSPS_MEAN	Male	164	4.2755	.52184	443	.088	.930
	Female	281	4.2800	.53765			

* Sig. < 0.05 significant

According to the independent samples t-test analysis given in Table 5, no significant difference was found between male and female participants' critical reading self-efficacy perception scale scores ($t(443)=0.088$, $p>0.05$).

3.4. Relationship between media literacy factors and university categories

The relationship between media literacy and university categories was also investigated and the results were shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive analyses of media literacy according to university categories

NMLS Categories	University Categories	N	X	SD
FC	Upper	119	4.4454	.41135
	Middle	295	4.1763	.48644
	Lower	31	4.0783	.93010
	Total	445	4.2414	.52529
CC	Upper	119	4.1541	.36753
	Middle	295	3.8048	.42504
	Lower	31	3.7984	.81757
	Total	445	3.8978	.47405
FP	Upper	119	4.5162	.48109
	Middle	295	4.1525	.54460
	Lower	31	3.7373	1.05049
	Total	445	4.2209	.61259
CP	Upper	119	4.5126	.42736
	Middle	295	4.1434	.54325
	Lower	31	3.5774	1.01611
	Total	445	4.2027	.60753

According to the comparisons between descriptive statistics in Table 6, it was found that the highest averages were in favour of the students enrolled in upper category universities as FC factor ($X = 4.4454$), CC factor ($X = 4.1541$), FP factor ($X = 4.5162$) and CP factor ($X = 4.5126$). On the other hand, it was found that the students of lower category universities got the lowest averages in terms of all sub-scale factors as FC factor ($X = 4.0783$), CC factor ($X = 3.7984$), FP factor ($X = 3.7373$) and CP factor ($X = 3.5774$). This finding revealed that the participants studying at universities in the upper category were more adequate than the participants in the lower category in terms of all factors.

Table 7. Multiple comparisons of NMLS factors and university categories by Tukey post hoc test

Factors	Categories (I)	Categories (J)	Mean Difference	P	Meaningful Difference
FC	Upper	Middle	.26911*	.000	Upper-Lower
	Lower	Lower	.36704*		
		Middle	.09793		
CC	Upper	Middle	.34926*	.000	Upper-Lower
	Lower	Lower	.35567*		
		Middle	.00642		
FP	Upper	Middle	.36366*	.000	Upper-Lower
	Lower	Lower	.77888*		
		Middle	.41522*		
CP	Upper	Middle	.36922*	.000	Upper-Lower

	Lower	.93519*
Lower	Middle	.56597*

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

According to Tukey Test analysis in Table 7, there was a statistically significant difference ($p = .000$) between the FC factor and the university categories (Upper, Middle, Lower) of the participants. The highest significant difference was between the universities in the upper category and the universities in the lower category ($MD = .36704$). The lowest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle category ($MD = .26911$). However, there was no significant difference between universities in the lower category and those in the middle category. Accordingly, the direction of significance was from upper category to lower category. When it comes to the difference between CC factor and the university categories, a significant difference was found ($p = .000$). The highest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and the universities in the lower category ($MD = .35567$). The lowest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle category ($MD = .34926$). There was no significant difference between universities in the lower category and those in the middle category. Accordingly, the direction of significance was again from upper category to lower category. There was a significant difference between the FP factor and the university categories ($p = .000$). Similar to the other categories, the highest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and the universities in the lower category ($MD = .77888$). The lowest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle category ($MD = .36366$). Accordingly, the direction of significance was from upper category to lower category. There was a significant difference ($p = .000$) between the CP factor and the university categories, and again, the highest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and the universities in the lower category ($MD = .93519$). The lowest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle category ($MD = .36922$). Consequently, the direction of significance was from upper category to lower category.

3.5. Relationship between critical reading factors and university categories

The relationship between critical reading self-efficacy perception and university categories was examined and the results were shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Descriptive analyses of critical reading factors and university categories

CRSPS Categories	University Categories	N	X	SD
E	Upper	119	4.5777	.34678
	Middle	295	4.1756	.51052

RE	Lower	31	4.3501	.94749
	Total	445	4.2953	.54432
	Upper	119	4.4613	.51033
	Middle	295	4.1330	.55490
	Lower	31	3.8853	.98653
V	Total	445	4.2035	.60584
	Upper	119	4.6000	.45398
	Middle	295	4.1878	.50046
	Lower	31	4.3871	1.03013
	Total	445	4.3119	.57026

According to the descriptive statistics in Table 8, it was found that the highest averages in terms of E factor ($X = 4.5777$), RE factor ($X = 4.4613$) and V factor ($X = 4.6000$) were in the upper category universities. The lowest average in terms of E factor ($X = 4.1756$) was in the middle category universities, the lowest average in terms of RE factor ($X = 3.7984$) was in the lower category universities ($X = 3.8853$), the lowest average in terms of V factor ($X = 4.1878$) was in the middle category universities. According to this finding, it can be said that the participants studying at universities in the upper category are more adequate than the participants in the lower and middle categories in terms of all factors.

Table 9. Multiple comparisons of CRSPS factors and university categories by Tukey post hoc test

Factors	Categories (I)	Categories (J)	Mean Difference	P	Meaningful Difference
E	Upper	Middle	.40201*	.000	Upper-Middle
	Lower	Lower	.22759		
		Middle	.17442		
RE	Upper	Middle	.32829*	.000	Upper-Lower
	Lower	Lower	.57595*		
		Middle	.24765		
V	Upper	Middle	.41220*	.000	Upper-Middle
	Lower	Lower	.21290		
		Middle	.19930		

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

According to Tukey Test analysis in Table 9, there was a significant difference ($p = .000$) between the E factor and the university categories (Upper, Middle, Lower). For the Factor E, the highest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle ($MD = .40201$). When the difference between lower category universities and the universities in other categories was examined, no statistically significant difference was found. Accordingly, the direction of the significance is from the upper category to the middle category. For the RE factor, a statistically

significant difference ($p = .000$) was found among categories. The highest significant difference was between the universities in the upper category and the universities in the lower category ($MD = .57595$). The lowest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle category ($MD = .32829$). There was no significant difference between the universities in the lower category and the universities in the middle category, and the direction of significance is from the upper category to the lower category. For the factor V, there was a significant difference ($p = .000$) among the university categories. The highest significant difference was between universities in the upper category and those in the middle category ($MD = .41220$). There was no significant difference between the universities in the lower category and the other categories. In contrast to the RE factor, the direction of significance was from the upper category to the middle category.

4. Discussion

Considering the related literature, to the best of researcher's knowledge, there was no study focusing specifically on the relationship between media literacy and the perception of critical reading self-efficacy in this study context. In studies in the relevant literature, the relationships between media literacy and critical thinking and critical literacy have been examined, and positive significant relationships have been found among them (Ayberk, 2016; Feuerstein, 2006; Semerci & Semerci, 2017). One of the competencies required in the Media Literacy course in the Turkish Language Teaching Undergraduate Program prepared by YOK is critical reading skills and competencies. For this reason, a study related to media literacy and critical reading was of importance and this endorses the rationale of the present study.

According to the findings obtained from the research, there was a positive and statistically significant relationship between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions. This finding is in line with the studies discussing media literacy and other aspects of critical literacy (Ayberk, 2016; Feuerstein, 2006; Semerci & Semerci, 2017). Although there have been studies finding statistically significant difference between genders (Aslan & Basel, 2017; Aydın & Çelik, 2017; Demir & Kan, 2017), the findings of the present study revealed that there was no significant difference between the media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of Turkish teacher candidates with the gender variable. This finding is also consistent with similar research findings in the literature. In their study on critical thinking and reading competencies, Mahdavi-rad and Mokhtari (2019) concluded that there was no significant relationship between the participants' critical reading competencies and their gender. Similarly, Gündüz (2015), in his case study on the reading habits and critical reading skills of freshman university students, concluded that the participants' critical reading skills did not differ significantly according to the

gender variable. Zhang and Zhu (2016) developed a scale to determine the digital media literacy levels of primary school students. In their study with 796 primary school students in Beijing, they found no significant difference between male and female students in terms of digital media literacy.

Another finding obtained from the research showed that the media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of Turkish teacher candidates were different from each other in terms of their university categories. Among the categories, students studying at universities in the upper category were found to be more adequate in terms of media literacy and critical reading self-efficacy than students in the middle and lower categories. Although there are studies (Karaman, 2009; Karasu & Arıkan, 2016; Şahin, 2019; Yılmaz, Köse, & Korkut, 2009) on the media literacy competencies and critical reading self-efficacy perceptions of university students in the literature, it was observed that these studies did not examine differences among universities by such a categorization. Thus, it can be claimed that this finding is one of the most recent and unique part of the present study.

As explained in the theoretical framework of the study, it is stated in the Turkish Language Teaching Program and Turkish Teaching Special Field Competencies by MoNE that Turkish teacher candidates should be endowed with a sufficient level of both media literacy and critical reading self-efficacy when they are graduated, regardless of their university categories. However, the findings obtained from the research showed that Turkish teacher candidates studying at universities in the upper category are more sufficient in terms of media literacy and critical reading self-efficacy than those in the lower and middle categories. In other words, students in the lower and middle categories are less adequate in terms of media literacy and critical reading self-efficacy perception. Among the reasons for this difference could be:

- The universities in the upper category have more academics and, among them, there might be experts in this specific field.
- Although there are some syllabi specific to these courses, the academics do not follow a common syllabus, thus there might be differences among the university categories.
- Media literacy and critical reading are closely related to the discussion of feelings and thoughts in a free environment. When considered in this aspect, apart from teaching and learning context, there might be other factors such as the location and socio-cultural environment of the universities. The cities where the upper category universities are located (Ankara, İzmir) are more socio-economically and culturally developed than the lower and middle category universities and therefore the higher category students have more opportunities to participate in different types of activities where they can share / express their feelings and thoughts.

5. Conclusions

One of the basic principles of Turkish teaching is to develop students' critical thinking skills. Therefore, in both media literacy and critical reading lessons, it is aimed to provide students with the skills of critically analyzing written, visual and auditory texts. The common point of these two courses is that they are aimed at fostering critical thinking. In this study, a positive and significant relationship was found between the media literacy competencies of Turkish teacher candidates and their critical reading self-efficacy perceptions. This finding supports that both courses are geared towards critical thinking. In addition, as stated in the theoretical framework of the research, individuals are exposed to a large number of media messages every day as a result of the developments in information and communication technologies, and the analysis of these messages requires critical thinking and reading skills. In this context, when the Turkish language teaching undergraduate program prepared by YOK was examined, critical reading was mentioned in the content of the media literacy course; however, it was not specified what skills Turkish teacher candidates should have for critical reading. Similarly, the critical reading course in the program did not include skills on how to critically analyze media messages. For this reason, the researcher is of the opinion that it is necessary and important to determine the common competencies that should be possessed in media literacy and critical reading courses and to add these competencies to the relevant program.

Another finding obtained from the study showed that the Turkish course teacher candidates studying in the upper category are more adequate in terms of media literacy and critical reading self-efficacy than those studying in the lower and middle categories. Among the possible reasons for this difference, it can be said that the universities in the upper category have more academicians who might teach these courses better; the academicians probably do not use the same syllabi and each prepare their own syllabus according to their own expertise, and these universities are located in the cities have students have different socio-cultural opportunities. From this point of view, it is recommended to strengthen the academic staff in universities in the middle and lower categories, to adopt a common curriculum for these courses, and to organize various activities where students can express their feelings and thoughts freely.

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