

THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN THE COVID-19 PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

Digital Literacy is the awareness attitudes and abilities of individuals to identify, access, and use digital tools and resources appropriately. It also encompasses the entire process of managing, integrating, evaluating, analyzing digital resources, creating new knowledge, creating media expressions, enabling constructive social action, communicating with others in the context of specific life situations. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the transfer of education to digital environments and the distance education across the world have revealed the necessity of digital literacy. This research aims to reveal the importance and necessity of digital literacy in the Covid 19 process. In the study, which was derived within the scope of document analysis, the literature for the purpose of the research was examined. As a result, digital literacy skills are important in order to adapt to the changing and developing world and to access information.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Covid 19, education

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the dominance of internet technologies all over the world, services, information and opportunities have diversified accordingly. Many tools and equipment also necessitated new knowledge, systems and habits. Mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablets have rapidly penetrated the social and educational sphere, enabling us to accept new ideas and include them among the indispensables of our lives (Fırat, 2016). This situation changed the course of my life and awakened the idea that I should be open to innovations.

There are differences between the old generations and today's contemporary generations in terms of collecting and accessing information. Especially in terms of working life, there are significant differences (Friedl & Verčič, 2010). This situation reveals generational conflicts in both family life and working life. This generation, which emerged after the introduction and intensive use of digital technologies in the 1980s and later years, has a complex preference structure in terms of media use in their private and business life (Verčič & Verčič, 2013).

In today's world, where information spreads very rapidly, false information containing false information, low reliability, and false information made for provocation cause misleading results for individuals and society. Çubukçu and Bayzan (2013) state that the biggest factor in the formation of internet risks is the production and sharing of inaccurate, abusive and misleading information. In this case, the concept of digital literacy gains importance. In order to survive in the digital society formed by the rapid development of digital technologies, some concepts come to the fore. The concept of digital literacy is one of them. Digital literacy is one of the dimensions that constitute the most important pillar of digital citizenship (Ribble, 2011). Digital literacy can be defined as the ability to access information quickly using digital technologies, to question the reliability of information and to produce information by using it effectively. According to Çubukçu and Bayzan (2013), knowing different technologies and having the ability to use technologies correctly include accessing the right information in the digital environment, producing the right information, being aware of the right information and using technology in the learning-teaching process.

During the Covid-19 pandemic period, the importance of education is felt more with the realization of digital tools. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, a pandemic was declared in the world in March 2020. Covid-19, which has an effect in all areas of life, has produced results that require the re-evaluation of education and training practices. One of the various measures taken for public health during the pandemic process in our country has been to take a break from face-to-face education. In order to compensate for the interrupted education due to the pandemic, emergency distance education applications have been started by educational institutions all over the world (Bozkurt, 2020). It is known that distance education is an option that can be used in the lifelong learning process, and emergency distance education is a necessity in times of crisis (Bozkurt & Sharma., 2020).

With the transfer of education to digital platforms due to the pandemic, the concept of digital literacy has become an important issue to be discussed. In particular, it is aimed to reveal the necessity of digital literacy levels of teachers and students, who are important stakeholders of education, and the importance of digital literacy in the distance education process with the research done.

COVID 19 AND EDUCATION

The Covid-19 pandemic affects life in many ways. One of the areas most affected by this process is education (Oranburg, 2020; Telli & Altun, 2020). While the educational activities of 300 million students worldwide were restricted in March 2020, this number reached 1.6 billion in April (UNESCO, 2020). As a result of the spread of the covid-19 virus all over the world, most countries have suspended physical education, but in order for the right to education to continue, they have switched to the distance education system.

In the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world, schools have made a rapid transition to distance education in order to ensure the sustainability of education. Telli and Altun (2020) stated that distance education is not the last resort but the only solution in this process. Thinking that the balanced application of theory and practice in distance education will bring positive results in learning, Bozkurt (2020) emphasized that the technology used without planning and the practices carried out without considering the opportunities of the students may cause social inequalities. In order for schools to provide effective teaching in the distance education system, planning, design and goals must be determined in this process (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Therefore, it is important to examine the application, learning process and student-teacher-system interaction dimensions of distance education carried out during the pandemic process.

In the distance education carried out in the Covid-19 pandemic, the contents were carried out with synchronous and asynchronous methods (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020; Ertuğ, 2020; Njoki, 2020). Teaching in distance education can be carried out independently of time and place. Teaching in distance education takes place at the same time, but in different places, synchronously or asynchronously at different times and in different places. When the literature is examined, it is seen that applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Skype, Tencent Meeting, RoomBox, Classin for synchronous teaching, Google Classroom, Blackboard Collaborate, ClassDojo, Skolplattformen, Twinkl, Scoilnet, SeomraRanga, SeeSaw for asynchronous teaching in the Covid-19 pandemic. , Okulistik, Edmodo and similar applications are seen to be used (Burke & Dempsey, 2020; Mouchantaf, 2020; Sari, 2020; Talidong, 2020).

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy covers all of the skills and behaviors that people should have in digital environments. digital literacy; Along with the correct use of different technologies, it requires the ability to reach, produce and share the right information, and to have the skills to use technology in the learning-teaching processes (Çubukçu and Bayzan, 2013). Digital literacy includes the processes of finding information, trying to understand, analyzing, producing and then sharing information through technological tools. In recent years, with the use of information technologies such as the internet, computers, interactive boards and smart boards in education, the necessity for students to use these technologies have emerged.

According to Hague and Payton (2010), digital literacy is; It consists of skills, knowledge and understanding that enable critical, creative, distinctive and safe practices with digital technologies. Accordingly, digital literacy; creative thinking, extracting, evaluating and criticizing the obtained information, recognizing socio-cultural and historical effects and creating digital content, working together, using and adapting to new technologies, accessing appropriate and secure content by knowing how to use these technologies, communication through media build capabilities.

Individuals with digital literacy skills should be able to fully and accurately perform the steps of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and creating a new product, respectively. In order for individuals to be digitally literate; must have effective communication skills and the knowledge of how to ensure security in digital environments, the ability to use digital resources creatively, and the knowledge to accommodate the understanding of the social society.

Ng (2011) highlighted that a digitally literate individual uses respectful and appropriate language to avoid misinterpretations and misunderstandings as if they are communicating face-to-face, keeps their own information as private as possible, protects their own security and privacy, and understands when they are threatened. Additionally emphasized that an individual who knows how to deal with it, who knows how to file a complaint or forward it to which authorities. Savage and Barnett (2013) state that digital literacy means being both a

consumer and writer (producer) of digital content and having the skills, knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes involved in both roles. In the shrinking world with the effect of globalization, the availability of digital platforms for all citizens of the world has led to the emergence of the concept of digital citizenship, and the perception of being a good citizen is rapidly transforming into a good digital citizen (Çubukcu & Bayzan, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students, teachers, educational programs, administrators, etc. in the school system, who are most affected by the rapid changes and transformations in digital technologies. has been. One of the challenges for students and teachers is knowing how to behave in a digital environment. Students need to be aware of digital literacy in order to protect themselves in the face of negative situations. Therefore, all stakeholders (government, administrators, teachers, families, digital literate students should have the knowledge to train. After the students gain the awareness of digital literacy, they will be trained as individuals who can fill the concept of digital citizen who are more qualified and aware of their behaviors.

Digital platforms and developing technology, which have become an important part of education, especially with the Covid 19 pandemic, have once again demonstrated the importance of digital literacy. As a result, individuals need to be digitally literate and educate themselves accordingly in order to adapt themselves, their environment and their peers to the changing world, not to get lost in the digital world, not to stay away from developments, and to socialize digitally. Just as traditional literacy follows a developmental process, digital literacy must also undergo a similar development process and reach a fluent level by accelerating over time.

In this direction, it is recommended to organize trainings primarily for teachers and education stakeholders and to add digital literacy trainings to education programs.

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