

| Research Article \ Araştırma Makalesi |

Medyanın Çocuklar Üzerindeki Etkisine Yönelik Öğretmen ve Öğretmen Adaylarının Metaforları ¹

Teachers' and Prospective Teachers' Metaphors Toward Media's Effect on Children

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Öz

Bu araştırmada olgu bilim deseni kullanılarak öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının medyaya yönelik metaforik algılarının farklı demografik özellikler bağlamında incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 26 öğretmen ve 24 öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen metaforlar incelendiğinde; medyaya yönelik öğretmenlerin 23; öğretmen adaylarının ise 19 farklı metafor geliştirdikleri görülmüştür. Araştırma sonunda, mesleki hizmet süresinin öğretmenlerin medya algılarında farklılıklar yarattığı ve mesleki hizmet süresi daha uzun olan öğretmenlerin medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki etkilerine yönelik algılarının daha olumsuz olduğu; medya eğitimi alma durumunun iki katılımcı grubunun da medya algılarında belirgin bir farklılık yaratmadığı bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin öğretmen adaylarına göre medyaya yönelik algılarının daha olumsuz olduğu araştırmanın bir diğer bulgusudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: medya, metafor, öğretmen, öğretmen adayları

Abstract

The current study aims to examine the metaphorical perceptions of teachers and prospective teachers towards the media in the context of different demographic characteristics by using the phenomenological design. The study group of the research consists of 26 teachers and 24 prospective teachers. Based on the content analyses of the data, it was revealed that teachers shared 23 and prospective teachers shared 19 metaphors regards to the media. It was found that years of work experience caused differences in teachers' perceptions of the media, and teachers with longer years of work experience had more negative perceptions regarding the effects of the media on children. It was also found that the status of receiving media education did not create any difference in the media perceptions of both participant groups. Additionally, another finding of the research is that teachers have more negative perceptions towards the media compared to prospective teachers.

Key words: media, metaphor, teacher, prospective teacher

Introduction

The media, a multifaceted and versatile concept, are harnessed through various devices such as newspapers, books, magazines, films, photos, billboards, radio, television, videos, cassettes, computers, and the internet. It serves multiple purposes, including education, news

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dissemination, social interaction, advertising, sales, and entertainment. Similar to global trends, Turkish children are exposed to diverse media devices from birth, engaging with them intensively at an early age (Beatty, 2006). According to the Office of Communication's (OFCOM) Media Use and Attitudes Report (2023), 97% of children aged 3-17 have internet access in households, with younger children predominantly using tablets (64%). Similarly, the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TSI) 2021 Information Technology Usage Research in Children report indicates that 87.2% of children aged 6-15 access the internet in households, with a notable increase in internet usage via mobile phones (53.9%), almost five times higher than the 2013 report. Research highlights patterns of early adoption, frequent and independent media use, and media multitasking among children (Kabali et al., 2015). Ownership of devices like tablets and smartphones, as well as engagement with computer and video games, is occurring at increasingly young ages, signaling a significant shift in media consumption habits among young children (Domingues-Montanari, 2017). Studies have indicated associations between mobile media device use and expressive language delay, reduced sleep, and delayed sleep onset in young children (Cheung et al., 2017; Heuvel et al., 2019). Despite recommendations against their use, the pervasive presence of screen media devices in the lives of very young children raises concerns about potential developmental implications (Anderson & Subrahmanyam, 2017).

The impact of media devices on children is influenced by various factors such as adult guidance, timing, and content preferences. Recent years have witnessed an increase in families' control over their children's media access, emphasizing the pivotal role of adults' beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes in shaping children's media use. While certain televised cartoons like Sesame Street or Blue's Clues have been found to promote early academic skills, the prevalence of harmful content on television and other devices necessitates active control and guidance over children's media access (Gündüz-Kalan, 2010; Kırhoğlu & Ünlü, 2023; Radesky et al., 2016; Söğütülül & Başer, 2023). Teachers' and teacher candidates' perceptions of media devices and children's media usage play a crucial role in shaping educational practices and strategies. While numerous research examined the aspects of educators', who work at different level of education, perceptions and experiences; few research conducted with preschool teachers or prospective teachers (Dong & Mertala, 2019; Karakoyun & Lindberg, 2021; Mertala, 2017). The use of media devices by teachers is linked to media literacy, self-perceptions, preparedness for technology integration, and educators' perceptions of their own competencies in integrating digital media into classroom practices (Alelaimat et al., 2020; Vulic & Vujovic, 2015). The teacher-child relationship, classroom adjustment, and children's behaviors and academic outcomes are also associated with teachers' use of media devices (Zhou & Nanakida, 2020).

In conclusion, educators play a pivotal role in mediating the potential effects of media on children. Metaphors, offering valuable insights into fundamental beliefs, cognition, and decision-making processes related to teaching practices, significantly shape the conceptions and beliefs of teachers about teaching and learning (Ahmad & Samad, 2018; Botha, 2009; Saban, 2006). Metaphors also permeate educational discourse, influencing the direction of educational policies and practices (Martin & Lázaro, 2011). Therefore, the current study conducted with prospective teachers and teachers in the province of Ankara, seeks to uncover the metaphors of pre-school, English, and primary school teachers and prospective teachers regarding the effects of media on children and explore whether these metaphors differ based on the work duration of teachers and media education status.

Method

The current study designed as case study (phenomenology) which is one of the qualitative research method. As Gall et al. (2007) point out, the phenomenological study focuses on finding out how people understand both their individual and collective experiences and how they convey this meaning into consciousness. In case studies, it is aimed to reveal and interpret individual perceptions of a phenomenon. In this study, content analysis was conducted to determine the metaphors of teachers and prospective teachers about the effect of the media on children.

Study Group

The study group of this research is composed of 50 participants in total who are 26 teachers from different professions and 24 prospective teachers who are studying in the last grade. We selected teachers and prospective teachers by short interview. Demographic information of the participants is shared below at the Table1 and Table2.

Table 1. Demographic Variables of Participants

Branches	Media education status	Teacher		Prospective teacher	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
Pre-school education	Received media education	3	2	8	2
	Not received media education	6	1	13	1
English education	Received media education	1	-	-	-
	Not received media education	5	1	-	-
Primary education	Received media education	-	-	-	-
	Not received media education	3	4	-	-

Table 2. Teachers' Years of Work Experience and Media Education Status

Media Education Status		Years of work experience		
		1-10years	11-20 years	20+ years
Media Education Status	Received media education	5	1	-
	Not received media education	3	4	13

Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, a semi-structured interview form was used that is composed of two parts. In the first part of the form, there are questions about the demographic information such as whether they received media training or not, gender, years of experience and branches. In the second part of the interview form, questions are asked to complete in order to uncover the metaphors the participants of the working group have in relation to the media. These questions are set out in the following way: "Media is like for children". What is the most appropriate expression to come to this blank? What is the reason of this metaphor that you used?

In addition to the ethics committee approval, we also obtained informed consent forms from the participants, which included recording the interviews. The initials of the participants' names were used when quoting them. The interview questions were applied face to face to the participants and the answers were recorded. The collected data were examined and categorized by taking into consideration the common characteristics of the participants regarding their media concept. In the process of ensuring the validity and reliability of the study, the direct representations of the participants, the complete metaphors produced and the frequency of repetition were included in the findings. In the reliability study of the research, the percentage

of compliance calculated by the formula of Reliability = Opinion Union / (Opinion Union + Opinion Separation) and developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. As a result of the cross-coding of the studies, the percentage of agreement was calculated as .91. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that the rate of consent for the reliability of the study is over 70%. Accordingly, it can be said that the reliability of the research is high.

Results

Metaphors Used by Prospective Teachers to Describe Media's Effect on Children

As a result of the content analysis of the interviews with the teachers, the metaphors they used were coded under three themes as "positive, negative and positive or negative depends on usage".

Table 3. Metaphors Used by Prospective Teachers for Media's Effect on Children

Media education status	Metaphors		
	Positive metaphors (f)	Negative metaphors (f)	Positive or negative depends on usage (f)
Received media education	Music (1)	Dead end (1)	Sugar (2)
	Play (1)	Swirl (1)	Pickle (1)
	Book (1)		Potato (1)
Not received media education			Mask (1)
	Feeding (1)	Drugs (2)	Ice-cream (1)
	Educator (1)		Sugar (2)
	Friend (1)		Sun (2)
	Imagine machine (1)		Mirror (1)
			Bridge (1)
		Medicine (1)	

The media has a positive effect on children

The metaphors that the prospective teachers used to express the media's positive effects on children are "abdominal satiety, educator, friend, music, game, imagination device, book". Some explanations of the metaphors used by prospective teachers are shared below:

A: "Our age is the information age and technology and the media have come to a very important place as you know. We can say that it is an educator and it offers useful information to children .. ". (an educator)

B: "How children are educated in books, nowadays they teach like children's books in the media". (a book)

The media has a negative effect on children

The metaphors for which prospective teachers expressed the media's adverse effects on children are "cigarettes, cocaine, dead-end street and vortex".

F: "The colorful face of the media is imprisoning children on the screen, stealing their time. The media is like a swirl that draws children away from the games.. immm I

meant that best way of learning is real life experiment for children and as I believe media devices don't let children to experience". (swirl)

A: "We believe in the necessity of the media and believe that we will take us one time, we believe that we are contributors to the way we are, just like people who live in the streets. But ultimately we enter an exit. Everything we think is useful is actually a hurt. So the media is beneficial, but the damage is much more and it does not bring us results ". (a dead end street)

The effect of media on children varies depending on how they use it.

The prospective teachers' metaphors for the media's variable effects on children include “ice cream, sugar, pickle, sun, mirror, bridge, potato, medicine, and mask”. Some of the explanations of the expressed metaphors by prospective teachers are shared below:

D: "Children reflect both good and bad aspects they see in the media into their lives. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to the use of media devices. If good examples are shown, the child can reflect good things into his or her life. Limited timing, being a good model, and controlling their screen time could help both parents and children to benefit from media devices.". (mirror)

G: ... it can cause various diseases, just like consuming too much sugar. Of course, the body needs sugar as well. Similarly, media is essential and important for a child's cognitive development. However, excessive use of media devices may harm the child's development. In this regard, I believe that these devices should be provided to children carefully and in moderation". (sugar)

Metaphors Used by Teachers to Describe Media’s Effect on Children

The themes that were obtained as a result of the interviews conducted by the teachers about the effect of the media on children were handled in 3 categories as "positive metaphors, negative metaphors and positive/negative metaphors depends of usage".

Table 4. Metaphors Used by Teachers for Media’s effect on Children

Years of work experience	Metaphors		
	Positive metaphors	Negative metaphors	Positive or negative depends on usage
1-10years	Chocolate (1)	Distraction device (1)	Food(1) Ice cream(1) Sugar(2) Chocolate (1) Sea (1)

11-20years	-	-	Food(1) Environment(1) Intelligence (1) Medicine (1) Mirror (1)
20+ years	-	Drugs (1) Barrier (1) Inevitable fact (1) Bad guide (1) Lie machine (1)	Food Poisoning (1) Ice cream (1) Sugar (1) Enough is as good as a feast (1) Market (1) Time (1) Play (1) Friend (1) Cloth (1)

As it can be seen on Table 4 only one of the teachers stated that the media is positive for the child. The metaphor used by the teacher is "chocolate." The explanation for this metaphor is;

A: "I liked chocolate, because if the child is enjoying and enjoying chocolate, then the phone, tablet and computer will get the same pleasure and the child will be happy. I think the media devices make the child happy". (chocolate)

The media has negative effect on children

The metaphors that teachers used for the media's negative effects on children are "drug, barrier, inevitable fact, bad guide, distraction device, lie machine." Some of the explanations for the metaphors shared by teachers are:

F: "The child takes everything on television. Good examples and behaviors specific to children need to be exhibited but unfortunately media devices do not. I think children should be far away from the media if they are negatively affected by clip lines, sequences and programs that are not appropriate for the culture of the family. Unfortunately, there is no beneficial programs and any child likes beneficial programs so I completely believe that media doesn't have any benefits to child ". (bad guide)

K: "I think the media is a device that does not make much use of the child and prevents creativity. Adults use media tools to avoid taking care of children. It is officially a distraction device ". (distraction device)

Some of the metaphors that teachers expressed for the media's positive/negative effects are depend on the way and duration of media usage are: "food poisoning, food, ice cream, environment, chocolate, sugar, friend, clothes ".

J: "The child learns what is happening through the media and reflects what they see in the media, what they hear, in positive or negative forms, I mean if they watch something include violence they learn violence behaviors. Parents should help children on what they watch and I think they shouldn't let their children to use smart phones. Smart phones especially have bad impact on children's behaviors and academic performance" (mirror)

H: "I have described it like this because children sleep, feed, learn and have fun just as they do over time. It is unstoppable and cannot be prevented. What is important here is how it is assessed, accurate, quality and effective ". (inevitable fact)

It was found that both teachers and prospective teachers emphasized that the impact of media on children depends on how it is used. Additionally, the frequency of negative metaphors used by teachers is higher than that used by prospective teachers. Teachers with more than 20 years

of work experience have more negative metaphors about media than their less experienced counterparts.

Results and Discussion

According to our findings, the perceptions of prospective teachers about the media are mostly positive, but they draw attention to the duration of use and the themes presented via media devices. It can be said that prospective teachers who use a positive metaphor for the media see it as an educational tool for children. Resnick (2007), in his research, emphasized that the use of new technologies positively affects children's creative thinking skills. New technologies and educational media devices, such as educational video games, cartoons, and social media platforms, can help children learn new information and skills. Prospective teachers who argue that media's effects on children can be either positive or negative mostly point out that the use of unconscious media is harmful to children, while it is useful and necessary when used consciously and controllably. Similarly, Büyükbaykal's (2007) study on the effects of television on children, it was emphasized that the content of television determines the positive or negative effect of its duration of use on the child. Christakis et al. (2013), in their experimental study involving children aged 3 to 5, found that when adults control and prevent violence in media and promote prosocial programs, media positively affect children's social behaviors. Linebarger and Vaala (2010) found that family-child cohesion enhances family-child interaction and has positive effects on children's language development when selecting appropriate programs and using media devices.

We found that receiving media education is not significant in prospective teachers' perceptions of media. We explain this finding by focusing on their age. Media devices and technology aren't unfamiliar to them, and they know how to use them in a positive way. Therefore, even if they haven't been trained in media, they don't hold negative perceptions about it. Togay et al. (2013) argued that most university students in their research on social networking use in the education process stated that the use of social media devices is necessary, beneficial, and easy. On the other hand, the perceptions of teachers about the media are mainly negative, and they can be positive or negative depending on usage. Teachers with a negative perception of the media claim that the content of media devices is not good for a child's development, and media is not a good role model for children. In literature, some research findings support teachers' views. Kesicioğlu (2015), in his study on pre-school children's interpersonal problem-solving skills, found that problem behaviors of children, such as verbal threats, aggression, and sharing, increased in proportion to the duration of television viewing. Similarly, Lan et al. (2010) and Bartholow and Anderson (2002) found that violence in media devices was easily absorbed by children, and children exposed to violent media devices showed increasingly short and long-term aggressive and violent behaviors. Çamurdan (2007) examined the visual media's effect on child health in the study. According to findings, supporting harmful visual media contents by media devices negatively affects children's health and directs them to various substance dependencies. Moreover, children aged 2 through 5 should not be exposed to any kind of screen for more than two hours per day. For this purpose, teachers and parents should be educated (Burns et al., 2011; Institute of Medicine of the National Academies 2011).

Teachers with 1-10 years of work experience did not express any negative metaphors, and their use of media generally intensified. However, as teachers' work experience increased, negative perceptions of the media also grew. This trend might be attributed to the fact that teachers who were exposed to technology at an earlier age tend to use media more effectively and may hold more positive views. It appears that teachers with traditional beliefs are more likely to eschew new technologies and media devices. Supporting our findings, some studies, such as Hermans et al. (2008), indicate that teachers with constructivist beliefs are inclined to utilize computers

in the classroom, whereas those with traditional beliefs are less likely to favor computer use in educational settings.

Until the media literacy course was added to the undergraduate curriculum as an elective course in 2018, media courses were not included as elective or compulsory in many universities in Turkey. This neglect may affect undergraduate students' beliefs and attitudes toward the media. As a result, even if students have positive views about media, they may lack conscious perspectives on the effective integration of media into classroom environments. This situation constitutes an important limitation of our study. Although we have collected data on teachers' and pre-service teachers' metaphors regarding media, we do not have sufficient information on their media literacy levels or their proficiency in using media in educational settings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, our study illuminates the varied perceptions of prospective teachers and experienced educators on the media's impact on children. Prospective teachers generally hold positive views, underscoring the necessity of conscious and controlled media use in education. In contrast, experienced teachers tend to adopt a more cautious approach, voicing concerns over the content's influence on child development. Those who interact with technology from a younger age appear to use media more effectively and harbor more positive attitudes. However, with increased experience, a notable shift to more negative perceptions emerges, potentially rooted in traditional beliefs. Recognizing the role of media content in shaping children's behavior is crucial. While positive educational programs can beneficially affect social behaviors, exposure to violent or inappropriate content can have adverse effects, as various studies in our research corroborate. Based on our findings, we propose several recommendations to improve educators' perspectives on media and its role in child development. First, integrating media education courses into teacher training programs is vital, preparing future educators with the skills and knowledge to effectively leverage media in educational contexts. Emphasizing conscious and controlled media usage, along with providing resources for selecting suitable educational content, is essential. Additionally, promoting media literacy awareness through workshops and training for both prospective and seasoned teachers is imperative. These should aim to enhance critical thinking regarding media messages and comprehension of media content's potential impact on child development. Highlighting technology's positive aspects, especially when used for interactive and collaborative learning, can further enable educators to incorporate media effectively into their pedagogy. Moreover, providing ongoing professional development for experienced teachers is crucial to keep them updated on new technologies and methodologies for integrating media into their teaching, ensuring they remain adept at navigating the dynamic media and educational technology landscape.

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Geniş Özet

Çağın gereklilikleri göz önüne alındığında medyaya ve medya araçlarına yaşamın her alanında yoğun bir biçimde maruz kalındığı açıktır. Bununla birlikte, medyanın çocukların bilişsel ve duygusal gelişimlerini olumsuz etkilediğini gösteren çalışmalar olduğu gibi medyanın eğitici ve destekleyici yönüne vurgu yapan araştırmalar da bulunmaktadır. Bu durum çalışmada, medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin öğretmen adaylarının ve öğretmenlerin algılarını araştırmak için nitel bir araştırma yöntemi olan fenomenoloji kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu çeşitli disiplinlerden 26 öğretmen ve eğitim fakültelerinin son sınıfında öğrenim gören 24 öğretmen adayları olmak üzere toplam 50 katılımcı oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri görüşme formu ile toplanmıştır. Görüşme formunda katılımcıların medyaya ilişkin sahip oldukları metaforları ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla tamamlamaları istenen "Medya çocuk için..... gibidir ya da....'ya benzer, sizce bu boşluğa gelecek en uygun ifade nedir? Bu benzetmeye ilişkin gerekçeniz nedir? Soruları bulunmaktadır. Hazırlanan görüşme soruları çalışma grubuna yüz yüze uygulanmış ve verdiği cevaplar ses kayıt cihazı ile kaydedilmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında katılımcıların medyanın çocuklar üzerindeki etkisini tartışırken kullandıkları metaforlar ve gerekçeleri içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonunda öğretmen adaylarının ağırlıklı olarak medyaya ilişkin olumlu metaforlar dile getirerek medyanın eğitim potansiyeline vurgu yaptıkları bulunmuştur. Ancak bazı katılımcıların medyanın kullanım süresi ve içeriği ile ilgili endişelerini dile getirdikleri de görülmüştür. Öğretmenlere ilişkin bulgularda ise genellikle medyanın çocuk gelişimine zararlı olduğu yönünde olumsuz algıların olduğu görülmüştür. Bağımlılık yaratan maddeler, engeller ve dikkat dağınıcı cihazlar öğretmenlerin ifade ettikleri olumsuz metaforlar arasındadır. Medyanın bilinçli kullanıldığında çocuk eğitimi üzerindeki olumlu etkisini vurgulayan araştırma bulguları literatürle uyumludur. Çalışma özellikle üniversitelerdeki medya eğitiminde eğitimcilerin inanç ve tutumlarını etkileyen potansiyel bir boşluğu ortaya koyuyor. Sonuç olarak, eğitimcilerin metaforik algılarını anlamak, hedefe yönelik müdahaleler ve eğitim programları geliştirmek için değerli bilgiler sağlar. Medya okuryazarlığını benimsemek, eğitimcilerin öğrenenlere medya araçlarını etkili bir şekilde kullanmaları ve eğitim uygulamalarını 21. yüzyılın talepleriyle uyumlu hale getirmeleri konusunda rehberlik etmeleri açısından önemlidir.