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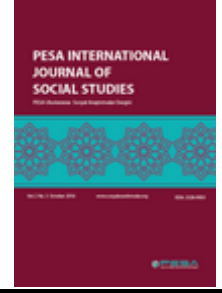
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**The Detection of Public Policy in the Formation of Digital Citizenship**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Online technologies have begun to penetrate society with many different applications and innovations since 1990s when the internet began to enter our lives. Until the early 2000s, various public institutions, private enterprises, municipalities, universities and other organizations began to enforce themselves to digital platforms. The concept of digital citizenship has emerged as a result of these developments. In this sense, the extent to which digital citizenship is addressed by public institutions in Turkey as a public policy constitutes the main theme of this paper. Firstly, 9 dimensions of digital citizenship handled by Ribble and his colleagues (Ribble et al., 2004) are going to be examined in the context of the policies of public institutions. Thus, it will be examined how public institutions contribute to Turkey's digital transformation and to what extent it contributes to digital citizenship.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The Internet has been regarded as one of the greatest technological discoveries of the century and it has also now evolved into a very different form with its about 30 years of history. Until the year 2000, by using the Internet communication structure, many institutions and organizations started to carry itself into the new digital medium called Internet. In 2000s, internet users started to meet Web 2.0 technologies. In 2003, for the first time, the concept of Web 2.0 began to emerge (Cormode and Krisnamurthy, 2008). With these technologies, the style and direction of content types on the internet have started to change completely. This social and technological transformation in communication has begun to offer solutions to the needs of businesses and institutions.

Internet-based technologies are needed for public responsibility and efficient and productive use of public resources. E-government, e-municipality and other internet based services and applications have been formed in accordance with these needs. The aim of providing high quality services, implementing citizen-focused strategies and action plans in order to accurately and effectively perceive and implement citizens' needs and requirements meet with online technologies. Therefore public policies are being produced to respond to specific social needs and demands.

Public policy is a process which is considered having different stages in various sources, generally consists of the following steps: agenda setting, formulating, legislation, implementation, evaluation. The first phase of the policy process is identification of the problem and agenda setting. In this phase, the problem is determined and setting agenda for solve it. The second stage is development of alternative politics and determination of the politics to be implemented. The last stage is implementation and evaluation. This stage is fulfilled by the bureaucracy, civil society organizations, media, political parties

may have effect on it. Implementation is to make the necessary legal arrangements, to issue orders, duties and authorizations, and to allocate the necessary materials and financial means.

In the extent to which digital citizenship is addressed by public institutions in Turkey as a public policy constitutes the main theme of this paper. Firstly, 9 dimensions of digital citizenship (digital access, digital commerce, digital communications, digital literacy, digital ethics, digital law, digital rights/responsibilities, digital health and digital security) handled by Ribble and his colleagues (Ribble et al., 2004) are going to be examined in the context of the policies of public institutions. Thus, it will be examined how public institutions contribute to Turkey's digital transformation and to what extent it contributes to digital citizenship.

### **1. The Concept of Public Policy**

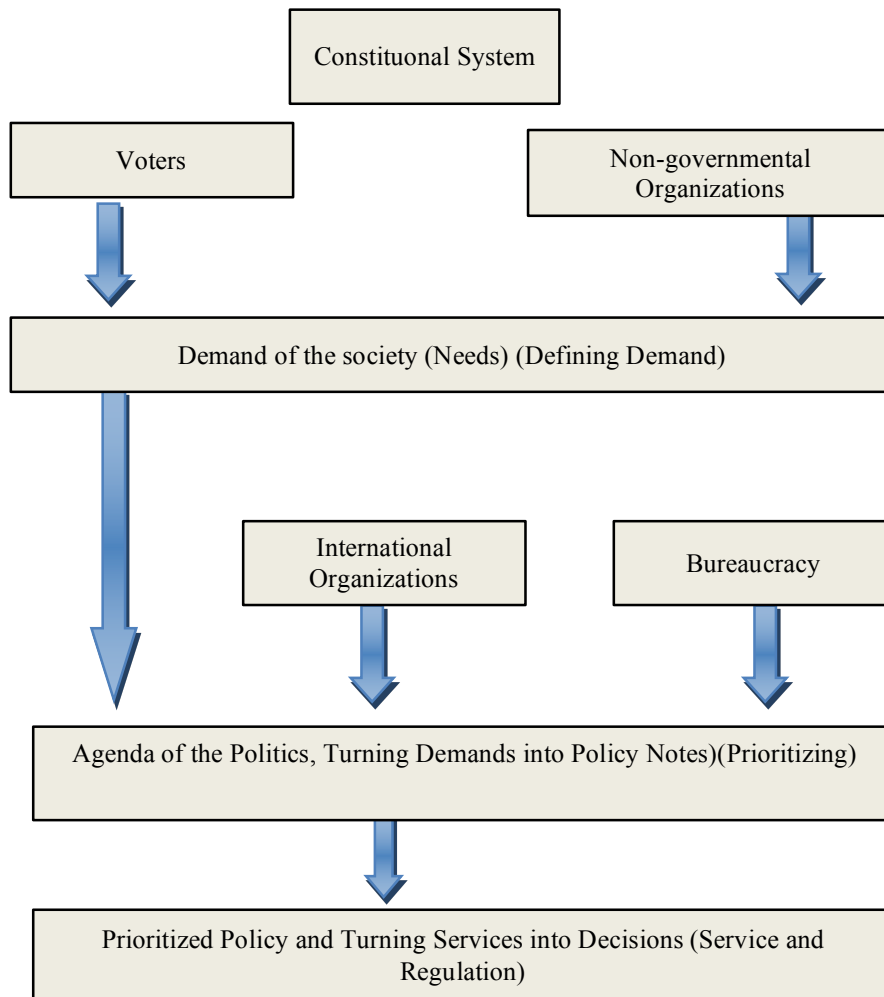
The concept of politics in Turkish has two meanings: first 'politics' that describe "all kinds of actions for the seizure of political power" and second 'policy' that describes "the way, method, attitude or general orientation that an organization or the senior managers of an organization adopt in important matters (Cevik and Demirci, 2012: 11, Eren, 2014: 261).

The concept of public policy can be described as Dye's (1984) definition of "everything the state chooses to do or not to do". Akdoğan (2011: 77) defined public policies as any action taken by public authorities and public officials. And as an example, the decision taken by village headmen and councilors of villages regarding the properties of the village as well as the decision such as tax deductions taken by Council of Ministers which affect all citizens, are considered as a policy. According to Kutlu (2012: 11), public policy involves all the necessary steps, including who the decision makers are in public administration, the process that started before the decision was taken, the inspection of the implementation of these decisions, the making of the necessary regulations and acting based on past experiences.

Three pillars of public policy are public issues, actors involved and the policy that will be implemented. The public issue is the subject at hand; The actor is the group or individual who are effective in solving the problem; The policy is the plan that is decided by the government (Eren, 2014: 262-3). Public policy is nothing but a process. If a problem arises or if there is a demand, a plan is set, implemented and evaluated to solve this problem. The policy consists of these stages. It is a process that is wider than making decisions only. Thus, the policy comprises it. There is a definite aim and a goal. It is not coincidental. If the desired results are not achieved in practice, the targets can be determined and revised again. There is no definite distinction between administration and public policy. The expertise of the public servants, the continuity and professionalism of the bureaucracy are important and influential at every stage of the policy process. In the process of public policy, it is not only public institutions that have a role. Depending on the political and societal structure of the country, the private sector or other sector representatives may play a role, although their existence or effects may change (Eren, 2014: 262-3, Çevik and Demirci, 2012: 12-3, Yıldız and Sobaci, 2013: 18).

### **2. The Process of Public Policy**

The policy-making process in democratic countries is based on constitution and laws. Those who are involved in the decision-making phase are those chosen by the people (Bicer and Yılmaz, 2009: 52). In this sense, parliament can be considered as the primary actor in the policy making process. Apart from this, the judicial bodies that determine the lawfulness of the bureaucracy that implement the determined policies and the policy itself are the official actors. Individuals, political parties, non-governmental organizations and media can be considered as informal actors. Nowadays, international actors seem to have a significant impact on policy-making processes.



**Source:** Bicer and Yılmaz, 2009: 53

*Figure 1: The Process of Forming Public Policy*

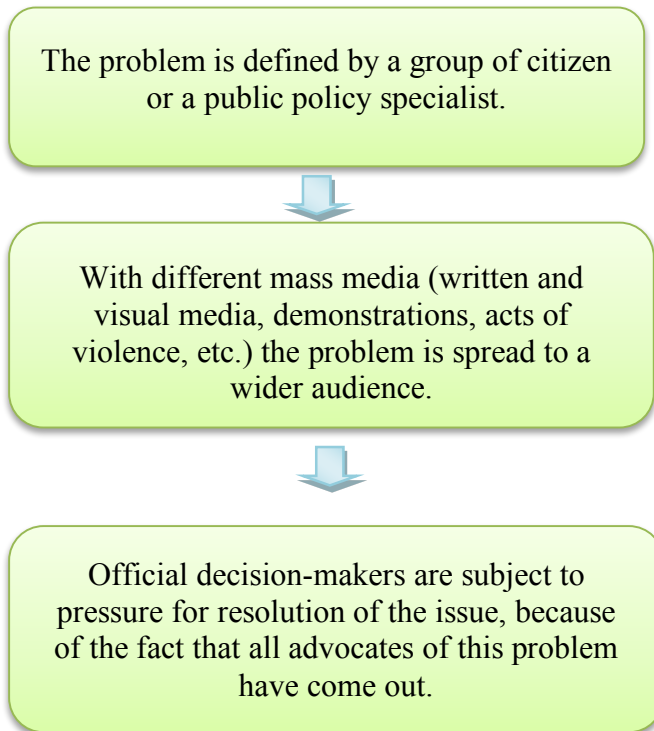
Public policies are being produced to respond to specific social needs and demands (Yıldız and Sobacı, 2014: 24). In this sense, demand for policy is the backbone of public policies. Because the public policy process does not begin without an existing problem and without a demand for solving this problem.

This process, which is considered having different stages in various sources, generally consists of the following steps: agenda setting, formulating, legislation, implementation, evaluation (COE, 2009: 9, Hague and Harrop: 2007: 378, Eren: 2014: 264). However, the process does not have to happen in this order. In practice, this process can be intertwined. According to Kutlu ("Local Public Policies") this creates a problem in our country. Kutlu states that decisions at the local level are taken hastily and that the applicability dimension is considered after the decisions are taken and that the planning process takes too little time and implementation period takes too long.

Eren (2014: 264) considers the public policy process in three stages: identification of the problem and agenda setting, development of alternative policies and determination of policies to be implemented, and finally implementation and evaluation.

**Identification of The Problem and Agenda Setting:** It is the first phase of the policy process. The policy process necessarily begins with the emergence of a problem and its setting as an agenda item. However, each problem has a different likelihood of getting involved in the set agenda. Some may be involved shortly, some come up after a long time, or they cannot come up at all (Kapti, 2013: 29). Here, characteristics such as the issue of the problem and which group it belongs to play an important role during this process.

According to Eren (2014: 264), this stage is the most important phase of the public policy process. Because, if the problem is not defined correctly, correct steps cannot be taken. At this stage, the role of the bureaucracy is important because expertise of the bureaucracy is utilized in the issues of putting out and examining the problems. The mastery of the bureaucracy over the laws and its experience in administration increase its effectiveness against political power (Gokus, 2000: 37-8). This increases the role of the bureaucracy in determining the policies to be implemented.



**Source:** Kapti, 2013: 30

### Figure 2: Agenda Setting Process

The agenda-setting phase is simply about governments making a choice between various issues. In this regard, various non-governmental organizations and other actors with any interest try to set the government's agenda based on their own interests and raise awareness about it by trying to influence the choice of the government (Yildiz and Sobaci, 2014: 24).

**Development of Alternative Politics and Determination of the Politics to be Implemented:** This phase concerns the determination of the objectives of the public policy, the identification

of alternatives to meet those goals and the implementation of one of the alternatives (Yildiz and Sobaci, 2014: 24). At this stage, the objectives are selected and the means to realize these goals are determined (Ozel, 2015: 28). At this stage, the parliament and the executive body have the primary role. The executive body provides information from relevant experts in the field in order to investigate and formulate appropriate ways of resolving problems, and gets ready to help the decision makers in the legislative process (Kapti, 2013: 33).

- (i) **Implementation and Evaluation:** During the implementation phase, all actions foreseen by the parliament are carried out for the policy to be implemented. These actions may involve the provision of new duties and responsibilities to existing organizations and staff, as well as the establishment of new organizations and the recruitment of new personnel. Again, although this stage is fulfilled by the bureaucracy, civil society organizations, media, political parties may have effect on it. Implementation is to make the necessary legal arrangements, to issue orders, duties and authorizations, and to allocate the necessary materials and financial means (Eren, 2014: 266).

The application phase can be described briefly as "transforming policy objectives into actions". Post-implementation outputs may not always coincide with the objectives of established policies. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the fact that the texts of the law are clear enough affect the implementation process considerably. Again, the support of the public in this process is an important factor. Establishing the necessary financial support and ensuring cooperation among different institutions are other important factors (Kapti, 2013: 36-7).

Public policies are not limited to the process of agenda setting, decision making by determining alternatives and implementation of them. It should be determined whether the policy implemented has achieved the desired objectives and whether it needs to be redesigned. This process starts with the evaluation phase. This stage can be terminated by one of the decisions to resume if the current public policy is successful, to redesign or terminate if it is found to be completely or partially unsuccessful. In order for this phase to take place in a healthy way, the public policy process must be conducted transparently, there must be a trust relationship between the actors and a well-functioning feedback mechanism (Yildiz and Sobaci, 2014: 25).

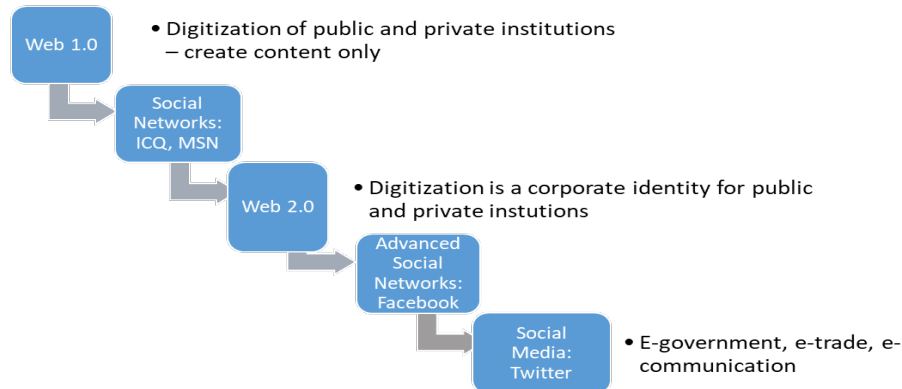
### 3. Digitalization and Socialization of Institutions in the Information Age

Digital technology has begun to enter our lives from the beginning of the 1990's with the birth of communication technologies and the Internet age. Until the year 2000, by using the Internet communication structure, many institutions and organizations started to carry itself into the new digital medium called Internet. In these nearly ten years, firstly digital contents are tried to be presented to the areas that are connected to the Internet and to the ones which can use internet as much as possible.

In 2000s, internet users started to meet Web 2.0 technologies. In 2003, for the first time, the concept of Web 2.0 began to emerge (Cormode and Krisnamurthy, 2008). With these technologies, the style and direction of content types on the internet have started to change completely. The Internet has begun to allow two-way communication between end users and content producers. With Web 2.0, it is not only possible for users just to reach the content, but also to develop completely new content besides the activities such as managing, changing, adding or deleting those contents is presented. Services such as blogs on personal web pages, wikis that provide a content management system, social networks that start as friendship sites and acquire corporate structure, and P2P (peer to peer) programs that allow users to download content on other users' computers, began to emerge in this new technological era.

While digitalization in the early days of the internet for corporations and organizations was only for transferring corporate information, in the process of moving from web 1.0 to web 2.0, it became a necessity and even an obligation to serve a purpose such as introducing products and services, providing brand and marketing management, listening to the customers and to provide services to Internet end-users.

Social networks, established with the logic of social communication, started to shift to social media structure from years 2000s to years 2010s. Closed and communicative communication among groups of people to socialize, meet and reach old friends has begun to transform into social media, which allows you to see the sharing of a person you do not even know, or complain about an enterprise that you are not satisfied with its service.



**Figure 3: Digitalization, Socialization and The Public**

This social and technological transformation in communication has begun to offer solutions to the needs of businesses and institutions. LinkedIn, which was established for career sites or career support, started to serve in this period. From a public perspective, internet-based technologies are needed for public responsibility and efficient and productive use of public resources. E-government, e-municipality and other internet based services and applications have been formed in accordance with these needs. The aim of providing high quality services, implementing citizen-focused strategies and action plans in order to accurately and effectively perceive and implement citizens' needs and requirements meet with online technologies (Koremez, 2010).

#### 4. The Concept of Digital Citizenship

The increasing prevalence of information technologies within society– and especially of the internet – has facilitated access to technological tools and information, and rapidly increased the interaction of individuals with the digital world. The innovative approaches and digital technologies brought by the information age not only present new opportunities, but also affect the development of individuals' cognitive and emotional intelligence at many levels (Cubukcu and Bayzan, 2016).

As many daily activities can nowadays be performed through the internet, this platform, which was originally designated as a “virtual” platform, is becoming less virtual day by day. Many of the rights and responsibilities of citizens who use the internet – as well as potential users –in daily life are also becoming applicable in the online world. Over time, as the positive and negative influences of the internet on individuals' lives became apparent, the concepts of digital literacy and digital citizenship were developed. Due to the increasing accessibility of digital technologies for many citizens, the concepts of digital citizenship and digital literacy, which were previously applicable for a limited number of individuals capable of effectively filtering and identifying the positive and negative aspects of the digital environment, have become applicable for all individuals (Cubukcu and Bayzan, 2016).

Digital citizenship is considered to consist of nine dimensions, which are digital access, commerce, communication, etiquette, literacy, law, rights and responsibilities, health, and security. These nine dimensions have been previously described in detail by Mike Ribble and his colleagues (Ribble et al., 2005). Over time, the concept of digital competence, which represents an integral aspect of digital citizenship, was also defined. Technological, cognitive, and ethical aspects have been described within the scope of the concept of digital competence (Calvani et al., 2009).



**Figure 4: Digital Citizenship and its nine Dimensions**

The digital citizen is an individual who is able to examine the effects of information technologies and communication tools; who is aware of the ethical values of the online world; who does not misuse the technology; who promotes and encourages proper behavior while communicating with others in the digital world; and who is aware of the opportunities and benefits brought by digital platforms. In this context, digital citizenship can be defined as the whole range of behavioral norms which a digital citizen must possess and exhibit while using technological tools (Cubukcu, 2014).

##### **5. Dimensions of Digital Citizenship and Its Relationship with Turkish Public Institutions**

Different views and approaches have been proposed at different times regarding digital citizenship. The main one is the dimensions of the concept of digital citizenship as defined by Ribble. The ability of individuals who can connect to internet and access to digital tools refers to the term of 'Digital Access'. The ability of those individuals who perform trade and shopping through the internet refers to the term of 'Digital Commerce'. The ability to communicate, conduct discussions and to cooperate within the digital world refers to the term of 'Digital Communication' (Cubukcu and Bayzan, 2016). These three dimensions are mostly related with skills and abilities of internet users.

At times, it is possible to see the undesirable behaviors on web platforms. Such issues form the basis of another dimension of digital citizenship, which is digital ethics; the fact that these types of activities and behaviors generally represent crimes forms the basis of yet another dimension of digital citizenship, which is digital law. These dimensions serve to illustrate the necessity of

taking the relevant laws and regulations into account when considering digital platforms (Cubukcu and Bayzan, 2016).

In addition to this, the digital rights and responsibilities dimension of digital citizenship refers to the individuals' right to express themselves freely on the internet, while using the digital tools at their disposal according to their intended use. The digital health dimension refers to the use of digital platforms under ergonomic conditions, at the proper time and location, and for the right duration of time, such that the physical and mental health of individuals is not adversely affected. Finally, the digital security dimension refers to the security of personal information and the safe use of the internet (Cubukcu and Bayzan, 2016).

**Table 1: Briefly 9 Dimensions of Digital Citizenship**

Digital Literacy	The ability to use of digital platforms and its applications.
Digital Access	Full electronic participation of society to digital platforms
Digital Communication	Electronic exchange of information
Digital Commerce	Skills of buying and selling of goods and services online
Digital Rights & Responsibilities	Those freedoms extended to every digital citizens & Electronic responsibility for actions and deeds which is either ethical or unethical
Ethics	Respect to others when using digital platforms
Health	Ability of protection of physical and sociological health on digital platforms
Law	Awareness of existence of rules and regulations of digital platforms
Security	Awareness of safe use of digital technologies

Table 1 shows briefly the dimensions of digital citizenship. Table 2 shows how Turkish public institutions react to digitalization in the concept of digital citizenship.

**Table 2: Dimensions of Digital Citizenship and The Role of Turkish Public Institutions**

Dimension	Main Responsible Area and/or Main Activities of Related Public Institutions
Digital Literacy	Ministry of National Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FATİH Project (Digitization in formal education)</li> <li>Information technology and software lesson for second level students</li> </ul>



<b>Digital Access</b> <b>Digital Communication</b>	Ministry of Transport and BTK (Information and Communication Technologies Authority): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for execution of electronic communication services</li> <li>• Regulations and strategic politics on establishment and operation of electronic communication infrastructure and network (Law No 5809 - Electronic Communications Law and related regulations)</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Commerce</b>	Ministry of Customs and Trade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for the enforcement of e-trade law</li> <li>• To take all kinds of precautions related to the development of electronic commerce and to make supervision (Law No 6563 - Electronic Trade Law)</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Rights</b>	BTK (Information and Communication Technologies Authority): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of consumer rights on electronic communication services (Law No 5809 - Electronic Communications Law and related regulations)</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Responsibilities</b>	-
<b>Digital Ethics</b>	-
<b>Digital Health</b>	-
<b>Digital Law</b>	BTK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic Communications Law numbered 5809</li> <li>• Electronic Signature law numbered 5070</li> <li>• Regulating Broadcasting in the Internet and Fighting Against Crimes Committed through Internet Broadcasting numbered 5651</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Security</b>	Ministry of Transport and BTK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities for conducting national cybersecurity studies - Decision on the implementation, management and coordination of national cyber security studies</li> <li>• 5651 - Regulating Broadcasting in the Internet and Fighting Against Crimes Committed through Internet Broadcasting</li> </ul>

## EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Digital Citizenship concept is mainly developed to analyze digital behaviors of individuals. In this study, how the public institutions have made regulations for citizens in the digital transformation of Turkey within the concept of digital citizenship is examined. There are other studies and regulations on digitalization but in this study, only the main topics and institutions are examined.

For instances, e-government and e-municipality applications are related with more than one institution and dimension of digital citizenship. Many public institutions offer electronic services within their activities. On the other hand, Information Society Strategy and Action Plan (2015 – 2018) is issued by Ministry of Development and National E-Government Strategy and Action Plan (2016 – 2019) is issued by Ministry of Transport. These two plans concern many public institutions. Another issue is that some topics cannot be directly related with only a public institution.

Although there are many regulations and activities on digitalization, regulations are necessary on three dimensions of digital citizenship: Digital responsibilities, ethics and health. There is no standard regulation or work has been found in this regard. Although there are standards and regulations related to ethical values, there is no such an example for digital platforms. On the other hand, it is necessary to make regulations for employees who use computer and internet to protect digital health. Digital responsibilities are another important dimension. Because some online users are able to act more irresponsibly than when they behave in real life. Cyber bullying is the most known irresponsibly act online. Public institutions should make more effort on cyber bullying and determine standards or regulations for digital responsibilities.

Furthermore, in some dimensions of digital citizenship, public institutions need to put more effort. One of them and maybe the most important one is digital literacy because it has a significant relationship with other dimensions of digital citizenship. It is a crucial action to take to prepare generations for the future. Digital literacy lessons should be dealt with more extensively in terms of effective and conscious use of digital technologies. Digital literacy should also be presented to all individuals within the framework of lifelong learning.

Turkey stands at good position in other dimensions of digital citizenship especially digital access and communication. 3G/4.5G technologies and broadband internet infrastructure spread all over the country. Increasing the use of digital technologies will be successful with digital literacy programs that can use these infrastructures and technologies. Digital law and security are problematic dimensions of digital citizenship. The rapid development in digital technologies makes difficult to combat cybercrime. Although steps are taken in this regard, governments should make cooperation, prioritize digital platforms in their legislative arrangements, and constantly develop themselves in this respect. This is not just for digital security and digital legal dimensions; it should be the main philosophy of governments in all dimensions of digital citizenship.

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