Cyberbullying Among Secondary School Students

Yılmaz BULUT*

Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Bölümü,
Beşiktaş / İstanbul / Türkiye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Bülent ALCI

Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Bölümü,
Beşiktaş / İstanbul / Türkiye

Abstract

In this study, the prevalence of cyber bullying among secondary school students in Bagcilar was investigated. The study was conducted with 231 students studying at 7th and 8th grades in a sample secondary school in Istanbul, Turkey. The data were obtained through "Cyber Bullying Scale" and "Cyber Victimization Scale" developed by Arıcak, Kınay and Tanrıkulu (2012). The results showed that getting unpleasant messages on the internet, saying things online that would not be said face to face, being disturbed via phone and introducing yourself as someone else were prevalent cyber bullying behaviors among secondary school students.

Keywords: Cyber bullying; Cyber victim; Cyber bully; Bullying on internet; Bullying via mobile.

* Sorumlu Yazar.   Tel: +90 531 772 09 05   E-posta: buluttyilmaz@gmail.com

Ortaokul Öğrencileri Arasındaki Siber Zorbalık

Özet

Bu çalışmada, Bağcılar'daki ortaokul öğrencileri arasındaki siber zorbalığın yaygınlığı araştırılmıştır. Araştırma, İstanbul'daki örnek bir ortaokuldaki 7. ve 8. sınıfta okuyan 231 öğrenciyle yapılmıştır. Verilerin elde edilmesinde Arıcak, Kınay ve Tanrıkulu (2012) tarafından geliştirilen "Siber Zorbalık Ölçeği" ve "Siber Mağduriyet Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, internette hoş olmayan mesajlar alma, yüzüne karşı söyleyemediklerini söyleme, telefonla arayarak rahatsız edilme ve kendini başka birisi olarak tanıtma davranışlarının ortaokul öğrencileri arasındaki yaygın siber zorbalık davranışları olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siber zorbalık; Siber kurban; Siber zorba; İnternette zorbalık; Cep telefonunda zorbalık.

Introduction

Bullying both as traditional bullying and cyberbullying has drawn attention of many researchers in recent years (Antoniadou, 2013; Bayar and Uçanok, 2012; Çetinkaya, 2010; Hinduja and Patchin, 2010). Bullying exists in the schools or online. However, the way how bullying occurs and the effects of traditional bullying and cyberbullying can be different. Therefore, how cyberbullying is different from traditional should be distinguished first.

Traditional bullying means "malicious attempts to humiliate an individual" (Di Martino, 2003, p.2) and it also includes disturbing another person physically, verbally and psychologically (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton and Scheidt, 2001). Traditional bullying can also be defined as "aggressive behaviors or intentional

harm by one person or a group, generally carried out repeatedly and over time, and involves a power differential" (Nansel et al., 2001). Traditional bullying was studied by many researchers but cyberbullying is not known well enough.

Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell and Tippett (2008, p.376) defines cyber-bullying is "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself".

Cyberbullying occurs mostly through two electronic devices: computers and mobile phones (Patchin and Hinduja, 2006). Cyber bullies threaten, harass, embarrass or exclude victims by using those electronic devices (Mishna, McLuckie and Saini, 2009). The use of internet and the technological devices increased and young people started to use social networking websites, web cameras and instant messaging. Therefore, they began to have different experiences out of their schools and homes (Mishna, McLuckie and Saini, 2009).

Joinson (1998) argues that people in cyberspace behave in a way they do not in real life because of the effects of disinhibition. Disinhibition means the situation that behaviors are not restrained (Mason, 2008). Similarly, Suler (2004) states that people behave in a different way on internet comparing with their face-to-face communication since they are not restrained. In cyberspace, people do not use the social, affective or contextual sings as much as they use in face-to-face

communication. Therefore, they become less sensitive and less reg-
retful for the cyber bullying behaviors that they perform (Mason, 2008).

In cyberbullying, perpetrators have no direct social disapproval
and punishment for engaging in bullying others and they also do not see
that victims suffer (Willard, 2007). As a result, their behaviors are often
disinhibited and become ruder, harsher, and more difficult to control
(Hinduja and Patchin, 2009). As a result of this, victims can get da-
maged mentally and academically (Antoniadou, 2013). Furthermore,
victims may even think about committing suicide. According to the
results of the research in the United States, the number of cyberbullying
victims who attempted suicide was nearly twice compared to youth
who did not experience cyberbullying (Hinduja and Patchin, 2010).

There are several research abroad and in Turkey. They are mostly
about the cyberbullying among high school students. However, there is
a limited research on cyberbullying among secondary school students
in Turkey. Therefore, further research should be carried out in order to
examine the cyberbullying. With this regard, the purpose of study is to
investigate the prevalence of cyberbullying among secondary school
students in Bagcilar where is the most cosmopolitan area in Istanbul.
More specifically, in this research, the answers of the questions below
are searched;

1- What are the most typical cyberbullying behaviors?

2- Where does cyber bullying mostly happen?

Literature Review

There are limited research about cyberbullying in Turkey but the number of the research is increasing gradually. Şahin, Sarı, Özer and Er (2010) conducted a quantitative research with 12 high school students in Trabzon. The results of the research revealed that cyberbullying is more common among male students compared to females and the most widespread cyberbullying behavior is disturbing by calling with a private number.

According to the results of the research carried out with 269 secondary school students by Arıcak et al. (2008), 35.7 % of the participants were cyber bully, 5.5 % of the students were cyber victim and 23.8 % of them were both bully and victim. It was also found that male students showed more bully, victim and bully-victim behaviors than female students. In addition, 25 % of the victims stated that they informed their peers and parents about the cyberbullying while 30.6 % of them stated they tried active solutions such as blocking the bully.

Likewise, Aydoğan, Dilmaç and Deniz (2009) made a research with secondary school students and the results of the is research showed that 32.6 % of the secondary school students became cyber victim and 22.5% exhibited cyber bullying behaviors. Additionally, Ayas (2011) found that 17.4 % of the high school students were exposed to cyber bullying and 15.5 % of them showed cyber bullying behaviors.

According to the results of the research of Bayar and Uçanok (2012) conducted with 1263 secondary school and high school stu-

dents, students who were not involved in traditional and cyber bullying perceived their school and teachers more positively than bullies and bully-victims.

Baker and Kavşut (2007) carried out a research with 228 high school students and 28 % of the students were found to be cyber bully and 30 % were cyber victims. The results showed that high school students in Turkey were tend to cyberbullying. It was also found that male students not only cyberbully more than girls but also they were exposed to cyberbullying more than girls.

The results of the research of Özdemir and Akar (2011) conducted on cyber bullying with 336 high school students revealed that 14 % of the students were exposed to cyberbullying and 10 % of them cyberbullied during previous month. It was also found that the most common cyberbullying place is a social sharing site "Facebook" and mobile phones are the mostly used devices for cyberbullying. In addition, Ekşi (2012) conducted a research with 508 vocational high school students and the findings revealed that narcissism has an indirect effect of cyberbullying.

Dilmaç (2009) made a research with 666 university students and the results showed that 22,5 % of the university students cyberbullied and 55,3 % were exposed to cyber bullying at least once during their lifetime. Additionally, male students were found to be cyber bully more than females. Similarly, Arıcak (2009) conducted a research with 695 university students and found that 20 % of the students cyber bullied at

least one time and 54 % of them were victims of cyber bullying. The result also revealed that nearly half of the participants pretended to be someone else on the internet or cell phone at least one time.

Method

Design

This study employed a quantitative methodology. Creswell (2012) states that quantitative research is used to collect data from a large number of people using predetermined instruments in order to describe a research problem. Convenience sample was used to choose participants.

Participants

This descriptive study were carried out with 231 students who attend to 7th and 8th grades at a secondary school in Bagcilar district of Istanbul during 2013-2014 academic year.

Table 1. The Participants

Gender	7th grade	8th grade	Total (n)
Male	57	53	110
Female	58	63	121
Total	115	116	231

110 of the participants (47.6 %) were male and 121 of them (52.4 %) were female and they were 12-14 year-old. In addition, 115 of the participants were 7th grade and 116 of them were 8th grade students. Purposive sampling was used to choose the students.

Procedure

The aim of the research is to determine the prevalence of cyber bullying that students practiced and experienced. Therefore, participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire in their classrooms in order to explore the frequency of cyber bullying behaviors which are experienced by students as both bullies and victims. Students were informed about the aims of the study and volunteer students were asked to take part in the research.

Instrument

Cyber Bullying Scale and Cyber Victimization Scale (Arıcak, Tanrıkulu and Kınay; 2012) and a brief demographic information form including questions about participants' gender, age and grade level were used.

The first part of the scale was personal information form, the second part involved 24 questions about the cyber bullying and the third part included 24 questions related to cyber victimization. 4 point likert scale was used to determine the frequency of cyber bullying behaviors and the scale included those four points: "never", "sometimes", "often", "always". In order to determine cyber victimization, yes / no type questions were used. The variance of the cyber bullying scale was found to be 50.58 % and Cronbach alpha value was .95. Similarly, Cronbach alpha value of the cyber victim scale was .89 and the variance was 30.17 %.

Data Collection

The participants were informed briefly about the cyber bullying and the aim of the study and they were also assured about anonymity and confidentiality before they filled in the questionnaire. Verbal consent was obtained from the students and they were asked to answer the questionnaire truthfully. The survey lasted approximately 30 minutes in each class and the data was collected in May, 2014 by the researcher. Data collection lasted four days.

Data Analysis

In order to investigate the prevalence and types of cyber bullying and cyber victimization, frequency analyses were performed. For data collection, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) was used.

Results

52.4 % of the participants are female and 47.6 % of them are male. 6.5 % of the participants are 12 years old, 45.5 % of them are 13 years old and 48.0 % of them are 14 years old and above. 49.8 % of the participants attend seventh grade and 50.2 % of them attend eighth grade.

According to the results of the study, 21.2 % of the students surf on the internet for one hour, 22.1 % surf for two hours, 16.5 % for three hours and 11.7 % for four hours. 21.6 % of the students use internet for five hours and more. 6.9 % of the students reported that they do not surf daily on the internet.

The results showed that 51.1 % of the students do not use computer daily without internet. 26.8 % of the students use computer daily for one hour, 7.4 % use computer for two hours, 3.9 % use computer for three hours, 3.0 % use computer for four hours and 7.8 % use computer for five hours and more.

Table 2. The Purpose of Using İnternet

Purpose	Male %	Female %	Total%
Study/do homework	60.9	77.7	69.7
Watch film	42.7	47.1	45.0
Social networking websites	87.3	74.4	80.5
Play games	66.4	28.9	46.8
Do shopping	3.60	5.00	4.30
Download/listen to music	36.4	51.2	44.2
Send/check e-mails	10.9	5.0	7.8
Get the news	14.5	14.0	14.3

The results related to the purposes of using internet revealed that 80.5 % of the students use internet mostly for social networking websites. 69.7 % of the students reported that they use internet for studying or for doing homework. 46.8 % of the students play games and 45.0 % watch films on the internet. While 44.2 % of the students listen to music on the net, 14.3 % use internet to get the news. 7.8 % of the students use internet for sending or checking e-mails and 4.3 % of the students do shopping online.

The results related to gender difference showed that 87.3 % of the male students use internet daily for social networking sites, 66.4 % play games on the internet and 60.9 % do homework or study. However, it

was found that most of the female students (77.7 %) use internet for doing homework or studying lesson. 74.4 % use internet for social networking websites and 51.2 % use internet for listening to music.

In addition, while 83.5 % of the students were found to use facebook as a social networking website, 6.1 % were found to use twitter. 10.4 % of the students reported that they do not use any social networking sites.

According to the results of the study, 33.3 % of the students introduced themselves as someone else on the internet. 23.8 % of the students opened an e-mail account using the name of someone else and 18.6 % opened a social networking account using the name of someone else. 15.2 % of the students reported that they use their friend's password secretly and 12.6 % used personal information of someone else on the internet.

42.9 % of the students stated that on the internet or mobile phones, they can easily tell the things that they can never tell face to face. While 19.5 % of the students sent unpleasant messages to their friends, 16.9 % sent insulting messages on the internet. Furthermore, 12.6 % of the students sent threatening messages on the internet. While 8.2 % of the students sent unpleasant messages to their friends, 10 % sent insulting messages through mobile phones. Moreover, 7.8 % of the students sent threatening messages through mobile phones. 24.2 % of the students also stated that they disturbed people by calling them. The results also showed that 10.4 % of the students published unpleasant

news about someone on the internet and 5.6 % spread false rumors on the internet while 6.9 % spread false rumors through mobile phones.

According to the results, 16 % of the students sent photos of their friends as an e-mail or message on the internet while 12.1 % sent photos of their friends without permission via mobile phones. It was also found that 10 % of the students published photos of their friends or someone else without their consent on the various websites.

33.3 % of the students stated that they called people bad names on the internet and 25.5 % of the students teased another person on the internet while 13.9 % teased another person through mobile phones.

Table 3. Common Cyber Bullying Behaviors Experienced by Victims

Cyber bullying behaviors	Percentage
Getting unpleasant messages on the internet	45.9
Saying things online that would not be said face to face	43.3
Getting disturbed via phone	39.0
Introducing oneself as someone else	33.3
Opening an e-mail account using their names	28.6
Getting insulting messages	26.8
Using someone's password	26.0
Opening an social networking account using their names	25.1
Attempt to enter someone's account	20.3
Name-calling	21.6
Getting threats	19.5

According to the results about cyber-victimization, 28.6 % of the students reported that someone opened an e-mail account using their names and 25.1 % reported someone opened an social networking account such as facebook and twitter using their names. 26 % reported that their passwords were used by another person and 20.3 % reported someone attempted to enter their account secretly.

In addition, 43.3 % of the students reported that they were said things online that would not be said face to face. 21.6 % of the students were found to be exposed to name-calling on the internet and 39 % reported that they were disturbed via phone.

Table 4. Cyber Bullying Behaviors on The Internet and Via Mobile Phones

Cyber bullying behaviors	On the internet %	Via mobile phones %
Getting unpleasant message	45.9	15.6
Being insulted	26.8	10
Being threatened	19.5	9.1
Being teased	18.6	8.2
Spreading rumors	17.7	7.8
Pictures sent by someone without permission	10.8	6.9

Students were found to be exposed cyber-bullying both on the internet and on the mobile phone. The findings demonstrated that 19.5 % of the students were threatened on the internet and 9.1 % received threatening messages through mobile phones. 45.9 % of the students got unpleasant messages on the internet while 15.6 % got unpleasant

messages through mobile phones. 10.8 % stated that someone publis-hed their photos on some websites and 8.2 % reported their photos were sent as an e-mail without permission while 6.9 % stated their photos were sent to other people through mobile phones.

Additionally, 17.7 % of the students reported that someone spread false rumors about them on the internet while 7.8 % stated so-meone spread false rumors about them via mobile phones. Also, 26.8 % of the students received insulting messages on the internet and 10 % got insulting messages on the mobile phone. Moreover, some people teased 18.6 % of the students on the internet and 8.2 % of the students on the mobile phone.

Discussion

In this research, the prevalence of cyber bullying and common cyber bullying behaviors were examined. The results showed that se-condary school students were exposed to various cyber bullying beha-viors.

According to the results, nearly half of the students (49.8 %) use internet daily more than 2 hours a day. Students were found to surf on the internet averagely 2.97 hours a day. Özbay (2013) similarly found that students surf on the net averagely 2.79 hours.

There results showed that more than half of the male students use internet for social networking websites, for playing games and for studying or doing homework. Likewise, more than half of the female students use internet for studying lesson or doing homework, for social

networking websites and for listening to music.

The most prevalent cyber bullying behaviors that students experienced were getting unpleasant messages on the internet, saying things online that would not be said face to face, being disturbed via phone and introducing yourself as someone else. Arıcak et al. (2008) also found that saying things online that would not be said face to face was the most common cyber bullying behavior.

The results of the study revealed that 33.3 % of the students introduced themselves as someone else on the internet. Similarly, Arıcak (2009) found that nearly half of the students pretended to be someone else on the internet. Also, Çetinkaya (2010) found that 25.2 % of the secondary school students introduced themselves as somebody else.

The rate of exposure to various cyber bullying behaviors on the internet or via mobile phones was found to be lower or higher in different research. For instance, spreading rumors (7.8 %) on the internet were found to be common in this research. Arıcak et al. (2008) found that spreading rumors (14.7 %) was more common among secondary school students. In contrary, Çetinkaya (2010) found that spreading rumors (2.9 %) was not very common.

Finally, cyber bullying through mobile phones were also found to be high in this research. The most widespread cyber bullying behavior via mobile phone was being disturbed (39 %). Similarly, Şahin, Sarı, Özer and Er (2010) found that disturbing by calling with a private number was the most prevalent cyber bullying behavior. The other

common cyber bullying behaviors via phone were getting unpleasant messages (15.6 %), getting insulting messages (10 %), receiving threatening messages (9.1 %), being teased (8.2 %) and spreading rumors (7.8 %). Likewise, Arıcak et al. (2008) found that being threatened (22.8 %), being insulted (20.2 %), spreading rumors (16.4 %) and being teased (13.9 %) via mobile phones are common cyber bullying behaviors. However, Çetinkaya (2010) found that being threatened (3.9 %) and getting hurtful messages (3.5 %) via mobile phone were not very common.

Conclusion

The research about cyber bullying among students is increasing day by day and the studies about cyber bullying have showed that cyberbullying is emerging as a problem among students. However, there is limited research in Turkey about cyber bullying and hence, this study aimed to describe the common cyberbullying behaviors among secondary school students.

The findings of this study showed that secondary school students experience different cyber bullying behaviors. Getting unpleasant messages on the internet, saying things online that would not be said face to face, being disturbed via phone and introducing yourself as someone else are the most prevalent cyber bullying behaviors. In addition, students experience cyber bullying both on the internet and via mobile phone.

The participants of this study do not represent all secondary

school students. Further research can be carried out with a larger group from different types of school. In addition, the views of teachers, school administrators and parents can be included and qualitative designs can be used to get information in depth for further research.

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