

# University Students' Views about Their Cyber bullying Behaviors and Self-Exposition

Ertuğrul Usta

Computer Education and Instructional Technology Department, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey

## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the views of university students on the presence and exposure of cyber bully behavior. The research study group consists of 10 male students who are higher education students. One of the qualitative research methods is "case study". In this direction, a "semi-structured interview form" was used to identify the behaviors and opinions of students and individual interviews were held with each student. In the analysis of the obtained data, "content analysis" technique was used. As a result of the content analysis, university students were exposed to bullying behaviors at different aspects and it was reached that they are doing bullying behaviors themselves. In addition, students' opinions are sought to reduce cyber bully behavior. The findings of the research were discussed in the literature and suggestions were made for students, their families and educators as well as for future researches on cyber bullying.

**Keywords:** Cyber bullying, Cyber victim, Internet technology, Qualitative Research

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Cyber Bullying

Today, the use of these technologies is widespread in almost every field, depending on the rapid developments in information and communication technologies and the living conditions we are in. The use of these technologies, especially the internet and mobile phones, is growing at a rapid pace and creating many inland facilities.

However, the unlimited, uncontrolled and prohibited use of the possibilities created by information and communication technologies cause some disadvantages. Examples of these adverse events are; Internet addiction, information theft, copying, easily accessible pornographic pages or sexual harassment through electronic means of communication (Erdur, Baker & Kavşut, 2007). Similarly, enabling information and communication tools to store and manipulate the identity of an individual can affect the communication process and its consequences negatively (Bargh & MacKenna, 2004; Balkis, Duru, Buluş, 2005).

The frequent use of information and communication technologies in the field of education has led to the widespread use of these technologies and their use by students. One of the most important problems brought about by this situation is to move bullying behaviors in schools to cyber world. This situation led to the observation of a new tyranny among young people called cyber bullying (Peker, Eroglu, Ada, 2012; Dilmaç, 2009; Çetin et al, 2012).

Using the information and communication technologies of the common point of cyber bullying definitions when analyzing the literature it seems that there are behaviors that are done;

- A) Intentionally,
- B) In the repeating form,
- C) For the purpose of harm.

Here, some researchers and writers have described the cyber bully in the following form;

Cyber bullying is defined as a form of social aggression made through electronic means of communication (Lacey, 2007). Paris S. Strom and Robert D. Strom describe cyber bullying as "the electronic form of peer bullying" (Strom & Strom, 2006). Belsey also describes cyber bullying as "repetitive hostile behavior by an individual or group to harm someone else by using information and communication technologies" (Belsey, 2007).

When studies of cyber bullying are examined, they are termed as concepts such as cyber bullying, online harm, electronic bullying, e-bullying, online social aggression, messaging typing on mobile phones, typhoon, cyber harm, digital bullying and internet bullying "(Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Williams & Guerra, 2007; Wolak, Mitchell, Finkelhor, 2006; Horzum & Ayas, 2011; Peker, Eroglu, Ada, 2012).

Bullying behaviours can also be transmitted via electronic mail, discussion groups, chat rooms, instant messaging, newsgroups, messages or digital images. One of the most important aspects cyber bullying is that cyber bully can easily hide his/her identity. Since the bully has the possibility to hide his identity, the bully can easily reach the aim of disturbing, scaring or making victims feel helpless, feeling free to disobey social norms, and other behaviours involving relational bullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2009).

Other important aspects of cyber bullying are; as the cyber field cannot be controlled sufficiently, the cybercrime can easily reach its purpose and it can be known to many people in a short time. From the other side, the internet environment makes it impossible to perceive the non-verbal messages and personal-physical features which are important in communication, which causes misinterpretation in the communication process (Bargh & MacKenna, 2004).

### *1.2 Cyber Victimization*

Cyber victimization is the victimization of an individual or group, private or legal person, technical or relational manner, and material or moral victimization of these behaviors through information and communication technologies (Horzum & Ayas, 2011).

According to the victims, it is impossible to escape from this kind of misconduct because it is an invariable part of their lives as a form of social life, fun to do homework. (Campbell, 2005). So, many victims do not report bullied events to adults because adults do not think this bullying can stop and many of them think it will restrict internet access. Emotional reactions reported by the victims; Feelings of humiliation, uneasiness, stress, fear of going to school, anxiety, loneliness and suicidal tendencies. (Campfield, 2006). Similarly, according to Campfield (2006), bullying is about bullying, power and control, whether in the school or online, and being criticized over a website can be as destructive as in real life.

### *1.3 The Purpose*

The aim of this research is to determine the negative effects of students on emotions and thoughts by determining the opinions of university students on the presence and exposure of cyber bullying, and to contribute to studies on prevention of cyber cyberbullying especially in other studies to be done in this subject

## **2. Methodology**

This research is a qualitative study aimed at determining the opinions and evaluations of university students about the presence and exposure of cyber bullying behaviors.

### *2.1 Research Sample*

People to participate in the interviews were selected from college students who were eager to talk about cyber bullying. Participants consisted of a total of 10 men, aged 20-26 (age average 23), who were studying at a university.

### *2.2 Data Collection Tool*

The research was conducted as a survey based on data obtained by a questionnaire. In order to determine In the second semester of the 2016-2017 academic years, open-ended questions were asked to evaluate and write on university students' views on bullying and exposure to bullying. Open-ended questions provide a flexible approach to the subject that the researcher wishes to investigate from one side, while preventing important variables related to the subject from being overlooked (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Students are exposed to these open-ended questions: "How many times have you bothered others via social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail?", "How many times did you call others by a bad name in social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times did you say unscrupulous things to others via social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times did you say that you will hurt or beat others by social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times have you threatened others by social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? " "Did you make something to make people to not be loved by others through social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times have you been disturbed by others by social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times have you been called by a bad name by others through social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times have others told you unscrupulous things through social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times that you are said that you will be hurt or beat by others via social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", " How many times did you threaten others by social networks like Facebook and twitter, text messages and e-mail? ", "How bullying behaviours can be reduced?". It has been emphasized that answers to these questions in the most elaborate way are very important in terms of how they can reduce the bullying behaviours.

### *2.3 Data Analysis*

Collected data analyzed by content analysis method that consists the analysis of the data, determination of the themes, and organizing the themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). After the interviews, the camera recordings were transferred into the text. The speaking is written without any corrections. In qualitative researches, in order to ensure the study of validity and reliability called "triangulation", opinions were taken from the participants in addition to the camera recordings and short notes were taken by the reporter. At the end of all these studies, the university students studied ten students, created themes and sub-themes and the necessary arrangements were made by the researcher. Direct citations were also made from participants. Students were given numbers from 1 to 10 when exams were made [S: 1 (Student: 1), S: 2, (Student: 2)]. Obtained findings are arranged in both explanations and tables.

### 3. Findings

In this section, findings obtained from investigation are presented in four categories. This category are; Exhibited bullying behaviours and exposed bully behaviours, student suggestions on prevention or reduction of cyberbullying, emotions and thoughts experienced as a result of exposed bullying behaviours..

The frequency distribution in which students exhibit the type of cyberbullying behaviour is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Exhibited Bullying Behaviours

Cyber Bully Behaviors	Student (f)
Sending messages with insult / sexual content / threats via email	2
Get information on the computer without getting permission	1
Talking with insults / sexual content / threats in the chat room	2
Sending messages with insults / sexual content / threats via SMS	1
Talking with insults / sexual content / threats in online games	3
Disturbing by private number	3
Taking and spreading unauthorized photo / video	1
Accessing private messages by taking passwords of Messenger and e-mail accounts	2
<b>Total(f)</b>	<b>15</b>

According to the information in the table, the most common bullying behaviours are bullying with special numbers and insulting / sexual / threatening behaviours in online games. Some of the behaviours of these students are as follows:

S:5 "I did not called or posted, but it's what I did. I do it when I'm bored. I do not do what I'm not sincere I do friends I already know, but I do not tell them then I know they will do it. Mine are innocent jokes...."

The student there thinks that they are just innocent jokes. However, bullying behaviour and jokes are concepts that should not be confused. Although it is difficult to make a distinction, it differs in terms of the results it creates.

S:8"An online player was cursing when the player lost the game. I could not stand it when he swore and I did it to him; He did not know who I was. ..."

The noticeable behaviour in exhibited cyber bullying behaviours is acting as desired in advantage of privacy in internet. The frequency distribution of the types of exposed cyber bullying behaviours are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Exposed cyber bully behaviours

Cyber Bully Behaviors	Student (f)
Receiving messages with insult / sexual content / threats via email	3
Getting information from your computer without permission	1
Insults in the chat room / sexual content / threatening conversations	2
Receiving insult / sexual / threatening messages via SMS	1
Talking with insults / sexual content / threats in online games	2
Disturb by private number	3
Unauthorized photographing / distribution and dissemination	2
Accessing private messages by retrieving the passwords of Messenger and e-mail accounts	2
Damage to someone who is familiar with the Internet	1
Kicking out of the rooms where chat and online games are played	1
<b>Total (f)</b>	<b>18</b>

The most exposed type of tyranny is the bullying behaviour of receiving insulting / sexual / threatening messages through e-mail and being disturbed by special attention. This is the expression of some of the students who are exposed to bullying behaviour:

S:2"Sexually-motivated mails usually come from men or men who introduce themselves as girls. We do not believe in such things. This is why we even fought some. ..."

As it can be understood from the expression "This is why we even fought," this bullying in the virtual environment has been moved to real life and reached to the dimensions of violence.

S:6"The numbers I do not know are calling me. Sometimes they say they miscalled and then they swore and turn off. Sometimes they send ridiculous messages..."

There is a thumping thing on the theme of exposure to cyber bullying; people are acting as they want taking the advantage of the privacy of the people there and a situation that starts in the virtual environment is also affecting real life.

The frequency distribution of feelings and thoughts towards bullying behaviours of students is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Emotions and thoughts according to cyber bullying

Emotions and Thoughts	Student (f)
Humiliation	1
Sadness	4
Hate	5
Request for revenge	3
Anger	6
<b>Total (f)</b>	<b>19</b>

According to Table 3, when the concepts of anger ( $f = 6$ ), hate ( $f = 5$ ) and sadness ( $f = 4$ ) were more pronounced by students, these concepts were more strongly related to feelings and thoughts, whereas humiliation ( $f = 1$ ) and wanting revenge ( $f = 3$ ) were less pronounced by the students, these concepts seem to be in a weaker relationship with the emotional and thought contacts.

#### *Student Suggestions*

In order to avoid the students' opinions on the prevention or reduction of cyberbullying, students were asked to express their views on how to reduce cyberbullying behaviours.

The students stated that the Ministry of National Education should do some studies. The responsibilities of the students to the Ministry of National Education can be clearly summarized by "Programs prepared by the Ministry should include information on ethical use as well as teaching students how to use computers and the internet. This awareness should be given to the students." In the light of these expressions, it can be concluded that there are not enough studies about ethical internet usage in the schools or the studies are not covered by all the students.

Some students have stated that nobody can do anything. When these students expressed their views they talked in the form of "I do not think anybody can do anything. Everything belongs to us; we cannot prevent anyone wanting to do."

Another student opinion is that everyone needs to work together and work together. The views of these students as follows: "School, family and child should take joint responsibility. If teachers in school provide enough information to students, if parents show their children adequate attention and take responsibility for their children, then such behaviour can be reduced."

Lastly, the students who expressed their opinions about the individuals who use the internet and suffered the victim stated that the individuals should be conscious. Students' opinions in this sense can be summarized like this: "Individuals should be sensitive and should complain to the places concerned when the bullying situation occurs. Deterrent implementations are required."

There are students who do not give an opinion about what the individual needs to do.

#### **4. Results and Suggestions**

We need to know that communication technologies that give direction to collectivity are the risks that they present as well as the risks they present. When these technologies are used out of control, they can cause some adverse effects, especially on the development of children and young people. Identification and elimination of these adverse effects are of utmost importance in terms of community health as well as in the case of children and young people. In this study, the following results were obtained in the study of cyberbully behaviors on university students.

Among the students, the most common cyber-bullying behaviors seem to be the behavior of "special tricks" and "insulting / sexual / threatening conversations in online games." In a survey conducted by 264 high school students, It has been found that it shows bullying behaviors. When the literature is examined, it is seen in this direction. There is a parallel between the opinions of the students on this subject and other research results.

According to the results of the content analysis conducted to find out what type of bullying behaviors the students are exposed to, it was concluded that the most common types of bullying behaviors were "receiving insulting / sexual / threatening messages via e-mail" and "disturbing from private number". In this regard, it has been determined that some of the high school students do not know much about this issue and some of the teachers delayed the intervention because some of the teachers did not use the mobile phone.

According to the results of the content analysis conducted by the students to learn feelings and thoughts on bullying behaviors, it can be said that the concepts of "anger", "hatred" and "sadness" are expressed more than the students whereas the concepts of "humiliation" and "desire for revenge" are less frequently encountered. In this regard, a study on regular internet users university students has resulted in that hostile emotions and psychotic symptoms are two important variables that significantly correlate with cyberbullying. In addition, in a study of individuals exposed to cyberspace, it has been stated that the vast majority of individuals who are exposed to online bulb behaviors experience "anger" and "frustration" after this behavior.

Finally, the question was asked to the students how to reduce "bullying behaviors?"

"The education programs prepared by the Ministry of National Education are not sufficient, the school, the

family and the child should take joint responsibility and the individuals should be more sensitive to the bullying" in order to establish the awareness of ethical internet use.

It is stated that the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the school staff, the families and the students is important responsibilities for the prevention of the cyberbullying, the emotions of the students of significance from these responsibilities, the responsibility for the use of the informatics technologies.

Cyber bullying is a threat to the healthy development of bullying young people. Therefore, it is necessary to take various measures to prevent the adverse effects of young people on their development. It is very important to inform the school staff, parents and students about the use of technology and to establish a business association.

## References

- Balkıs, M. Duru, E. & Buluş, M. (2005). Şiddete yönelik tutumların öz yeterlik, medya, şiddete yönelik inanç, arkadaş grubu ve okula bağlılık duygusu ile ilişkisi.[The Relationship between Attitudes Toward Violence and Self Efficacy Media Belief Toward Violence Peer Group and Sense of Belonging to School] *Ege Eğitim Dergisi*, 2(6), 81-97.
- Bargh, J.A. and McKenna, K.Y.A. (2004) The Internet and Social Life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 573-590
- Belsey, B. (2007). "Cyberbullying: A real and growing threat." *ATA Magazine*, 88(1), pp. 14-21.
- Campbell, M. A. (2005) Cyber bullying: An old problem in a new guise? *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 15(1), pp. 68-76.
- Campbell, D. C. (2006). *Cyberbullying and victimization: Psychosocial Characteristics of Bullies, Victims, and Bully-victims* Retrieved from <http://etd.lib.umt.edu/theses/available/.../umi-umt-1107.pdf>
- Çetin, B. Eroğlu, Y. Peker, A. Akbaba, S., & Pepsöy, S. (2012). Ergenlerde ilişkisel-karşılıklı bağımlı benlik kurgusu, siber zorbalık ve psikolojik uyumsuzluk arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi.[The Investigation of Relationship among Relational Interdependent Self-Construal, Cyberbullying, and Psychological Disharmony in Adolescents: An Investigation of Structural Equation Modelling] *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri*, 12(2), 637-653.
- Dılmaç, B. (2009). Sanal zorbalığı yordayan psikolojik ihtiyaçlar: Lisans öğrencileri için bir ön çalışma. [Psychological Needs as a Predictor of Cyber bullying: a Preliminary Report on College Students] *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 9(3), 1291-1325.
- Erdur-Baker, Ö. and F. Kavşut (2007) 'Cyberbullying: A New Face of Peer Bullying', *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 27(7): 31-42.
- Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2009). *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*. California, Corwin Press.
- Horzum, M. B. & Ayas, T. (2011). Ortaöğretim Öğrencilerinin Sanal Zorba Ve Mağdur Olma Düzeylerinin Okul Türü Ve Cinsiyet Açısından İncelenmesi. [The Examination Of Cyberbullying And Victim Levels Of High School Students According To School Type And Gender] *Journal of Educational Sciences & Practices*, 10(20).
- Kowalski, R.M., & Limber, S.P. (2007). *Electronic bullying among middle school students. Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, S22-S30.
- Lacey, B. (2007). Social aggression: a study of internet harassment. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Long Island University.
- Peker, A. Eroğlu, Y. & Ada, Ş. (2012). Ergenlerde Siber Zorbalığın Ve Mağduriyetin Yordayıcılarının İncelenmesi [The Investigation Of Predictors Of Cyberbullying And Cybervictimization In Adolescents]. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*. 12(2), 185-206
- Strom, P. S., & Strom, R. D. (2005). Cyberbullying by Adolescents: A Preliminary Assessment. *The Educational Forum*, 70, 21-36.
- Williams, D., & Guerra, N.G. (2007). Prevalence and predictors of internet bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, S14- S21.
- Wolak, J., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2006). *Online Victimization: 5 Years Later* (No. 07-06-025). Alexandria, VA, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.
- Yıldırım, A. & Şimşek, H. (2011). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri* [Qualitative research methods in the social sciences] (8. Baskı). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.