



# Examination of the Correlation Between 8<sup>th</sup> grade Students' Cyber Bully/Victim Behaviors and their Self-confidence Values

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## *Abstract*

In the study, the correlation between cyberbullying and cyber victimization, which is included in the digital literacy skill in the Social Studies Curriculum, and self-confidence value was examined. From this point of view, the research aims to determine the degree and direction of the correlation between 8<sup>th</sup> grade students cyberbully/victim behaviors and their self-confidence value. As a data collection tool; The CyberBully/Victim Scale developed by Ayas and Horzum (2010); The Self-Confidence Scale developed by Akin (2007), and the Personal Information Form developed by the researcher were used to access personal information. The research sample consists of a total of 455 students studying at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of public and private schools in the Nilufer, Yildirim, and Kestel districts of Bursa. Spearman's Rho Correlation analysis was used in the analysis of the data. As a result of the study, a statistically significant moderate-level inverse correlation was found between students cyberbully/victim status and their tendency levels of self-confidence.

*Keywords:* cyberbullying, cyberbully, cyber victim, value, self-confidence.

## 1. Introduction

Innovation is progressing rapidly in the field of education as well as in many areas. The most common of these innovations is the use of technology in education. Education is not the only technology in student life. Technology not only enables easier and faster access to scientific information, but also impacts social relationships (Tanrikulu et al., 2013).

The rapid increase in Internet use in all disciplines and age groups has created critical remorse from today's individuals. Increasing number of mass media users, aging general network users, easy access to general network applications for everyone, interpersonal communication via social media and provision of other general network applications via mass media being easy always produces positive results. If the Internet is used improperly, carelessly, and unknowingly, these situations can cause serious problems. Today, cyberbullying and suffering is a sense of meaning through the virtual world, where individuals want to share their personal lives through applications in the virtual world, express their feelings and thoughts with unlimited freedom, and

prove themselves to others. Brings to trying to meet. Better than others and take revenge. Recently, the situation of cyberbullying and victims is widespread due to the use of mass media in a wider segment. This is especially apparent among students in the world of education (Peker, 2013).

With the increasing use of technology among young people today, students can use technology tools to bully at school. Under these circumstances, one of the types of bullying among school students is a new type of bullying called “cyberbullying” (Ayas & Horzum, 2010). We believe that the effects of cyberbullying and the reflection of cyber damage are serious phenomena in our lives in interpersonal and family relationships, friendships, relationships with parents, educational processes, and many other social and human relationships increase.

### 1.1 *Value and values education*

In social life, everything is shaped according to values and compared with others. People often assimilate the values of their group, society, and culture and take them as criteria in their choices and judgments. Thus, they can reach general opinions such as more beautiful, appropriate, accurate, fairer, better, and more critical. Values are essential factors in determining normal or abnormal behavior in society. The affective dimension, which consists of personal behaviors and attitudes, customs and traditions, feelings of appreciation, morals and ethical values, etc., is indispensable for both individual and social life (Dilmac et al., 2009). Values are also criteria in the regulation, selection, evaluation, and decision-making processes of individuals. Values are the driving force in achieving the needs for love, respect, and self-actualization. With this aspect, values constitute a guiding, regulating, and motivating element in human life (Aydin & Gurler, 2012)

It is observed that there is serious corruption in human values in the world and Turkey. This situation reaches those who threaten humanity. As people move away from values, they lose their human characteristics. Almost all countries tend to find solutions to turn the bad situation into a positive one. As a result of the search for a solution, a new education model expressed as “values education” has been created to be implemented in schools (Yaman, 2012).

Values education strives to strengthen the transition process of values in education. These transitions are achieved through the training program and moral environment. Values education aims to develop ideas about values and their development through critical thinking, comparison of ideas, and analysis. When we examine the relationship between values education and moral development, we can say that values education and moral development focus on students' value development, but they also have differences. Values education expresses ideas about the values necessary for students while moral development focuses on the cognitive process (Yalar, 2010).

It is based on acquiring values in the educational processes to maintain the culture created in the historical process, reach the determined goals, and transfer them to the next generations. With the significant contribution of society, family, media, and education programs, it is aimed that people learn, adapt, and internalize universal, national, and spiritual values and transform them into behavior. Thus, students can become persons compatible with society developing their personalities in a healthy, balanced, and consistent way through the values education provided during the educational process (MoNE, 2017).

### 1. 2 *Self-confidence*

Mainly, self-confidence can be explained as believing in one's ideas, feelings, and learning ability. Since the existence of humanity, self-confidence has been affected by various experiences in family, school, and business life and is needed in every period of life. The dictionary

meaning of self-confidence is the confidence that an individual feels in himself/herself. A self-confident individual can look at the events s/he encounters realistically and positively, analyze his/her experiences correctly, make the right decisions and show active reactions to the changes in his/her life. The level of self-confidence can differ from person to person. The high or low self-confidence will make the individual successful or unsuccessful in directing his/her life as s/he wishes. Self-confidence is crucial as a determinant of failure or success in the process of being at peace with each individual's life (Yurtseven, 2011).

Self-confidence is one of the most significant factors that determine the actions of individuals. It is an expression that includes dimensions such as individuals' positive opinions about themselves, the belief that they can control events, knowing themselves with their truth and mistakes, being satisfied with themselves, and accepting themselves as they are (Gokkaya, 2017). Being aware of one's behavior, expectations, goals, and feelings; is essential for self-confidence. When asked about his/her thoughts about himself/herself, the individual should make favorable inferences with his/her likes and dislikes (Kasatura, 1998).

School-age people display certain behaviors that show their self-confidence levels. Individuals with low self-confidence levels exhibit excessive controlling attitudes. Moreover, they are also introverted, shy, quiet, and afraid of the possibility of failure. Therefore, they refrain from trying to do something, have difficulty establishing friendships, show attitudes dependent on their parents, have difficulty adapting to new situations, are emotionally overly sensitive and hurt, and constantly try to please others. Another behavior showing low self-confidence level is the lack of control, and individuals in this group have been stated to be bullies, blame others even for their own mistakes, be angry, aggressive, uncooperative, often need to ask their parents if they are loved, and have trust issues (Humphreys, 2002).

According to Lindenfield (2011), self-confidence is divided into two as internal confidence and external confidence. Internal confidence comes from people's self-emotions. Self-love, recognizing and accepting one's characteristics, thinking positively about oneself, setting realistic goals in line with their characteristics, and putting them into practice are among the elements of internal confidence. Individuals who are satisfied with themselves and at peace with themselves can be interpreted as having high-level internal confidence. External confidence is complementary to internal confidence. It is the behavior of the individual that s/he is pleased with himself/herself and that s/he accepts and loves himself/herself. It can be said that individuals with high internal confidence also have high external confidence. These two must be balanced for healthy communication (Akt. Gundogdu, 2019).

The correlation between cyberbullying/victim status, which is the sub-problem of digital literacy skills in the Social Studies Curriculum, and the self-confidence value were examined in the research. From this point of view, the research aims to determine the degree and direction of the correlation between 8th-grade students cyberbully/victim behaviors and their self-confidence value. In response to the problem of the study, answers were sought for the **questions** "Is there a correlation between the cyberbullying status and the self-confidence value?" and "Is there a correlation between cyber victimization experiences and self-confidence value?".

## 2. Method

The study was carried out with the quantitative research method and the relational survey model. The study, which aims to collect data to determine a group's main characteristics, is called the survey model (Buyukozturk et al., 2016). Relational survey models are research models that aim to determine the existence and/or degree of covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2009). The survey method reveals a situation to determine the selected group's

beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about a particular subject. Survey models are studies that aim to collect data to determine specific characteristics of a group (Buyukozturk et al., 2016).

### *2.1 Participants*

The current research was conducted with 455 students, 223 of which were girls and 232 were boys, studying at the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level in private and public secondary schools in Nilufer, Yildirim, and Kestel districts of Bursa province in the 2018-2019 academic year. In the research, 6 secondary schools were reached. Three of these schools are public and three are private schools. We especially selected the schools attended by students from different socio-economic levels.

### *2.2 Data collection tools*

In the current study, the Cyberbully/Victim Scale developed by Ayas and Horzum (2010) and the Self-Confidence Scale developed by Akin (2007) were used as data collection tools. In addition, the Personal Information Form developed by the researcher was used to reach the students’ personal information.

#### *2.2.1 Cyberbully/victim scale*

In the study, the Cyberbully and Victim Scale developed by Ayas and Horzum (2010) was used to determine students’ cyberbullying and cyber victimization. During the development phase of the scale, a question pool consisting of 30 items was created by examining the literature and conducting interviews and observations with primary school students, teachers, and families where the scale would be applied. A 5-point Likert type was used to express the level of agreement about the items on the scale. This rating type was “Always (5), Often (4), Sometimes (3), Rarely (2), and Never (1)”.

The Cyberbully/Victim Scale was created to determine the cyberbullying behaviors of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade primary school students. This scale consists of 19 items and three factors to reveal cyberbully/victim levels of the individuals who are “cyberbullying” and “who are cyberbullied” to their peers. The Cyberbullying/Victim Scale’s subdimension of Sexual Bullying in a Virtual Environment includes items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 18. Among these items, “Unauthorized and inappropriate photo-taking” constitutes the sample item of this factor. The sub-dimension of Inhibition and Harming in the Virtual Environment includes items 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16. “Deliberately sending infected mail” constitutes the sample item of this factor. The sub-dimension of Rumors in the Virtual Environment includes items 19, 20, 21, and 22. “Spreading and disseminating humiliating rumors on the Internet or phone” constitutes the sample item of this factor.

Students were expected to mark how often they used the words and actions in the cyberbully section and how often they were exposed to them in the cyber victim section. The lowest score obtained from the Cyberbully/Victim Scale is 19, and the highest score is 95. As the scores on the scale increase, the situation of being a bully and a victim also increases.

#### *2.2.2 Self-confidence scale*

In the study, the Self-confidence Scale developed by Akin (2007) was used to determine the students’ self-confidence levels. As a result of the factor analysis performed in the Self-confidence Scale study, a total of 33 items with two factors as internal confidence and external

confidence, were obtained and factor loadings of the scale are also ordered between the values of 31 and 75.

The Self-confidence Scale has the sub-dimensions of internal confidence and external confidence. The sub-dimension of internal confidence includes items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32. “I believe I can overcome my problems” is an example item for the internal confidence sub-dimension. The sub-dimension of external confidence includes items 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33. “I can understand other people’s criticisms” is an example item for the external confidence sub-dimension. The highest score obtained from the Self-confidence Scale is 165, and the lowest score is 33. A high score indicates a high-level self-confidence.

### 2.3 Data collection and data analysis

The data in the study were obtained by using the Cyberbully/Victim Scale and the Self-confidence Scale. The research was carried out with 8<sup>th</sup> grade students studying in private and public schools in the Nilufer, Yildirim, and Kestel districts of Bursa. Through Correlation analysis, the data were analyzed to find an answer to the main problem of the study, with the questions; “Is there a correlation between the cyberbullying status and the self-confidence value?” and “Is there a correlation between cyber victimization experiences and self-confidence value?”. The data were analyzed by applying correlation analysis. For the normality assumption, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed, and Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients were examined. The Skewness value in the study was between 1.507 and 941, and the Kurtosis value was between 571 and 185. Based on the findings, it was determined that the assumption of normal distribution could not be achieved. Spearman’s Rho Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the degree of the correlation between students cyberbully/victim behaviors and their self-confidence value tendencies due to the data not showing normal distribution.

## 3. Findings

Analyzes were made in order to determine the relationship degrees of students cyberbully and cyber victim behaviors and their tendencies towards self-confidence value and the direction of the relationships.

### 3.1 The correlation between cyberbully/victim and self-confidence value of the students participating in the research

The results of the correlation analysis showing the correlation between the students’ cyberbullying behavior scores and their self-confidence tendency scores are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The correlation analysis results showing the correlation between students’ cyberbullying behavior scores and self-confidence scores (n=455)

	Spearman's rho					
	Self-confidence			Cyberbully		
	r	P	N	r	p	N
Self-confidence	1.000	.	455	-.532**	.000	455
Cyberbully	-.532**	.000	455	1.000	.	455

\*\* . The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01.

According to the results of the correlation analysis given in Table 1, a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' cyberbullying behaviors and their levels of self-confidence ( $r = -.532$ ). According to the analysis results, as the cyberbullying scores increase, the self-confidence value tendency decreases.

The results of the correlation analysis showing the correlation between students' cyber victimization experiences and their self-confidence scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The correlation analysis results showing the correlation between students' cyber victimization experiences and their self-confidence scores (n=455)

	Spearman's rho					
	Self-confidence			Cyberbully		
	r	P	N	r	p	N
Self-confidence	1,000	.	455	-.595**	.000	455
Cyberbully	-.595**	.000	455	1,000	.	455

\*\* The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01.

According to the results of the correlation analysis, a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' cyber victimization behaviors and their self-confidence levels ( $r = -.595$ ). According to the analysis results, as the cyber victimization experiences increase, the self-confidence value tendency decreases.

### 3.2 *The cyberbully/victim and self-confidence value sub-dimensional correlations of the students participating in the research*

In this part of the analysis, the correlation analysis between the sub-dimensions was interpreted through the tables. Table 3 shows the correlation between the cyberbully scale's sub-dimensions and the self-confidence scale's sub-dimensions.

Table 3. The correlation analysis results of students' cyberbullying sub-dimension scores and self-confidence sub-dimension scores (N=455)

			Cyber bully	Sexual Bullying	Inhibition Harming	Spreading Rumors
Spearman's rho	Self-confidence	r	-.532**	-.513**	-.554**	-.579**
		p	.000	.000	.000	.000
Spearman's rho	Internal Confidence	r	-.544**	-.538**	-.558**	-.560**
		p	.000	.000	.000	.000
Spearman's rho	External Confidence	r	-.508**	-.483**	-.544**	-.584**
		p	.000	.000	.000	.000

\*\* The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01.

According to the results of the correlation analysis given in Table 3, a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' cyberbullying behaviors and their internal confidence level ( $r = -.544$ ) and external confidence level ( $r = -.508$ ). As the students' levels of cyberbullying behavior increase, their tendency levels of internal and external confidence decrease.

According to the study results, a high correlation was determined between the students' tendency levels of cyberbullying and internal confidence. In contrast, a low-level correlation was determined between their tendency levels of external confidence. It can be said that as students' tendency levels of cyberbullying increase, their tendency levels of internal confidence decrease.

There was a negative, significant, and high-level correlation between the students' tendency levels of self-confidence and sexual bullying ( $r=-.513$ ), inhibition and harming ( $r=-.554$ ), and spreading rumors in the virtual environment ( $r=-.579$ ). As the students' levels of self-confidence increase, their tendency levels of sexual bullying, inhibition, and harming and spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

There was a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation between the students' status of internal confidence and their scores of sexual bullying ( $r=-.538$ ), inhibition and harming ( $r=-.558$ ), and spreading rumors in the virtual environment ( $r=-.560$ ). As the students perform sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment, their tendency levels of internal confidence decrease.

There was a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation between the students' status of internal confidence and their scores of sexual bullying ( $r=-.483$ ), inhibition and harming ( $r=-.544$ ), and spreading rumors in the virtual environment ( $r=-.584$ ). As the students' levels of external confidence increase, their tendency levels of sexual bullying, inhibition, and harming and spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

According to the research results, a high-level correlation was determined between students' tendency levels of self-confidence, internal and external confidence, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment. In addition, there was a low-level correlation between their tendency levels of sexual bullying in the virtual environment. As the students' tendency levels of self-confidence, internal and external confidence increase, their tendency levels of spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

Table 4 shows the correlation between the Cyber Victim Scale's sub-dimensions and the Self-confidence Scale's sub-dimensions.

Table 4. The correlation analysis results of students' scores for cyber victim sub-dimension and self-confidence sub-dimension (N=455)

			Cyber bully	Sexual Bullying	Inhibition Harming	Spreading Rumors
Spearman's rho	Self-confidence	r	-.595**	-.560**	-.574**	-.591**
		p	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Internal Confidence	r	-.596**	-.568**	-.572**	-.585**
		p	.000	.000	.000	.000
	External Confidence	r	-.577**	-.540**	-.560**	-.579**
		p	.000	.000	.000	.000

\*\* . The correlation is significant at the level of 0.01.

According to the results of the correlation analysis in Table 4, a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' status of cyber victimization and their levels of internal confidence ( $r=-.596$ ) and external confidence ( $r=-.577$ ). As students' levels of cyber victimization increase, their tendency levels of internal and external confidence decrease.

According to the study results, a high-level correlation was determined between the students' tendency levels of cyber victimization and internal confidence. In contrast, a low-level correlation was determined between their tendency levels of external confidence. It can be said that as students' tendency levels of cyber victimization, their tendency levels of internal confidence decrease.

There was a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation between students' self-confidence and their tendency levels of sexual bullying ( $r=-.560$ ), inhibition, and harming ( $r=-.574$ ), and spreading rumors in the virtual environment ( $r=-.591$ ). As the students' levels of self-confidence increase, their cyber-bullying behavior levels of sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

According to the research results, while a high-level correlation was determined between students' tendency levels of self-confidence and spreading rumors in the virtual environment, a low-level correlation was determined between their tendency levels of sexual bullying in the virtual environment. As the students' tendency levels of self-confidence increase, their tendency levels of spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

There was a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation between the students' levels of internal confidence and their scores of sexual bullying ( $r=-.568$ ), inhibition and harming ( $r=-.572$ ), and spreading rumors in the virtual environment ( $r=-.585$ ). As the students' levels of self-confidence increase, their cyber victimization levels of sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

There was a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation between the students' levels of internal confidence and the scores of sexual bullying ( $r=-.540$ ), inhibition and harming ( $r=-.560$ ), and spreading rumors in the virtual environment ( $r=-.579$ ). As the students' levels of external confidence increase, their cyber victimization levels of sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

According to the research results, while a high-level correlation was determined between students' tendency levels of internal and external confidence and spreading rumors in the virtual environment, a low-level correlation was determined between their tendency levels of sexual bullying in the virtual environment. As the students' tendency levels of internal and external confidence increase, their tendency levels of spreading rumors in the virtual environment decrease.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

In this part of the study, the results of an analysis to determine the relationship between 8<sup>th</sup> grade cyberbullying/victim behavior and self-confidence were discussed, interpreted, and conclusions were drawn.

According to the results obtained from the study, it was observed that the cyberbully/victimization status of the students differed significantly according to the gender variable, and that male students were more cyberbullying and cyber-victimized than female students. It was observed that male students do more cyberbullying and cyber victimization than **female students in the studies by Şam (2017), Özer (2016), Öztürk (2019), Sipahi (2019) Özdemir (2015), Yalçın (2019), Çetinkaya (2010), Erdur-Baker and Kavşut (2007), Arıcak (2008), Dilmaç (2009), Serin (2012), Eksi (2012), Ayas and Horzum (2012), Başköy (2013), Özbay (2013), Yaman and Sönmez (2015), Çiftçi (2015) Korkmaz (2016), Metli (2017), and Yazar (2019)**. In the study by **Pekşen-Süslü (2016)**, when the cyberbullying/victimization scores of high school students were examined in terms of gender, and the cyberbullying scores were examined, it was found that male students had higher scores than female students and there was a significant difference. It was



determined that there was no significant difference in terms of gender in cyber victimization scores.

Unlike the results of the current study, Ünver and Koç (2017) did not find a significant difference between cyberbullying and gender in their study. Dilber (2013) found in his study that gender did not show a significant difference between being a cyberbully and being a victim. Gök (2019), Özer (2016), Özdemir and Akar (2014), and Tokunaga (2010) stated in their studies that there is no significant difference between exposure to cyberbullying and gender.

As a result of the research, a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' cyberbullying behaviors and their tendency levels of self-confidence. In other words, as students' status of cyberbullying increases, their tendency value of self-confidence decreases. A negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' scores of cyber victimizations and their tendency levels of self-confidence. As their cyber victimization experiences increase, their tendency of self-confidence value decreases.

When evaluated in terms of the sub-dimensions of the scales, a negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between the students' levels of cyberbullying behavior and internal and external confidence. As the students' levels of cyberbullying behavior increase, their tendency levels of internal and external confidence decrease. A negative, significant and moderate-level correlation was found between students' sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, spreading rumors in the virtual environment, and their internal and external confidence tendencies. As the students perform sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment, their tendency levels of internal confidence decrease.

A negative, significant, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' levels of cyber victimization behavior and internal and external confidence. As students' cyber victimization experiences increase, their tendency levels of internal and external confidence decrease. A statistically significant, negative, and moderate-level correlation was found between students' levels of sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, spreading rumors in the virtual environment, and internal and external confidence. As the students' levels of sexual bullying, inhibition and harming, and spreading rumors in the virtual environment increase, their internal and external confidence levels decrease.

#### *4.1 Recommendations*

(1) The current research was carried out before the epidemic process, which has been on the agenda recently. For this reason, it is recommended that researchers interested in the subject carry out similar studies to determine the change in cyberbullying or victimization conditions due to the intense use of mass media and the general network by students in this process of distance education due to the epidemic.

(2) The incidents of bullying and victimization are also experienced at young ages. It is seen that this situation affects the value tendencies of children as much as their psychological, sociological, and academic achievements. In this direction, it is recommended to move the studies on values to digital platforms.

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