



Ethnic-based cyberbullying: The role of adolescents' and their peers' attitudes towards immigrants

Derya Atalan Ergin 

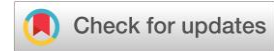
Ministry of National Education, Ankara, Turkey, deryaatalan@gmail.com

Gülendam Akgül 

Çankırı Karatekin University, Department of Social Work, Çankırı, Turkey, gulendamakgl@gmail.com

Neslihan Güney Karaman 

Ankara University, Department of Educational Psychology, Ankara, Turkey, neslihanguney@gmail.com



ABSTRACT The rate of migration has increased in Turkey in recent years. The school setting is the most important area for socialization and acculturation for immigrant adolescents. It is also the place where they might be exposed to negative attitudes and behaviors from their peers. Immigrant adolescents are at risk of experiencing ethnic-based cyberbullying; however, the research on its causes was limited despite the growing numbers of immigrant adolescents. We examined (a) the predictive role of adolescents' and their peers' attitudes toward immigrant adolescents' ethnic-based cyberbullying behaviors and (b) whether the immigrant background of the cyber victim affects adolescents' reasoning about cyberbullying toward immigrants. To address the research questions, we used a mixed-method design. The sample included 139 participants ($\bar{X}_{age}=13.16$, $SD=0.94$) who attended two different secondary schools in Ankara. We found that both adolescents' and their peers' negative attitudes predicted ethnic-based cyberbullying. However, a positive attitude toward immigrants was not found to be related to ethnic-based cyberbullying. Qualitative analysis results regarding ethnic discrimination were interpreted within the framework of behavioral privacy. The present study highlighted that immigrant students are more likely to be cyber victimized in the presence of a negative attitude toward immigrants at the class level.

Keywords: *Attitude toward immigrants, Ethnic-based cyberbullying, Immigrant students, Peer attitude toward immigrants*

Etnik temelli siber zorbalık: Ergenlerin ve akranlarının göçmenlere yönelik tutumlarının rolü

ÖZ Türkiye'de göç oranları son yıllarda artmaktadır. Okul ortamları göçmen çocuk ve ergenlerin sosyalleşme ve kültürleşme süreçlerinde önemlidir. Ancak göçmenler okullarda zorbalık ve ayrımcılık gibi olumsuz tutum ve davranışlara da maruz kalabilmektedir. Göçmen ergenler etnik temelli siber zorbalığa maruz kalma riski altındadır. Ancak göçmen ergenlerin artan sayılarına rağmen siber zorbalığın nedenlerine ilişkin çalışmaların sınırlı olduğu görülmektedir. Bu çalışmada a) ergenlerin ve akranlarının göçmen ergenlere yönelik tutumlarının etnik temelli siber zorbalık davranışlarındaki yordayıcı rolü ve (b) siber mağdurun göçmen olmasının ergenlerin göçmenlere yönelik siber zorbalık davranışında bir neden olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. Araştırma sorularının incelenmesinde karma desen yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın örneklemini Ankara'da iki farklı ortaokulda öğrenim gören 139 ergenden ($\bar{X}_{yas}=13,16$, $SS=0,94$) oluşmaktadır. Bulgular hem ergenin hem de akranının göçmenlere yönelik olumsuz tutumunun etnik temelli siber zorbalığı yordadığını göstermiştir. Ancak, göçmenlere yönelik pozitif tutum etnik temelli siber zorbalıkla ilişkili bulunmamıştır. Etnik ayrımcılığa yönelik nitel analiz sonuçları davranışsal gizlilik çerçevesinde yorumlanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları okul ortamında göçmenlere yönelik olumsuz tutumların göçmen öğrencilerin siber zorbalık davranışına maruz kalma ihtimallerini artırdığını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Akranların göçmenlere yönelik tutumu, Etnik temelli siber zorbalık, Göçmenlere yönelik tutum, Göçmen öğrenciler*

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is one of the crucial issues affecting schools and students. The number of immigrant students is increasing in recent years. It is reported that 13% of the students among the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries had an immigrant background (OECD, 2019). Turkey is the third country with the highest level of migration during 2010-2015 (OECD, 2017). Migration to Turkey in 2019 increased by 23.8% compared to the previous year. The number of registered immigrants between 10-14 years of age is 75.451 in Turkey (Turkish Statistical Institution, [TUIK], 2018). The increasing number of immigrant students in Turkey may be associated with some problems at schools.

Schools, where immigrant children and adolescents have the highest contact with members of the mainstream society, have a crucial role in their acculturation and adaptation (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012). Nevertheless, schools can also be environments where they are subjected to discrimination due to their ethnic backgrounds (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2019; Durkin et al., 2012; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019). Research has shown that discrimination in school is related to low levels of peer acceptance and high school deviance (D'hondt et al., 2017; Guerra et al., 2019).

Similar to traditional bullying victimization (Bayram Özdemir et al., 2019; Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2019), cyber victimization might be caused by victims' ethnic background. Therefore, attitudes toward these groups, especially in school settings would be related to increased cyberbullying toward them. In the present study, we expected that adolescents' and their peers' negative attitudes toward immigrants would be related to more cyberbullying behaviors. Moreover, attributing the causes of cyberbullying in imaginary scenarios to ethnicity would reveal their implicit negative attitudes toward their immigrant peers.

The Ethnic-based Cyberbullying

Bias-based cyberbullying is defined as "cyberbullying based on a victim's actual or perceived characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and national origin" (Henry, 2013). Much of the work related to bias-based cyberbullying focused on the gender and sexual orientation of the victims (Abreu & Kenny, 2018; Price-Feeney et al., 2018). Some studies in the literature prefer the term online racial discrimination or racial cyberbullying (Schumann et al., 2013; Tynes et al., 2008). Bias-based cyberbullying due to ethnicity is also called ethnic-based cyberbullying (EBC), which we use in the present study. Research on ethnic-based cyberbullying is limited.

Having a different ethnic background elevates the risk of victimization for both traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Bjereld et al., 2015; Comas-Forgas et al., 2017). Cyber victimization was more likely to be experienced by immigrant students (Comas-Forgas et al., 2017; Llorent et al., 2016) or students with different ethnic origins (Rodríguez-Hidalgo et al., 2018). Cyber victims of racial bullying reported that factors such as religious beliefs, language, and name were perceived as causes of cyberbullying toward them (Affan, 2013). The immigrant students were aware of the discrimination toward themselves and attributed their victimization to their different nationalities (Comas-Forgas et al., 2017).

Ethnic-based cyber victimization has serious impacts on adolescents. For example, mental health problems, substance abuse, and school-related problems are associated with ethnic-based cyber victimization (Sinclair et al., 2012). Exposure to online racial discrimination is also related to anxiety and depression (Tynes et al., 2008). Thus, considering the increased number of immigrant students at schools, higher rates of cyberbullying toward ethnic minorities, and negative consequences of cyber victimization, investigating the correlates of ethnic-based cyberbullying toward immigrants is imperatively demanded.

Adolescents' Attitude toward Immigrants

One potential variable that may explain ethnic-based cyberbullying is the adolescents' attitude toward immigrants. The ethnically mixed schools, where culturally different adolescents socialize, are excellent environments to examine attitudes toward immigrants. School environment and peers may provide opportunities for immigrant adolescents to observe people from mainstream culture and contact with them. Peers' perceptions of respect toward racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity, close teacher-student relationships, and a high rate of immigrants reduce the risk for immigrants (Crosnoe et al., 2004; Georgiades et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2016). A supportive school climate that accepts ethnic diversity is related to less bullying behavior towards immigrants (Le & Johansen, 2011). In addition, increasing school belongingness of immigrants was related to less bullying (Vitoroulis & Georgiades, 2017).

Adolescence is a period when peer relationships are getting more important. Peer relationships also have a meaning for immigrant adolescents. Peers provide immigrants with information and resources about the mainstream culture that they do not get from their own families (Schnell et al., 2013). Otherwise, adolescents may have different attitudes toward immigrant peers, such as racism (Carrera-Fernández et al., 2019), prejudice (Özdemir et al., 2018), xenophobia, or tolerance (Van Zalk et al., 2013). In the presence of negative attitudes, immigrant adolescents were more likely to experience bullying due to their race, religion, and family income (Sulkowski et al., 2014). Adolescents used categorical information more in their perceptions or evaluations of other people and had more prejudice-related priming effects than children (Degner & Wentura, 2010). Therefore, adolescence is a crucial time when negative or positive attitudes may influence their behaviors.

Peers' Attitude toward Immigrants and Ethnic-based Cyber Bullying

Adolescents learn behaviors and attitudes through observation and interaction with others in their surroundings (Bandura, 1977). Peers' attitude is an important factor to change and create adolescents' opinions. The studies supporting Banduras' Social Learning Theory have shown the importance of peers in the acquisition of attitudes and behaviors, especially in adolescence (Barry et al., 2017; Feng et al., 2017). There is developmental pressure during adolescence to conform to group norms to be accepted by peers. The standard of the group is an important determinant of adolescents' intention to perform any act (Rubin et al., 2015). Thus, the social norms of peers in the same class may affect the adolescents' attitudes toward immigrant peers, which in turn influences the cyberbullying acts.

The existing literature provides indirect support for peer influence. For example, students having more contact with different ethnic backgrounds peers tended to believe that race-based exclusion was wrong (Park et al., 2019). In parallel with this, less bullying occurred in schools with high numbers of immigrant students than those with low numbers of immigrant students (Vitoroulis & Georgiades, 2017). The proportion of ethnic minorities in the classroom is proposed as a determining factor in adolescents' attitudes toward immigrants (Özdemir et al., 2018). Immigrant adolescents with less social power in the immigrant-sparse classrooms are more likely to be rejected, isolated, and victimized (Agirdag et al., 2011; Özdemir et al., 2018; Plenty & Jonsson, 2017) and more likely to be bullied (Hjern et al., 2013). Besides, the school climate affected EBC (Kim & Faith, 2020). The rate of EBC was low in schools with a more positive climate. Thus, factors such as the number of immigrant students in school and long-term contact with them might influence the EBC. Although the role of prejudiced beliefs in ethnic harassment was investigated previously (Bayram Özdemir & Stattin, 2014), the role of peers' attitudes in EBC has not been investigated so far.

The Current Study

The empirical evidence suggests that there is a link between the attitudes of peer groups toward immigrants and EBC towards them. More specifically, classroom peers constitute an important social context for adolescents since they have spent most of their time together. The previous studies have mostly focused on the traditional victimization of immigrant adolescents (Stevens et al., 2020), but

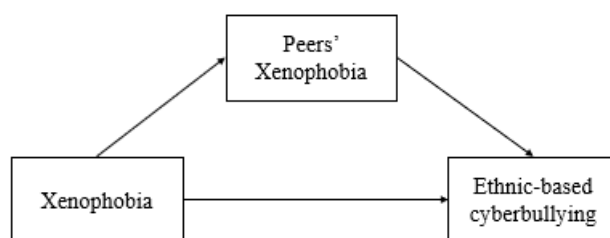
cyberbullying being one of the most basic problems seen in adolescence in recent years, and the investigation of cyberbullying based on ethnicity is considered an important contribution. Intervention or prevention program for cyberbullying for special groups are generally different from the prevention of cyberbullying. For example, activities aimed at reducing awareness or weakening can be included in prevention activities planned to be developed for gender or ethnic groups. Therefore, it is important to determine ethnic-based attitudes towards cyberbullying in this study. Thus, findings from the current study would help to explain the EBC concerning adolescents' attitudes and their peers' attitudes to be useful for further EBC intervention programs at schools.

The main purpose of the present study was to examine the predictive role of adolescents' and their peers' attitudes on EBC toward immigrant adolescents. Some researchers noted that adolescents' social norms are influenced by their peers' norms (Harris, 1995; Rubin et al., 2015). According to the research on the relationship between peers' attitude and adolescents' engagement in bullying (Özdemir et al., 2018) and cyberbullying (Kim & Faith, 2020), it is expected that the peers' attitude toward immigrants mediates the relationship between adolescent's attitude and EBC toward immigrants. The proposed relationships between variables in the current study have been shown in Figure 1.

In the investigation of EBC, not only the overt behavior but also the cognitions behind the cyberbullying are thought to be crucial. It is assumed that the immigrant status of cyber victims would influence adolescent's reasoning about cyberbullying. Therefore, another aim of the current study is to investigate whether the immigrant background of the cyber victim affects adolescents' reasoning about cyberbullying toward the immigrant peers.

Figure 1.

The Proposed Relationship Between the Variables in the Study



METHOD

Participants and Procedure

To address the aim of the study, we used a mixed-method design. Both qualitative and quantitative data for the present study were collected from 139 adolescents (58 girls, 41.7%, and 81 boys, 58.3%). The participants' age ranged from 11 to 15 years ($\bar{X} = 13.16$, $SD = .94$). They attended two different secondary schools where immigrant students also attend. Participants were selected from students who had immigrant classmates. Participants have been in the same class with immigrant peers more than three years (28.3%), one to three years (34.8%), or less than one year (37.0%). There were only Iraqi immigrants in the schools where the data for the present study were collected. This might be due to the fact that the population of Iraqi immigrants is higher than others in Turkey (TUİK, 2018).

The study employed a purposive sampling strategy. The adolescents who study with at least one immigrant peer in the same class were reached. The schools were contacted and informed about the aims of the study. Ethical approval from Çankırı Karatekin University and consent from parents of participants in this study were obtained. Adolescents were informed about the purpose of the study, the opportunity to refuse or discontinue participation at any time. Students in two schools completed the

data collection tools in a course hour.

Measures

Attitudes toward immigrants

To measure attitudes toward immigrants, participants were administered the Tolerance and Xenophobia Scale. The scale was originally developed in Swedish (Van Zalk et al., 2013). It consisted of eight items that were rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1=do not agree at all to 4=agree completely). Sample items include "Immigrants are good for the Swedish economy" (Tolerance); "Immigrants increase criminality" (Xenophobia).

The scale was adapted into Turkish in the current study. The original scale was first translated to Turkish, and then it was retranslated to English by a group of specialists who were highly competent in English. The translation was compared to the original version, and the Turkish version was revised. Standard model fit indices ($X^2/df=0.61$, $RMSEA=0.00$, $SRMR=0.16$, $NFI=1.00$, $TLI=1.02$, $GFI=0.99$) showed excellent model fit. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were .74 for the Tolerance scale and .73 for the Xenophobia scale.

Peers' attitudes toward immigrants

To measure peers' attitudes toward immigrants, the scores on the Tolerance and Xenophobia Scale were used. The peer attitude score was computed by averaging the Tolerance and Xenophobia Scale scores of all students in the same class, similar to Özdemir et al. (2018). As a result, each class had an average tolerance and xenophobia score, which constituted the peer attitude score for other students in that class.

Ethnic-based cyberbullying

To measure the frequency of EBC, participants were administered the Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory-II. The scale was developed by Topcu (2014). It consisted of ten items which were rated on a four-point Likert type scale (1=never to 4=more than three times). Sample items include "sending embarrassing or hurtful messages on the Internet" Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was .86 in the current study. The instruction of the scale was changed as "In the last six months, how often have you done the following behaviors to your immigrant peers" to measure ethnic-based cyberbullying toward their immigrant peers.

Attributions about the causes of cyberbullying

There are various forms of cyberbullying behaviors such as flaming, harassment, denigration, masquerading, outing and trickery, social exclusion, and cyberstalking (Bauman, 2015). Flaming is hurtful personal attacks, including hostile and angry interactions in public or private. Social exclusion is a deliberate action which indicates that an individual is not part of the group and unwanted. Flaming and social exclusion were common forms of cyberbullying in this age group (Calvete et al., 2010) and were used in the imaginary scenarios in the present study.

To measure adolescents' opinions about whether being an immigrant is a cause for cyberbullying; participants were presented with two imaginary scenarios. They were asked an open-ended question after each scenario. The two scenarios and questions were presented below:

Scenario 1: "There was a WhatsApp group created by students in the class 6/A. At the beginning of the year, all students in the class were in the group. Shamim was new at the school. He moved from Iraq a few months ago. When Shamim first came to class, he asked Deniz to add him to the WhatsApp group. When Deniz went home in the evening, he added him to the group, but a few days later, Deniz wrote

negative and humiliating things about Shamim in the group. Some of his classmates participated in Deniz's behavior, and some did not. After negative dialogues, Deniz excluded Shamim from the group."

Question 1: "Why do you think Deniz excluded Shamim from the WhatsApp group?"

Scenario 2: "Whenever Shamim shares a photo on Facebook, Deniz writes a negative comment under these photos. Shamim is very upset after these comments."

Question 2: "Why do you think Deniz might have written negative comments?"

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Before the analysis, preliminary analyses revealed no violations to the assumptions of homoscedasticity, normality, or linearity. Mean differences according to gender and age were examined using independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance, respectively. Hierarchical regression analyses were used to predict the ethnic-based cyberbullying. The participants' answers to the scenarios were analyzed using content analysis by two independent researchers. The responses to open-ended questions were examined according to their attributions to immigrant status. Finally, the meaningful themes were identified as a result of comparisons of individual's opinions about scenarios.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Before the regression analysis, the correlations between variables and the means and standard deviations were computed. The results are presented in Table 1. Correlations were in the expected directions. Cyberbullying had positive correlations with xenophobia and peers' xenophobia. Xenophobia was negatively correlated with tolerance and peers' tolerance. Tolerance had significant positive correlations with peers' tolerance. Finally, peers' xenophobia had a significant negative correlation with peers' tolerance.

Analysis showed that there were significant mean differences in peers' xenophobia ($F_{(4,134)} = 25.809$, $p < .01$), peers tolerance ($F_{(4,134)} = 20.807$, $p < .01$) and tolerance ($F_{(4,134)} = 5.316$, $p < .01$) according to age groups. The means for peers' xenophobia were higher for older ages ($\bar{x}_{11} = 10.00$, $\bar{x}_{12} = 10.00$, $\bar{x}_{13} = 11.28$, $\bar{x}_{14} = 12.58$, $\bar{x}_{15} = 12.00$). Conversely, the means for tolerance ($\bar{x}_{11} = 10.37$, $\bar{x}_{12} = 7.52$, $\bar{x}_{13} = 6.61$, $\bar{x}_{14} = 6.23$, $\bar{x}_{15} = 8.67$) and peers' tolerance level ($\bar{x}_{11} = 9.00$, $\bar{x}_{12} = 7.86$, $\bar{x}_{13} = 6.59$, $\bar{x}_{14} = 6.71$, $\bar{x}_{15} = 7.00$) were lower for older ages. In other words, as the adolescents grow, xenophobia increased whereas tolerance decreased. There were no gender differences in EBC ($t_{(137)} = -.634$, $p > .05$), peers' tolerance ($t_{(137)} = .040$, $p > .05$), tolerance ($t_{(137)} = 1.260$, $p > .05$), peers' xenophobia ($t_{(137)} = .143$, $p > .05$) and xenophobia level ($t_{(137)} = 1.124$, $p > .05$).

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | \bar{x} | SD |
|----------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|---|-----------|------|
| 1. Cyberbullying | 1 | | | | | 13.57 | 5.24 |
| 2. Xenophobia | .25** | 1 | | | | 11.35 | 3.46 |
| 3. Tolerance | -.13 | -.20* | 1 | | | 6.92 | 2.82 |
| 4. Peers' xenophobia | .30** | .46** | -.14 | 1 | | 11.50 | 1.45 |
| 5. Peers' tolerance | -.13 | -.24** | .46** | -.41** | 1 | 6.98 | 1.07 |

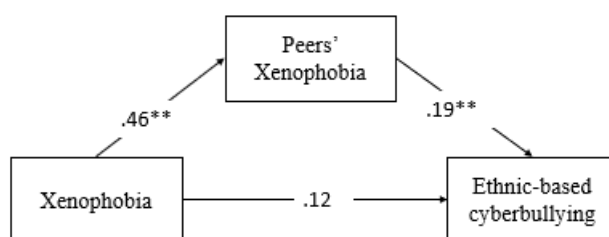
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Predictors of Ethnic-based Cyberbullying

In order to examine the proposed relationship between variables, a hierarchical regression model was tested. To support the mediation hypothesis, Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach was followed: a) independent variable (ethnic-based cyberbullying) is correlated with the dependent variable (attitudes toward immigrants) b) independent variable (ethnic-based cyberbullying) is correlated with the mediator variable c) when the effect of the independent variable (ethnic-based cyberbullying) was controlled, the mediator variable (peers' attitudes toward immigrants) is correlated with the dependent variable (attitudes toward immigrants) d) when the effect of the mediator variable (peers' attitudes toward immigrants) is controlled, the relationship between the independent (ethnic-based cyberbullying) and dependent variable (attitudes toward immigrants) is no longer significant. If the fourth step is not met, but the first three steps are met, partial mediation is indicated. If all four steps are met, the mediator variable is completely mediated in the relationship (Figure 2.).

Figure 2.

Mediation Analyses Results



In the first step, EBC correlated significantly with xenophobia ($\beta=.25$, $p<.05$) but not tolerance ($\beta=-.13$, $p>.05$). Thus, only xenophobia was examined as an independent variable. In the second step, xenophobia correlated peers' xenophobia ($\beta=.46$, $p<.05$) but not peers' tolerance ($\beta=-.06$, $p>.05$). Thus, only peers' xenophobia was examined as a covariate in the following step. In the third step, when the effect of xenophobia was controlled, EBC correlated with peers' xenophobia ($\beta=.19$, $p<.05$). In the fourth step, when the effect of peers' xenophobia was controlled, EBC did not correlate with xenophobia ($B=.12$, $p>.05$). As a result, peers' xenophobia was found to be a full mediator in the relationship between EBC and xenophobia (Table 2).

Table 2.

The Relationships Between Variables

| Model | Relations | B | SE | β | R^2 | ΔR^2 |
|-------|---|------|------|---------|-------|--------------|
| 1 | Xenophobia \rightarrow EBC | .163 | .055 | .25** | .06 | |
| 2 | Xenophobia \rightarrow Peers' xenophobia | .191 | .032 | .46** | .21 | |
| 3 | Peers' Xenophobia \rightarrow EBC (after xenophobia was controlled) | .054 | .021 | .19** | .25 | .04 |
| 4 | Xenophobia \rightarrow EBC (after peers' xenophobia was controlled) | .081 | .052 | .12 | .22 | .01 |

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

Predictors of Ethnic-based Cyberbullying

Analysis of the qualitative study involves qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) and statistical content analysis (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). During the content analysis, the responses of the participants were carefully read many times. First, codes were identified, then they were grouped under the themes. Finally, the themes were categorized on the basis of an attribution to the ethnic or immigrant background.

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, coding was carried by the first and second authors of the study independently. Kappa values were computed as of .86 and .85 for the first and second scenarios, respectively. Following these coding, coders met together with the third author (N.G.) to discuss the discrepancies in the categories. The same analysis process was undertaken to determine the themes.

Kappa value was computed as .82, and .82 respectively. Both categories and themes' inter-rater reliability for answers were also high, above 70%, as recommended by Guerin and Hennessy (2002). Once coding was complete, frequencies of themes were computed for the answers. The resulting categories and themes were presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Attributions for Cyberbullying

| Categories | Themes | n |
|--------------------------------------|---|----|
| Attributions for the first scenario | | |
| Immigrant status | Neutral features | 73 |
| | Negative features | 16 |
| Other causes | Protagonists' negative features | 7 |
| | Protagonists' negative thoughts | 20 |
| | Protagonists' negative past experiences | 8 |
| Attributions for the second scenario | | |
| Immigrant status | Neutral features | 23 |
| | Negative features | 31 |
| Other causes | Protagonists' negative features | 8 |
| | Protagonists' negative thoughts | 44 |
| | Protagonists' negative past experiences | 4 |
| | Photos' features | 9 |

For the first scenario, the responses were categorized into two, attributing cyberbullying to "immigrant status" and "other causes". Most participants (71.8%) stated immigration-related causes. Those who attributed cyberbullying to being an immigrant mentioned either "neutral features" or "negative features" of the cyber victim. Most of the participants (58.9%) stated neutral comments, whereas small numbers of them (12.9%) expressed negative comments related to being an immigrant. Those who attributed cyberbullying to other causes than being an immigrant mentioned protagonists' negative features, negative thoughts, and negative past experiences. In this category, most of the participants attributed to the protagonist's negative thoughts (16.1%).

For the second scenario, responses were categorized into two categories similar to the first scenario. Different from the first scenario, most participants (54.7%) attributed cyberbullying to other causes. Two similar themes, which are neutral and negative features, emerged in the "immigrant status" category. Different from the first scenario, participants mentioned more negative features (26.1%) than neutral features of the cyber victim (19.3%). In the "other causes" category, four different themes emerged. Three of these are the same in the first scenario (protagonist's negative features, thoughts, and past experiences), and a different theme, the photo's characteristics, emerged in this category. Most participants mentioned the protagonist's negative thought theme (37%) in the second scenario.

For the "immigrant status" category, some participants mentioned just being an immigrant or language differences. These responses are accepted as neutral features. Examples for attribution to a neutral feature were "Because he is an immigrant" (P13) and "Maybe they (i.e., classmates) do not understand what he is saying" (P138). Some participants implied negative behaviors and were placed under the negative features theme. Example for attribution to a negative feature were "Immigrants mistreat Turks,

he did the best (Syria-Iraq)" (P21), "Because immigrant may have Coronavirus" (P128), and "He may be Chinese and carries virus/ If he is a Syrian, he does not include to the group because immigrant people betrayed their own country" (P112). In this theme, immigrants were either attributed to Coronavirus, or they have been accused of betraying their own country. Another example of a negative feature theme was "He (i.e., Deniz) does not like him (i.e., Shamim). He hates him. He has a grudge against him. Turkish people have been harmed by many immigrants. Therefore, he thinks immigrants humiliate their own country" (P68). These participants mentioned immigrants' harm to Turkish people.

For the other causes' category, some participants noted the negative features of the cyberbully, such as the personality characteristics of the protagonist. Some examples from their answers were, "Deniz is arrogant" (P87), "Deniz sees superior herself /himself; therefore, I do not like the child (Deniz)" (P17). Some participants also mentioned negative personality characteristics of the cyber victim, such as "Shamim is a bad person, and others want him to feel bad" (P25). Under the negative thoughts' themes, participants talked about negative emotions, negative cognitions, and negative behaviors. Some examples were, "Because he (i.e., Deniz) did not like his friend (i.e., Shamim) or Shamim did something he (i.e., Deniz) did not like" (P40) and "He (i.e., Deniz) does not like Shamim, he (i.e., Deniz) may be humiliating him (i.e., Shamim)" (P48), "Shamim does not like Deniz" (P56) and "Deniz may have a grudge or may not like Shamim" (P30). Finally, under the negative past experiences theme, some adolescents mentioned that Shamim and Deniz might have negative past experiences with each other. Example answers were "Shamim would have made bad comments to others" (P57), "There was a big fight between them" (P69), "Because Shamim may share bad things" (P1), and "Shamim sent useless messages in the past" (P11). In the second scenario, some participants attributed cyberbullying to the characteristics of the photograph that Shamim shared. Examples for these responses included "Deniz does not like the photo" (P42), "Because Shamim shared a photo that Deniz did not like" (P44), and "The photo may be bad" (P113).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between ethnic-based cyberbullying and the attitude toward immigrants. The literature that examined the attitude towards immigrants in bullying and victimization mostly focused on traditional bullying (Stevens et al., 2020; Walsh et al., 2020). The present study, on the other hand, evaluated the attitude towards immigrant status on cyberbullying, which has been the subject of much research recently. The primary purpose was to examine the predictive role of adolescents' attitudes and their peers' attitudes toward immigrant adolescents on the engagement in EBC. Specifically, we investigated the extent to which xenophobia and tolerance toward immigrants among adolescents and their peers in the classroom influence their involvement in the EBC.

Our findings showed that both adolescents' xenophobia and their peers' xenophobia predicted the EBC of adolescents in line with our expectations. Moreover, after peers' xenophobia was controlled, the relationship between adolescents' attitudes and EBC became nonsignificant. However, tolerance to immigrants and tolerance of peers was not found to be related to EBC. Accordingly, adolescents' attitudes towards immigrants predicted the EBC towards them as consistent with the previous findings (Strohmeier et al., 2011). The results supported that adolescents' own attitudes, as well as their peers' attitudes predicted ethnic-based cyberbullying similar to ethnic victimization (Agirdag et al., 2011; Özdemir et al., 2018; Plenty & Jonsson, 2017). According to these results, class-level or school-level interventions would be more useful for ethnic-based cyberbullying rather than individual interventions. Especially, the mediating role of peers' attitudes underlines the importance of a positive school environment over individual attitudes.

Interestingly, both xenophobia and tolerance levels in the present study were higher than other studies in the literature (e.g., Van Zalk et al., 2013). In other words, Turkish adolescents had more xenophobic and tolerant attitudes towards their immigrant peers than their European peers. Immigrants in European

countries have more apparent differences from their European peers. On the other hand, the immigrants in Turkey are more similar to the host students in terms of religious beliefs and physical appearance. These common characteristics might be an explanation for Turkish adolescents' higher tolerance to their immigrant peers. The participants in the present study also had higher xenophobic attitudes than European adolescents. Parental negative attitudes may also account for the high level of xenophobia in the present study (Ersoy & Ala, 2019). In addition to attitudes towards immigrants, the attitudes towards cyberbullying may also play an important role in engagement in cyberbullying. Studies revealed the relationship between the positive attitude towards cyberbullying and cyberbullying perpetration (Barlett et al., 2017; Barlett et al., 2016; Boulton et al., 2012; Doane et al., 2016). Similarly, Kırcaburun and Baştuğ (2016) reported that the attitude toward cyberbullying predicted cyberbullying behavior in Turkey. However, adolescents' attitudes towards cyberbullying were not included in the present study, which was one of the limitations.

The mediating role of peers' attitudes towards immigrants on the EBC is consistent with the literature. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory stated that adolescents learn behaviors and attitudes through observation and interaction with others in their surroundings. It stressed the importance of peers' attitudes and behaviors in adolescents' behavior. There were similar studies that showed adolescents' negative attitudes towards immigrants and their relationship with peer relations (Özdemir et al., 2018; Titzmann et al., 2015). While xenophobia predicted engagement in EBC, the positive attitude that is tolerance towards immigrants did not have a relationship with EBC in the current study. Van Zalk et al. (2013) suggested that tolerance was not only the direct opposite of xenophobia but related to political knowledge. Prior studies supporting this opinion reported that political knowledge was associated with only positive attitudes toward immigrants but not with negative ones (Ekström & Östman 2013; Taylor, 2017). Studies found that inefficacy of political knowledge education in Turkey (Ataman et al., 2012; Kuş & Tarhan, 2016). It is known that Turkey has been among the countries with an increasing number of immigrants (OECD, 2017). Therefore, it may be essential to give weight to such political knowledge education to support a more positive attitude toward immigrants and to lower the EBC. The result of the current study revealed both the possible insufficiency of political knowledge among adolescence and the lack of studies on political knowledge and tolerance among Turkish adolescents.

The previous studies which investigated the attitudes towards immigrants in Turkey also revealed some negative attitudes in adult samples. For example, Ersoy and Ala (2019) reported that parents did not want asylum seekers and refugees to be educated in the same schools with their children. The parents expressed their concerns that the behaviors of refugee children may constitute inappropriate role models for their children and damage their social development due to the different cultural backgrounds. These kinds of negative attitudes from parents are likely to feed the negative attitudes of adolescents as early adolescence is an especially sensitive period for parental influences in forming attitudes towards immigrants (Gniewosz & Noack, 2015). In the present study, the influence of parental attitudes was not included.

The mediating role of peers' attitude was parallel with the studies on school climate and the number of immigrant students in the class and their relationship with the attitude towards immigrants. The proportion of ethnic minorities in the classroom was proposed as a determining factor in adolescents' attitudes toward immigrants (Özdemir et al., 2018). Also, the school climate affected EBC (Kim & Faith, 2020). The rate of EBC was lower in schools with a more positive climate. In Turkey, immigrant students may attend temporary education centers, public schools, or private schools. As a result, the number of immigrant students in classes differs between schools. In the present study, the number of immigrant students in the classrooms resembled the general view of Turkey (i.e., the number of immigrant students was lower than the number of host students). The research showed that immigrant adolescents were more likely to be rejected, isolated, and victimized in more homogenous classes (i.e., the number of immigrant students low) where they had less social power (Agirdag et al., 2011; Hjern et al., 2013; Özdemir et al., 2018; Plenty & Jonsson, 2017). Thus, the relatively homogenous profile of the classes may be a factor for more negative attitudes towards immigrants and higher levels of EBC in the present study and Turkey.

Another aim of the present study was to investigate whether the immigrant background of the cyber victims affected adolescents' reasoning about cyberbullying. For this purpose, adolescents explained the reason for the protagonist's cyberbullying behaviors toward an immigrant peer in two different imaginary scenarios. Similar to the quantitative results, the negative attitudes towards immigrants were also revealed in the qualitative data. Adolescents were more likely to associate the causes of cyberbullying behaviors given in the scenarios with an immigrant background. The most frequent theme of the immigrant category was "neutral features". Adolescents reported that being an immigrant by itself may be a cause for the EBC. The "negative features" theme reflected the responses related to negative attributions toward immigrants. Some negative attributions were "having a virus", "betrayal of their own country," and "harm to Turkish people" in this theme. There have been no previous studies on the adolescents' attitudes toward immigrants in this age group, although there are some studies on university samples (e.g., Bağcı & Gürlü, 2018). On the other hand, a study with adolescents and their parents focused on the attitude toward immigration and revealed both positive and negative themes related to being an immigrant (Avcı, 2020). In that study, the immigration evoked such responses as life difficulties, flee from war, longing for the home country, going back to the home country, poverty, good people, unhappiness, comfortable lives, and increasing population. Adolescents' responses differed from parents' responses in that the responses of the former reflected both positive and negative attitudes, whereas the responses of the latter were quite negative. The present qualitative findings also revealed positive, negative, and neutral attitudes consistent with the former study.

The qualitative results of the study revealed an attributional difference for cyberbullying in two scenarios. More adolescents attributed the cyberbullying to causes related to being immigrant in the first scenario but not in the second. Their attribution may be related to their perceptions about the different social media applications used in scenarios. The cyberbullying took place in the WhatsApp group in the first scenario, whereas it was on Facebook in the second scenario. The result may reflect adolescents' views about the unique characteristics of these online social media platforms. WhatsApp groups were associated with the highest level of behavioral privacy, while Facebook represented the least (Waterloo et al., 2018). Similarly, WhatsApp was found to allow more intimate communications than Facebook, which was for connections with weaker ties (Karapanos et al., 2016). In general, people are more likely to use WhatsApp groups to communicate with a few and closer friends. On the other hand, Facebook may be perceived as a more public platform by adolescents. Immigrant peers were not accepted to WhatsApp groups since these groups might be perceived as a more private area, and the reason behind the discrimination may be their unwillingness to share their private space with immigrants. Therefore, exclusion from the group might be explained by "being immigrant". Besides, Facebook is a more public platform. Any negative comment on Facebook might be interpreted as more "general" and caused by other general reasons instead of discrimination. Thus, the difference may reflect adolescents' social distance toward their immigrant peers. Adolescents tend to prefer close friends from the same ethnic background (Özdemir et al., 2018; Strohmeier & Spiel, 2003). The result of this study is consistent with the previous research, which investigated the degree of intimacy and privacy toward immigrant peers (Bogardus, 1968).

In the present study, there are some limitations. The present study focused on that peers' influences on attitudes towards immigrants. However, parental attitudes also impact adolescents' attitudes (Gniewosz & Noack, 2015). Parents' domestic conversations about immigrants and their prejudices are also reflected in the attitudes of adolescents (Miklikowska et al., 2019). Future studies may include the role of parental attitudes. Another limitation was the self-report measurement of ethnic-based cyberbullying. The self-report measure would have presented a social desirability problem since higher social desirability was associated with the lower report of cyberbullying behaviors (Betts and Spencer, 2017). Finally, there are some limitations regarding the sample. The present sample consisted of students who had only Iraqi immigrant classmates. Future studies would include larger sample sizes and more ethnically diverse classes.

As traditional bullying has been turning into cyberbullying, ethnic bullying has also been moving to cyber environments. Thus, more studies are needed that investigate the variables correlated with of

ethnic-based cyberbullying and its intervention. In conclusion, the present findings underlined the importance of peer's attitudes in ethnic-based cyberbullying toward immigrants. Interventions that focus on ethnic-based cyberbullying should focus on developing a more tolerant attitude toward immigrant students at the class level. In-class and out of school activities which bring students from different ethnic origins together would increase the time they spend together and would decrease the xenophobic attitudes.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çalışmalar akran gruplarının göçmenlere yönelik tutumları ile göçmenlere yönelik etnik temelli siber zorbalık arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermektedir. Ergenler için aynı sınıfta öğrenim gördükleri ve zamanlarının çoğunu birlikte geçirdikleri akranları önemli bir sosyal bağlam oluşturmaktadır. Önceki çalışmalar çoğunlukla göçmen ergenlerin geleneksel mağduriyetine odaklanmıştır (Stevens vd., 2020). Etnik temelli siber mağduriyette akranların tutumlarının rolünü inceleyen bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmadan elde edilen bulguların, etnik temelli siber zorbalığın ergenlerin ve akranlarının tutumlarıyla ilişkisini ortaya koymasının, eğitim ortamlarında etnik temelli siber zorbalığa yönelik müdahale programları için yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Çalışmanın temel amacı ergenlerin ve akranlarının göçmen öğrencilere yönelik tutumlarının etnik temelli siber zorbalık üzerindeki yordayıcı rolünü incelemektir. Bazı araştırmacılar ergenlerin sosyal normlarının akranlarının normlarından etkilendiğini vurgulamaktadır (Harris, 1995; Rubin vd., 2015). Akranların tutumu ile ergenlerin geleneksel zorbalığa ve siber zorbalığa katılımı arasındaki ilişki üzerine yapılan araştırmaya dayanarak (Ozdemir vd., 2018), akranların göçmenlere yönelik tutumlarının ergenlerin tutumu ve etnik temelli siber zorbalık arasındaki ilişkide aracı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Etnik temelli siber zorbalığın incelenmesinde sadece açık davranışların değil onun ardında yer alan düşüncelerin de önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Çalışmada, siber mağdurların göçmen olmalarının ergenin siber zorbalık davranışının nedenini etkileyeceği varsayılmıştır. Bu nedenle bir diğer amaç, siber mağdurların göçmen olmasının ergenlerin göçmenlere yönelik siber zorbalık davranışlarındaki yordayıcı rolünün incelenmesidir.

Çalışmada toplam 139 ergene ulaşılmıştır (58 kız, %41,7 ve 81 erkek, %58,3). Ankara’da bulunan iki farklı ortaokulda öğrenim gören ergenlerin yaşları 11-15 arasındadır ($\bar{X}=13,16$, $SS=,94$). Katılımcıların %28,3’ü üç yıldan fazla, %34,8’i bir-üç yıl arasında, %37,0’si ise bir yıldan az bir süredir bir göçmen akranıyla aynı sınıfta eğitim görmektedir.

Çalışmanın nicel verilerinin toplanması amacıyla Van Zalk vd. (2013) tarafından geliştirilen ve bu çalışma kapsamında Türkçeye uyarlanan Tolerans ve Yabancı Düşmanlığı Ölçeği ile Revize Edilmiş Siber Zorbalık Ölçeği-II (Topçu, 2014) kullanılmıştır. Akranların göçmenlere yönelik tutumları asıl öğrenci dışında kalan diğer öğrencilerin ortalama puanlarının alınmasıyla belirlenmiştir (Özdemir vd., 2018). Nitel verilerin analizinde ise araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanmış iki senaryodan yararlanılmıştır.

Nicel verilerin analizinde cinsiyet ve yaşa göre ortalama puanlar arasındaki farklılıklar sırasıyla t-testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi ile incelenmiştir. Etnik temelli siber zorbalığın yordayıcılarının belirlenmesinde ise hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Senaryolarla ilişkili iki açık uçlu sorunun incelenmesinde ise içerik analizinden yararlanılmıştır.

Değişkenler arasındaki basit korelasyon katsayıları siber zorbalık ile yabancı düşmanlığı ve akranların yabancı düşmanlığı arasında pozitif ilişkiyi göstermiştir. Ayrıca yabancı düşmanlığı tolerans ve akranların toleransları ile negatif ilişkilidir. Tolerans ile akranların toleransı arasında pozitif ilişki bulunmaktadır. Son olarak yabancı düşmanlığı ile akranların yabancı düşmanlığı arasında pozitif ilişki bulunmuştur. Değişkenlerin yaşa göre ortalamaları arasında akranların yabancı düşmanlığı ($F_{(4,134)}=25,809$, $p<,01$), akranların toleransı ($F_{(4,134)}=20,807$, $p<,01$) ve tolerans ($F_{(4,134)}=5,316$, $p<,01$) puanlarında anlamlı farklılık bulunmuştur. Buna göre, tolerans ($\bar{x}_{11}=10,37$, $\bar{x}_{12}=7,52$, $\bar{x}_{13}=6,61$, $\bar{x}_{14}=6,23$, $\bar{x}_{15}=8,67$) ve akranların toleransı ($\bar{x}_{11}=9,00$, $\bar{x}_{12}=7,86$, $\bar{x}_{13}=6,59$, $\bar{x}_{14}=6,71$, $\bar{x}_{15}=7,00$) yaşın artmasıyla azalmaktadır. Yabancı düşmanlığı düzeyi ise yaşla birlikte artmaktadır ($\bar{x}_{11}=10,00$, $\bar{x}_{12}=10,00$, $\bar{x}_{13}=11,28$, $\bar{x}_{14}=12,58$, $\bar{x}_{15}=12,00$). Cinsiyete göre değişkenlerin ortalama puanları arasında anlamlı fark bulunmamıştır.

Etnik temelli siber zorbalığın yordayıcılarının belirlenmesinde hiyerarşik regresyon analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Aracılık rolünün değerlendirilmesinde ise Baron ve Kenny'nin (1987) dört aşamalı yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. İlk aşamada etnik temelli siber zorbalık ile yabancı düşmanlığı ve tolerans arasındaki ilişkiler incelenmiştir. Etnik temelli siber zorbalık ile yabancı düşmanlığı ($\beta=.25$, $p<.05$) arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunurken tolerans ile anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmamıştır ($\beta=-.13$, $p>.05$). Bu nedenle yalnızca yabancı düşmanlığı bağımsız değişken olarak incelenmiştir. İkinci adımda yabancı düşmanlığı ile akranların yabancı düşmanlığı ve akranların toleransı arasındaki ilişki incelenmiştir. Yabancı düşmanlığı ile akranların yabancı düşmanlığı arasında pozitif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki görülürken ($\beta=.46$, $p<.05$); yabancı düşmanlığı ve akranların toleransı arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmamıştır ($\beta=-.06$, $p>.05$). Bu nedenle yalnızca akranların yabancı düşmanlığı aracı değişken olarak analizlere dahil edilmiştir. Üçüncü adımda yabancı düşmanlığının etkisi kontrol edildiğinde etnik temelli siber zorbalık ile akranların yabancı düşmanlığı arasındaki ilişki değerlendirilmiş ve iki değişken arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur ($\beta=.19$, $p<.05$). Son adımda, akranların yabancı düşmanlığı kontrol edildiğinde etnik temelli siber zorbalık ile yabancı düşmanlığı arasındaki ilişki incelenmiş ve anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmamıştır ($B=.14$, $p>.05$). Sonuç olarak akranların yabancı düşmanlıklarının etnik temelli siber zorbalık ve yabancı düşmanlığı arasındaki ilişkide tam aracı olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Nitel analiz sonuçlarına bakıldığında ilk senaryo için yanıtlar “göçmen olma” ve “diğer nedenler” olarak adlandırılan iki kategoride incelenmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğu (%71,8) göçmen olmaya atıf yapmışlardır. Bu kategori siber mağdur için “nötr özellikler” ve “negatif özellikler” temalarında incelenmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunun göçmen olmayla ilgili nötr yorumlar yaparken (%58,9), küçük bir kısmının (%12,9) göçmen olmaya ilişkin olumsuz atıflarda bulunduğu görülmüştür. İkinci kategori olan “diğer nedenler” de ise temalar “kahramanın negatif özellikleri”, “olumsuz düşünceler” ve “olumsuz geçmiş deneyimler” şeklinde belirlemiştir. Bu kategoride frekansı en yüksek tema kahramanın olumsuz düşünceleridir (%16,1).

İkinci senaryoda yanıtlar ilk senaryoya benzer biçimde iki kategoride toplanmıştır. İlk senaryodan farklı olarak, katılımcıların çoğu (%54,7) siber zorbalıkta “diğer nedenler”e atıf yapmışlardır. Göçmen olma kategorisinde yine “nötr özellikler” ve “negatif özellikler” olarak iki tema belirlemiştir. İlk senaryodan farklı olarak katılımcılar negatif özelliklere (%26,1) nötr özelliklerden (%19,3) daha fazla atıf yapmışlardır. “Diğer nedenler” kategorisinde beliren dört temanın üçü ilk senaryoyla aynıken son tema “fotoğrafın özellikleri” olarak adlandırılmıştır. Katılımcıların çoğu kahramanın negatif düşüncelerine atıf yapmışlardır (%37).

Bu çalışmada etnik temelli siber zorbalık ile göçmenlere yönelik tutum arasındaki ilişkileri değerlendirmek amaçlanmıştır. Bulgular ergenlerin yabacılara yönelik tutumları ile akranlarının tutumlarının ergenlerin etnik temelli siber zorbalık davranışının yordayıcıları olduğunu göstermiştir. Bulgu önceki araştırma sonuçlarıyla tutarlıdır (Strohmeier vd., 2011). Ancak ergenlerin toleransı ve akranların toleransı etnik temelli siber zorbalığı yordamamıştır. Van Zalk vd. (2012) toleransın sadece yabancı düşmanlığının karşıtı olması ile açıklanamayacağını, kavramın politik bilgiyi de içerdiğini belirtmektedir. Önceki çalışmalar politik bilgi ile göçmelere yönelik olumlu tutumlar arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermektedir (Ekström & Östman 2013; Taylor, 2017). Türkiye’deki ergenlerin politik bilgilerinin incelenmesi ve iki değişken arasındaki ilişkinin değerlendirilmesi önemlidir. Etnik temelli siber zorbalık ile yabancı düşmanlığı arasındaki ilişkide akranların yabacılara yönelik tutumlarından yabancı düşmanlığı tam aracı rolde olduğu bulunmuştur. Bandura Sosyal Öğrenme Teorisi’nde (1977) ergenlerin tutum ve davranışlarını çevrelerini gözlemleyerek ve bireylerle etkileşime girerek öğrendiklerini savunmaktadır. Bu, ergenlerin davranışlarında akranlarının tutum ve davranışlarının önemini göstermektedir. Ayrıca önceki çalışmalar çalışmanın bu bulgusunu destekler niteliktedir (Ozdemir vd., 2018; Titzmann vd., 2015). Nitel analiz sonuçları ise nicel analiz bulguları ile tutarlıdır. Göçmenlere yönelik olumsuz tutumlar temalarda belirlemiştir. Ergenler özellikle ilk senaryodaki kahramanın siber zorbalığa uğrayan göçmen akranına yönelik tutumunu daha çok siber mağdurun göçmen olmasıyla ilişkilendirmişlerdir.

Çalışmada ergenlerin göçmenlere yönelik tutumlarına yalnızca akranlarının tutumlarının etkisi

incelenmiştir. Ergenlerin tutumları üzerinde anne babanın tutumlarının etkisinin incelenmesinin önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bir diğer sınırlılık ise etnik temelli siber zorbalığın öz-bildirime dayalı ölçülmesidir. Bu konuda sosyal beğenirlik siber zorbalık davranışlarının düzeyini düşürebilen bir faktör olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Geleneksel zorbalık siber ortamlar söz konusu olduğunda siber zorbalığa dönüşmektedir. Etnik temelli siber zorbalığın değerlendirilmesine ve müdahalesine ilişkin daha fazla çalışmaya ihtiyaç olduğu düşünülmektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları akranların göçmelere yönelik tutumlarının ergenin siber zorbalık davranışındaki önemini vurgulamaktadır.