

Communicator Style as a Predictor of Cyberbullying in a Hybrid Learning Environment*

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Abstract

This study aimed to describe the characteristics of undergraduate students in a hybrid learning environment with regard to their communicator styles and cyberbullying behaviors. Moreover, relationships between cyberbullying victimization and learners' perceived communicator styles were investigated. Cyberbullying victimization was measured through a recently developed 28-item scale with a single-factor structure, whereas the communicator styles were measured through Norton's (1983) scale which was recently validated in Turkey. Participants were a total of 59 undergraduate Turkish students enrolled in an effective communication course in 2010 spring and fall semesters. Face-to-face instruction was supported through web 2.0 tools where learners' hid their real identities through nicknames. Participants used personal blogs in addition to the official online platform of the course. Their posts on these platforms were used as the source of the qualitative data. Descriptive analyses were followed by the investigation of qualitative and quantitative interrelationships between the cyberbullying variable and the components of the communicator style measure. Correlations among victimization and communicator style variables were not significant. However, qualitative analysis revealed that cyberbullying instances varied with regard to discussion topics, nature of the discussions and communicator styles. Example patterns from the log files were presented accompanied with suggestions for further implementations.

Keywords: *Cyberbullying; communicator styles; blended learning; higher education.*

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