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Exploring profiles based on cyber victimization in young adults

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ABSTRACT The aim of this study was to identify the latent profiles of young adults based on their levels of cyber victimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation (DER), and to examine whether these profiles differed according to gender and academic year. The study included 425 young adults enrolled at a public university in Türkiye. Data were collected using the Cyber Victimization Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, the Self-Compassion Scale–Short Form, and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale. Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) and the R3STEP procedure were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed four distinct latent profiles: The Protective Resources Profile, Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile, Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile, and High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile. The R3STEP analysis indicated that gender was significantly associated with latent profile membership, whereas academic year showed limited associations. Specifically, compared with male students, female students were less likely to belong to the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile and the High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile rather than the Protective Resources Profile, but were more likely to belong to the Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile rather than the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile. Additionally, fourth-year students were more likely than first-year students to belong to the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile rather than the Protective Resources Profile.

Keywords: *Cyber victimization, Emotion regulation difficulties, Latent profile analysis, Perceived social support, Self-compassion*

Genç yetişkinlerde siber mağduriyet profillerini keşfetmek

ÖZ Bu çalışmanın amacı, genç yetişkinlerin siber mağduriyet, algılanan sosyal destek, öz-şefkat ve duygu düzenleme güçlüğü (DDG) düzeylerine göre gizil profillerini belirlemek ve bu profillerin cinsiyet ve sınıf düzeyine göre farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını incelemektir. Araştırmaya Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde öğrenim gören 425 genç yetişkin katılmıştır. Veriler, Siber Mağduriyet Ölçeği, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği, Öz-Şefkat Ölçeği–Kısa Formu ve Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde Gizil Profil Analizi (GPA) ve R3STEP yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, dört farklı gizil profil ortaya koymuştur: Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profili, Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek DDG Profili, Orta Düzey Psikososyal Uyum Profili ve Yüksek Öz-Şefkat / Ortalama DDG Profili. R3STEP analizi, cinsiyetin gizil profil üyeliğiyle anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğunu, sınıf düzeyinin ise sınırlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Özellikle, erkek öğrencilerle karşılaştırıldığında kadın öğrencilerin Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profili yerine Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek DDG Profili ve Yüksek Öz-Şefkat / Ortalama DDG Profilinde yer alma olasılıklarının daha düşük olduğu belirlenmiştir. Buna karşılık, kadın öğrencilerin Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek DDG Profili yerine Orta Düzey Psikososyal Uyum Profilinde yer alma olasılıkları daha yüksektir. Ayrıca, dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin birinci sınıf öğrencilerine kıyasla Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profili yerine Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek DDG Profilinde yer alma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Algılanan sosyal destek, Duygu düzenleme güçlüğü, Gizil profil analizi, Öz-şefkat, Siber mağduriyet*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and social media has led to significant changes in the ways young adults interact socially. While this transformation provides many opportunities for young people, such as communicating, expressing themselves, and expanding their social networks, it also brings certain risks. In particular, online environments have become spaces where individuals can be more easily and more frequently exposed to negative experiences such as exclusion and humiliation (Zhu et al., 2021). This situation has increased the likelihood of the emergence and spread of cyber victimization among young adults. Cyber victimization is defined as individuals being intentionally and repeatedly exposed to harmful behaviors through digital platforms. This phenomenon may manifest in various forms such as online threats, humiliation, exclusion, unauthorized sharing of private information (exposure), and harassment (Hu et al., 2021). Individuals exposed to such experiences may exhibit outcomes such as decreased attention and motivation, declines in academic achievement, and withdrawal from social relationships. Furthermore, negative experiences encountered in online environments can have lasting effects on individuals' self-perception and sense of social trust. Research evidence indicates that individuals exposed to cyber victimization exhibit elevated levels of depression and anxiety, greater loneliness, and lower self-esteem (Albikawi, 2023; Yıldırım et al., 2022). In addition, these individuals may have difficulty coping with negative emotions, develop more self-critical attitudes, and experience a decline in hope regarding the future. Overall, these findings underscore the multifaceted effects of cyber victimization and underscore the importance of developing preventive and protective interventions in this area.

Cyber victimization among young adults emerges through the combined influence of multiple factors. These factors can be conceptualized within the scope of individual characteristics, family relationships, and the educational environment. At the individual level, weak self-regulation skills, lack of social skills, emotional sensitivity, and intensive use of digital environments may increase the risk (Doğan et al., 2025). In the educational environment, the quality of peer relationships, the level of social adjustment, and institutional approaches may also play a determining role in the emergence and continuation of cyber victimization (Wang et al., 2013). Recent literature indicates that individuals who experience cyber victimization may have different personal characteristics, different risk profiles, and different coping strategies. While some individuals are characterized by high emotional sensitivity and inward orientation, others may simultaneously assume both victim and perpetrator roles. This situation suggests that the causes and consequences of cyber victimization may vary from individual to individual and that one-dimensional approaches may be insufficient in intervention processes (Kowalski et al., 2019).

Social Support

Social support is defined as the emotional, psychological, and practical assistance that individuals either perceive or receive from those in their social environment (Feeney & Collins, 2015). In the literature, it is commonly regarded as a crucial resource that mitigates the negative effects of stress and supports psychological adjustment (Lakey & Orehek, 2011). An essential aspect of social support lies not only in the availability of help but also in individuals' subjective evaluation of that support. Therefore, perceived social support is frequently emphasized as a more powerful predictor than the support actually received (Thoits, 2011). Recent findings suggest that social support contributes significantly to improving quality of life, enhancing individuals' ability to deal with difficulties, and promoting overall adjustment. Greater perceived social support is linked to lower psychological distress and higher well-being (Rueger et al., 2016). Moreover, social support enables individuals to reframe stressful experiences as manageable rather than threatening, thereby strengthening their coping capacities (Akeren & Ay, 2019; Lakey & Orehek, 2011). Recent studies also show that social support has both preventive and buffering relationships with cyber victimization. High levels of perceived social support reduce the likelihood of individuals being exposed to cyber victimization and mitigate the psychological effects when such experiences occur (Zhou et al., 2017). In contrast, insufficient perceived social support may lead to increased feelings of loneliness and strengthen their search for acceptance and approval in online environments. This situation may increase the risk of cyber victimization. When individuals who

lack adequate social support do not have safe resources to share the negative experiences they encounter in online environments, the likelihood of the continuation of victimization may increase (Tektaş & Kaçmaz, 2025). Some studies suggest that cyber victimization may reduce perceived social support over time, increasing social withdrawal and psychosocial vulnerability (Wright, 2024).

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is conceptualized as the ability of individuals to adopt an understanding, accepting, and supportive attitude toward themselves when faced with failures, inadequacies, or challenging life experiences. It represents an important psychological resource that enables individuals to acknowledge their human vulnerability and evaluate negative experiences from a more balanced perspective rather than engaging in harsh self-criticism (Neff, 2023). Recent approaches conceptualize self-compassion not only as a positive personality trait but also as a coping skill that can be developed and taught (Phillips & Hine, 2021). Self-compassion comprises three core components. Self-kindness refers to adopting an understanding and supportive attitude toward oneself rather than a judgmental or punitive stance. Common humanity involves recognizing that negative experiences are not unique to the individual and that mistakes and difficulties are natural aspects of being human. Mindfulness refers to the ability to approach negative emotions and thoughts in a balanced and aware manner without suppressing or overgeneralizing them. When considered together, these three components constitute a holistic structure that strengthens individuals' internal regulatory capacity (Germer & Neff, 2013). Higher self-compassion is associated with reduced intensity of adverse emotional experiences including depressive symptoms, anxious feelings, heightened stress, and feelings of shame, while demonstrating greater psychological resilience, hope, life satisfaction, and overall well-being (Ferrari et al., 2019). By fostering a kinder and more accepting attitude toward oneself, self-compassion enables individuals to interpret adverse life events not as signs of personal deficiency but as temporary and manageable experiences (Neff et al., 2007). Emerging findings further indicate that self-compassion serves a key regulatory function in psychological processes related to cyber victimization. Among those exposed to such experiences, lower self-compassion is linked to heightened self-criticism, guilt, and feelings of worthlessness. In contrast, higher self-compassion appears to buffer the emotional impact of cyber victimization (Aledeh et al., 2024). Specifically, it helps individuals avoid internalizing negative online interactions as reflections of their own inadequacy. Conversely, individuals with limited self-compassion are more likely to engage in harsh self-judgment and to generalize negative experiences, which can intensify emotional distress. During young adulthood in particular, insufficient self-compassion is regarded as a significant vulnerability factor that may amplify the adverse effects of cyber victimization (Chen & Zhu, 2022).

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation (DER)

Emotion regulation involves effectively understanding and managing emotions in line with situational demands, whereas difficulties reflect problems in controlling, identifying, and tolerating emotions, often leading to maladaptive coping strategies (McRae & Gross, 2020). Young adulthood is considered an emotionally sensitive developmental period because it involves identity development, the restructuring of social relationships, and academic or career transitions. During this stage, insufficiently developed emotion regulation skills may make individuals more vulnerable to stressful life events. Notably, adverse experiences in online contexts can disseminate more quickly and reach broader audiences compared to in-person interactions. This situation may increase the emotional burden experienced by individuals and challenge their regulatory capacity. Within the context of cyber victimization, individuals with poor emotion regulation are more prone to experiencing increased and enduring negative emotional responses to incidents such as threats, exclusion, and similar adverse online experiences or humiliation encountered in online environments. Individuals who are unable to regulate their emotions effectively may turn to dysfunctional coping strategies such as internalizing the victimization they experience, overgeneralizing negative events, or avoiding related situations. This process may deepen and prolong the effects of victimization (Compas et al., 2017). For this reason, emotion regulation deficits are recognized as a key individual vulnerability factor in explaining cyber

victimization experiences among young adults.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Ecological Theory developed by Bronfenbrenner proposes that individual behavior cannot be explained solely by personal characteristics. According to this theory, individuals are influenced by their relationships with family, peers, and the broader social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). From this perspective, cyber victimization can also be considered a multidimensional experience associated with both individual and social factors (Lee et al., 2021). Individual psychological characteristics may influence how people respond to cyber victimization. Self-compassion and emotion regulation are particularly important in coping with stressful experiences (Inwood & Ferrari, 2018). Individuals who experience DER may have greater difficulty managing negative emotions following cyber victimization. This may increase psychological vulnerability and make adjustment more difficult (Gratz & Roemer, 2004). In contrast, self-compassion may help individuals respond to negative experiences in a more balanced and supportive manner.

Social Ecological Theory also emphasizes the role of interpersonal resources. Social support may help individuals feel supported when facing stressful experiences (Chu et al., 2010). Support from family, friends, and significant others may also facilitate coping with cyber victimization. Therefore, perceived social support can be considered an important interpersonal resource that may reduce the negative effects associated with cyber victimization (Elsaesser et al., 2017). The scope of Social Ecological Theory in the present study should be considered within the context of the variables examined. The study primarily focuses on individual psychological characteristics and perceived interpersonal support. Although perceived social support encompasses support perceived from family, friends, and significant others, broader contextual factors such as family functioning, peer climate, the university environment, and the digital environment fall outside the scope of the present study. Therefore, Social Ecological Theory is used as a general conceptual framework for understanding the individual and interpersonal characteristics examined in the study, rather than as a model encompassing all ecological levels.

The Present Study

Previous person-centered studies have shown that involvement in cyber victimization and cyberbullying is characterized by heterogeneous patterns across individuals. For example, Vranjes et al. (2018) identified three cybervictimization classes in both adolescent and adult samples and found that these classes differed in emotion regulation strategies. Similarly, Martínez-Monteagudo et al. (2020) identified three profiles among Spanish adolescents based on cybervictimization, cyberaggression, and the co-occurrence of aggression and victimization. Other studies identified four classes based on different forms of online and offline victimization (Bradshaw et al., 2015) and five classes based on victimization and perpetration across cyber, verbal, relational, and physical bullying (Coyle et al., 2021). More recently, Peras et al. (2025) identified three profiles—nonvictims, moderate victims, and severe victims—based on verbal, relational, and cybervictimization. Collectively, these findings indicate that involvement in cyber victimization and cyberbullying does not follow a uniform pattern across individuals. However, previous person-centered studies have primarily examined the severity and forms of victimization or patterns of involvement across victimization and bullying perpetration roles (Coyle et al., 2021; Peras et al., 2025). Although emotion regulation has been examined in relation to cybervictimization classes (Vranjes et al., 2018), limited attention has been given to how cyber victimization co-occurs with psychological and interpersonal resources within the same profiles. In particular, cybervictimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation have not been jointly examined as profile indicators in previous person-centered research. Moreover, previous person-centered studies have examined cybervictimization and related forms of victimization in adolescent samples, either exclusively or alongside adult samples (Peras et al., 2025). The present study addresses this gap by examining cyber victimization alongside perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation among young adults. This approach allows for the examination of different combinations of risk and protective psychosocial characteristics

within the same profiles. Rather than focusing solely on the level or form of cyber victimization, the study adopts a person-centered approach to examine how cyber victimization is patterned together with individual and interpersonal resources. Social Ecological Theory provides a general conceptual framework for considering individual characteristics and interpersonal resources together in the present study. Within this framework, cyber victimization and difficulties in emotion regulation are considered risk-related characteristics, whereas perceived social support and self-compassion are considered protective psychosocial resources. Accordingly, the present study addressed the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Under which latent profiles are young adults classified in terms of their levels of cyber victimization, social support, self-compassion, and DER?

Research Question 2: Do the probabilities of young adults' membership in latent profiles differ significantly according to gender and academic year?

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

In this study, students from a public university located in the eastern region of Türkiye were recruited through classroom announcements using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected online in classroom settings in January 2026 to facilitate standardized administration of the data collection process. To protect participants' anonymity, no personally identifying information, such as names or student identification numbers, was collected. Participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and would be used solely for research purposes. A total of 437 university students were approached for participation, of whom 428 agreed to participate and completed the questionnaire, corresponding to a participation rate of 97.9%. The participants had a mean age of 21.49 years (SD = 1.13; range = 18–27 years). The data of three participants were excluded due to incomplete questionnaire responses. Consequently, the final analytic sample consisted of 425 young adults, including 176 females (41.4%) and 249 males (58.6%). However, there is no universal threshold for an adequate sample size in latent profile and latent class analyses; rather, the required sample size depends on factors such as the degree of class separation, class proportions, the number of indicators, and model characteristics (Tein et al., 2013).

Ethics Committee Approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Ethics Committee (Approval Code: 2025/14, Date: 26/12/2025), and informed consent was collected from all participants.

Instruments

Personal Information Form

A demographic information form developed by the researcher was used to collect data on participants' gender and academic year.

Cyber Victimization Scale

The instrument was initially developed by Lee et al. (2017) and later adapted into Turkish by Şimşek and Gizir (2025) to measure the cyberbullying experiences of university students in online settings. The Turkish adaptation comprises 23 items organized under four dimensions: verbal/written bullying, visual

bullying, sexual bullying, and social exclusion. Responses are collected using a five-point Likert-type scale, where higher scores reflect greater exposure to harmful or aggressive behaviors via digital communication platforms. The scale allows for both subscale-based and total score evaluations. A sample item is: "*I was repeatedly exposed to humiliating messages online.*" Regarding reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was reported as .95, while the subscale coefficients ranged from .83 to .92. In the current study, α = .89.

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

The MSPSS, originally developed by Zimet et al. (1988) and adapted into Turkish by Eker et al. (2001), was used to assess participants' perceptions of social support from three sources: family, friends, and significant others. The scale consists of 12 items organized into three subscales (Family Support, Friend Support, and Significant Other Support), with each subscale including four items. Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Very strongly disagree) to 7 (Very strongly agree). Higher scores indicate greater perceived social support. A sample item is, "*I can share my problems with my friends.*" In the Turkish adaptation study, Eker et al. (2001) reported satisfactory psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .80 to .95 across the subscales and .89 for the total scale. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient for the total scale was α = .88.

Self-Compassion Scale

The scale, originally developed by Raes et al. (2011) and adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım and Sarı (2018), was used to assess individuals' levels of self-compassion. It consists of 12 items measuring self-compassion across six components: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Almost never) to 5 (Almost always). The negatively worded items representing the self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification dimensions are reverse-scored before calculating the total self-compassion score. Higher total scores indicate greater levels of self-compassion. A sample item is, "*I try to see my failures as part of the human condition.*" In the Turkish adaptation study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total scale was reported as .75 (Yıldırım & Sarı, 2018). In the present study, the internal consistency coefficient for the total score was α = .90.

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation (DER) Scale

Emotion regulation difficulties were assessed using the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale–Short Form (DERS-16), originally developed by Bjureberg et al. (2016) and adapted into Turkish by Yiğit and Güzey-Yiğit (2017). The scale is designed to assess individuals' difficulties in understanding, accepting, and effectively regulating their emotional experiences. The Turkish version consists of 16 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always), with higher scores indicating greater DER. The scale comprises five dimensions: lack of emotional clarity, difficulties engaging in goal-directed behavior, impulse control difficulties, limited access to effective emotion regulation strategies, and non-acceptance of emotional responses. A sample item is, "*When I feel distressed, I have trouble controlling my behavior.*" The Turkish adaptation demonstrated good psychometric properties, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .92 for the total scale and internal consistency coefficients ranging from .78 to .87 across the subscales. In the present study, the scale also demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .91.

Data Analysis

The analyses were conducted using Mplus version 8.7. Cyber victimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation (DER) were included as continuous indicators in the latent profile analysis (LPA). The indicators were analyzed in their original metric and were not standardized. Models were estimated using the robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimator. Indicator variances were constrained to be equal across profiles. Within-profile covariances were fixed to zero.

Thus, local independence among the indicators was assumed. During data screening, three participants with incomplete responses were excluded. No missing data remained in the final analytic dataset. Therefore, no additional missing-data estimation procedure was applied. To reduce the risk of convergence to local maxima, 500 random sets of starting values were used. The best 100 solutions were retained for final-stage optimization. Replication of the best log-likelihood value was examined for each solution. The analysis began with a one-profile model. The number of profiles was then increased sequentially up to six profiles. Model selection was based on the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), sample-size adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (ABIC), Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin likelihood ratio test (VLMR-LRT), Lo–Mendell–Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test (LMR-LRT), Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT), and entropy. Lower AIC, BIC, and ABIC values indicated comparatively better model fit. Significant likelihood ratio tests indicated improvement over the solution with one fewer profile. Entropy values closer to 1 indicated greater classification accuracy. The final solution was not selected solely on the basis of statistical fit indices. Profile sizes, model parsimony, solution stability, theoretical coherence, and substantive interpretability were also considered (Nylund-Gibson & Choi, 2018; Weller et al., 2020). Profiles representing less than 5% of the sample were examined with particular caution. However, this threshold was not treated as an absolute exclusion criterion. Profile size was considered together with the other model-selection criteria. After the final latent profile solution was selected, associations between profile membership and sociodemographic variables were examined using the R3STEP method. This method accounts for classification uncertainty when estimating associations between auxiliary variables and latent profile membership.

RESULTS

Demographic Properties of The Sample

The demographic properties of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Demographic Properties of the Sample

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	249	(58.6)
	Female	176	(41.4)
Academic year	1	117	(27.5)
	2	92	(21.6)
	3	128	(30.1)
	4	88	(20.7)
Faculty	Education	130	(30.6)
	Arts and Sciences	75	(17.7)
	Health Sciences	101	(23.7)
	Engineering	119	(28.0)
Total		425	(100)

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study sample. The final sample consisted of 425 undergraduate students, of whom 249 (58.6%) were male and 176 (41.4%) were female. Regarding academic year, 117 (27.5%) participants were first-year, 92 (21.6%) were second-year, 128 (30.1%) were third-year, and 88 (20.7%) were fourth-year students. Participants were also drawn from different faculties: 130 (30.6%) were enrolled in the Faculty of Education, 75 (17.7%) in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 101 (23.7%) in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and 119 (28.0%) in the Faculty of Engineering. Overall, the sample included students from all four academic years and four different faculties, reflecting diversity in terms of academic year and field of study.

Table 2.
Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients, and Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Cyber victimization	—			
2. Social Support	-.07	—		
3. DER	.28***	-.17**	—	
4. Self-Compassion	-.14**	.09	-.53***	—
M	49.83	59.19	32.67	33.80
SD	12.98	11.85	8.03	11.94
Skewness	-.15	.18	-.64	.07
Kurtosis	.42	.23	-.32	-1.04
Cronbach's α	.89	.88	.91	.90

*Note. ** = p < .01 and *** = p < .001.*

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics, internal consistency coefficients, and Pearson correlations among the study variables. All variables demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .88 to .91. Skewness values ranged from −0.64 to 0.18, and kurtosis values ranged from −1.04 to 0.42.

Cyber victimization was positively correlated with difficulties in emotion regulation (r = .28, p < .001) and negatively correlated with self-compassion (r = −.14, p = .005). Its association with perceived social support was not statistically significant (r = −.07, p = .144). Perceived social support was negatively correlated with difficulties in emotion regulation (r = −.17, p = .001), whereas its association with self-compassion was not statistically significant (r = .09, p = .051). Difficulties in emotion regulation showed a strong negative correlation with self-compassion (r = −.53, p < .001).

Table 3.
Model Fit Indices for The Latent Profile Analysis

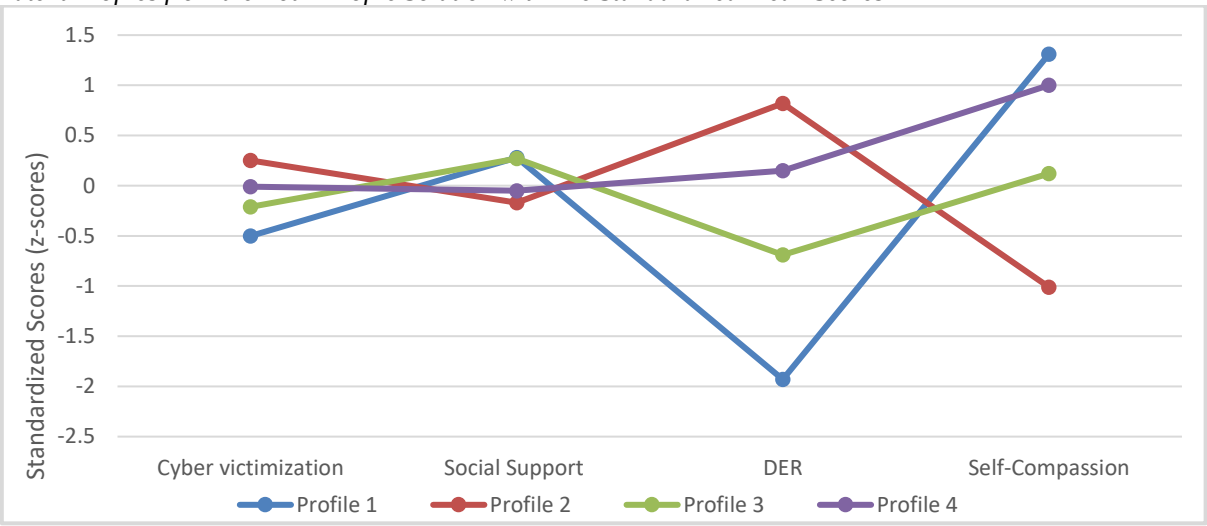
Latent profiles		1 class	2 classes	3 classes	**4 classes**	5 classes	6 classes
Indices	AIC	12860.39	12367.21	11992.51	**11530.05**	11183.28	11075.5
	BIC	12892.81	12419.88	12065.45	**11623.19**	11296.67	11209.14
	ABIC	12867.42	12378.63	12008.33	**11550.2**	11207.82	11104.42
	Entropy	NA	0.975	0.991	**0.991**	0.984	0.982
	VLMR	NA	503.183	384.697	**441.133**	356.767	117.786
	p value	NA	< .001	< .001	**< .001**	0.0031	0.0002
	LMR	NA	487.087	372.391	**427.016**	345.35	114.017
	p value	NA	< .001	< .001	**< .001**	0.0037	0.0003
	BLRT	NA	503.183	384.697	**441.133**	356.767	117.786
	p value	NA	< .001	< .001	**< .001**	<.001	< .001
	Best LL replicated	NA	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	Yes	Yes
Group sizes	Lt 5%	0	0	0	**0**	1	2

Note. NA = Not applicable; The selected model is presented in bold. AIC = Akaike Information Criteria; BIC = Bayesian Information Criteria; ABIC = Adjusted Bayesian Information Criteria; VLMR = Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin Likelihood Ratio Test; LMR = Lo-Mendell-Rubin Adjusted Likelihood Ratio Test; BLRT = Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test; Lt = Less than.

Latent profile solutions ranging from one to six profiles were compared (see Table 3). The AIC, BIC, and adjusted BIC (ABIC) values decreased as the number of profiles increased. The VLMR, LMR, and BLRT results also indicated significant improvements across successive profile solutions. Entropy values were above .98 for all multi-profile solutions. These values indicated high classification accuracy. Fit indices were not considered alone when determining the optimal number of profiles. Profile sizes, model parsimony, and theoretical interpretability were also considered (Nylund-Gibson & Choi, 2018; Weller et al., 2020). In the four-profile solution, no profile included less than 5% of the sample. In the five-profile solution, one profile fell below this threshold. In the six-profile solution, two profiles fell below the 5% threshold. The literature recommends that small profiles be evaluated with caution. However, the 5% threshold is not considered an absolute exclusion criterion. Profile size should be evaluated together with model fit and theoretical meaningfulness (Weller et al., 2020). Based on these

criteria, the four-profile solution was selected as the final model. This solution maintained adequate profile sizes. It also showed high classification accuracy. In addition, it provided a more parsimonious and interpretable structure than the five- and six-profile solutions. Finally, the best log-likelihood value was replicated for all solutions from two to six profiles. This finding provided additional support for the stability of the solutions.

Figure 1.
Latent Profiles from the Four-Profile Solution with The Standardized Mean Scores



Note.DER= Difficulties in Emotion Regulation; Profile 1 = Protective Resources Profile, Profile 2 = Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile, Profile 3 = Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile, Profile 4 = High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile.

Figure 1 illustrates the standardized mean scores of the four latent profiles across cyber victimization, perceived social support, DER, and self-compassion. Profile 1 (Protective Resources Profile) was characterized by low cyber victimization (z = −0.50), slightly above-average perceived social support (z = 0.28), markedly low DER (z = −1.93), and high self-compassion (z = 1.31). Profile 2 (Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile) was characterized by slightly above-average cyber victimization (z = 0.25), slightly below-average perceived social support (z = −0.17), high DER (z = 0.82), and low self-compassion (z = −1.01). Profile 3 (Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile) was characterized by slightly below-average cyber victimization (z = −0.21), slightly above-average perceived social support (z = 0.27), low DER (z = −0.69), and average self-compassion (z = 0.12). Profile 4 (High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile) was characterized by average levels of cyber victimization (z = −0.01), average perceived social support (z = −0.05), average DER (z = 0.15), and high self-compassion (z = 1.00).

Table 4.
Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Characteristics by Latent Profile

Variable	Category	Total Sample n = 425	Profile 1 n = 62 (14.6%)	Profile 2 n =189 (44.5%)	Profile 3 n = 76 (17.9%)	Profile 4 n = 98 (23.1%)
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gender	Male	249 (58.6%)	26 (41.9%)	131 (69.3%)	35 (46.1%)	57 (58.2%)
	Female	176 (41.4%)	36 (58.1%)	58 (30.7%)	41 (53.9%)	41 (41.8%)
Academic year	1	117 (27.5%)	20 (32.3%)	51 (27.0%)	17 (22.4%)	29 (29.6%)
	2	92 (21.6%)	19 (30.6%)	38 (20.1%)	19 (25.0%)	16 (16.3%)
	3	128 (30.1%)	16 (25.8%)	55 (29.1%)	22 (28.9%)	35 (35.7%)
	4	88 (20.7%)	7 (11.3%)	45 (23.8%)	18 (23.7%)	18 (18.4%)

Table 4 presents the distribution of demographic characteristics across the four latent profiles. Overall,

males constituted 58.6% of the total sample, whereas females accounted for 41.4%. Across the latent profiles, the proportion of female participants was highest in Profile 1 (58.1%), followed by Profile 3 (53.9%), whereas male participants were most prevalent in Profile 2 (69.3%). Profile 4 showed a relatively balanced gender distribution, with males comprising 58.2% and females 41.8% of the profile. Regarding academic year, students from all four academic years were represented in each latent profile. First-year students were most frequently represented in Profile 1 (32.3%), whereas third-year students constituted the largest proportion of Profile 4 (35.7%). In contrast, fourth-year students were least represented in Profile 1 (11.3%). Overall, the distributions indicate that all latent profiles included participants from both genders and all academic years, with some variation in their relative proportions across profiles.

Table 5.
Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Latent Profile Membership (R3STEP)

Profiles	Variables	B	OR	95% CI	SE	p
Profile 1-Profile 2 The reference categories were Male, 1st year (Academic year), and Profile 1.	Gender					
	Female	−1.171	0.31	0.17–0.57	0.308	< .001
	Academic year					
	2	−0.261	0.77	0.36–1.65	0.390	.500
	3	0.351	1.42	0.64–3.13	0.405	.391
	4	0.963	2.62	1.02–6.76	0.484	.047
Profile 1-Profile 3 The reference categories were Male, 1st year (Academic year), and Profile 1.	Gender					
	Female	−0.151	0.86	0.43–1.73	0.356	.675
	Academic year					
	2	0.182	1.20	0.48–3.01	0.471	.704
	3	0.495	1.64	0.64–4.16	0.476	.302
	4	1.068	2.91	0.97–8.77	0.563	.058
Profile 1-Profile 4 The reference categories were Male, 1st year (Academic year), and Profile 1.	Gender					
	Female	−0.693	0.50	0.26–0.96	0.334	.038
	Academic year					
	2	−0.562	0.57	0.24–1.37	0.445	.212
	3	0.438	1.55	0.67–3.61	0.430	.306
	4	0.599	1.82	0.64–5.14	0.531	.260
Profile 2-Profile 3 The reference categories were Male, 1st year (Academic year), and Profile 2.	Gender					
	Female	1.022	2.78	1.58–4.92	0.287	< .001
	Academic year					
	2	0.445	1.56	0.70–3.48	0.410	.281
	3	0.148	1.16	0.54–2.49	0.391	.712
	4	0.104	1.11	0.49–2.53	0.419	.799
Profile 2-Profile 4 The reference categories were Male, 1st year (Academic year), and Profile 2.	Gender					
	Female	0.482	1.62	0.98–2.67	0.258	.063
	Academic year					
	2	−0.288	0.75	0.36–1.57	0.380	.441
	3	0.095	1.10	0.59–2.05	0.318	.770
	4	−0.371	0.69	0.34–1.42	0.365	.317
Profile 3-Profile 4 The reference categories were Male, 1st year (Academic year), and Profile 3.	Gender					
	Female	−0.545	0.58	0.31–1.08	0.319	.088
	Academic year					
	2	−0.734	0.48	0.19–1.20	0.468	.116
	3	−0.051	0.95	0.41–2.19	0.426	.904
	4	−0.478	0.62	0.25–1.58	0.474	.320

Note. B = logit coefficient; SE = standard error of the logit coefficient; OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval. Gender and academic year were entered as categorical predictors. Male was the reference category for gender, and first year was the reference category for academic year. No linear trend across year levels was assumed or tested. The reference profile for each comparison is indicated in the corresponding comparison heading. Exact p values are reported except when p < .001.

Table 5 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression analysis using the R3STEP procedure to examine whether gender and academic year predicted latent profile membership. Overall, gender emerged as a significant predictor of profile membership, whereas academic year showed limited associations. When Profile 1 was used as the reference category, female students were significantly less likely than male students to belong to Profile 2 (OR = 0.31, 95% CI [0.17, 0.57], p < .001) and Profile 4 (OR = 0.50, 95% CI [0.26, 0.96], p = .038). In addition, fourth-year students were more likely than first-year students to belong to Profile 2 rather than Profile 1 (OR = 2.62, 95% CI [1.02, 6.76], p = .047).

Furthermore, when Profile 2 was used as the reference category, female students were significantly more likely than male students to belong to Profile 3 (OR = 2.78, 95% CI [1.58, 4.92], $p < .001$). All remaining comparisons were not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

In this study, young adults were found to form four distinct profiles based on cyber victimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation. This finding indicates that cyber victimization may exhibit different patterns among young adults in conjunction with psychological and social characteristics. Indeed, previous person-centered studies have also shown that distinct subgroups may emerge based on the level and type of cyber victimization and on victimization and aggression roles (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Coyle et al., 2021; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020; Peras et al., 2025; Vranjes et al., 2018). The present study extends this literature by examining cyber victimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation within the same profile model. The identified profiles reflect not only differences in the level of cyber victimization but also different combinations of psychosocial characteristics that co-occur with victimization. From this perspective, considering cyber victimization together with individuals' psychological and social resources may provide a more comprehensive understanding (Akeren, 2021). This pattern is also consistent with previous findings highlighting the multidimensional nature of cyber victimization and its associations with psychological characteristics (Zhu et al., 2021).

Profile 1 – Protective Resources Profile

The first profile was labeled the Protective Resources Profile because low cyber victimization co-occurred with high self-compassion, relatively high perceived social support, and markedly low DER. The term "protective" here does not imply a causal function; rather, it describes the co-occurrence of positive psychosocial characteristics within the profile. Self-compassion is regarded as a psychological resource associated with adopting a more understanding and balanced attitude toward oneself in the face of negative experiences (Neff, 2023). Similarly, emotion regulation is associated with individuals' ability to understand and manage their emotional responses to stressful experiences (McRae & Gross, 2020). The presence of perceived social support within this pattern further indicates that individual characteristics and interpersonal resources can co-occur within the same profile. Previous findings reporting an association between social support and psychological adjustment in the face of stressful experiences provide a theoretical basis for interpreting this pattern (Lakey & Orehek, 2011; Rueger et al., 2016). However, the present cross-sectional findings do not indicate that these resources lead to lower cyber victimization; rather, they show that these resources co-occur with lower levels of victimization.

Profile 2 – Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile

The second profile constitutes the largest group in the sample. This profile is characterized by low self-compassion and high DER. Perceived social support is close to the average level, whereas cyber victimization is only slightly elevated. Therefore, this profile was labeled the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile. This pattern indicates that self-compassion and DER are prominent variables in differentiating this profile from the others. Previous research has also demonstrated an association between cyber victimization and emotion regulation processes. In particular, Vranjes et al. (2018) reported that different cyber victimization classes may differ in terms of emotion regulation strategies. Studies on self-compassion have also shown that lower self-compassion is associated with more negative psychological experiences in the context of cyber victimization (Aledeh et al., 2024; Chen & Zhu, 2022). Thus, rather than indicating the presence of a "high-risk" group, this profile should be interpreted as a psychosocial pattern in which low self-compassion and difficulties in emotion regulation cluster together with cyber victimization.

Profile 3 – Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile

The third profile was labeled the Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile because relatively low levels of cyber victimization and DER co-occurred with relatively high perceived social support and average self-compassion. Compared with the first profile, this profile exhibited a more moderate pattern, particularly in terms of self-compassion and DER, while cyber victimization remained relatively low. This finding indicates that low cyber victimization does not occur exclusively within a single pattern characterized by high levels of all psychosocial resources. The negative association between perceived social support and DER is also generally consistent with the structure of this profile. However, the nonsignificant overall correlation between perceived social support and cyber victimization in the present sample suggests that the association between social support and victimization does not follow a simple linear pattern across all participants. When considered alongside the literature highlighting the association of social support with stressful life experiences and psychological adjustment (Rueger et al., 2016), this finding suggests that person-centered analyses can reveal distinct combinations that may not be captured by variable-centered associations alone.

Profile 4 – High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile

The fourth profile is distinguished by high self-compassion co-occurring with approximately average levels of cyber victimization, perceived social support, and DER. Therefore, this profile was labeled the High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile. Although previous studies have shown that self-compassion is negatively associated with adverse experiences such as stress, self-criticism, and psychological distress (Aledeh et al., 2024; Ferrari et al., 2019), the present findings should not be interpreted as indicating that self-compassion replaces other psychosocial resources or compensates for their absence. Rather, this profile demonstrates that high self-compassion does not always co-occur with high perceived social support or low DER. This finding supports the person-centered perspective that psychosocial resources may form different combinations across individuals.

In particular, the comparison between the first and fourth profiles makes this heterogeneity more apparent. Although both profiles are characterized by high self-compassion, the main distinction lies in DER. Therefore, high self-compassion alone should not be regarded as a general indicator of psychosocial adjustment. Although self-compassion and emotion regulation are related, they are conceptually distinct constructs. Self-compassion refers to an individual's attitude toward oneself when facing difficulties, whereas emotion regulation refers to the processes involved in understanding and managing emotional experiences (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Neff, 2023). Indeed, although the two variables were strongly associated in the present data, their lack of complete overlap is consistent with the profile structure showing that high self-compassion can co-occur with different levels of DER. Thus, rather than representing entirely opposing categories, Profiles 1 and 4 can be viewed as two distinct patterns demonstrating that similar levels of self-compassion may occur within different emotion regulation patterns.

The profile structure identified in the present study differs in important ways from those reported in previous person-centered research. Vranjes et al. (2018) reported that cyber victimization classes differed in terms of emotion regulation strategies, whereas Martínez-Monteagudo et al. (2020) identified distinct profiles based on different combinations of cyber victimization and cyberaggression. Bradshaw et al. (2015) identified classes based on different forms of online and offline victimization, while Coyle et al. (2021) jointly examined different forms of victimization and aggression. Peras et al. (2025), in contrast, identified a severity-based profile structure consisting of non-victimized, moderately victimized, and severely victimized groups. These studies primarily focused on the form or severity of victimization or on victimization–aggression roles. In contrast, the profiles identified in the present study did not follow a simple low–moderate–high ordering in terms of cyber victimization. This difference suggests that including psychological and interpersonal resources as profile indicators may reveal a more complex pattern of heterogeneity. Nevertheless, given differences across studies in samples, indicators, and analytical approaches, the identified profiles should not be assumed to be directly equivalent.

Predictors of Latent Profile Membership

The R3STEP analysis indicated that gender was a significant predictor of latent profile membership, whereas academic year showed only limited associations. Specifically, compared with male students, female students were less likely to belong to the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile and the High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile than the Protective Resources Profile. In addition, when the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile served as the reference category, female students were more likely than male students to belong to the Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile. Regarding academic year, fourth-year students were more likely than first-year students to belong to the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile rather than the Protective Resources Profile. All remaining comparisons were not statistically significant. The finding that female students were less likely than male students to belong to the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile relative to the Protective Resources Profile indicates that gender was associated with different configurations of self-compassion, emotion regulation difficulties, perceived social support, and cyber victimization. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously, as evidence regarding gender differences in psychosocial adjustment has been inconsistent across studies (Rueger et al., 2016; Tamres et al., 2002). From the perspective of Social Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), this pattern highlights the importance of considering individual psychological characteristics together with interpersonal resources when examining differences in psychosocial profiles. At the same time, female students were less likely than male students to belong to the High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile than the Protective Resources Profile. Because both profiles were characterized by high self-compassion but differed primarily in DER, this finding should not be interpreted as indicating lower self-compassion among women. Rather, it suggests that gender may be associated with different configurations of psychosocial characteristics, even when profiles share similar levels of a particular resource. This pattern further supports the importance of considering self-compassion and emotion regulation as related but distinct characteristics rather than interpreting profile differences on the basis of a single indicator.

When the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile was used as the reference category, female students were more likely than male students to belong to the Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile. This finding indicates that women in the present sample were less likely to display the combination of low self-compassion and high DER that characterized Profile 2 and were more likely to exhibit the comparatively moderate pattern observed in Profile 3. Collectively, these findings suggest that gender differences in profile membership are better understood in terms of configurations of multiple psychosocial characteristics rather than isolated variables. Regarding academic year, fourth-year students were more likely than first-year students to belong to the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile rather than the Protective Resources Profile. Although this difference may be related to the academic, career-related, and developmental demands experienced during the final year of university, this interpretation should be treated cautiously because these factors were not directly assessed in the present study. Moreover, no other comparisons involving academic year reached statistical significance. Thus, academic year showed only a limited association with latent profile membership in the present sample.

Limitations, Practical Implications, and Future Directions

This study is subject to several limitations. First, participants were recruited using convenience sampling from a single public university in eastern Türkiye. Therefore, the sample may not adequately represent the demographic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of university students and young adults across Türkiye, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should replicate the identified profiles using more diverse and representative samples drawn from multiple universities and geographical regions. Second, although several statistical fit indices were considered when comparing the latent profile models, the determination of the optimal number of profiles was not unequivocally supported by all statistical criteria. The four-profile solution was retained partly on the basis of theoretical meaningfulness, interpretability, and profile distinctiveness. Accordingly, the identified profile structure should be regarded as requiring further replication rather than as a definitive

classification of young adults based on cyber victimization and psychosocial resources. Third, the moderate-to-strong association between self-compassion and difficulties in emotion regulation ($r = -.53$) indicates some overlap between these indicators. Because the latent profile model was specified with within-profile covariances fixed to zero, this association raises a potential concern regarding the local independence assumption. Although these indicators represent theoretically distinct constructs, future studies should examine alternative model specifications that allow selected within-profile covariances or more flexible variance–covariance structures to determine the robustness of the identified profiles. Fourth, although the sample size ($N = 425$) was adequate for estimating the models examined in the present study, it may be limited for reliably distinguishing among increasingly complex solutions extending to six profiles, particularly when some profiles contain relatively small proportions of participants. Moreover, the stability and replicability of the four-profile solution were not evaluated through cross-validation, split-sample procedures, or an independent sample. Future research with larger samples should therefore examine whether the present profile structure can be replicated across independent samples and different populations. Fifth, all study variables were assessed through self-report measures obtained from the same participants at a single time point. Consequently, the observed associations may partly reflect common method variance, social desirability, or other response biases. The cross-sectional design also precludes conclusions regarding temporal or causal relationships among cyber victimization and psychosocial resources. Future studies could address these limitations by employing longitudinal and multi-informant designs and incorporating data from multiple sources. Sixth, measurement invariance across gender was not examined before gender was included as a predictor of latent profile membership. Therefore, the gender-related R3STEP findings should be interpreted cautiously, as observed differences may partly reflect differences in how the underlying constructs function across gender groups. Future studies should establish measurement invariance before conducting gender-based comparisons of latent profile membership. Seventh, the profiles were defined using only four indicators: cyber victimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and difficulties in emotion regulation. In addition, information on potentially relevant contextual characteristics, such as socioeconomic background, residence status, daily internet or social media use, preferred online platforms, and previous experiences of cyberbullying, was not collected. The inclusion of a broader set of individual, interpersonal, and contextual indicators may provide a more comprehensive representation of psychosocial heterogeneity associated with cyber victimization. Eighth, the study did not include distal psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, or psychological well-being. Consequently, the criterion-related validity and broader psychological relevance of the identified profiles could not be directly evaluated. Future research should incorporate theoretically relevant distal outcomes and use appropriate three-step procedures, such as DU3STEP or BCH, to examine whether the identified profiles differ systematically in psychological adjustment and related outcomes. Ninth, the gender distribution of the sample was moderately imbalanced, with male participants comprising 58.6% of the sample. This unequal representation may have affected the statistical power and precision of the gender-based R3STEP comparisons, particularly for detecting smaller differences in latent profile membership. Accordingly, the gender-related findings should be interpreted with caution. Future studies should examine the replicability of these associations in samples with a more balanced gender distribution. The findings also have important practical implications. Interventions targeting young adults should focus not only on cyber victimization experiences but also on the psychosocial characteristics that co-occur with these experiences. In particular, the Low Self-Compassion / High DER Profile suggests that some young adults may benefit from interventions focusing on self-compassion and emotion regulation, as these were the most distinctive characteristics of this profile. Rather than treating this group as a broadly defined “high-risk” profile, interventions may be more appropriately tailored to its specific pattern of low self-compassion and high DER. The High Self-Compassion / Average DER Profile also has implications for intervention planning. The coexistence of high self-compassion with average DER indicates that high self-compassion does not necessarily coincide with low emotion regulation difficulties. Accordingly, interventions should not assume that strength in one psychosocial domain reflects uniformly adaptive functioning across other domains. Assessment of both self-compassion and emotion regulation may therefore provide a more differentiated basis for identifying intervention needs. Similarly, individuals characterized by the Moderate Psychosocial Adjustment Profile may benefit from programs aimed at strengthening existing psychological and interpersonal resources. More broadly, university-based preventive programs may

incorporate components addressing emotion regulation, self-compassion, and perceived social support while recognizing that these characteristics can occur in different combinations across individuals.

Future research should extend the present findings in several ways. First, longitudinal studies are needed to examine the stability of the identified latent profiles over time and to investigate whether individuals transition between profiles across different developmental periods. Second, future studies should incorporate digital-use characteristics, such as daily internet and social media use, preferred online platforms, patterns of online engagement, and platform-specific indicators of cyber victimization to provide a more nuanced understanding of online victimization experiences. Finally, person-centered approaches should examine a broader range of psychosocial outcomes, including depression, anxiety, loneliness, academic adjustment, and help-seeking behavior, to better understand the short- and long-term outcomes associated with different cyber victimization profiles.

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrated that cyber victimization among young adults is characterized by heterogeneous psychosocial profiles rather than a single, homogeneous pattern. By identifying four distinct latent profiles based on cyber victimization, perceived social support, self-compassion, and DER, the findings underscore the importance of considering both risk factors and protective psychosocial resources when understanding cyber victimization. In particular, self-compassion, emotion regulation abilities, and perceived social support emerged as key characteristics distinguishing more adaptive from more vulnerable psychosocial profiles. Overall, the study contributes to the growing person-centered literature by demonstrating that strengthening protective psychosocial resources may be as important as reducing cyber victimization itself in promoting psychological adjustment among young adults.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Dijital teknolojilerin ve sosyal medya kullanımının yaygınlaşması, genç yetişkinlerin iletişim kurma ve sosyal ilişkilerini sürdürme biçimlerini önemli ölçüde değiştirmiştir. Bu dönüşüm çeşitli iletişim ve etkileşim olanakları sunarken siber mağduriyet gibi riskleri de beraberinde getirmiştir. Siber mağduriyet; bireylerin dijital platformlarda tehdit, aşağılama, dışlanma, taciz ve özel bilgilerin izinsiz paylaşılması gibi zarar verici davranışlara maruz kalmasını ifade etmektedir. Araştırmalar, siber mağduriyetin depresyon, kaygı, yalnızlık ve düşük benlik saygısı gibi çeşitli psikolojik sorunlarla ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir (Albikawi, 2023; Yıldırım vd., 2022). Bununla birlikte, siber mağduriyet yaşayan bireylerin psikososyal özelliklerinin homojen olmadığı görülmektedir. Benzer olumsuz çevrimiçi deneyimlere maruz kalan bireyler; öz-şefkat, duygu düzenleme ve algılanan sosyal destek gibi bireysel ve kişilerarası özellikler bakımından farklılaşabilmektedir. Araştırmanın kavramsal çerçevesi Sosyal Ekolojik Kurama dayanmaktadır. Bu kuram, bireysel davranışların yalnızca kişisel özelliklerle açıklanamayacağını ve bireyin içinde bulunduğu sosyal çevrenin de dikkate alınması gerektiğini ileri sürmektedir (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bu araştırmada öz-şefkat ve duygu düzenleme bireysel psikolojik özellikler, algılanan sosyal destek ise kişilerarası bir kaynak olarak ele alınmıştır. Bununla birlikte, aile işlevselliği, akran iklimi, üniversite ortamı ve dijital çevre gibi daha geniş bağlamsal faktörler doğrudan incelenmemiştir. Bu nedenle Sosyal Ekolojik Kuram, tüm ekolojik düzeylerin sınandığı kapsamlı bir model olarak değil, araştırmada ele alınan bireysel ve kişilerarası özelliklerin birlikte değerlendirilmesini sağlayan genel bir kavramsal çerçeve olarak kullanılmıştır. Önceki kişi merkezli çalışmalar, siber mağduriyet ve siber zorbalık deneyimlerinin bireyler arasında farklı örüntüler oluşturabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmaların önemli bir bölümü mağduriyetin şiddetine ve biçimlerine ya da mağduriyet ve zorbalık rollerinin birlikte görülmesine odaklanmıştır. Ayrıca duygu düzenleme stratejilerinin farklı siber mağduriyet sınıflarıyla ilişkili olabileceği gösterilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, siber mağduriyet, algılanan sosyal destek, öz-şefkat ve duygu düzenleme güçlüğünün aynı kişi merkezli model içerisinde birlikte incelendiği araştırmalar sınırlıdır. Bu araştırmanın amacı, genç yetişkinlerin siber mağduriyet, algılanan sosyal destek, öz-şefkat ve duygu düzenleme güçlüğü düzeylerine dayalı gizil profillerini belirlemek ve profil üyeliğinin cinsiyet ile sınıf düzeyiyle ilişkisini incelemektir. Önceki kişi merkezli çalışmaların mağduriyetin biçimi ve şiddetine ağırlık verdiği, mevcut çalışmanın ise psikolojik ve kişilerarası kaynakları aynı profil modelinde ele aldığı belirtilmektedir.

Araştırma, Türkiye'nin doğu bölgesindeki bir devlet üniversitesinde öğrenim gören öğrencilerle yürütülmüştür. Katılımcılara kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle ulaşılmış ve veriler Ocak 2026'da sınıf ortamında çevrimiçi olarak toplanmıştır. Ulaşılan 437 öğrenciden 428'i araştırmaya katılmıştır. Eksik yanıtları bulunan üç katılımcı analiz dışında bırakılmış ve nihai örneklem 425 genç yetişkinden oluşmuştur. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması 21,49'dur (SS = 1,13; yaş aralığı = 18–27). Örneklemin 176'sı (%41,4) kadın, 249'u (%58,6) erkektir. Katılımcılar eğitim, fen-edebiyat, sağlık bilimleri ve mühendislik fakültelerinde öğrenim görmektedir. Fakültelere göre dağılım sırasıyla %30,6, %17,7, %23,7 ve %28,0'dır. Verilerin toplanmasında Siber Mağduriyet Ölçeği, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği, Öz-Şefkat Ölçeği–Kısa Formu ve Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Ölçeği–Kısa Formu kullanılmıştır. Ölçeklerin bu araştırmadaki Cronbach alfa katsayıları sırasıyla .89, .88, .90 ve .91 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Veriler Mplus 8.7 programında Gizil Profil Analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Siber mağduriyet, algılanan sosyal destek, öz-şefkat ve duygu düzenleme güçlüğü sürekli gösterge değişkenleri olarak modele dâhil edilmiştir. Değişkenler analiz öncesinde standartlaştırılmamış ve özgün ölçüm birimleriyle modele alınmıştır. Modeller sağlam maksimum olabilirlik tahmincisi kullanılarak tahmin edilmiştir. Gösterge varyansları profiller arasında eşitlenmiş ve profil içi kovaryanslar sıfıra sabitlenmiştir. Yerel maksimumlara ulaşma riskini azaltmak amacıyla 500 rastgele başlangıç değeri kullanılmış ve en iyi 100 çözüm son aşama optimizasyonunda değerlendirilmiştir. Her model için en iyi log-olabilirlik değerinin tekrarlanıp tekrarlanmadığı ayrıca incelenmiştir.

Bir profilden altı profile kadar olan modeller karşılaştırılmıştır. Model seçiminde AIC, BIC, düzeltilmiş BIC, VLMR-LRT, LMR-LRT, BLRT ve entropi değerlerinin yanı sıra profil büyüklükleri, model sadeliği, çözümün kararlılığı, kuramsal anlamlılık ve yorumlanabilirlik birlikte dikkate alınmıştır.

Örneklemin %5'inden daha azını oluşturan profiller dikkatle değerlendirilmiş, ancak bu ölçüt mutlak bir dışlama ölçütü olarak kullanılmamıştır. Dört profilli modelde %5'in altında herhangi bir profil bulunmazken beş profilli modelde bir, altı profilli modelde ise iki küçük profil ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca iki profilden altı profile kadar olan tüm çözümlerde en iyi log-olabilirlik değeri tekrarlanmıştır. Bu değerlendirmeler sonucunda dört profilli çözüm, daha karmaşık modellere göre daha yalın ve yorumlanabilir olması ve yeterli profil büyüklükleri sağlaması nedeniyle nihai model olarak seçilmiştir. Dört profilli çözümün AIC değeri 11530.048, BIC değeri 11623.191, düzeltilmiş BIC değeri 11550.204 ve entropi değeri .991'dir. Birinci profil, örneklemin %14,6'sını (n = 62) oluşturan Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profili olarak adlandırılmıştır. Bu profil düşük siber mağduriyet, ortalamanın biraz üzerinde algılanan sosyal destek, oldukça düşük duygu düzenleme güçlüğü ve yüksek öz-şefkat ile karakterizedir. İkinci profil, katılımcıların %44,5'ini (n = 189) oluşturan Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profilidir. Bu profilde siber mağduriyet yalnızca ortalamanın biraz üzerinde, algılanan sosyal destek ise ortalamaya yakın düzeydedir. Profili esas olarak düşük öz-şefkat ve yüksek duygu düzenleme güçlüğü ayırt etmektedir. Üçüncü profil, örneklemin %17,9'unu (n = 76) oluşturan Orta Düzey Psikososyal Uyum Profilidir. Bu profilde siber mağduriyet ve duygu düzenleme güçlüğü ortalamanın altında, algılanan sosyal destek ortalamanın biraz üzerinde ve öz-şefkat yaklaşık ortalama düzeydedir. Dördüncü profil ise örneklemin %23,1'ini (n = 98) oluşturan Yüksek Öz-Şefkat / Ortalama Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profilidir. Bu profil yüksek öz-şefkat ile birlikte yaklaşık ortalama düzeyde siber mağduriyet, algılanan sosyal destek ve duygu düzenleme güçlüğüyle karakterizedir. R3STEP sonuçları, cinsiyetin gizil profil üyeliğiyle anlamlı biçimde ilişkili olduğunu, sınıf düzeyinin ise sınırlı bir ilişki gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profili referans alındığında kadın öğrencilerin erkek öğrencilere göre Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profilinde yer alma olasılıkları daha düşük bulunmuştur (OR = 0,31, %95 GA [0,17, 0,57], p < .001). Kadın öğrencilerin Yüksek Öz-Şefkat / Ortalama Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profilinde yer alma olasılıkları da erkeklere göre daha düşüktür (OR = 0,50, %95 GA [0,26, 0,96], p = .038). Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profili referans alındığında ise kadınların Orta Düzey Psikososyal Uyum Profilinde yer alma olasılıkları erkeklerden daha yüksektir (OR = 2,78, %95 GA [1,58, 4,92], p < .001). Ayrıca dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin birinci sınıf öğrencilerine göre Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profilinde yer alma olasılıkları Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profiline kıyasla daha yüksek bulunmuştur (OR = 2,62, %95 GA [1,02, 6,76], p = .047). Diğer karşılaştırmalar istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir. Bulgular, genç yetişkinlerde siber mağduriyetin tek tip bir psikososyal örüntü içinde ortaya çıkmadığını göstermektedir. Özellikle Koruyucu Kaynaklar Profili ile Düşük Öz-Şefkat / Yüksek Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Profili arasındaki farklılıklar, siber mağduriyetin öz-şefkat, duygu düzenleme ve algılanan sosyal destek gibi psikososyal özelliklerle birlikte değerlendirilmesinin önemine işaret etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, araştırmanın kesitsel yapısı nedeniyle bu değişkenler arasında nedensel veya zamansal bir yön olduğu sonucuna varılamaz. Daha yüksek psikososyal kaynakların daha düşük siber mağduriyete yol açtığı ileri sürülemeyeceği gibi, siber mağduriyet deneyimlerinin zaman içerisinde öz-şefkat, duygu düzenleme veya algılanan sosyal destekle nasıl bir karşılıklı ilişki içinde olduğu da mevcut verilerle belirlenemez. Araştırmanın tek bir devlet üniversitesinde kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle yürütülmesi bulguların genellenebilirliğini sınırlandırmaktadır. Ayrıca tüm değişkenlerin aynı zamanda öz-bildirim araçlarıyla ölçülmesi ortak yöntem yanlılığı ve sosyal beğenirlik gibi olası yanlılıkları beraberinde getirebilir. Kesitsel tasarım nedensel çıkarımlara olanak vermemektedir. Örneklemde erkeklerin oranının kadınlardan daha yüksek olması da cinsiyete dayalı R3STEP karşılaştırmalarının istatistiksel gücünü ve tahmin kesinliğini etkileyebilir. Gelecek araştırmalarda daha dengeli cinsiyet dağılımına sahip, farklı üniversite ve bölgelerden oluşturulan örneklemlerle profil yapısının yeniden sınanması önemlidir. Bunun yanında boylamsal çalışmalar, profillerin zaman içerisindeki kararlılığının ve bireylerin profiller arasında geçiş yapıp yapmadığının incelenmesine olanak sağlayabilir. Mevcut çalışmanın sınırlılıkları arasında cinsiyet dağılımındaki dengesizlik ve kesitsel tasarım da açık biçimde belirtilmektedir.