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EXAMINATION OF ADOLESCENTS' COPING WAYS WITH CYBERBULLYING

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ABSTRACT: With the rapid development in information and communication technologies, increase in quality and quantity of various tools that are compatible with Internet also augments interpersonal communication and interaction opportunities on the Internet. This increase in interpersonal communication and interaction on virtual platforms, however, brings a set of problems along, too. One of these problems is the use of the virtual platform technologies by the young to bully (cyberbullying) their peers. Considering 12 to 20 years of adolescents, being the most engaged people with virtual platforms, and who are called the digital natives; ascertaining adolescents' coping ways with cyberbullying is thought to be important. The purpose of this study is to examine 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades high-school adolescents' coping ways with cyberbullying on the basis of gender, high-school type and Facebook membership variables. Survey model was used as the research method. The study was conducted with 301 adolescents from two different high-schools in a city in the centre of Turkey. "Coping with Cyberbullying Scale towards Adolescents" consisting of 17 items and 4 subscales was used to obtain research data. Findings obtained from the research show that adolescents' coping ways with cyberbullying are generally elevated. Additionally, while there is a significant difference in favour of female adolescents in coping ways with cyberbullying in terms of gender; there is, on the other hand, a significant difference in favour of adolescents studying from public high-schools in terms of school type. Finally, coping ways with cyberbullying according to whether the adolescents are members of Facebook, differentiated on a significant level in favour of the ones that are not members of Facebook.

Key Words: Coping with cyberbullying, adolescents, gender, facebook membership.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays information and communication technologies rapidly develop and therefore gradually increasing occurred in the quantities and qualities of different tools which are compatible with Internet causes to an increase in interpersonal communication and interaction possibilities in Internet environment as well. Based on the results of the research conducted by Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) in April 2015, it is determined that while 54.8% of individuals in the 16-74 age range in Turkey uses computer, 55.9% of them uses Internet (TUIK, 2015). However, the use of social media with a rate of 80.9% takes place on the top among intended uses of Internet in the first three months of same year (TUIK, 2015). The Internet usage rate in the world has reached 46.1% for the first five months of 2016 (Internet Live Stats, 2016). Such an increase and acceleration occurred in use of communication tools nearly turns the world into a small city and even if there are distances among people and people don't know each other, they take the opportunity to establish communicate each other. The most popular technological tools of this era in which we live are mobile tools and these tools have an important place in the life of the young ones (Saran, Seferoglu & Cagiltay, 2009). The mobile tools rapidly become widespread in our country and accordingly they are no doubt used by adolescents in the best way.

Adolescence period covers 12-24 age range and adolescence term refers to the individuals whose childhood period ends upon their attainment to puberty and it continues to young adulthood period (between aged 25-30) and differs from childhood period in terms of biological and psychological and society expects them to take responsibility and they win their economic freedoms at the end of this period (Kulaksızoğlu, 2004). Adolescents consist of individuals who can more closely follow technological advances compared to their parents and learn

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faster the changes in their environment than their parents and act more flexible in the interpretation of the information learned. As each learning will cause to behavioral changes and also as adolescents have more advantage in learning the innovations and in turning them into behavior, they exhibit more different behaviors than their parents. These behavior differences can lead adolescents to experience conflicts and problems with their parents (Kulaksızoğlu, 1989). As adolescents use more and better the technological means and their parents don't know to benefit from the technological means as required, Prensky (2001) defines the adolescents as "digital natives" and their parents as "digital immigrants".

Today, group who are more willing to use the Internet considered as the most basic component of information and communication technologies are digital natives (Tonta, 2009). Digital natives means individuals who are born inside modern technology and communication world and place online media and new technologies in the center of their lives and have natural skills to use them (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives adapt newly emerging technological innovations in a short time and naturally turn them into a part of their lives. Speed and accessibility has become the passion of digital natives and as a sequence they get used to it and consume it quickly. Digital immigrants are such a generation that they were not born with the tools engendered by the rapidly evolving information and communication technologies and tools such as mobile phones, computers and so on have entered in their lives later. This generation can be forced in using technological tools, resist them and even refuse them; but they are obliged to benefit from these tools in order to keep up with the times. There are some differences between digital natives and digital immigrants in terms of using of technology as well as there are some differences in their general behaviors. Generally digital natives have an extremely nervous person; they anger easily and tend to exaggerate their some behaviors. But digital immigrants, contrary to digital natives, get pleasure out of a quite life and generally exhibit a calmer attitude than digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Some negative features of digital natives bring alone some problems in the digital age. Due to especially using of Internet in many types of devices, the number of communication channels in cyber environments has increased and as a consequence cyberbullying named as a new type of bullying has become popular among adolescents.

Belsey (2007) defines the cyberbullying that has many definitions in literature as behaviors aiming to harm to other people by means of using of information and communication technologies by an individual or a group and repeating intentionally and made hostilely. However, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) has stated that adolescents have harassed each other by using technological tools such as mobile telephones and computers together with modern technology with the impact of the interest in technology and accordingly that they have exhibited bullying behavior against each other. There are similarities between cyberbullying and bullying in terms of bad faith, violence, repetition and remarkable power difference (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Willard (2006) expresses that there are seven cyberbullying activities such as anger (angry, to send rude and abusive messages), harassment (to transmit continuous offensive messages), cyber harassment (to forward repeatedly harmful and extremely frightening threat messages), defamation (to send untrue or cruel expressions), imitation (to act like someone which is under bad and difficult conditions), navigation and deception (to send the sensitive and proprietary information belonging to someone else to other people and to deal with spreading of this information to more people) and removal from membership (to remove a member intentionally from a online group). He has stated that these activities consist of text, picture, graphic, video and audio files.

According to the data of research performed by TUIK in Turkey in concern with individuals taking place among aged 16-74, the age group where computer use is at the highest level is composed of individuals taking place among aged 16-24 with a ratio of 70% (TUIK, 2015). It has been determined that group where Internet use is at the highest level is composed of individuals taking place among aged 16-24 with a ratio of 77% (TUIK, 2015). In light of these data and when it is taken into consideration that most interested group on the Internet are adolescents, it may be said that exposing of adolescents to cyberbullying is potentially a higher probability. For example, in Turkey it has been determined in the scope of a research conducted together with high school students that 30.2% of adolescents have shared their passwords in the Internet and it has been revealed that 13.4% of boys and 10.4% of girls have been exposed to cyberbullying (Aricak, Siyahhan, Uzunhasanoglu, Saribeyoglu, Ciplak, Yilmaz, & Memmedov, 2008). Some negative emotions have occurred in individuals exposed to bullying and their daily activities have been adversely affected from this situation (Willard, 2007).

In a study conducted by Anderson (2012) about what individuals exposed to cyberbullying feel, it has been observed that individuals in question face with emotions such as sadness, self-accusation, lack of self-confidence, insecurity, anger, discomfort, depression, isolated from environment and shame. It is possible to see many studies carried out abroad that what kind of strategies is required to cope with cyberbullying. Parris, Varjas, Meyers and Cutts (2012) have divided into three sections activities aiming to cope with cyberbullying in their studies. In other words they are composed of sections such as reactive coping, preventive coping and not to use any method to prevent. The methods used in reactive coping consist of avoidance, acceptance, defense and social support seeking behaviors. The methods used in preventive coping are to tell someone, to raise safety and awareness. Similarly, Baştürk-Akca, Sayımer, Balaban-Salı and Başak (2014) state that it is essential to take the preventive measures and to provide the correct use of technological means by creating the awareness of

cyberbullying in order to protect individuals from cyberbullying. Sezer, Sahin and Akturk (2013) conducted a study on middle school students for the ways they use to prevent themselves from cyberbullying. The results of their study show that students; complain cyberbullying to the site administrator, contact to the experts, inactivated their own accounts, answering back or counterattack to cyberbullying. As a consequence, importance of determination of levels of coping with cyberbullying is emphasized in studies fulfilled in order to minimize the effects of cyberbullying on individuals and to take preventive measures. With this study, we have aimed to examine the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents dealing with exceedingly technological tools and therefore exposed to cyberbullying.

Purpose of this Research

The purpose of this study is to examine the levels of coping with cyberbullying of students studying at 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades of high schools. In accordance with this general purpose, we have tried to find answers for questions indicated below in the scope of this research:

1. What are the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents?
2. Do the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents show differentiation according to the variables specified below?
 - a. Gender,
 - b. High school type,
 - c. Facebook membership

METHOD

Research Model

Survey model has been used as research design in this study. Survey model is a kind of research that describes an ongoing situation in the past or at the present time without changing (Karasar, 2014).

Study Group

301 high school students studying in a province in the central part of Turkey have participated in this research on a voluntarily. Descriptive statistics regarding the study group is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Adolescents

Variable	Option	n	f (%)
Gender	Female	115	38.2
	Male	186	61.8
High school type	Vocational and Technical High School	112	37.2
	Public High School	189	62.8
Facebook Membership	Yes	217	72.1
	No	84	27.9
Grade Level	9 th Grade	79	26.3
	10 th Grade	110	36.5
	11 th Grade	71	23.6
	12 th Grade	41	13.6

As shown in Table 1; while 115 of adolescents participated in the study is composed of girls, 186 of adolescents participated in the study is composed of boys. 112 of adolescents were studying at Vocational and Technical High School while 189 of them were studying at Public High School. When looking at the Facebook membership of adolescents in Table 1, it shows 72.1% of adolescents are a member of Facebook, while 27.9% of them are not a member of Facebook. In addition, information related to grade levels of the participants is as follow: 79, 110, 71 and 41 of participants consist of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades students respectively.

Data Collection Tools

“Coping with Cyberbullying Scale towards Adolescents” and “Personal Information Form” is used to collect data from adolescents in the scope of the research.

Coping with Cyberbullying Scale towards Adolescents

In this research, “Coping with Cyberbullying Scale towards Adolescents” is used developed by Peker, Özhan and Eroğlu (2015) and carried out a validity and reliability study together with 318 secondary school students in

order to determine the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents. The scale consists of 4 subscales. There are 3 items in subscale called as “Social Support Seeking”, 5 items in subscale called as “Help Seeking”, 4 items in subscale called as “Struggling” and finally 4 items in subscale called as “Online Security”, in other words 17 items in total take place in the scale. In the coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents, a 4-point Likert type scale, participant is requested to mark one of “Never”, “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Always” options. These options are given 1, 2, 3 and 4 scores respectively. There is no item for which reverse point is given in the scale. Instead of achieving a total score in the scale, achieving a total score for each subscale and evaluating the levels of coping with cyberbullying in the subscales is recommended. When total score increases in each subscale, it is highlighted that the levels of coping with cyberbullying will be in a high level. In the scale, Cronbach α internal consistency coefficient is .80 for social support seeking subscale; .86 for help seeking; .70 for struggling and .77 for online security.

Personal Information Form

In this research, personal information form prepared by researchers is used in order to determine the gender, high school type, class levels of adolescents and whether they are Facebook membership or not. In the Personal Information Form, closed-ended questions related to variables specified above have been asked and adolescents participated in the research have been requested to mark the most appropriate option for them.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The reliability of the scale used in the research has been calculated again in the scope of this study. As a result of the calculation, Cronbach α internal consistency coefficient as .76 for social support seeking subscale, as .83 for help seeking, as .70 for struggling and as .70 for online security has been found in the scale. Calculation of Cronbach α internal consistency coefficient as .70 and above indicates that measuring tool used is reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2016). The kurtosis and skewness coefficients of subscales have been calculated with purpose of determining the appropriate statistical techniques to reach the results being the scientific validity through data obtained from the scale. The values obtained according to results of the calculation are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients of the Subscales

	Social Support Seeking	Help Seeking	Struggling	Online Security
Kurtosis	-.240	.146	-.103	.904
Skewness	-.598	-.881	-.677	.573

When the values given in Table 2 are considered, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients calculated for each subscale take place within the limits of -1 and +1 and this shows that scores obtained from subscales exhibit a normal distribution (Huck, 2012). As a consequence, it has been decided to use the parametric tests on the data obtained from the scale. Based on this, descriptive statistics was used in the analytical procedures and independent sample t-test was used in the comparison of the pairs (gender, high school type, Facebook membership).

Scale items are in 4-point Likert type and adolescents have been requested to give scores between 1 and 4 to items taking place in the scale. The scale intervals were calculated by interval = range width / group number formula and is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Scale Intervals

Scales	Option	Intervals
1	Never	1.00 – 1.74
2	Sometimes	1.75 – 2.49
3	Generally	2.50 – 3.24
4	Always	3.25 – 4.00

FINDINGS

The Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents

In this research, the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents have firstly been examined. When the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents are determined, total scores obtained from subscales have been calculated and evaluated instead of total coping with cyberbullying score as is indicated by Peker, Özhan and Eroğlu (2015). It has been specified that the conditions of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents who totally obtain high scores in subscales are at a higher level. The analysis results obtained in accordance with this situation are given in Table 4.

Table 4. The Conditions of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents

The Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying	N	Min.	Mak.	\bar{X}	SD
Social Support Seeking	301	3	12	8.42	2.22
Help Seeking	301	5	20	11.65	3.95
Struggling	301	4	16	11.13	2.99
Online Security	301	5	20	16.03	3.29

When average scores obtained by adolescents in subscales of the coping with cyberbullying scale are examined, it is seen that average scores obtained from Help Seeking subscale take place in "Sometimes" range, while average scores obtained from all other subscales take place in "Generally" range. Accordingly, it can be said that the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents are generally high.

Examination of the Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents According to Gender

According to gender of adolescents, differentiation levels between scores taken by adolescents in the coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents is examined through independent sample t-test and analysis results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Examination of the Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents According to Gender

Scale	Subscale	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SS	t	p
Coping with Cyberbullying towards Adolescents	Social Support Seeking	Female	115	9.01	2.046	3.679	.000
		Male	186	8.06	2.252		
	Help Seeking	Female	115	12.87	3.833	4.344	.000
		Male	186	10.89	3.839		
	Struggling	Female	115	12.06	2.826	4.383	.000
		Male	186	10.55	2.943		
	Online Security	Female	115	17.75	2.255	8.541	.000
		Male	186	14.97	3.388		

When the values given in Table 5 are considered, it is seen that there is a significant difference in favor of female adolescents among scores obtained from all subscales of coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents (Social support seeking [t = 3.679, $p < 0.01$], help seeking [t = 4,344; $p < 0.01$], struggling [t = 4,383, $p < 0.01$] and online security [t = 8,541, $p < 0.01$]). These results suggest that female adolescents can achieve to cope with cyberbullying in the best way in social support seeking, help seeking, struggling and online security subscales compared to male adolescents.

Examination of the Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents According to High School Type

According to high school types of adolescents, differentiation levels between scores taken by adolescents in the coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents is examined through independent sample t-test and analysis results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Examination of the Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents According to High School Type

Scale	Subscale	High School Type	N	\bar{X}	SS	t	p
Coping with Cyberbullying towards Adolescents	Social Support Seeking	VTHS ¹	112	7.84	2.463	-3.385	.001
		Public High School	189	8.77	1.992		
	Help Seeking	VTHS ¹	112	11.34	3.871	-1.044	.297
		Public High School	189	11.83	3.994		
	Struggling	VTHS ¹	112	10.50	3.013	-2.850	.005
		Public High School	189	11.50	2.913		
	Online Security	VTHS ¹	112	14.33	3.692	-6.850	.000
		Public High School	189	17.04	2.552		

¹ VTHS: Vocational and Technical High School

When the values given in Table 6 are considered, it is seen that there is a significant difference in favor of adolescents who studying in a public high school among scores obtained from social support seeking, struggling and online security subscales of coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents (Social support seeking [t = -3.385; $p < 0.01$], struggling [t = -2 850; $p < 0.01$] and online security [t = -6.850; $p < 0.01$]). But there is not a significant difference among scores obtained from help seeking [t = -1.044; $p < 0.01$] subscale in terms of high school type from where they received education. These results suggest that adolescents studying at a public high

school can achieve to cope with cyberbullying in the best way in social support seeking, struggling and online security subscales compared to adolescents studying in the vocational and technical high school.

Examination of the Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents According to Facebook Membership

According to Facebook membership of adolescents, differentiation levels between scores taken by adolescents in the coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents is examined through independent sample t-test and analysis results are given in Table 7.

Table 4. Examination of the Levels of Coping with Cyberbullying of Adolescents according to Facebook Membership

Scale	Subscale	Facebook Membership	N	\bar{X}	SS	t	p
Coping with Cyberbullying towards Adolescents	Social Support Seeking	Yes	84	9.18	1.989	3.757	.000
		No	217	8.13	2.241		
	Help Seeking	Yes	84	12.89	4.081	3.465	.001
		No	217	11.17	3.798		
	Struggling	Yes	84	11.96	3.164	3.060	.002
		No	217	10.81	2.856		
	Online Security	Yes	84	17.06	3.205	3.435	.001
		No	217	15.63	3.246		

When the values given in Table 7 are considered, it is seen that there is a significant difference in favor of adolescents who are not a member of Facebook among scores obtained from all subscales of coping with cyberbullying scale towards adolescents (Social support seeking [t = 3.757; p <0.01], help seeking [t = 3.465; p <0.01], struggling [t = 3.060; p <0.01] and online security [t = 3.435; p <0.01]). These results suggest that adolescents who are not a member of Facebook can achieve to cope with cyberbullying in the best way in social support seeking, help seeking, struggling and online security subscales compared to adolescents who are a member of Facebook.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Cyberbullying events increase rapidly among adolescents, it affects adversely especially the adolescents and individuals who closely follow and use all technological developments (Ayas & Horzum, 2012). In this study in which we determine the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents and to examine whether the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents become different according to some variables or not, we firstly have set forth that the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents are high. Aricak et al. (2008), in a manner similar to our study, have determined in their studies that adolescents have optimistic opinions about coping with cyberbullying. In another study by Akturk (2015), cyberbullying sensibility levels of high school students were examined and it was reported that cyberbullying sensibility levels of the students were high.

Secondly, we have determined that female adolescents can achieve to cope with cyberbullying in the best way in social support seeking, help seeking, struggling and online security subscales compared to boy adolescents. In a study conducted by Peker (2014) together with 314 high school students receiving education in 9th, 10th, 10th and 11th classes, participants were applied an questionnaire related to coping with cyberbullying consisting of helplessness, help seeking, coping technically, struggling, aggression and prevention subscales. According to results of this research, it has seen that girls exhibit a significant difference in help seeking, struggling, prevention and coping technically subscales compared to boys, while boys exhibit a significant difference in aggression subscale compared to girls. Price and Dalgleish (2010) have determined two different the coping strategies with cyberbullying as offline and online strategies. They conducted their study with 548 adolescent aging below 25, they found a significant difference in favor of females for strategies such as confronted bully, told a friend, stayed offline, stopped looking, told parent or carer, told teacher or principal, told kids helpline and told another adult among offline strategies. They also found that a significant difference in favor of males for strategies such as did nothing, retaliated and told a sibling among offline strategies. While there is a significant difference in favor of females in strategies such as blocked bully and changed own avatar or mobile number among offline coping strategies, there is a significant difference in favor of males in strategies like removed from friend list.

Thirdly, we have determined that adolescents who studying at a public high school can achieve to cope with cyberbullying in the best way in social support seeking, struggling and online security subscales compared to adolescents studying at a vocational and technical high school. In the literature there is no study where the levels of coping with cyberbullying are examined according school type, but studies are carried out on exposing cyberbullying as well as showing cyberbullying behaviors are examined according to school type. In a study

where exposing cyberbullying are examined, it is seen that students studying at a public high school are exposed to further sexual bullying behaviors in the virtual environment compared to students studying at a vocational high school (Horzum & Ayas, 2011). In another study, it is seen that students studying at public schools are exposed to further cyberbullying compared to students studying at private schools (Topçu, Erdur-Baker, & Çapa-Aydın, 2008). In another study where conditions of cyberbullying behavior showing by students are examined according to school type, it is found that students studying at public high schools show further cyberbullying behavior compared to students studying at science high schools (Şahin, Aydın, & Sarı, 2012).

Fourth and finally, we have determined that adolescents who are not a member of Facebook can achieve to cope with cyberbullying in the best way in social support seeking, help seeking, struggling and online security subscales compared to adolescents who are a member of Facebook. When it is considered that students are frequently exposed to cyberbullying in chat rooms and social networks (Ayas & Horzum, 2012), it can be interpreted that adolescents who are not a member of Facebook can achieve to cope with cyberbullying compared to adolescents who are a member of Facebook. Özdemir and Akar (2011) have determined in a study conducted by them that the participants are further exposed to cyberbullying in the Facebook. Baştürk-Akca, Sayımer and Ergül (2015) have determined in a study conducted by them that more than half of students (60%) meet with someone through social media, especially on Facebook, also they have determined in same study that 44% of students makes positive return when they find acceptable the message of someone they don't recognize. It can be said that social media, especially Facebook make people to trust strangers, so it can increase the likelihood of exposing to cyberbullying.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study where the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents are examined, it is seen that the levels of coping with cyberbullying of adolescents are generally high and they become different according to the gender, school type and Facebook membership. At the end of this research, the following suggestions may bring forward in concern with practice: Informing meetings and awareness education may be made about cyberbullying in schools in order to ensure that adolescents can achieve to cope with cyberbullying. Awareness of adolescents related to online security that will cause adolescents to expose to cyberbullying, that will enfeeble the adolescents in coping with cyberbullying can be increased. Adolescents' families who are ready to help to adolescents as their relatives in coping with cyberbullying should be informed about cyberbullying and the ways of coping with cyberbullying and social supports to be provided for them should be increased. Necessary information about institutions, organizations and individuals may be given to adolescents so that they can receive the help when they are exposed to cyberbullying. In addition, researching of conditions of coping with cyberbullying may be suggested for studies to be carried in the future through different variables on different samples.

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