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Research Article

**DETERMINATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS'
AWARENESS REGARDING CYBER VIOLENCE**

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ABSTRACT

During the survey conducted with secondary school students, it was observed that there was a connection between children's internet usage habits and their views on cyber violence. On the other hand, many children do not have full awareness of cyber violence due to their inability to make a clear distinction between cyber violence and daily behaviors (jokes, discussions). Furthermore, in line with the results of the survey analysis, it should be noted that the data obtained also varies according to the age and gender characteristics of the study group.

The conducted field work is beyond our intended has been useful in determining the detection of cyber violence awareness, as it provides information about their reactions to cyber violence, except that whether children have information about what cyber violence is.

Keywords: *Cyber Bullying, Cyber Violence, Child, Internet*

1. INTRODUCTION

Millions of people use the Internet to make their lives easier and to communicate. Despite all the benefits of the Internet, users who make up a large portion of the online population abuse the Internet for antisocial purposes. Therefore, the Internet should review via both of part (Kierkegaard, 2008). Aggression via the Internet is a global phenomenon. At a time when the Internet is no longer a luxury but a necessary part of daily life in the industrialized world, online violence is unavoidable.

The aim of this article we have written is to elaborate the subject by evaluating the findings obtained as a result of field research by including the unethical online behaviors we have compiled relating to the phenomenon of "Cyber Violence." To this end, an understanding of the phenomenon will be first ensured by explaining the concepts of cyber violence.

1.1. Concepts

The word "cyber" literally means computer culture, information technologies, belonging to the Internet, and virtual reality (Sir, 2017).

When the definition of "violence" and the definition of the word "cyber" are combined, "cyber violence" can be defined as follows: Any repetitive behavior that creates or threatens to create an attack on the welfare of an individual or group (physical, psychological, emotional) through the use of information technologies (Baker & Tanrikulu, 2010). In other words, cyber violence can be expressed as any kind of violence practiced by an individual or groups using information and communication technologies (Aslan and Doğan, 2017).

Unlike traditional (offline) forms of violence, cyber violence occurs virtually and, in particular, instantaneously via online platforms and even though they are not physically located together. Therefore, cyber violence must also have physical components. These components are technological tools such as computers, mobile phones, and tablet computers.

The harm caused by cyber violence can be predominantly psychological and/or emotional (Mishna, Mclukie & Saini, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2006). Of course, this situation cannot be said to be any less destructive than the consequences of traditional violence. Recent studies in this field is support this issue (Korkmaz, 2010). In related studies, both children who were subjected to cyber violence and children who were exposed to traditional violence had concentration impairment and withdrawn at school (Beran & Li, 2005).The Internet, which provides fast access to many data that will make people's lives easier, also makes our lives easier as a means of communication (Nawalia, Kanbul & Ozdamli, 2018). Various types of cyber violence occur on all platforms used for communication such as social media channels, Internet sites, and e-mail environments where computer technology is of great importance in our daily life (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). This is because in addition to the benefits mentioned, abuse of access to the Internet is just as easy and just as fast. In fact, since almost everyone can be reached on the internet, the scope of cyberbullying is wider than traditional bullying and affects more individuals (Çetin, Yaman & Peker, 2011) Instances of cyber violence carried out mainly via social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are cited as examples of this.

In line with the definition made by the World Health Organization in the Violence and Health Report in 2002, violence is: "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm." (WHO, 2002) Lawyers define acts of violence as: "Acts that human beings carry out against their counterparts that cause significant or insignificant damage or injury to them, and that express aggression and rudeness." (Polat, 2014)

Table 1: Types of cyber violence (Akça et al., 2017)

Types of Cyber Violence

Flaming	These are short-lived arguments between individuals that mostly involve threats and insults with an offensive and hostile attitude. It is generally experienced in public communication environments such as chat rooms and games.
Harassment	This is when flaming continues for longer and is the continuous sending of offensive, hostile messages via sources of communication such as e-mail and SMS.
Denigration	This is the sharing of untrue and disparaging messages about the victim. The most common example is the posting of a photograph of the victim digitally combined with another photograph of sexual content.
Impersonation	This is when a person assumes the identity of another person online and posts material that is harmful to them on their webpage, account profile, or another platform and/or communicates with other people in their name.
Disclosure and Trickery	Disclosure is the sharing of private information about a person online. For example, sexually explicit and obscene images can be disclosed after a relationship ends. Trickery takes the form of deceiving a person, then taking and using their knowledge.
Exclusion	This means the deliberate removal of the targeted person from an online group or not including them in that group.
Cyberstalking	This is the continuous sending of threatening, disturbing, and offensive messages with the intention of harming the victim. The goal may be to damage the victim's reputation and to ruin their relationship with those around them.

Cyber violence has become a social phenomenon that we frequently encounter, particularly given the advances in technology today. Be it against adults or children, cyber violence is no less destructive than the consequences of physical violence. Since the Z generation lives and breathes technology, an exponential increase in cases of cyber violence is being observed but despite this, social awareness of the unlawfulness of cyber violence is not developing in parallel with this increase. (Kierkegaard, 2008)

2. METHODOLOGY

Our study is a quantitative study conducted face-to-face using the survey method. When choosing this method, attention was paid to obtaining the most accurate results by considering the qualities of the study group.

Four hundred and twenty-three (423) secondary school students between the ages of nine and sixteen (9-16) studying in Sakarya Province were selected as the study group. The survey included seventeen (17) multiple-choice questions. Even though the questions were aimed at determining children's awareness of cyber violence, they were prepared so as not to affect children who were victims of cyber violence. The field work data were analyzed using

the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. The questions covered demographic information, Internet usage habits, cyber violence awareness, and action taken against cyber violence.

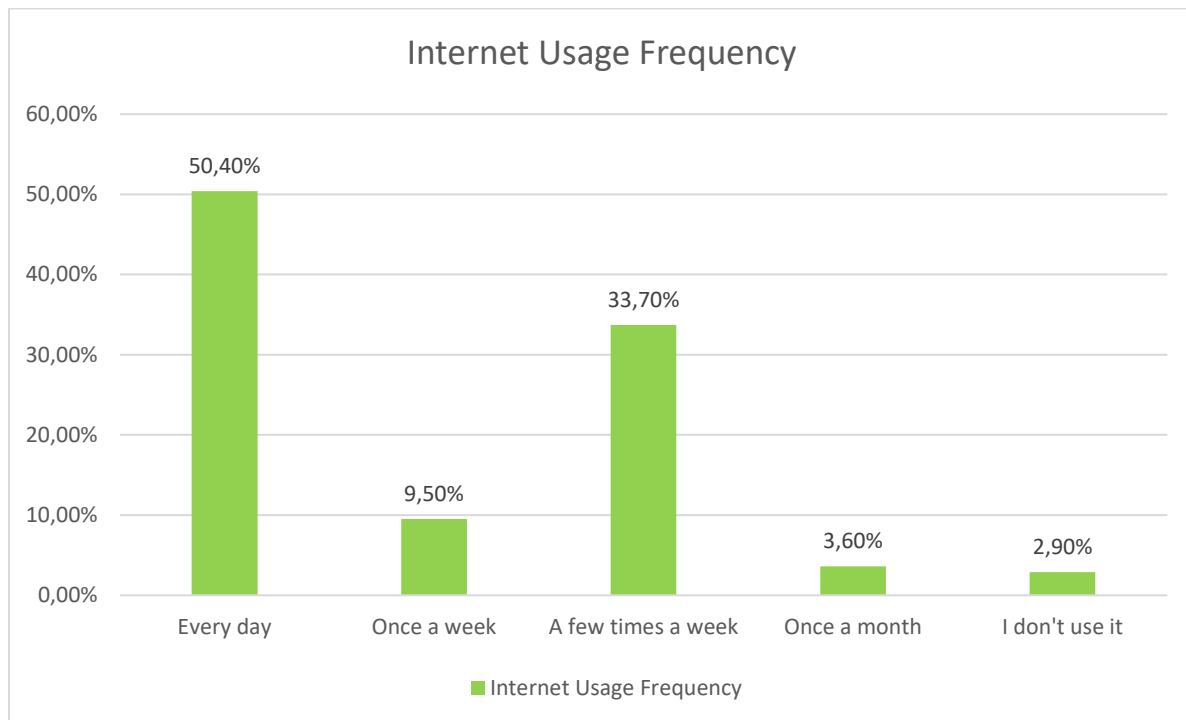
3. PARTICIPANT PROFILE

While 47.5% of the 423 secondary school students in the field study were female, 52.5% were male and the average age of the participants, all aged between 9 and 16, was 12.63 years.

3.1. Findings

As mentioned above, Internet usage has increased in parallel with advances in technology, especially for the “Z” generation. The study's findings also support this determination, showing that 97.1% of children aged 9-16 use the Internet continuously, while 2.90% do not use the Internet. More than half of the children who use the Internet use it every day. Studies on whether there is a significant difference between Internet usage frequency and cyber violence behavior have also been observed that those who spend more time on the Internet practice more cyber violence behavior than others. (Yiğit & Seferoğlu, 2017) Individuals most frequently perform their cyber violence-related behaviors through the internet. For this reason, it's said that the possibility of cyber violence rate is higher in individuals who use the internet extensively. (Erdur & Baker, 2010) Accordingly, as stated Kowalski and Limber (2007) as it may be said that the environment is conducive to experiencing acts of cyber violence.

Figure 1: Internet usage frequency



In the question posed in the survey to determine why children use the Internet, despite the differences in their reasons, very few children selected research purposes while more children stated they use it to play games and to access social media.

In this regard, especially since 71.8% of boys use the Internet to play games, the rate of in-game cyber violence is remarkable. Of course, children may be exposed to cyber violence by encountering inappropriate content while doing research; however, the violence encountered in the game environment is based on mutual interaction, is instant, and peer-to-peer and can therefore have longer lasting effects on children and destructive outcomes.

In addition to this, among the other reasons the children gave for using the Internet was to communicate via social media platforms, for example meeting new people and chatting with people they know. Social media channels provide a suitable environment for children to achieve their stated goals.

Within the scope of this study, the variability of cyber violence by gender was also tried to be determined. Independent studies conducted in previous years have also investigated whether cyber violence varies by gender. While Syts (2004) and Patchin & Hinduja (2006) argue that gender is not a fundamental variable on cyber violence; Li (2006) found that the situation of encountering cyber violence differs according to gender in his study.

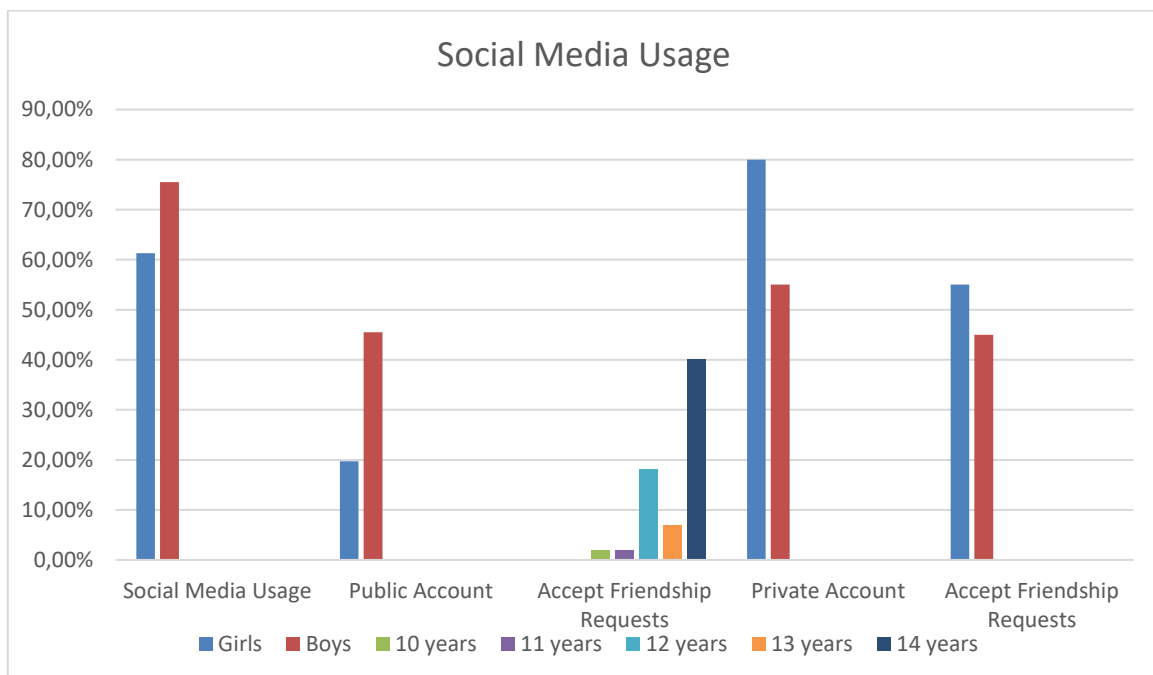
Some 61.3% of girls and 75.5% of boys use social media platforms. As can be seen, these rates are quite high. Moreover, 19.7% of girls and 45.5% of boys using social media platforms use their social media accounts publicly. Public accounts make it easier to carry out cyber violence and make children a target.

The rate of communicating on social media platforms, which is one of the reasons children use the Internet, and the rate of accepting friendship offers from people they do not know is also high, irrespective of gender. When evaluated on an age basis, a significant difference was seen in the rates at which children accept friendship offers from people they do not know. Accordingly, 2.2% of 10-year-olds stated that they accepted friendship offers from people they do not know, while this rate reached 40% for 14-year-olds.

The striking point here is that most of the children who said "I don't accept friendship offers from people I don't know" already have public social media profiles. Therefore, children do not have the opportunity to check who they are friends with on their social media accounts. Anyone who wants can follow children whose social media accounts are public and share posts with them. This situation makes children who have public social media accounts vulnerable to cyber violence.

When looking at unprotected social media accounts as well as other environments where cyber violence can take place, it is seen that children's attitudes toward people and the environment in which violence occurs vary depending on age and gender factors.

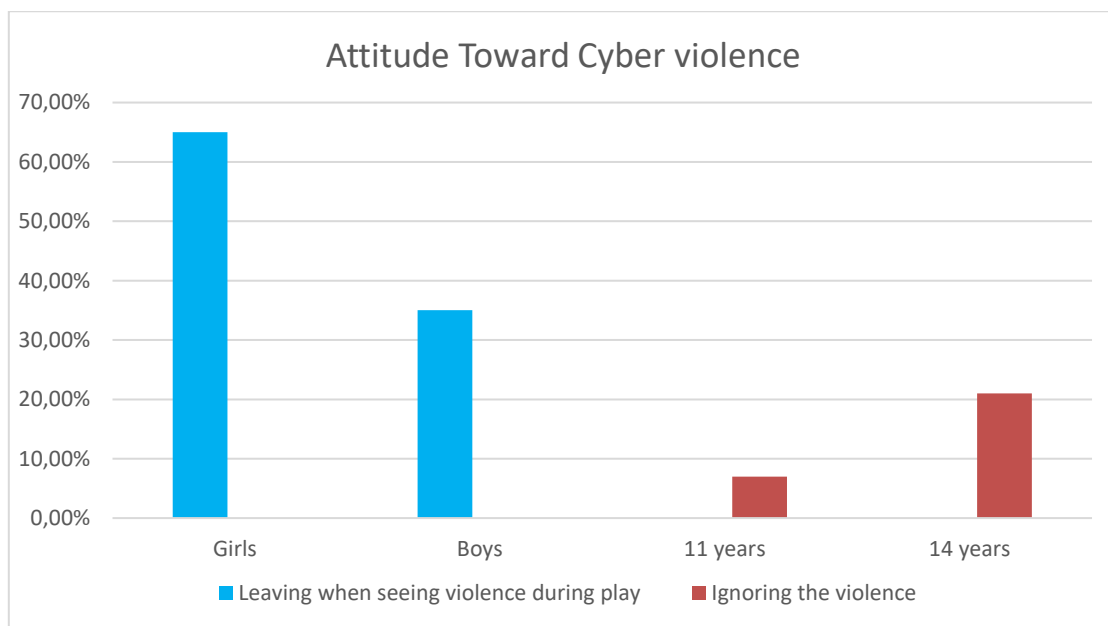
Figure 2: Social media usage



In fact, when violent behavior does occur in the online game environment, where the 9-16 age group spends a lot of time, 65.8% of the girls move away from that environment, while only 34.2% of the boys choose to leave it. In such cases, since boys remain in the environment where cyber violence takes place, it is highly likely that acts of cyber violence will continue and new ones will occur. For example; while children leave the environment as a result of short-lived "flaming" -- a form of cyber violence particularly seen in game environments -- the fact that others remain in this environment can lead to "exclusion/harassment," which can last longer and have systematically negative consequences. As long as there are people who remain in the cyber violence environment without paying attention to the violence, this situation can continue. It is highly likely that those children who remain in this cycle will experience psychological consequences.

Some of the children who encounter such cyber violence in the game environment use the in-game complaint mechanism. While the rate of complaints is 61.5% for 10-year-olds, this rate drops to 25% for 15-year-olds. However, the proportion of children who ignore the violence they see in the game room increases with age. Some 6.8% of 11-year-olds and 21.3% of 14-year-olds said "When I encounter cyber violence in the game room, I ignore it; I don't do anything about it." Therefore, as their age increases, they tend to remain indifferent by ignoring acts of cyber violence. Younger children have a greater tendency to report to their teachers and/or parents.

Figure 3: Attitude toward cyber violence



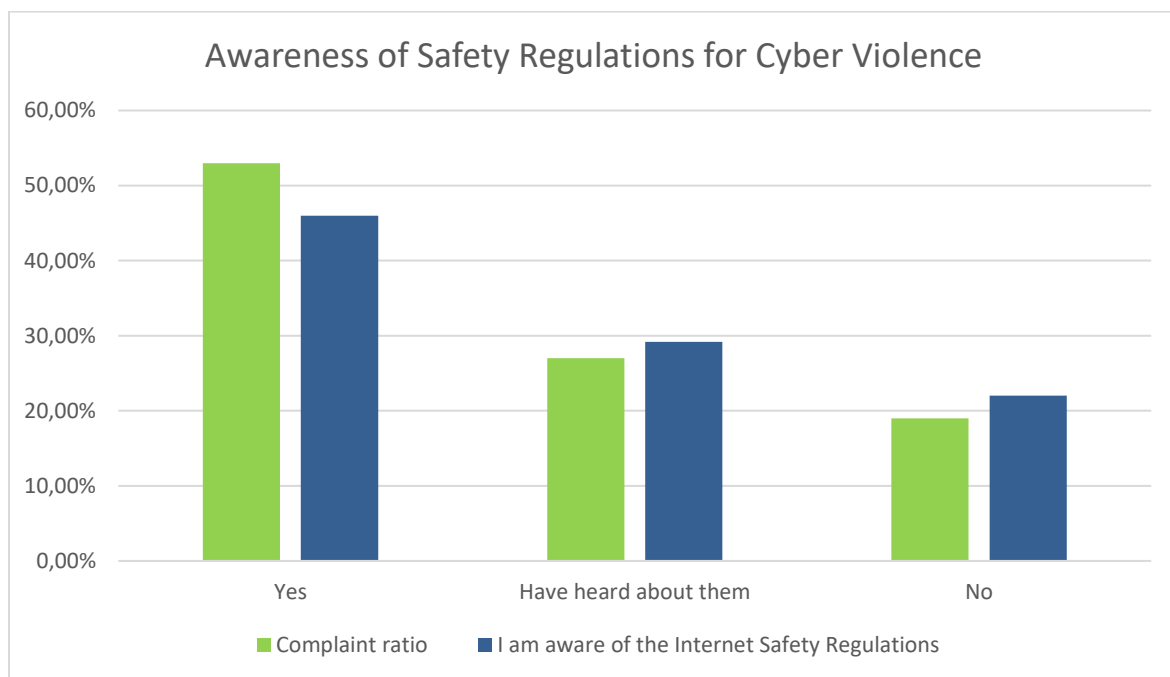
Although this situation shows the attitude towards cyber violence, it also includes the proportions that will come to the fore in the subsequent awareness assessment. The high rate of ignoring cyber violence when children encounter it is important in determining the extent to which cyber violence awareness exists.

Of the 363 children who referred to the unauthorized disclosure of their photographs as cyber violence, 50.4% tended to post by taking screenshots of others' messages and were unable to detect this phenomenon when the disclosure type of cyber violence took a different form. Only 38% of the children who stated that it was a fun joke said they would share it. Based on this, it may be said that children do not see the sharing of message contents as cyber violence. Even this result shows us that irrespective of age or gender, more than half of the children are not fully aware of cyber violence.

While 77.8% of 10-year-old children who encountered cyber violence stated they would tell their parents about the incident, only 11.1% of 15-year-old children stated they would rather tell their parents. As can be seen, children's reactions to cyber violence normally differed considerably depending on their age.

Some 46.6% of the children stated that they are aware of the Internet safety regulations they can apply in case of cyber violence, while 23.6% stated that they do not know these regulations. Subsequently, it was determined that 54.1% of the children who are aware of the Internet safety regulations apply these regulations, which help prevent possible cyber violence incidents or end current incidents of cyber violence. Only 18.9% of the children who do not know the Internet safety regulations stated they would apply these regulations. In the light of these findings, it was revealed that more than half the participants are aware of the regulations for the prevention and termination of cyber violence.

Figure 4: Awareness of safety regulations for cyber violence



Analysis of these findings showed us that carrying out awareness studies for children regarding cyber violence incidents and the authorities they can apply to will be meaningful and effective.

In Turkish law, the following actions to be taken in the event of encountering cyber violence:

Table 2: Ways of combating cyber violence

ihbarweb.org.tr	Filling in the report form on the website
Internet Hotline 166	Calling the hotline
198 KVKK Data Protection Hotline	Calling the hotline
155@iem.gov.tr	Sending an e-mail to the e-mail address
155 Police Emergency Hotline	Calling the hotline

4. CONCLUSION

The high frequency of digital platform use, especially by the study's target audience, may cause an increase in the frequency of cyber violence and the resulting negative consequences. However, as much as children's awareness affects these risks and the actualization of these negative consequences, so do their Internet usage habits and online behaviors.

On the other hand, as can be seen in the research, age and gender are two important variables that affect behavior and knowledge of cyber violence. For example, the tendency of girls to stay away from cyber violence and the fact that boys stay in cyber violence show us that their social media usage habits are different. Another example of this situation is the relatively high proportion of boys who have public social media account profiles when compared with girls.

In terms of age, the rate of using social media accounts privately or publicly varies, and the rate of using public accounts increases with age. Children's desire for social acceptance and not being exposed to social exclusion may ensure this. This situation proves that this case is a very complicated phenomenon that should be evaluated in detail.

When the results of the assessment of cyber violence awareness were analyzed independently of age or gender, it was seen that it is essential to raise awareness in society, especially in children, of what cyber violence behavior is. Families and educational institutions and organizations have a great responsibility in raising this awareness. Those concerned should care about increasing social media literacy so that children can become conscientious social media users, and this issue should be made a part of raising children.

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