ERGENLERDE DIŞLANMA, SİBER ZORBALIK VE İLİŞKİLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

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Öz

Teknolojideki gelişmeler nedeniyle internet bağımlılığı ergenler arasında sürekli büyüyen bir sağlık sorunudur. Bu çalışmanın amacı, ergenlerin dışlanma ve siber zorbalık deneyimlerini ve aralarındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırma tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel tipte yapılmıştır. Araştırma bir üniversitede araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 18 yaş altı 616 öğrenci ile yürütülmüştür. Ergenler İçin Dışlanma Deneyimi Ölçeği (OES-A) ve Ergenler için Siber Zorbalık Ölçeği (BCS-A) puanlarının yordayıcılarının tek değişkenli analizi Kruskal-Wallis testi ile yapılmıştır. Yüksek OES-A ve BCS-A puanları ile ilişkili faktörlerin analizi Ki-kare veya Fisher testleri ile incelenmiştir. Çalışmaya 616 ergen katılmıştır ve %69,2'si kadındır. Yaş ortalaması 17.75(+/- 0.44) idi. BCS-A ortanca puanı 27,0(24-65) olup, katılımcıların %50,3'ü yüksek BCS-A puanına sahiptir. Ortanca OES-A puanı 17.0(11-47) idi ve %58.4'ünün yüksek OES-A puanı vardı. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin siber zorbalık ve dışlanma düzeyleri yüksek bulunmuş ve her iki kavram arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Öğrencilerin teknolojiyi doğru ve uygun zamanda kullanabilmeleri için konferans, panel ve benzeri etkinlikler düzenlenmelidir. Özellikle dışlanma ve siber zorbalık açısından risk altında olabilecek grup için üniversite öğrencilerinin psikososyal destek alabilecekleri Mediko-Sosyal birimler kurulmalıdır. Eğitimcilerin sanal ortamdaki iletişimden kaynaklanan riskleri bilmesi ve bu olaylarla baş edebilmesi için risk gruplarına destek ve danışmanlık vermesi de önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dışlanma, Siber Zorbalık, Ergenlik, Üniversite Öğrencileri

EXAMINATION OF OSTRACISM AND CYBERBULLYING IN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

Abstract

Due to improvements in technology, internet addiction is a continuously growing health problem among adolescents. The aim of the study was to evaluate ostracism and cyberbullying experiences of adolescents and analyze the relation between them. The study was conducted in descriptive and cross-sectional type. The study was conducted at a university with 616 students under the age of 18 who agreed to add the research. Univariate analysis of the predictors of Ostracism Experience Scale for Adolescents (OES-A) and Cyberbullying Scale for Adolescents (BCS-A) scores was performed by Kruskal-Wallis test. The analysis of factors associated with high OES-A and BCS- A scores were studied by Chi-square or Fisher exact tests. 616 adolescents participated the study and 69.2% were female. Mean age was 17.75(+/- 0.44). The median score of BCS-A was 27.0(24- 65) and 50.3% of the participants had high BCS-A scores. The median OES-A score was 17.0(11-47) and 58.4% had high OES-A scores. The level of cyberbullying and ostracism of the students participating in the study was found to be high, and a positive significant relationship was found between both concepts. Conferences, panels and similar events should be organized for students to use technology correctly and in a suitable time. Medico-Social units should be established where university students can receive psychosocial support, especially for the group that may be at risk for ostracism and cyberbullying. It is also important for educators to know the risks arising from communication in the virtual environment and to provide support and counseling to risk groups in order to cope with these events.

Keywords: Ostracism, Cyberbullying, Adolescence, University Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Humankind is a social creature and needs social interactions to sustain good physical and psychological integrity. The demand for good social relations is basic and universal (1). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs; basic needs are at the bottom of the pyramid and to satisfy the ones at the upper levels, each stage must be satisfied within the individual themselves. In addition, after sustaining basic needs, social interactions are in the next step. Man needs to be socially accepted, be a part of a group and live in cooperation with the group (2). Social exclusion and ostracism are important barriers for an individual while trying to be a part of a community (3).

Ostracism is a term used synonymously with "social exclusion. It is defined as "being ignored or excluded by others". There are numerous indicators of social exclusion, such as; social status, age, psychological wellbeing, dependency to social support, psychological and physiological health problems (4). Adolescence is a developmental stage, characterized by the understanding of the self in relation to the social world. During this period, the individuals are socially more sensitive and ostracism is common in adolescents (5). During adolescence, good social relations are essential to understand the social norms and to improve different perspectives. The ostracism during adolescence may lead adolescents to online social activities to maintain their social communication. E-mails and messages are the most popular ways of online communication (6).

Due to improvements in technology, internet addiction is a continuously growing health problem among adolescents. Internet is a good way of communication. But, in addition to internet addiction, anti- social behaviors are new psychosocial problem of this platform. The most common anti-social behaviors in internet are; e-mails containing anger, ignorance (no replies to e-mails, ignoring in cha platforms), cyber- hate (the social violence of a group against other groups), online damage (aggressive e- mails/ jokes, sexual requests.) (7). All of these anti- social behaviors are included in the term of cyberbullying. The cyberbullying (CB) is a form of harassment by using electronic means (e- mail, cellular phones, messages and web sites). CB can include posting rumors, threats, sexual remarks, a victims' personal information, or pejorative labels (8). In literature, there are numerous studies about CB in adolescents. However, there is no study working on the relation between ostracism and CB. The aim of the study was to evaluate ostracism and cyberbullying experiences of adolescents and analyze the relation between them.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1.Study population

The research is of the cross-sectional descriptive type. University students age of ≤ 18 were included. Participants with a history of neuropsychiatric illness causing difficulty to participate in the survey were excluded.

2.2.Data collection method

The adolescent participants were evaluated with structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were prepared with questions about sociodemographic data, working status, information about faculty, success in school, participation in social activities (theater, cinema…), the purpose of using internet, if they have internet access in their home/ dorm, daily time spent on the internet. In addition, Ostracism Experience Scale for Adolescents (OES-A) and Cyberbullying Scale for Adolescents (BCS-A). OES-A is an 11 item, self-report, five-point likert type instrument that assesses two ostracism subtypes: exclusion and ignorance. The sum of the 11 items results in a score ranging from 11 to 55. There is a positive correlation between the score and the ostracism experienced. Turkish validation of the scale was performed by Akin, Uysal and Akın, 2016 (9). BCS-A is 24 item, self-report, scale validated by Arıcak, Kınay and Tanrıkulu, 2012 (8). The Turkish validation was

performed in adolecents in high school (11-18 years of age). The validity and reliability of the study revealed a 0.95 Cronbach's alpha and concluded that BCS-A scale was reliable and valid.

2.3.Implementation of study

In consistent with the validation study, our study was conducted in university students less than 18 years of age. 1002 participants in the faculties of Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University were invited to study. 616 (61.4%) students participated and completed the survey.

2.4.Statistical analysis

Baseline characteristics of the patient group were described by using frequencies and proportions for dichotomous and categorical variables. Univariate analysis of the predictors of OES-A and BCS-A scores was performed by Kruskal-Wallis test. The median score of 17.0 was used to group OES-A scores into high and low. In addition, the median score of 27.0 was used to group BCS-A scores into high and low. The analysis of factors associated with high OES-A and BCS-A scores were studied by Chi-square or Fisher exact tests. All analyses were performed by using SPSS 17.0 for Windows. Values of p of less than 0.05 were considered to be statistically significant.

2.5.Ethics

Non-invasive Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University approved the study and the study was in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki. All the participants were included after having informed consent.

3. RESULTS

The characteristics of participants were summarized in Table-1. The research was conducted with 616 adolescent participants and 69.2% of them were famale. Mean age was 17.75(+/- 0.44). The faculties of the students were Education (183, 29.7%), Engineering (93, 15.1%), Economics and Administrative sciences (88, 14.3%), Veterinary (86, 14.0%), Health Sciences (76, 12.3%), Science and Literature (63, 10.2%), Theology (27, 4.4%). Most of the participants (94.5%) were living with their families and 81.5% had nuclear families. Half of them (51.6%) were living in city center, 13.1% was working in a part- time job and 15.4% declared a good economic status. 28.1% of them were interested only in sports, 15.4% only in art and 2.4% in both of them. However, 54.1% of the participants had no hobbies and 43.2% declared reading as a hobby. 12.2% of the thought that they were academically unsuccessful. 99.8% of them had internet access in their homes/ dormitories. Most of the adolescents use internet only for fun (85.2%) and 57.1% of them spent more than 3 hours on social media.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants

Characteristics	N (%)
Age	
16	3(0.5)
17	148(24.0)
18	465(75.5)
Gender	
Female	426(69.2)
Male	190(30.8)
Live in	
City center	318(51.6)
Other (town, village)	298(48.4)

Faculty	
Education	183(29.7)
Science and Literature	93(15.1)
Economics and Administrative sciences	88(14.3)
Veterinary	86(14.0)
Health Sciences	76(12.3)
Engineering	63(10.2)
Theology	27(4.4)
Parents	
Living together	581(94.3)
Divorced/dead	35(5.7)
Educational status- father	
Illiterate	0(0)
Primary school	327(53.1)
Middle school	46(7.5)
High school	136(22.1)
University	107(17.4)
High school or higher	243(39.4)
Other	373(60.6)
Educational status- mother	
Illiterate	3(0.5)
Primary school	373(60.6)
Middle school	89(14.4)
High school	112(18.2)
University	39(6.3)
High school or higher	151(24.5)
Other	465(75.5)
Family structure	
Nuclear family	502(81.5)
Extended family	114(18.5)
Working part-time	81(13.1)
Less than 1 year	33(40.7)
More than 1 year	48(59.3)
Economical status	
Average	521(84.6)
Good	95(15.4)
Hobby	
Present	283(45.9)
Absent	333(54.1)
Success in school	
Excellent	1(0.2)
Good	241(39.1)
Moderate	299(48.5)
Bad	75(12.2)
Theater or cinema	
≥ once monthly	540(87.7)
< once monthly	76(12.3)
Purpose of using internet	
Fun	525(85.2)
Educational activities	50(8.1)
Both	41(6.6)
Time spent in social media	
None	18(2.9)
Less than 3 hours	264(42.9)
More than 3 hours	334(54.2)

n: Number of participants, %: Percent

The median score of BCS-A was 27.0(24- 65) and 50.3% of the participants had high BCS-A scores. The median OES-A score was 17.0(11-47) and 58.4% had high OES-A scores. The results of

the correlation between BCS-A and OES-A were summarized in Table-2. There was a positive, statistically significant correlation between cyberbullying and ostracism (r=0,55, p<0.001). In the analysis of the factors affecting the participants' cyberbullying scores; in men and women (80.0% vs 37.1% p<0.001), those living apart from family (68.9% p=0.019), people with good and moderate economic status (52.6% vs 52.6% p=0.006), hobbyists and non-hobbyists 43.1% vs. (56.5% p=0.001), those with poor course success (72.0% p<0.001), those who use social media for less than 3 hours or more (37.5%, 59.9% p<0.001), the cyber bullying score was found to be high.

Table 2. The Correlation Between BCS-A and OES-A Scores

		BCS-A	OES-A
BCS-A	Pearson correlation	1	,556**
	P value		,000
	N	616	616
OES-A	Pearson correlation	,556**	1
	P value	,000	
	N	616	616

** In the pearson correlation analysis, r< 0.01 is statistically significant

The factors related with higher scores of BCS-A and OES-A were summarized in Table-3. In the analysis of the factors affecting the ostracism scores of the participants; men and women (91.6% vs 43.7% p<0.001), good and moderate economic status (60.3% vs 48.4% p=0.02), hobbyists and non-hobbyists (49.5% vs. 66.1% p<0.001) in those with poor course success, and those who used social media for less than 3 hours or more (44.7% vs 68.8% p<0.001) ,the ostracism score was found to be high.

Tablo 3. The Factors Related with Higher Scores Of BCS-A And OES-A

Factors	High BCS-A score (n,%)	p	High OES-A score (n,%)	p
Gender				
Female	158(37.1)		186(43.7)	
Male	152(80.0)	<0.001	174(91.6)	<0.001)
Live in				
City center	153(48.1)		181(56.9)	
Other (town, village)	157(52.7)	0.14	179(60.1)	0.23
Faculty				
Education	104(56.8)		93(50.8)	
Economics and Administrative sciences	63(71.6)		65(73.9)	
	52(60.5)		71(82.6)	
Veterinary	31(40.8))		35(46.1)	
Health Sciences	31(31(33.3)		53(57.0)	
Engineering	21(33.3)		31(49.2)	
Science and Literature	8(29.6)	<0.001	12(44.4)	<0.001
Theology				
Parents				
Both alive	286(49.2)		337(58.0)	
other	24(68.6)	0.019	23(65.7)	0.23
Educational status- father				
High school or higher	129(53.1)		95(62.9)	
Other	181(48.5)	0.15	265(57.0)	0.11
Educational status- mother				
High school or higher	82(54.3)		95(62.9)	

Other	228(49.0)	0.51	265(57.0)	0.11
Family structure				
Nuclear family	250(49.8)		297(59.2)	
Extended family	60(52.6)	0.32	63(55.3)	0.25
Working part-time				
Yes	44(54.3)		54(66.7)	
No	266(49.7)	0.25	306(57.2)	0.06
Working				
Less than 1 year	19(57.6)		25(75.8)	
More than 1 year	25(42.4)	0.19	39(24.2)	0.03
Economical status				
Average	274(52.6)		314(60.3)	
Good	36(37.9)	0.006	46(48.4)	0.02
Hobby				
Present	122(43.1)		140(49.5)	
Absent	188(56.5)	0.001	220(66.1)	<0.001
Success in school				
Not successful	54(72.0)		55(73.3)	
More	256(47.3)	<0.001	305(56.4)	0.003
Purpose of using internet				
Fun	259(49.3)		302(57.5)	
Educational activities	32(64.0)		31(62.0)	
Both	19(46.3)	0.66	25(61.0)	0.54
Time spent in social media				
Less than 3 hours	99(37.5)		118(44.7)	
More than 3 hours	211(59.9)	<0.001	242(68.8)	<0.001
OES-A Scores				
High	265(85.5)			
Low	95(31.0)	<0.001		

4. DISCUSSION

In today's world, which we can call the age of technology, the use of computers and the internet has become indispensable tools of life. Although the main purpose of the emergence of the Internet is to access information easily, cheaply, quickly and securely and to facilitate communication, the widespread use of the Internet faster than expected has led to pathological overuse and internet addiction, which can be described as a new type of addiction, or an increase in psychopathological behaviors on the Internet (10). According to the studies in the literature; Increased psychopathological behaviors related to the Internet have been observed especially among university students (11-13). Almost all of the university students participating in the research have internet in their place of residence. According to the data of TUIK (2019), the rate of regular internet users in our country was determined as 98.2%. Ease of access can also bring problems related to the subject. The majority of them use the internet for entertainment and their usage time is over 3 hours on average. According to the data of TUIK (2019), it has been determined that 93.9% of individuals in our country use internet for messaging and 81.4% for sharing photos and message on their social media profiles (14).

Use of internet more than 3 hours per day is considered excessive (15). Anderson (2001) determined that the majority of 1300 university students spend 100 minutes a day, and only a few of indicates that this situation negatively affects their daily activities (16). In this study, contrary to our research findings, the level of pathological internet usage is very low. Excessive use of Internet is especially common in individuals who live away from social activities, do not engage in activities, are withdrawn and have low self-efficacy (17,18).

Spending too much time on internet leads to pathological internet use, on the other hand, it causes the individual to avoid social relations and become more withdrawn. In the same way, it increases the addiction behavior and pathological behaviors towards the internet in the individual who shows introversion behavior.

Cyberbullying, which is the most common of these pathological behaviors, is similar to the types of bullying carried out in the physical environment. The main difference is the use of information and communication technologies such as the internet or mobile phone, where virtual communication can take place. According to our research findings, cyberbullying behavior was found to be high in men and low in women. Ashiq, Majeed, and Malik (2016) similarly found cyberbullying behavior higher in males in their study examining the cyberbullying behaviors of university students (19). Similarly, in Korean university students, cyberbullying behavior was found to be higher in males (20). However, there are also results in the literature that indicate that there is no difference between the cyberbullying behaviors of girls and boys (21,22). Therefore, it would not be appropriate to suggest that boys are more bullies than girls in all circumstances, based on the gender-related cyberbullying behavior characteristics of our study.

Cyberbullying and ostracism behaviors were found to be high in individuals with poor academic success. This may be due to the fact that the student spends a lot of time in the virtual environment, and therefore the student cannot fulfill his responsibilities regarding his lessons enough. There are studies in the literature stating that academic achievements are directly related to ostracism (23). Cyberbullying and ostracism behaviors were found to be high in students who are not interested in arts and sports. There are many studies in the literature emphasizing that adolescents interested in both fields have healthy psychological development (23-27).

Although there is no personal contact between the attacker and the victim in cyberbullying, the attacked person suffers psychological harm. Depression, low self-esteem, fear, sadness, disappointment, embarrassment, etc. such emotions are seen intensely seen in bullied adolescents (28). In fact, sometimes the results are worse and may result in suicidal behavior (29). Likewise, people who engage in cyberbullying behavior stated that the reason for this behavior is their desire to take revenge on the people and situations that they get angry with in daily events. This situation can be seen more frequently in individuals who have difficulty in expressing themselves and who have poor anger management, individuals with low self-esteem, introverted personality traits and even depressive moods (30-32). From this point of view, we can say that cyber-victimization can occur in a place where there is cyberbullying behavior and that both groups may face many psychosocial problems.

Cyberbullying behaviors may increase gradually when the individual who distances himself from social relations, behaves more introverted, spends pathological time in the virtual environment. (33). This vicious circle can become chronic, leading to a decrease in the chance of treatment. The positive correlation between ostracism and cyberbullying behaviors in our study seems to be compatible with the literature. Saylor et al (2012) found that ostracism and cyberbullying behaviors in adolescents are associated with low self-esteem, depressive mood, and lack of sense of belonging (34). Again, Pharo et al (2011) showed that ostracism negatively affects four basic psychological needs: sense of belonging, self-esteem, sense of control and meaning of life (35). They also stated that pathological behaviors will be inevitable in individuals whose needs are hindered due to ostracism, especially in adolescents.

5. CONCLUSION

The level of cyberbullying and ostracism of the students participating in the study was found to be high, and a positive significant relationship was found between both concepts. Cyberbullying behavior was found more in male students.

Conferences, panels and similar events should be organized for students to use technology correctly and in a suitable time. Elective courses under the name of Science and Technology can be placed in the education plan. Student societies should support students to develop certain areas of interest and to ensure their active participation in activities such as arts and sports. It is important that academic advisors and university administration pay special attention to this issue during the orientation process of students to the university. The active participation of the students in the activities at the university must be ensured. In this way, students' sense of belonging can be supported, making them feel more valuable, more positive and hopeful towards life, and improving their communication skills.

Medico-Social units should be established where university students can receive psychosocial support, especially for the group that may be at risk for ostracism and cyberbullying. It is also important for educators to know the risks arising from communication in the virtual environment and to provide support and counseling to risk groups in order to cope with these events. In this regard, academic staff at the university should be provided with training on the subject. Qualitative studies must be planned to examine the underlying causes of ostracism and cyberbullying behaviors in the relevant subject.

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