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Cyberbullying among secondary school teachers by parents

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Cyberbullying which is known as violence on the Internet is a dimension of peer bullying takes places through electronic communication technologies. Cyberbullying which can occur in any environment regardless of the time and place is the way in which individuals with higher ability to use communication technologies to lead other individuals in a series of negative behaviors over time. With the rapid development of technology and the ease with which internet access becomes easier and cheaper, it becomes a problem that needs to be studied more and more importantly day by day. Facebook, twitter and whatss up, the most widely used social network today, has the potential to become the most commonplace for cyberbullying behaviors. The purpose of this study was to determine cyberbullying towards teachers by parents in secondary schools based on teachers views according to sex, tenure and school size. The sample of the study was 181 teachers from 14 secondary schools. The experiences and perspectives of 181 teachers were assessed regarding the incidence and perceptions of the likelihood of cyber harassment by parents. The results presented here indicate that nearly3/4 of teachers in the sample had received harassing or threatening messages from parents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying can be defined as an act of violence by an individual or group with the intention of hurting, a person physically (hitting him, or harming an item belonging to it), verbally (to ridicule an individual), sexually (to make inappropriate offers, or to send immoral content) and psychologically (to threaten or to humiliate him). Bullying affects more people every day and can be encountered at every moment of life. Today, bullying in schools is a serious and overarching issue that is bothering the public and governments day by day [1]. It is not possible to name all negative and aggressive behaviors that are applied to individuals as bullying. Taking into account the definitions in the literature, there are three main features of bullying in general. These are aggression, repetition and power imbalance [2]-[4]. In the case of bullying, individuals can be found in the status of bully, victim or bully-victim. While the oppressor is the one who is strong and the one who is acting, the victim is the relatively weaker side exposed to oppression. However a bull-victim is a person who is personally aggressive, who acts in a way that is likely to be tense with his social environment, and is sometimes the victim of the bullying, and sometimes the bully itself [5]-[8].

The advancement of technology and its availability as a bullying "tool" presented opportunities to make cyberbullying easier. The Internet offers benefits in terms of high-speed communication and information

recall but, for many people, it also brings limitless, unchecked, and uncontrolled usage. Due to this freedom of use, coupled with a lack of defined limits, new form of bullying occured which is called cyberbullying that involves use of e mails, cellphones, pagers, whatss up messages, short message services, Internet chatrooms, blogs, forums, social network web sites, and cameras [9], [10]. Compared to traditional bullying, cyberbullying has some characteristics that can intensify the effects of bullying. Some of those; can be stated as the act of bullying can occur at any time and at any place, the perpetrator is mostly anonymous, it is generally noticed by others immediately. Studies related to cyberbullying show that cyberbullying and victimization have very serious negative effects on the social, academic and emotional lives of the individuals. Examples of cyberbullying have become a problem that affects more and more people, which need to be studied more today. [11]-[17]. Most of this research, however, has focused on issues associated with individual students or relationships between students (e.g., student bullies and student victims of bullying, aggressors and victims in student-on-student assaults), though some studies have examined attacks and threats against teachers from students [18]. A missing component in the school safety research concerns relationships and interactions between parents and teachers. Despite the important positive contributions made by parents in the school setting, parental aggression is a problem for teachers. Negative parental interaction has been cited as a source of undesirable occupational experiences for teachers [19]-[22]. Parents often communicate in demeaning, manipulative, threatening, and/or directly or passively aggressive ways with teachers. The vast majority of cyberbullying research has examined these problems primarily among students and left unexamined the impact of many of these school factors on teachers' perceptions and experiences. One largely overlooked area of research concerns cyberbullying from parents to teachers.

Schools currently use mobile technologies such as emails, text messages and whatss up as a primary or supplemental means to distribute information and proactively establish involvement of the parents [23, 24]. With this shift to ICT messages as a primary means of communication between parents and teachers, however, the impersonal nature of those messages may create additional opportunities for individuals to harass or threaten one another. The limited amount of existing research suggests that cyberbullying from parents is experienced by teachers both internationally and domestically. For instance, [25] found that some Canadian educators had been victims of text messages harassment, although they were more likely to be targets of verbal harassment. Later surveys of U.K.educators suggest that 15% to 20% of respondents had experienced a form of cyberbullying from parents via e mails, text messaging, or malicious websites [26]-[28]. Moreover, in 2009, one in five survey participants knew of colleagues who had been cyberbullied and had not reported it [26]. The findings also showed that cyberbullying had affected their work by reducing their confidence as a teacher; some were forced to take sick leave due to stress, at least some of which could be attributed to cyberbullying.

In general, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have little information about the prevalence or incidence of cyberbullying toward teachers and situational and contextual factors associated with cyberbullying toward teachers. Thus, this study lays an important foundation for future work in this area by creating a baseline of knowledge regarding this topic that currently is limited in Turkey.

The purpose of this study is to determine cyberbullying towards teachers by parents in secondary schools based on teachers' views? For this purpose, the answers of the following questions were sought:
a. What kind of cyberbullying is being done by parents toward teachers in secondary schools by using ICT tools?
b. How often do parents cyberbully teachers with ICT instruments?
c. Do teachers' perceptions of cyberbully by parents change significantly according to their gender, tenure and school size?

The limitation of this study is that it focused solely on secondary school teachers' perspective working at Bursa, Turkey. Thus, although the findings presented here need to be taken in the context of this sample and are not immediately generalizable to the country as a whole, it is reasonable to expect that future research efforts with more representative samples would produce similar results.

2. RESEARCH METHOD
This descriptive research, measures the cyberbullying perceptions of the participants at a single time, with quantative research methods.

2.1. Data collection
As limited literature currently available on general parental cyber aggression toward teachers, it is understood that original items should be designed to help understand the types and responds of parental cyberbullying toward teachers at secondary schools. A focus group of experienced teachers, parents, and school administrators were used to develop the instrument. In the first part of the instrument type of cyber bully was

asked to the teachers. Respondent teachers were asked if they had received any messages with ICT tools in the last 12 months that were (a) annoying; (b) embarrassing; (c) offensive; (d) insulting; (e) threatening; or (f) sexually suggestive. Respondents were asked about the frequency of cyberbullying on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means never and 5 means nearly everyweek The low mean scores on each of the variables are encouraging because they indicate that teachers rarely receive bullying messages. In the second part. What kind of responds do teachers use against cyberbully was asked with 7 choices. Information on the demographic characteristics of the teachers was collected by the "Teacher Information Form".

To begin the data collection process, an e-mail was mailed to all Nilüfer district secondary school administrators (n=39) describing the purpose and methodology of the study and asking for the permission to send e-mails and whatss up messages to each teacher asking for their help in administering the instrument. The initial e-mail was followed up with two other e-mails and some visits to the schools. In the end, 14 (35.9%) schools agreed to allow their teachers to participate. Once verbal consent was received from the principals, arrangements were made with teachers to give detailed information about the study. The schools returned the instrument in one week to the researcher.

The participants were 181 teachers working in the city of Bursa, Nilüfer district Turkey. Of these, 63.7% (n=93) were females and 36.3% (n=88) were males, of whom 11.6% (n=21) were less experienced than 5 years, %40.9 (*n*=74) were experienced between 6-14 years, 47,5%(n=86) were more experienced than 16 years. %35,7 (n=5) of the teachers teach in schools with less enrollment than 500 students. %64,3 (n=9) of the respondents teach in schools with enrollments more than 500 students.

2.2. Analysis of data

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to find out whether the data show normal dispersion or not. For the data showing normal dispersion, t-test and one-way analysis of variance were applied. For the variables that were found significant, Turkey HSD test was used to make comparisons across groups. For the data that did not disperse normally, Mann-Whitney U was used. The relationships among the variables were investigated using with the co-efficient of Spearman correlation. The significant level was found to be α=0.05. For the statistical analysis of the quantitative data, SPSS 16.0 was used.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, we define cyberbullying through type of messages, frequency of messages and responds of cyberbullied teachers. Respondents were asked to respond to questions asking them a parent of a child at their school had ever sent them cyberbullying messages with ICT tools.

23% (n=43) respondontents reported that they have never been cyberbullied by parents in the last 12 months. More than half of those (n=110; 79,7%), responding that a parent had sent numerous annoying (n=83; 60.1%) , embarrasing (n=65; 47.1%), offensive, (n=91; 66%) posts. The number and percentage of other types of posts are as follows; insulting, (n=57; 41%) and (n=15; 10,8%) sexually suggestive messages.

Teachers reported that they receive (X=2.48) messages from parents with ICT tools in the last 12 months. These messages are mostly sent via SMS, whatss up and email. Afterwards, facebook phone talk and instagram are used by parents. Parents sending threatening (X = 3.29), annoying (X = 2.84), offensive (X = 2.17) embarrasing (X = 2,39), insulting (X = 1,86) and sexually suggestive(X = 1,13) posts to the teachers respectively**.** (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of posts sent by parents

Types of Posts	X	Ss
Annoying	2.84.	0.74
Embarrasing	2.39	0.80
Offensive	2.17	0.69
Insulting	1.86	0.86
Threatening	3.29	0.99
Sexually suggestive	1.13	0.43
Total	2.48	0.64

There were significant differences according to gender variable in relation to types of messages as seen in table 2. The results indicated that female teachers had significantly more embarresing (t=4.90, p=.04), insulting (t=2.77, p=.00), and threatening (t=3.65, p=.03) messages than their male counterparts. Although no significant differences were, found according to gender variable, the female teachers had more annoying (X=2.72) and sexually suggestive (X=2.12) posts where as male teachers get more offensive (X=2.22) messages than the female.

Table 2. Teachers' gender and perception of cyberbully

	Gender	X	t	p
Annoying	Female	2.72	2.37	.67
	Male	2.46		
Embarrasing	Female	2.81	4.90	.04
	Male	2.64		
Offensive	Female	2.07	1.52	.76
	Male	2.22		
Insulting	Female	2.48	2.77	.00
	Male	1.08		
Threatening	Female	2.88	3.65	.03
	Male	1.70		
Sexually suggestive	Female	2.12	.423	.47
	Male	1.16		

The results in table 3 indicated that the teachers who are working between 6-14 years had significantly more offensive (F=6.28, p=.03), posts than the teachers working over 15 years and less than five years. Furthermore, there are significantly differences among the less tenured and more than 15 years tenured teachers in case of threatening posts (F=6.93, p=.02), The teachers with less experince have more threatening messages (X=3.70). Although no significant differences were found according to tenure the less experienced teachers had more annoying, (X=2.91) insulting (X=2.48) and sexually suggestive (X=2.12) posts than the more experienced colleouques. However teachers with 6-14 years tenure have more embarrasing (X=2.81) posts than the others.

Table 3. Teachers' tenure and perception of cyberbully

	Tenure	X	F	df	p	Significancy
Annoying	<5 years (a)	2.46	6.72	2	.38	
	6-14 years (b)	2.72				
	>15 years (c)	2.91				
Embarrasing	<5 years (a)	2.64	3.58		.32	
	6-14 years (b)	2.81				
	>15 years(c)	1.69				
Offensive	<5 years (a)	2.07	6.28		.03	a-b
	6-14 years (b)	2.22				b-c
	>15 years(c)	2.46				
Insulting	<5 years (a)	2.48	5.19		.58	
	6-14 years (b)	1.08				
	>15 years(c)	1.03				
Threatening	<5 years (a)	3.,70	6.93		.03	a-c
	6-14 years (b)	2,.88				
	>15 years(c)	1.,39				
Sexually suggestive	<5 years (a)	2,12	3,25		,61	
	6-14 years (b)	1,06				
	>15 years(c)	0,09				

As it is shown in table 4 the results indicated that the teachers who are working at crowded school with more than 500 enrollments had significantly more annoying, (U=117.000, p=.04); offensive (U=87.00, p=.00) threatening (U=1533.00, p=.02), and sexually suggestive (U=1566.00, p=.04) posts than the teachers working in crowded schools. Although no significant differences were found according to the size of schools ın crowded schools teachers have more embarrasing posts (X=2.81) whereas teachers in less crowded schools have more insulting (X=2.48) posts.

Table 4. School size and perception of cyberbully

	School Size	X	U	p
Annoying	<500	2.46	1170.00	.040
	>501	2.72		
Embarrasing	<500	2.64	2810.0	.076
	>501	2.81		
Offensive	<500	2.07	2034.5	.00
	>501	2.22		
Insulting	<500	2.48	1265.5	.084
	>501	1.08		
Threatening	<500	1.70	1533.00	.023
	>501	2.88		
Sexually suggestive	<500	1.12	4016.5	.011
	>501	1.96		

4.   DISCUSSION

The experiences and perspectives of 181 teachers were assessed regarding the incidence and perceptions of the cyber harassment by parents. The results presented here indicate that nearly3/4 of teachers in the sample had received harassing or threatening messages from parents. It is clear that cyberbullying and cyber harassment from parents is a problem for teachers in the sample. Internet provided a forum where parents would say things they wouldn't necessarily say face to face. There's no fear that they are going to get a punch in the head after they send posts on the internet. According to personal communication with an attorney, there are no laws that directly regulate cyber bullying in Turkey. Procedures applied in response to crimes committed on the internet, including cyber bullying, are regulated within the scope of law number 5651 on Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Suppression of Crimes Committed by means of Such Publications, which imposes obligations on parties (i.e., hosting service providers) running the virtual environments in which such crimes were committed. Because the current Turkish sanctions are not a disincentive for cyber bullies, it is necessary for lawmakers to enact more effective punishments and sanctions for this harmful behavior.

Parents mostly send threatening posts to the teachers. The most basic reason is unfortunately, in recent years people have become accustomed to use violence to make their wishes. In Turkey parents have the right to complain to the Ministry of Education by call center and to the president directly even in the smallest events. It is quite frightening and thought-provoking that the vast majority of society accepts the threattowards others as normal and ordinary.

Although some studies [29]-[34] report that gender is not related to cyber bully behaviors, the main findings of the present study were that female teachers had experienced more cyber bullying than males which is similar to [35] research. The findings of the present study related to gender is contradictory with, [36]-[39], who determined that male educators were significantly more likely to receive rude text posts than their female counterpart. Due to the cultural acceptance of women as weaker and vulnerable may have increased the violence against female teachers. The least cyberbullying type that their families apply is sexually suggestive. The main reason for this is that as culturally teachers are accepted "holly" sexually suggestive messages area highly immoral and unacceptable.

Teachers with 6-14 years of seniority receive annoying, embarrasing and offensive posts more than the others. Perhaps the most basic reason for this is that the teachers in this group are occupationally exhausted, and sometimes experience burnout syndrome. Because they are professionally exhausted, they may experience problems both in the teaching process and in communication within the classroom. This can also cause the parents to use cyber violence. Younger therefore less experienced teachers being more likely than their older counterparts to use social media and ICT tools [40], [41] and were also more likely to be victimized by cyber harassment. In the present study teachers with 5 years or less of seniority are young and inexperienced for the parents, and receive more insulting, thrilling and sexually suggestive posts. Probabaly parents see teachers as novice and defenseless. Because they think they can manage the teachers in this group more easily, they often cyberbully them. However, more experienced teachers develop strategies to better address student situations that might prompt cyber harassment than their less experienced counterparts [42]. Young teachers have difficulty in communicating with the parents especially the ones who are inexperienced and do not know how they are spoken to the family. While parents often treat their senior teachers more respectfully, they may find that inexperienced teachers are taught how to do their jobs, disrespectfulness, and arrogance.

Teachers working at schools with larger enrollments experience more cyberbullying from parents. The number of students enrolled in a school may contribute to cyberbullying of teachers because the larger student-to teacher ratios often found in these schools may result in less individualized attention from teachers and less interaction between parents and teachers in the course of the normal school year activities [43], [44]. Parents who feel their child is not receiving the treatment or attention they expect might be more likely to cyber-harass their teachers. This general lack of individual interaction may result in parents using technology to communicate with and possibly cyber-harass teachers, especially if they feel as though their child is not receiving enough personal attention. In addition, cyber bullying is more common in crowded schools because of the fact that parents have communication with each other and sometimes they have a bad influence on each other about the teachers and school functioning.

5.   CONCLUSION

Proper communication between teachers and parents, whether about general policies or about a particular child's progress, is extremely important. Similarly, parents are often not provided with information on appropriate communication with teachers and thus may be unaware of the proper procedures to use for dealing with concerns about their children. Thus, it is imperative that parents learn these types of rules and guidelines on communicating with teachers and expressing their concerns when there is a problem.

A review of the policies could take place during orientation at the beginning of each school year, parents should be given the policies in hard copy, policies should be available online, and policies should be revisited from time to time in media such as school newsletters, web sites and social media tools. There is a huge need for formal training in communication techniques that train teachers to reach out to parents in ways that prevent them from becoming aggressive or may help to de-escalate a parent who does become aggressive. Therefore, it is highly recommended that educators receive specialized training courses and/or refreshers in communicating with parents as part of the continuing education or in-service training

This exploratory study has offered some insight into the levels of parental harassment experienced by Turkish teachers. There are, however, some limitations to this study that limit the generalizability of these findings and should be addressed in future research. Future research will utilize probability samples with more diverse groups of respondents so that results can be generalized to the larger population of educators.

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