

CHAPTER 9

CYBERBULLYING HURTS: THE RISING THREAT TO YOUTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying refers to the behaviour of inflicting harm upon a certain individual or group by using information or communication technologies. Although it originally became a topic of discussion in Europe and North America, it has now become a worldwide issue. Bullying is not a new phenomenon but ‘conventional bullying’ is now being replaced by cyberbullying. With the increasing use of the Internet, mobile devices and particularly the spread of social media, the number of individuals vulnerable to cyberbullying is on the rise. In this context, angry or offensive messages, those mocking, teasing, intimidating, acquiring private information by means of fake accounts or attempts to spread such information may all be considered as examples of cyberbullying. While conventional bullying may occur at a certain place or time, cyberbullying emerges anytime and anywhere people may have access to the Internet. Additionally, factors such as cyberbullying’s capacity to spread more quickly and simultaneously to a larger number of people, its long-lasting effects and the perpetrator’s perception of concealing his/her identity enhance the need for multidimensional scholarly studies on this subject.

Keywords: Bullying, mobbing, cyberbullying, internet, Turkey

1. Concept of Bullying

The term “bully” has a long history that can be traced back to the 1530s (Bully, 2019). Bullying is defined as “intentional and aggressive behaviour occurring repeatedly against a victim where there is a real or perceived power imbalance, and where the victim feels vulnerable and powerless to defend himself or herself” (UN Report, 2018). A bullying situation involves at least two people: a bully and a victim. The former causes the latter harm either directly through physical abuse or indirectly through verbal or written means. Unless action is taken to stop the bullying, it can continue over long stretches of time.

1.1. Methods of Bullying

Bullying can take on several different forms with the core value being the intentional infliction of harm on an individual or group:

- 1) Physical bullying (using your body or objects to cause harm): includes hitting, punching, kicking, spitting or breaking someone else’s belongings.
- 2) Verbal bullying (using words to hurt someone): includes name calling, put-downs, threats and teasing.
- 3) Social bullying (using your friends and relationships to hurt someone): includes spreading rumours, gossiping, excluding others from a group or making others look foolish or unintelligent. This form of bullying is most common amongst elementary school girls (RCMP, n.d).

2. Mobbing: Bullying in the Workplace

The concept of “mobbing” was first used in the 1980s by Heinz Leymann (1996) to designate acts of repression, violence, intimidation and harassment in working life. It derives from the word “mob”, which means an illegal crowd associated with extreme violence and, in turn, derives from the Latin “mobile vulgus”. Mobbing means harassing, intimidating or troubling somebody and is assessed in the context of psychologically abusing an individual (Gender Equality Commission, 2011). In other words, “mobbing” is the act of one or multiple individuals coercing, intimidating or abusing a certain individual labeled as “unwanted” into absolute submission by exclusion or by verbal or physical harassment. It is bullying that takes place in a work environment.

Turkey first became familiar with the concept of mobbing with the Draft Code of Obligations in 2011 that stipulated the obligation of an employer to prevent psychological

abuse at the workplace. Mobbing, often thought to be targeting women, may also victimise males with the same intensity (Gender Equality Commission, 2011). Though it is noteworthy that victims are usually female, the first mobbing lawsuit in Turkey was filed by a male bureaucrat, Ş.T., who was employed at the Turkish Grain Board, on the allegation that he and his family suffered depression due to psychological pressure and claimed 15 thousand TL of emotional damages from his managers.

2.1. Types of Psychological Pressure in the Workplace

In order to make such a distinction, types of psychological pressure should be discussed clearly in the context of mobbing's formational and developmental stages. These may be examined under the following three topics:

a. Downward Psychological Harassment: These are cases of psychological harassment perpetrated by superiors towards their subordinates. Superiors use the corporate power they possess by repressing their subordinates and pushing them out of the corporate framework.

b. Horizontal Psychological Harassment: These are cases where the perpetrator and the victim of psychological harassment at the workplace are colleagues of the same standing who have similar posts and similar opportunities. For example, cases of envy, competition, conflict of interests or personal disfavour between employees who are in the same conditions.

c. Upward Psychological Harassment: This is the case where the employee perpetrates psychological harassment against the executive. This type of case is rarely encountered. Its examples may be employees' rejection of recognising the executive, loyalty to the former executive or envy (TISK, 2012).

It is observed that, based on his/her personal traits, the perpetrator may employ a range of methods in the act of mobbing. Such methods include isolation, insult, sarcasm, denigration, constant negative criticism, work overload, work diminishing, rumours, condemnation, physical violence and sexual harassment. In summary, attacks in the workplace in the context of mobbing that target the victim's job or position may manifest themselves in various forms and due to various reasons for degradation and deterioration. They may be an attack on the educational status, an attack on capabilities or an attack on the working style. Attacks on personality may target the creed, ethnic identity, physical appearance, language, dialect, social surroundings, private life, clothing or mannerisms of the victim. In conclusion, people subjected to mobbing, by the magnitude and impact of the damage they suffer, are rendered incapacitated to perform their jobs (Gender Equality Commission, 2011).

3. The Age of Cyberbullying

The term “cyberbullying” appeared or was first used in Canada by Bill Belsey, an educator and the founder of the Canada-based anti-bullying website www.bullying.org (Froese-Germain, 2008, p. 46). Cyberbullying is defined as a type of bullying consisting of intentful and hostile behaviour that is performed by a certain individual’s or group’s use of information and communication technologies to harm others (Seçkin, 2017). Today, due to developing technologies, people have the opportunity to bully others not only in the work environment but also in a virtual environment, particularly on social media. In this context, cyberbullying extends the span of conventional bullying and endows people with a greater range of facilities to move mobbing beyond the psychological intimidation efforts taking place between superiors and their subordinates (Gender Equality Commission, 2011). Furthermore, information received through the Internet may be used against individuals and may serve as elements of repression. In whatever form and for whichever purpose it may serve, the phenomenon may lead an individual to depression with psychological and economic damage or even suicide.

3.1. Differences and Similarities Between Bullying and Cyberbullying

Though bullying has been around since the beginning of human history, cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon due to its reliance on new digital technologies. Technology has made positive contributions to the advancement of human life. However, as a neutral tool, technological advancements can also serve as tools to harm people. Cyberbullying is one such example of this type of negative use of technological advancements.

Similarities between bullying and cyberbullying may be listed as follows:

- a) Bullying constitutes the common essence in these two types of behavior. With bullying, the victim is subjected to psychological, rather than physical harm. It is impossible to observe or gauge the damage and destruction to the victim’s psyche and the degree of harm the victim suffers.
- b) In both types of bullying behavior, the perpetrator has the intent of willingly and intentionally harming the victim. The perpetrator is not disturbed by the despair the victim is pushed to and moreover, the perpetrator may hold the belief that the victim has deserved how he/she is being treated.
- c) The attack is not of physical nature but targets the victim’s personality and individual psyche. Intentful behaviour that aims at hurting that person is involved. The victim

is hurt from such behavior targeting him/her, suffers a loss of self-esteem and feels psychologically insecure.

- d) The parties in both types of bullying are identical: victim, perpetrator and onlookers.
- e) In regard to their results, both types of bullying bring upon the victim a heavy and unbearable burden. Indeed, as a result of both types of bullying, the victim may resort to committing suicide in an attempt to put an end to their suffering. Even if such a dire outcome is not always involved, the victim goes through a psychologically severe trauma, feels a sense of defeat in the face of such treatment and experiences shame and loss of self-esteem because his/her personality is plundered. He/She cannot understand why they are treated that way and secludes himself/herself from real life (Seçkin, 2017, p. 89).

It should be noted that cyberbullying varies from conventional bullying in certain aspects stemming from the nuances of the technology used in the former to inflict harm (Slonje, Smith & Frise, 2013):

- a) Cyberbullying is associated with technological expertise to a certain extent;
- b) It is a type of bullying that essentially occurs indirectly, rather than face-to-face and may have anonymous outcomes;
- c) Accordingly, the bully may not be able to observe the victim's response, at least in the short term;
- d) Roles of witnesses to the act of bullying – due to opportunities presented by the media – may be more complicated than the roles of witnesses to conventional bullying;
- e) It is presumed that one of the incentives in conventional bullying is the status gain acquired by exposing the perpetrator's power in the eyes of others. However, in cyberbullying, the perpetrator does not achieve such a result;
- f) Scope of potential onlookers – due to opportunities of the media – has further extended in cyberbullying; and
- g) It is difficult to avoid cyberbullying because the bully is able to reach the victim anywhere through technology, not physically but virtually.

Additionally, according to Hinduja (2011), bullying perpetrated in a virtual environment renders a victim even more vulnerable. At this point, the victim may feel much more defenceless against the destructive nature of what is shared on social media against him/her

and sometimes the victim cannot comprehend who the bully is and why he/she is targeted. Additionally, the bully, relying on confidentiality, may act even more cruelly and aggressively.

3.2. Types of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may emerge in very different forms. In light of research, it may nevertheless be discussed under two topics (Seçkin, 2017, pp. 79-80):

A. Electronic Bullying:

This type of cyberbullying is associated with technical cases emerging in the form of cracking the passwords and access to personal information of the victim (i.e. hacking). The party that acquires the account data of the person targeted is then able to send malevolent messages or make indecent requests. The victim who is unaware that his/her account has been hacked or learns this far too late and faces a troublesome adversity.

B. Electronic Communications Bullying:

This type of cyberbullying involves actions such as constant harassment through messages, humiliation, mocking, unauthorised publication of a person's photograph/video, all through use of ICT (Information & Communication Technologies). This type of bullying involves aggressive behaviour interfering with human relations and may lead to very negative outcomes for the victim.

In both electronic bullying and electronic communications bullying, gaining an advantage relies on the perpetrator's aptitude in using the technology. Particular for committing electronic bullying, the person is required to have advanced skills for technology use. An average level of skills in technology use may prove insufficient for such practices. Electronic communications bullying may not require a congruent level of technology use skills. Possession of average skills of technology use may be sufficient for this type of cyberbullying and many people, whenever they intend to, may easily commit electronic communications bullying.

According to Willard (2007), there are seven different categories of common cyberbullying:

- 1) Flaming:** Sending angry, rude, vulgar messages about a person to an online group or to that person via email or other text messaging.

- 2) **Online harassment:** Repeatedly sending offensive messages via email or other text messaging to a person. This action may put a person in a difficult situation and may even lead to highly embarrassing circumstances.
- 3) **Cyberstalking:** Online harassment that includes threats of harm or is excessively intimidating. Cyberstalking may be long-term, and this may weaken the victim's defence mechanism.
- 4) **Denigration (put-downs):** Sending harmful, untrue, or cruel statements about a person to other people or posting such material online.
- 5) **Masquerade:** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material that makes that person look bad.
- 6) **Outing:** Sending or posting material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information, including forwarding private messages or images.
- 7) **Exclusion:** Cruelly excluding someone from an online group. A person excluded from the communication environment suffers emotional damage and feels secluded.

In summary, actions such as incitement-agitation, harassment, defamation/slander, mimicking, exposure, exclusion, sending disturbing and repetitive messages or stalking are characterised as cyberbullying. Though all bullying is serious and hinders normal development, with the dramatical increase of opportunities due to the development of digital technologies there is an increasing need to focus effort on the re-assessing of the concept of cyberbullying and handling it concretely. Indeed, recent discussions regarding cyberbullying have taken place in popular culture mediums, such as popular teenager and young adult series, film and cartoons (e.g. 13 Reasons Why, Cyberbully, Ralph Breaks the Internet, The Duff) where the main character is someone who is sexually abused and becomes a victim of cyberbullying. Because pop culture plays an important role in the lives of teenagers, these kinds of productions may increase the debate on cyber bullying.

3.3. Parties Involved in Cyberbullying

As in conventional bullying, cyberbullying essentially involves three parties: the perpetrator, the victim and onlookers. Nevertheless, although the parties are identical, the status of the parties in cyberbullying has certain differences (Horzum & Ayas, 2013). For the perpetrators, the biggest difference between traditional and cyberbullying is the anonymity afforded to them through the use of digital technologies. For the victim, this anonymity of the

perpetrator of cyberbullying can cause more anxiety by making it more difficult to identify the perpetrator, while also leaving a wider and more permanent trace of the harmful actions. (Beale & Hall, 2007). The most significant difference, however, between traditional bullying and cyberbullying is with the third party: onlookers. Though it is true that both types of bullying are not experienced only by the perpetrator and the victim, but that they also affect the people around them, either directly or indirectly. In cyberbullying, the number of onlookers, sometimes ranging into the millions, as well as their anonymity is significant. Bullying does not only involve the perpetrator and the victim but, especially in the case of cyberbullying, can sometimes involve large sections of the public as well. Therefore, awareness of ethical rules for Internet use and ways of identifying, stopping or coping with cyberbullying are gaining importance for the public at large.

3.4. Causes of Cyberbullying

The number of studies handling cyberbullying is growing because the problem is a universal one, namely bullying, and the recent technological advancements have extended the impact of such behaviour. One of the most important factors in the proliferation of cyberbullying is the lack of knowledge in this field. Lack of knowledge both in terms of society lacking an understanding of the scope and impact of cyberbullying and in terms of the individual lacking coping mechanisms to deal with it. Most of the time, an individual is unable to share his/her negative experiences in the virtual environment with their family and other trusted people around them and, not knowing what to do, the individual experiences isolation and profound despair.

But what causes a perpetrator of cyberbullying to resort to such harmful actions? Identifying why an individual resorts to such actions to destroy the social, academic or emotional lives of others is considerably difficult. Hatred, grudge, envy, personality disorders, inferiority complex, deficiencies in development of emotional capabilities and intelligence and power worship are just some of these causes.

The causes leading perpetrators of cyberbullying to these actions may be listed as follows (Willard, 2002):

1. Perpetrators of cyberbullying, often referred to as cyberbullies, assume that there is a low possibility that they may get caught and, therefore, act with ease;
2. Perpetrators of cyberbullying believe that they cause no physical harm to their victims;

3. Justifying themselves based on the fact that others commit cyberbullying too, perpetrators of cyberbullying do not view such actions as unethical; and
4. Perpetrators of cyberbullying may also act in such a manner in order to inflict revenge on people who bullied them.

Indeed, it can be understood that perpetrators of cyberbullying are emotionally apathetic, and they are not really aware of the destruction caused by the harm they inflict. Their self-confidence in avoiding “getting caught” makes them act in an even more unrestrained manner. Furthermore, ethical self-justification of their actions enables them to rid themselves of the moral burden.

4. Struggling Against Cyberbullying: The Turkish Experience

Many studies on cyberbullying show that individuals subjected to such cases are usually children and young people (Beran, Mishna, McInroy & Shariff, 2015; Hango, 2016). Considering that this group also uses the Internet most significantly and efficiently, it may be established that the rate of Internet use is correlated with being a perpetrator or victim of cyberbullying. And like Internet access, cyberbullying is a worldwide phenomenon.

4.1. Internet use in Turkey

According to the Report on Household Use of Information Technologies (IT) published annually by TÜİK (The Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018), the use of computers and the internet are increasing in Turkey with many households possessing internet connectivity and with more men using the service:

•**The ratio of Turkish internet users in the age cluster 16-74 is 72.9 percent:** Computer and Internet use in the year 2018 in the age cluster 16-74 was 59.6 percent and 72.9 percent respectively. In the previous year, i.e. 2017, these ratios were 56.6 percent and 66.8 percent. In the age cluster 16-74, the ratios of computer and Internet use for males were 68.6 percent and 80.4 percent and 50.6 percent and 65.5 percent for females.

•**The rate of internet use increased from 90 percent in 2017 to 93 percent in 2018 in young people in the 16-24 age group:** The rate of internet use of young males within the 16-24 age group (making up 15.8 percent of Turkey’s total population) increased by 3.6 percent to 96.9 in 2018 compared to the previous year while for young women the same period saw a smaller increase of 2.3 percent to 89.

•**Eight out of ten households have Internet access:** According to the data of the Report on Household Use of Information Technologies, by April 2018, 83.8 percent of households had home Internet access. This ratio was 80.7 percent in the same month for 2017.

•**The ratio of households with broadband Internet access is 82.5 percent:** The ratio of households with broadband Internet access in April 2018 was 82.5 percent. While 44.5 percent of the households had residential broadband connection (ADSL, cable connection, fiber connection, etc.), 79.4 percent of the households had mobile broadband connection. The ratio of households with broadband Internet access in the previous year was 78.3 percent.

4.2. Cyberbullying: Comparison between Turkey and the world

“Some 25 percent of young people are exposed to bullying via mobile phones or the Internet. Eleven percent of them say that embarrassing or damaging photographs of them have been taken and shared without their permission. More than half of young people say they do not trust their families so do not tell them when they are targeted by cyber bullying,” said BTK head Ömer Fatih Sayan, commenting on a new initiative “Don’t be a cyber bully” (Şimşek, 2018).

In addition to TÜİK’s study, the Ipsos Survey Company conducted a worldwide study, which included Turkey, on the issue of cyberbullying. According to the results of the Ipsos Cyberbullying Survey of 2018, which studied the issue of cyberbullying and the public’s perceptions on the issue in 28 countries including the United States, Germany, France and Turkey, public awareness for the issue of cyberbullying has shown an increase, but still one in every four respondents worldwide asserted that he/she was not familiar with the term. As per the study, 75 percent of 20.793 respondents from 28 countries asserted that they had either witnessed, read about or heard about cyberbullying. Compared to the year 2011, the awareness score for cyberbullying has shown an increase of 9 percentage points.

The Ipsos Cyberbullying Survey (2018) also has a particular emphasis on cyberbullying experienced by children. According to the data, 17 percent of the respondents worldwide asserted that their children faced cyberbullying, while 4 percent asserted that their children regularly experience cyberbullying. Of those participating from Turkey, 20 percent of the parents in the survey asserted that their children experienced cyberbullying. Compared to 2011, the ratio of cyberbullying faced by children in Turkey has increased by 5 percent. The platform where children experienced cyberbullying the most was identified as social media.

Social media is followed by mobile platforms and online messaging platforms. With the increase in cyberbullying, awareness for the issue shows a congruent increase as well. Where Sweden (91 percent) and Italy (91 percent) are identified as countries with the highest level of awareness for cyberbullying, the lowest level is observed in Saudi Arabia (37 percent). Turkey stands somewhere in the middle with an awareness for cyberbullying at a level of 60 percent.

Much research shows that young generations are reluctant to report incidents of cyberbullying if they do not feel safe and know that their privacy will be protected (Beran et al., 2015; Hango, 2016; Hinduja, 2011). According to another survey by Ipsos/Reuters (2012), more than 10 percent of the families around the world reported that their children faced cyberbullying, while around 25 percent reported that they knew somebody who had experienced this kind of bullying and one-third of the respondents question whether cyberbullying has any differences from other types of harassment. According to the research, the data obtained is a reflection of the universal response against cyberbullying on a global basis. While the study is labeled as a 'first' in its specific field, it is also seen as a guide to draw the boundaries of cyberbullying. The study posits that subsequent studies on the subject will show if a rising trend of responsiveness towards cyberbullying exists and will also underline parental awareness. More than 18 thousand adults representing 6,500 children from 24 countries participated in the online survey on the subject. According to 60 percent of the respondents, the main media of cyberbullying are Facebook and similar social networks. Mobile devices and online chatrooms, with their shares of 40 percent, follow social networks as a main media for cyberbullying.

The study also shows that awareness towards cyberbullying is high. Two thirds of respondents asserted that they are informed of the concept of cyberbullying, reporting that they had read or heard something about the concept. As per the same survey, the ratio of being informed on cyberbullying is 50 percent in Turkey. In other words, half of the Turkish respondents in the survey had witnessed, read about or heard of this subject. Furthermore, 22 percent of the Turkish respondents held the view that cyberbullying can be eliminated with necessary sanctions. As for the question "Did your child experience cyberbullying at home?" 88 percent of the Turkish respondents gave the answer 'No, never.' While 80 percent of the Turkish respondents asserted that they witnessed disturbing behaviour on social media networks such as Facebook, this ratio is 39 percent for cellphones or other mobile devices, 55 percent for chatrooms, 41 percent for e-mail messages, 46 percent for online instant messaging system and 45 percent for other types of websites (Ipsos/Reuters, 2012).

4.3. Actions taken to stop cyberbullying in Turkey

In this context, for the purpose of combatting cyberbullying, although not of significant currency in the greater public, certain important projects in educational circles with assistance from the European Union, Ministry of National Education and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) have been launched. One of these such actions is the Combatting Cyberbullying project implemented between 2014 and 2016 under the Strategic Partnerships/KA2 partnered by the Directorate General of Innovation and Educational Technologies (YEĞİTEK). The target population of this project aiming at assuring safe Internet use for children aged 9 to 16 also involves parents and teachers. Under the project, a Cyber Safety Game was also launched through the creation of a mobile application. Available on EBA Market and Google, the scenario, graphics and encoding were designed by YEĞİTEK and aimed to teach students safe Internet use through gameplay and also, provide them with advice on how to stay safe on the Internet. Under the same project, guidebooks for students and parents on safe Internet use were prepared (Siberzorbalık, 2015).

Another project on the subject which also received European Union assistance was the multinational project designed by Vahide Aktuğ Middle School. The project involved the creation of the website <http://www.clearcyberbullying.eu> which serves as a source of information on cyberbullying and also includes a dramatization of cyberbullying situations that can be printed and used as educational handouts. While websites of some schools have started to host information sections on cyberbullying, other schools have introduced videos and animations for awareness of young people on the subject. Another awareness project assisted by TÜBİTAK called “Improving Cyberbullying Awareness of the Turkish Youth in Basic Education: A Field Study on Young People’s Perception and Awareness of Cyberbullying” designed public service announcements and suggested the concept of media literacy as a means to combat cyberbullying. Under the project, in addition to public service announcements, informational guidelines were introduced (Siberzorbalık, 2015).

4.4. Legal actions taken regarding Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying and the terms of “cyberstalking”, “cyberthreats”, “cyberharrasment” and “cybersexting” are similar to each other in their origins and are directly related with harrasment in the cyber sphere. Sometimes, these concepts may be intermingled and furthermore, in legislation, they may be used in substitution of one another. Indeed, the terms with the closest meanings to each other are bullying, cyberbullying and cyberstalking (Beran & Li, 2007, pp. 25-33). Whatever they are called, such actions constitute criminal behaviour

and some instances are punishable by prison sentence under certain types of crimes in the Turkish Penal Code - a fact that many perpetrators may not be aware of. Often children or young people may be using the Internet to commit such crimes without being aware they are doing so. Parents may also not be aware that they are contributing to such crimes when they share what they believe is “a joke”, but is really cyberbullying (Şimşek, 2018).

It is also important that victims of such cyberbullying incidents, as well as their close family and friends, be aware of their legal rights and obligations. These may include supply evidence on cyberbullying and receiving legal consultancy. In cases of emergency, by filing a criminal complaint at the prosecutors’ offices or law enforcement units, the legal procedure may be initiated against a perpetrator of a cyberbullying crime. At this point, subjects such as the digital channel or account the offence is perpetrated from, its method and the perpetrator’s identity are of particular significance to prosecutors.

In Turkey, cases such as rights abuses, fraud or forgery that may be encountered on the Internet and associated penalties are designated under the title ‘Cyber Crimes’ in Articles 243, 244, 245 and 246 of the Turkish Penal Code (Law No. 5237) promulgated in the Official Gazette of the date 12/10/2004. Various units such as the Telecommunications Communication Presidency (TIB) of the Information Technologies and Communications Authority combat cyber-crimes through relevant statutory arrangements. In 2011, the Cyber Crimes Department Presidency of the Turkish National Police was founded. Through this unit, the scattered organisational frame of various department presidencies and field services offering assistance for investigation of crimes committed by use of information technologies and examination of digital data was unified under a specific department and the capability to combat against cyber-crimes was enhanced.

In Turkey individuals who experience offences in the online environment may resort to the following remedies:

- Filing a criminal complaint at the Public Prosecutor’s Office with any data or finding associated with the crime;
- Complaining on the 155 Police Hotline, for crimes of suicide incitement, sexual abuse of children, facilitating drug use, obscenity, slander, harassment and crimes committed against Atatürk;
- Filing a complaint at the web address www.ihbarweb.org.tr; or
- Filing a complaint on ALO 166 Internet Complaint Hotline of the Telecommunications Communication Presidency.

According to lawyer Fehmi Ünsal Özmestik “Methods that should be followed in the legal procedure may vary on the basis of each particular event” and in certain situations, as an option to achieve more expedient and effective results, it may be considered that face-to-face interviews and interaction with the perpetrator of cyberbullying is arranged prior to initiating the legal procedure (Ünal, 2019).

5. Conclusion & Suggestions

Bullying refers to the act of imposing dominance over others by use of power, threatening, intimidation or coercion. On the other hand, the term cyberbullying has certain methodological differences from conventional bullying. As a formal definition, cyberbullying refers to “intentional and recurring harm” induced through use of digital technologies using computers, mobile devices and other electronic devices. This is a plain and brief definition and it is the most favoured one since it contains the most significant characteristics of cyberbullying.

These important factors covered by this definition are as follows (Serter, 2017):

- *Intentional*: The act should be intentional, not accidental.
- *Recurring*: It is representative of a certain mannerism, not a specific event isolated from other events.
- *Harm*: The target should be aware that he/she is harmed.
- *Computers, cellphones and other electronic devices*: The use of digital technologies is a key distinguishing factor of cyberbullying from conventional bullying.

Adapting this definition to the daily lives of children and young people, cyberbullying may be identified as repetitive online mocking, intimidation, threat through e-mail or SMS or the perpetrator’s sharing of disturbing content about another person on his/her digital or social media accounts. Destructive comments, threats, rumours and photographs or videos in online circulation are also examples of cyberbullying.

It is undeniable that the acts of cyberbullying cause destructive effects on their victims. Since the content in most of the cyberbullying cases is related to the victim, it can often become difficult for the victim to cope with the attention and focus on their situation. One of the most important opportunities in combating cyberbullying is to create greater awareness of what it is, who it harms, and what are the social and legal consequences. Scholarly studies and projects are needed to study and identify solutions that can be applied universally or individually. Empathy training on the subject is one possible solution. Such measures should

also be supported with legislation, clearly indicating that those who commit cyberbullying “pay a price”. However, in addition to such scholastic endeavours, there is also a need to engage the public and, particularly, children and young adults who are most often the victims and perpetrators of such crimes into the conversation around cyberbullying. Schools also offer platforms for such discussions amongst young people. Informative websites on cyberbullying, such as www.eba.gov.tr, are available to aid in the School-Student-Family triangle of communication and cooperation. Preventative work against cyberbullying are tasks that may be assumed by school administrations and teachers. In addition to educating the educators, such measures against cyberbullying may include educational and social scenarios to aid students, peer support groups, lessons on Digital Citizenship and responsible Internet use are some of the actions that may be conducted to assist students in preventing cyberbullying. Likewise, training programs designed for parents, informing the parents on ways of identifying and combatting cyberbullying are also required in the struggle against cyberbullying. It is also important to remember that digital platforms must also be involved in the fight against cyberbullying. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and others, also bear a responsibility in educating about and combating against such cyber-crimes.

In conclusion, it is evident that the real struggle against cyberbullying should be through informal and formal education of Media Literacy and Digital Media Literacy, spanning from preschool education to life-long education. With this strategy, children and young people along with their teachers, parents, families and anyone who uses digital technologies can become responsibly literate in media and digital media. This method may also help save them from cyberbullies and teach them how to help cyberbullying victims.

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