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Research Article

The Correlation between Social Media Use and Cyber Victimization: A Research on Generation Z in Turkey

Sosyal Medya Kullanımı ile Siber Mağduriyet Arasındaki İlişki: Türkiye'de Z Kuşağı Üzerine Bir Araştırma

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ABSTRACT

Although social media usage has many advantages, it also brings many risks. Anger, hate and bullying actions by individuals are frequently encountered on social media platforms today. Thus, this study aims to determine whether there is a meaningful correlation between social media use and cyber victimization. The cyber victimization levels of the users were investigated using the data of research conducted online with 390 participants (Generation Z) and social media users. The purposeful sampling method was used to select the participants. In the analysis of the data, frequency analysis, pearson correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were performed using the statistical package program. It was found that the frequency of exposure of users to cyberbullying behaviors is low. It was determined that there are significant correlations at p=.01 and p=.05 levels between the independent variables of the sub-dimensions (socializing, obtaining information, sharing, following, and making use of leisure time) of the social media usage scale and the dependent variables of the cyber victimization sub-dimensions (cyber harassment, fraud, sharing and exclusion of private information, and virtual struggle and anxiety).

Keywords: Social media, social networks, cyber victimization, cyberbullying, generation Z

ÖZ

Sosyal medya kullanımı pek çok fırsatı bünyesinde barındırmasına karşın birçok riski de beraberinde getirmektedir. Birey kaynaklı öfke, nefret ve zorbalık gibi eylemlerin günümüzde sosyal medya platformlarında da sıkça karşılaşılan durumlar olduğu görülmektedir. Bu doğrultuda çalışmanın amacı sosyal medya kullanımı ile siber mağduriyet arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olup olmadığını tespit etmektir. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle 390 sosyal medya kullanıcısı ile online olarak gerçekleştirilen araştırmanın verileri kullanılarak kullanıcıların siber mağduriyet düzeyleri araştırılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde istatistiksel paket programı kullanılarak frekans analizi, pearson korelasyon analizi ile doğrusal

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regresyon analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları doğrultusunda kullanıcıların, siber zorbalık davranışlarına maruz kalma sıklığının düşük olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, araştırma bulguları bir bütün olarak incelendiğinde, sosyal medya kullanımı ölçeği alt boyutları (sosyalleşme, bilgi edinme, paylaşma, takip etme ve serbest zaman değerlendirme) bağımsız değişkenleri ile siber mağduriyet alt boyutları (sanal taciz, sahtekârlık, özel bilgileri paylaşma ve dışlama ile sanal mücadele ve kaygı) bağımlı değişkenleri arasında p=,01 ve p=,05 düzeyinde anlamlı ilişkiler olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal medya, sosyal ağlar, siber mağduriyet, siber zorbalık, Z nesli

INTRODUCTION

Expressing oneself, expressing feelings and thoughts, and interacting with other individuals are some of the most basic psychological needs of individuals and are indispensable for life. Developments in internet, informatics and cyber technologies have both changed and differentiated the communication styles of individuals (Lee & Cho, 2011, p. 72). Progress and developments in communication technologies have enabled unprecedented types of platforms to be used and this situation has changed the content and formal aspect of communication (Kwon & Sung, 2011, p. 5; Pfeil, Arjan, & Zaphiris, 2009, p. 643). Following on from Web 1.0 technology, the fact that Web 2.0 technology has read-write based two-way communication has increased the importance of the internet and digitalization (Lietsala & Sirkkunan, 2008, p. 19). Web 2.0 technology, which transforms the communication style into a more dynamic and dialogic structure, is gradually increasing its influence, especially with the spread of the use of social media platforms (Morgan, Snelson, & Elison-Bowers, 2010, p. 1405). Social media platforms have an important role in making digital communication a part of life. Social media differs from traditional media with its distinct features such as accessibility, usability, innovation and permanence (Lewis, Kaufman, Gonzalez, Wimmer, & Christakis, 2008, pp. 330-331). Social media platforms that allow users to log in with real or fake identities further increase the complexity in the virtual world (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211; Karadağ, 2010, p. 82). The perception of social media as a platform that offers unlimited freedom and its uncontrolled use brings along several issues (Boughman, 2010, p. 933; Maranto & Barton, 2010, p. 36). This situation has brought up concepts such as cybercrime or cyberbullying (Lee & Cho, 2011, p. 73). Considering the purposes of social media use, it is seen that it provides significant benefits such as entertainment, economic communication and commercial advantages, following and adaptation to developments, freedom of expression, communication and access to information, organization, and socialization. On the other hand, it also has negative aspects such as building addiction,

information pollution, ethical concerns, the feeling of loneliness, superficiality and loss of time (Koçak, 2012).

On social media platforms, individuals can present an appearance that is beautiful, successful, happy, satisfied with life, strong, interested, socially responsible, thoughtful, criticizable, knowledgeable, educated, having standards, ego-centric, and tend to be content that it is close to one's feelings and thoughts rather than objective reality (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Moreover, the sense of belonging in social networks negatively affects an individual's focus on their daily routines in real life, and the urge to be online constantly causes the individual discomfort in environments where internet is not available (Özodaşık, 2001).

Users share their identity and personal information and make the details about themselves available on social media platforms to the public by their own will. Several types of personal information such as educational information, address, personal pictures, workplace, marital status, kinship relations, birthday, political opinion, etc. are made accessible to third parties on social media platforms. The passwords' similarity to the dates shared on social media platforms is one of the important security problems (Hobson, 2008, p. 20). Users can become victims of harassment and abuse by malicious activities on social media platforms. It is observed that the users' personal rights are violated via the social network through the use of various illegal or unauthorized content. Providing information through photographs, home addresses and location tags increases the risk of getting targeted by these actions (Yavanoğlu, Sağıroğlu, & Çolak, 2012, p. 15). Cyberbullying, which is at the top of the informatics or cybercrime in social media usage, is the most common problem. However, users who experience cyber victimization due to cyberbullying may be aware of how social media is vulnerable to cybercrime. Social media tools, a platform that is very open to manipulation and crime, also cause trust issues, especially due to the potential of creating fake profiles, fictitious and suspicious identities. When the texts, images, animated images etc. shared without paying attention to the language used on social media platforms are used in an uncontrolled manner and spread to large masses, it creates a huge data cloud and causes content density.

The problematic use of social media platforms is increasing among users aged 20 and under as a study revealed. The increase in mobile device usage among young people in this age group, games played on social media platforms have become a part of life. Social media platforms used in an excessive, uncontrolled and lawless manner

lead to fundamental problems, especially among young people as well as all users (Hawi & Samaha, 2017, p. 577).

Social media platforms provide pivotal benefits, as well as bringing enormous risks and negativities. Creating a jargon of its own and corrupting language, providing openings to propaganda, provocation, manipulation, inciting and illegal structures are considered among the risks and negativities of social media. Having such negative aspects and risks makes social media a platform vulnerable to crime. Thus, the vast majority of cybercrime is committed on social media platforms.

Identity masking on social media platforms, or the possibility of impersonating an anonymous or fictional identity, are thought to be among the important risks. It is observed that cyberbullying has become an act performed more easily through accounts created with such deceptive information. Defining the deliberate and disturbing behaviors of a user towards another as cyberbullying, it was stated that those who are exposed to these behaviors experience cyber victimization (Gross, 2004, p. 636). Cyberbullying's aspects of threats, violence, harm, power imbalance, harassment, and exclusion are similar to traditional bullying (Kowalski & Limber, 2007, p. 24).

The features that distinguish cyberbullying from traditional bullying and make it even more problematic are the lack of confidentiality, security, time and space limitations, absence of physical power necessity, easy access to the victim, higher influence spectrum, and its wide scope thanks to the possibilities of technology and digital platforms (Yaman & Sönmez, 2015, p. 20; Ayas & Horzum, 2012, p. 371; Antoniadou, Kokkinos, & Markos, 2016, p. 28). Therefore, those who are victims of harassment and threats, pressure and psychological violence on social media platforms, are defined as "cyber victims", and those who harass and threaten, pressurize and conduct psychological violence are defined as "cyberbullies" (Li, 2007, p. 436; Bussey, Fitzpatrick, & Raman, 2015, p. 32). Users can play both victim and bully roles in some cases. However, cyber victims may experience academic failure, emotional, psychological, cognitive and psychosomatic problems such as low self-esteem, disappointment, dissonance, anxiety disorder, loneliness, emotional instability, pessimism, agitation, and depression (Huang & Chou, 2010, p. 1585; Kokkinos, Antoniadou, & Markos, 2014, p. 210; Arıcak & Özbay, 2016, p. 283). A study on cyberbullying suggested that the relevant behaviors are virtual stalking and harassment, impersonation, humiliation, sharing personal information without consent, ignoring/excluding and fraud (Willard, 2007). Moreover, crimes committed in

the field of informatics can be summarized as insults, blackmail and threats, virtual/online fighting, unauthorized access, fake identity production, impersonation, virtual/online gambling, and unauthorized texts or e-mails (Stewart & Fritsch, 2011, pp. 82–83).

A study in which relational bullying behaviors such as ignoring or excluding and rumor-making were considered and cyberbullying was analyzed with the assumption that females were more prone to this type of cyberbullying was emphasized (Keith & Martin, 2005). Moreover, in another study it was determined that males are more prone to cyberbullying (Erdur-Baker & Kavsut, 2007). One study (Wang, Lei, Liu, & Hu, 2016) showed that cyberbullying and cyber victimization vary greatly by gender, sometimes the cyberbully is a male, and the cyber victim is a woman or vice versa. When the effects of cyberbullying, in other words, cyber victimization are examined, it is possible to describe the results of cyber victimization under four tenets, emotional and psychological, social, academic and physical effects (Özer, 2016). However, the impact size of cyber victimization varies depending on the intensity and duration of cyberbullying, the psychological state of the victim and their resistance to the stress caused by cyberbullying. This action, which affects cyber victims, also deeply affects individuals who practice cyberbullying. Cyberbullies, become individuals with less empathy, short tempered, emotionally scarred, aggressive, offensive, psychological, social and communication problems and mood disorders, and who lack anger and stress management capabilities. Additionally, there may be cyberbullies who are confident, witty, fond of mocking personal characteristics and who have high level communication skills.

Nowadays, social media platforms are the main source of cybercrime committed against individuals, society and the state. Cyberbullying, which is a substantial element in cybercrime, is the most common act of criminal users on social media. Users who are exposed to cyberbullying should take the same precautions as they take against crime in their daily lives when using the internet or social media platforms. Conscious and controlled use of social media platforms can minimize the problems faced on these platforms.

In this context, this study focuses on the investigation of whether there is a significant correlation between social media usage and cyber victimization by determining the victimization levels of Generation Z and social media users. Moreover, determining whether social media usage has a significant effect on cyber victimization is also examined. For this purpose, one research question is is there a significant relationship between social media use and cyber victimization sub-dimensions? Another research

question is, does social media use have a significant effect on cyber victimization? The research conducted between November and December 2019 focuses on the answers to these questions.

The study is important in terms of the scarcity of studies conducted to measure the relationship between social media use and cyber victimization and the contribution to the literature in this field. In addition, measuring the relationship between social media use and cyber victimization in a Generation Z sample reveals the importance of the study.

AIM AND METHODOLOGY

This study aims to determine whether there is a significant relationship between social media use and cyber victimization. The cyber victimization levels of the users were investigated using the data obtained from online research on 390 social media users through the purposeful sampling method. In the analysis of the data, frequency analysis, pearson correlation analysis, and linear regression analysis were performed using statistics software.

Aim

The correlational research technique, a quantitative research desing, was used in this study in order to examine the relationship between social media use and cyber victimization. The primary aim of the study is to question the presence of a significant correlation between the sub-dimensions of social media usage and cyber victimization. Furthermore, a secondary purpose of the study is to determine whether social media usage has any predictive role in cyber victimization. In this context, research questions of the study are as follows: Is there a significant relationship between social media use and cyber victimization sub-dimensions? Does social media use have a significant effect on cyber victimization?

Methodology

Research Model

The study was planned with a quantitative research design (model) in order to answer the research questions. Additionally, the general scanning model was used in

the study. In a universe consisting of numerous elements, scanning arrangements made over a group of samples to be taken from the universe in order to make a general judgment about the universe are referred to as the general scanning model (Aziz, 2015, p. 27; Karasar, 2016, p. 111). In this study, in order to arrange the necessary conditions for collecting and analyzing the data in accordance with the research purpose and in an economical way, the survey (online) technique, a quantitative research design, was used. In this regard, a theoretical model was created to determine the role of social meadia use on cyber victimization.

Participants

Literature embraces different approaches to the classification of generations and the periods they cover. Although there is a consensus on the definition of the term "generation", there are different perspectives as regards naming the generations and classifying the periods they cover. The main reason for such differences is that researchers evaluate events from different dates (Singh, 2014; Turner, 2015; Csobanka, 2016; Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Dimock, 2019).

For example, the classification of Lanchester and Stillman about generations employ the term "Traditionalists" to define those born between 1900-1945, "Baby Boomers" for those born between 1946-1964, "Generation X" for those born between 1965-1980, "Generation Y" for those born between 1981-1999, and "Generation Z" for those born in 2000 and after (Lanchester & Stillman, 2002). Generation Z, who were born after 1999 and are usually the children of generation X, are regarded as the normal alphabet heirs of the Y and X generations (Bergh & Behrer, 2013, p. 11).

As in the conceptualizations of other generations, it is evident that there are also debates in the conceptualization of the Z generation. Considering that the research and social analysis about the Z generation is still in progress, it can be inferred that discussions over classifications, the periods they cover, and their conceptualization are likely to continue (Turner, 2015). However, the change and development of the world with the new millennium, the increase in the use of the internet, the renewal and ease of virtually everything have caused the generation that was born and which has been growing up after 2000 to evolve to a different position (Dimock, 2019). Therefore, the most prominent feature of Generation Z is that these individuals grow up with the internet and technology.

The interest of Generation Z in smart phones, their intensive use of social networks, their tendency to use technology and their being surrounded by digital technology were determinants in their selection as a research sample. Furthermore, the individuals who spend the most time on social media platforms are from Generation Z. Generation Z spends an average of five hours a day on social media. Another reason why Generation Z was chosen as the research sample is that they tend towards content production rather than content consumption on social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2018). As to what year we should look to for the emergence of Generation Z, there is no consensus among researchers. Various year ranges from 1991 to 2001 are addressed depending on the differences in technological development in the countries, while sociologists often refer to the year 2000. Accordingly, the most senior Generation Z members today are 20 years old. The research sample was chosen from among the participants determined in consideration of these criteria.

Data Collection Tool

In the study, cyber victimization [predicted-outcome] factor was determined as the dependent variable. The social media usage [predictor-predictive] factor was determined as an independent variable. The sub-dimensions and structural validity of both the dependent and the independent variable were determined using factor analysis. The independent variable has the effect of explaining the dependent variable. In other words, it is possible to explain the cyber victimization variable with the social media usage variable. The survey (questionnaire) technique, one of the most common data collection methods, was performed online to obtain primary data in the study. The question form used in the study consists of 2 parts. The first part summarizes the "social media usage" scale introduced by a previous study (Altunbaş & Kul, 2015), and the "cyberbullying/victimization" scale developed in another study (Stewart, Drescher, Maack, Ebesutani, & Young, 2014) and translated into Turkish by Küçük (2016). Both scales were adapted and used in the framework of the present study. The second part of the questionnaire consists of questions used for determining the demographic features of the participants. The research questionnaire was prepared in Turkish. There are a total of 37 observed variables consisting of 2 parts in the questionnaire. A detailed review of the national and international literature regarding the questions in the questionnaire was conducted, and the aforementioned scales were used in the preparation of the questions. In scales created to determine the correlation between social media use and cyber victimization, all of the expressions were scaled

according to a 5-point Likert scale ranging between 1-Strongly Disagree and 5-Strongly Agree.

Operation

As of the end of 2019, the completion date of the research, Generation Z accounted for 16% of Turkey's population. According to December 2019 data provided by TUIK (Turkish Statistical Institute) Address-Based Population Registration System, the population of Turkey was 83,154,997. Accordingly, Generation Z population of Turkey amounts to 13,304,799, 51.15 percent of which is male, and 48.85 percent is female (TUIK, 2020).

According to a recent piece of research investigating the use of social media by Generation Z (which constitutes more than 13 million of Turkey's population), Generation Z in Turkey attaches great importance to the use of social media. Generation Z particularly uses content sharing platforms (YouTube, Netflix, Instagram) to a great extent. The research revealed that watching videos is very important for the Z generation. The intense use of video changes the consumption habits and mentality. In addition, the interest of Turkey's Generation Z in digital games is relatively high. Generation Z thinks that it socializes through social media platforms and displays an activist character (MarketingTürkiye, 2021).

Accordingly, the cyber victimization levels of the users were investigated by using the data from research conducted online with 390 social media users (Generation Z) in Turkey through the purposeful sampling method. Participants were contacted online. The data collection process took approximately 2 months. Data was collected between November 2019 and December 2019. The average age of the participants (n=390) was 20.11. The participants in the research were university students (Generation Z). Active use of social media was set as a prerequisite for participation in the research. Thus, the universe of the research was Generation Z members who were active social media users. Since it is impracticable to reach all social media users, the research was conducted using the purposeful sampling method, one of the non-probability sampling methods. The research was conducted with 397 social media users, and the analysis covered data from 390 participants, as the questionnaires of 7 participants were omitted due to incomplete or incorrect data.

A sample size table was used in the calculation of the sample size. According to Balcı (2004, pp. 91-93), there are correct estimation probabilities in average sample sizes. The main determinant of estimation completeness is not the sample to population ratio, but the actual sample size. In general, the desired accuracy in estimation can be achieved in sample increments up to 150 or 200. There are sample sizes for universes of different sizes and required sample sizes for tolerable error with 95% precision. The important point here is that the subjects in the selected frame can represent the universe, and that a sample number is reached in the relevant reference number. Thus, it is seen that the sample size of a Generation Z population of 13 million is in the 95% confidence interval where n=390 (with α=0.05 margin of error) in this study. In other words, sample selection has a 5% margin of error.

The participants constituting the sample were contacted online. The questionnaire containing the scale expressions was transferred to Google Forms, where the online questionnaire form was made available. A link to the Google Form file was sent to the participants and social media tools such as e-mail, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, in line with the purposeful sampling method and the participants were asked to complete the online questionnaire.

The data of the study was obtained online with the participation of active social media users through the purposeful sampling method due to time constraints and the difficulty of access to the sample. The limitations of the study include the extent of research sample consisting of Generation Z, and the scope of the research confined to the use of social media by Generation Z, as well as the levels of cyber victimization they experience. Additionally, the research results are limited to November 2019-December 2019, the dates during which the research data was collected.

Another limitation of the study is that factors other than age and gender, such as place of residence (urban/rural), income status, and socio-cultural status were not taken into consideration in determining the sampling frame based on the concern that they would not serve the purpose of the study. Given that the research was carried out with a Generation Z sample and this age group is predominantly composed of university students, the most significant sampling criteria are age and gender. Another important factor in this regard is the active use of social media by the participants. Since the study aimed to research a population with an average age of 20 and actively in pupilage, factors such as urban/rural segregation, socio-economic and cultural differences were

excluded in the sampling process as they did not serve the purpose of the research. In this respect, three basic issues were taken into consideration in determining the sampling frame which are age, gender, and active social media use.

Statistical Analysis

In the analysis of the data, frequency analysis, pearson correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were conducted using a statistics software. The questions in the personal information form, and the percentage and frequency of cyber victimization of social media users are presented in the tables.

FINDINGS

The data collected in the study was encoded and integrated into the statistics program. This data was analyzed using a statistical analysis/package program. After the data entry was completed, the statistical tests to be used in data analysis were determined. Whether the data is normally distributed should be analyzed over the kurtosis-skewness values while determining the statistical tests to be made on a data group. As a result of the kurtosis-skewness normality test conducted on the research data, it was determined that the data showed a normal distribution. The results obtained by analyzing the research data within the determined systematic framework are given below. Firstly, frequency analysis results related to socio-demographic questions that determine the participant profile in the first part of the questionnaire are provided. Table 1 shows the demographic data of the participants regarding gender, age, average daily social media usage time and frequency of social media usage purpose.

Table 1 shows that 51.0% of the participants were male and 49.0% were female. The average age of the participants was 20.11. In addition, it was determined that the average daily social media usage time of the participants was 4 hours. The frequency of social media usage purpose of the participants were as follows: 7.2% sharing, 20.0% entertainment, 20.3% information, 18.7% learning and 33.8% socializing (See Table 1).

As a result of the factor analysis (Table 2), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.883) was used to measure the overall suitability of the whole question group for factor analysis. In addition, the suitability of each individual sub-dimension for factor analysis was also measured. According to the factor analysis, participants perceived social media usage

in 5 sub-dimensions [socialization, information acquisition, sharing, following, making use of leisure time] (Table 2). In addition, factor dimensions were found to be over 0.50 (See Table 2).

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the users participating in the research mostly gave feedback that they agreed with the statement 'I use social media to keep up with my interest areas (x=4.10)'. In the second place, there was the statement 'I transfer the news and videos to my friends (x=4.03)'. In addition, the table includes all statements according to their importance. Table 3 reveals that the current sample group uses social media platforms to follow others and to get the information flow (See Table 3).

As a result of the factor analysis (Table 4), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.862) was used to measure the overall suitability of the whole question group for factor analysis. In addition, the suitability of each sub-dimension for factor analysis was also measured. The factor analysis showed that the cyber victimization scale was perceived by the participants in 3 sub-dimensions [virtual harassment and fraud, sharing private information and exclusion, virtual struggling and anxiety]. S37 included in the study was excluded from the analysis because the factor load was below 0.50 and the problem was far from semantic integrity. As a result, it was found that all factor dimensions were above 0.50. The compatibility of each obtained factor within itself was measured with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. This coefficient is the degree of matching depending on the correlation between questions. Since Cronbach's Alpha values are above 60% in all sub-dimensions of the cyber victimization scale, it was determined that the factors are statistically reliable (See Table 4).

Table 5 shows that the users participated in the study mostly asserted that they agreed with the statement 'I make my complaints to the relevant authority to combat cyberbullying (x=3.62)'. The second most agreed expression was 'The longer I spend time, the more likely I am to suffer (x=3.28)'. It is important for the participants to express that they will attempt to file a complaint against any cyberbullying, although their exposure to cyberbullying is relatively low. However, the participants think that the more time they spend on social media platforms, the more likely they are to be exposed to cyberbullying. In addition, the table includes all statements by their importance (See Table 5).

Table 6 demonstrates that there is a significant correlation between one of the sub-dimensions of social media usage scale socializing and cyber victimization sub-

dimensions sharing private information and excluding (r=503; p=0.01) and virtual harassment and fraud (r=285; p=0.01). Moreover, other significant correlations between information acquisition and virtual struggling and anxiety (r=135; p=0.01); sharing and virtual harassment and fraud (r=.204; p=0.01); following and virtual harassment and fraud (r=.271; p=0.01); again following and sharing private information and exclusion (r=127; p=0.05); and last but not least making use of leisure time and virtual harassment and fraud (r=114; p=0.05). It was determined that there are weak and moderate significant relationships between some social media use sub-dimensions and cyber victimization sub-dimensions in line with the empirical results (See Table 6).

The R^2 value, .106, in Table 7, indicates that independent variables can explain 10.5% of the changes in the dependent variable as the result of the F statistics points to the idea that model is valid as a whole. Empirical results show that the variables of social media use and cyber victimization have a positive and statistically significant effect (See Table 7).

The findings reveal that social media usage significantly affects cyber victimization. However, despite the active use of social media, it is found that the current sample group's exposure to cyberbullying was not very high.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The increase in internet and social media usage frequently revives certain issues such as cyberbullying and cyber victimization faced on these platforms. In this study on the correlation between social media usage and cyber victimization, it was found that there is a weak significant relationship between socialization, sharing, following and making use of leisure time, which are sub-dimensions of social media usage and virtual harassment and fraud, one of the sub-dimensions of cyber victimization. Moreover, it was determined that there is a moderately significant correlation between socialization, one of the sub-dimensions of social media usage, and sharing private information, one of the sub-dimensions of cyber victimization (r=503; p=0,01). In addition, a weak significant correlation was found between following, which is one of the sub-dimensions of social media usage, and sharing private information and exclusion (r=127; p=0.05), which is a sub-dimension of cyber victimization. On the other hand, it was observed that there was a weak significant correlation between information acquisition, the sub-dimension of social media usage, virtual struggling and anxiety which are cyber

victimization sub-dimensions (r=.135 p=0.01). Moreover, it was determined that social media usage has a significant effect of β=.326 on the cyber victimization variable. The research findings show that the increase in social media usage may cause higher cyberbullying activity. However, it is not true to say that every social media user is exposed to cyberbullying, and it is also necessary to state that cyber victimization is a problem for all users.

These platforms constitute an important risk area due to the possibility of hiding the identity on social media platforms and impersonating an anonymous or fictional identity. It is seen that cyberbullying has become an act performed more easily through accounts created with such deceptive information. Considering the deliberate and disturbing behaviors of a user towards another user as cyberbullying, it is stated that those who are exposed to these behaviors experience cyber victimization. On the other hand, the features of cyberbullying such as threats violence, harm, power imbalance, harassment and exclusion come to the fore. Therefore, the longer the time spent on social media platforms, the more likely it is to be exposed to cyberbullying.

In a similar study, it was determined that individuals use social media platforms intensively for at least 1-3 hours a day to have social interactions (messaging, following, content sharing etc.) (Öztürk & Akgün, 2012). Another study showed that Generation Z uses social media platforms for at least 2 hours. The results of relevant studies indicate that the usage level of social media platforms tends to increase and social interaction, communication and sharing are the main purposes (Başoğlu & Yanal, 2017). In this study, the average duration of social media usage of the participants is 4 hours. In studies conducted to determine the levels of social media usage, it is seen that the usage rates have increased. The increase in the duration of use also increases the risk of cyber victimization.

Another study revealed that although social media platforms compose a communication channel, they are not as effective as vivid interactions and are not useful during emergencies. It was determined that individuals with a large network of friends on social media actually start to feel lonely in real life (Zhang, 2012).

Nowadays, university students are usually branded as Generation Z and young people who are seen as digital natives, realize their social relationships through social media platforms. This generation, which prefers to be in the virtual world rather than the real world, spends more of its free time on social media platforms.

Another study discovered that individuals spend excessive time on social media and this situation negatively affects their academic success (Waqas, Afzal, Zaman, & Sabir, 2016). The scholarship argues that among the purposes of individuals' social media usage, communicating and maintaining interaction with their friends and close circles come to the fore (Boyd & Ellision, 2007). In this study, participants' purposes of using social media (Table 1) are socializing, learning, obtaining information, entertainment and sharing. The diversity in usage purposes also increases the usage time of social media. As the usage time increases, the rate of cyber victimization can also increase. In this context, social media users should be conscious and critical social media literate.

Although the young generation (z) strives to do physical activity, it is observed that individuals generally prefer activities that require passive participation (especially social media today) in their free time. The usual reasons such as entertainment and creating a friend environment are considered as the main rationale behind participating in all activities with active and passive participation. However, it has been observed that reasons such as healthy living and participation in physical activity come last. It has been determined that individuals tend to use social media platforms intensively as a means of spending time since these platforms offer versatile interaction and unique features (Yerlisu Lapa & Ardahan, 2009).

On the other hand, in some studies on cyberbullying (Beran & Li, 2005; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006), it was determined that individuals selected as victims exhibit some negative behaviors. It has been observed that cyberbullying is associated with behaviors such as frustration, stress, anger, sadness, depression, and unhappiness. A study (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006) showed that emotional and psychological effects such as disappointment, anger, and sadness develop in individuals exposed to cyberbullying. Moreover, the authors found that feelings of exclusion and helplessness can be experienced intensely in cyberbullied individuals in addition to the emergence of feelings of anger and sadness. Some studies conducted in this context (Brown, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2006; Campbell, 2005) showed that cyberbullying causes results similar to the psychological consequences of traditional bullying.

In general, research results show that participants' (Generation Z) use of social media is a factor in determining their level of cyber victimization, and this effect is associated with their social media addiction levels and exposure to cyber victimization. The research

results confirm the trend in the literature that shows a relationship between the increased use of social networks and the risk of cyber victimization.

It is possible to evaluate the consequences of cyber victimization as emotional, psychological, social, academic and physical effects. However, the extent of the effects of cyber victimization, depending on the intensity and duration of the cyberbullying, the psychological state of the victim and their resistance to the stress caused by cyberbullying.

The fact that victims of cyberbullying are constantly exposed to persistent insults, threats, blackmail and bullying, means that the psychological, spiritual and emotional state of the victims gets severely disturbed. Psychological and emotional circumstances such as shame, humiliation, anxiety, and loss of trust caused by cyber victimization may lead to radical negative changes in individuals' awareness of identity and self-esteem.

When the responses of the participants to the variables ('I make my complaints to the relevant authority to combat cyberbullying', 'The longer I spend time, the more likely I am to suffer', 'Exclusions are made more easily on social media platforms', 'I received disturbing messages from social media accounts') are examined (Table 5), the participants think that they may be exposed to cyberbullying on social media at any time. Moreover, they think that their probability of being a cyber victim is parallel to their use of social media. Accordingly, the fact that they stated that they received disturbing messages from their social media accounts indicates that they are cyber victims. Otherwise, the literature and research findings highlight how high a risk of victimization teens present, both in the real world and online, as they are potential targets of aggression for their peers. From another perspective, social media users appear to be using cyber-aggression to boost their status or gain more popularity. Hence, it can lead to a decrease in psychological well-being measures such as subjective happiness, associated with both greater social media addiction and increased risk of cyber victimization.

The results of the research and the previous studies reveals that there is a moderate correlation between social media usage and cyber victimization and that it has a significant effect on the dependent variable. Considering that the increase in social media usage also affects the possibility of being exposed to cyberbullying in the same

manner, it is important for users to be conscious of this fact. An unconscious and addictive use of social media can increase the likelihood of individuals becoming victims. Therefore, even individuals with no previous exposure to cyber victimization should be careful about content sharing and social media usage. Moreover, this is substantial for the mental and psychological development of the young generation to reduce social media usage of Generation Z to increase physical activity and other leisure activities. It also offers some practical ideas for promoting psychological well-being in the z-generation of the study, taking into account study limits and future indicators for research. The study highlights the need to target intervention and prevention strategies for the risk of cyber victimization and social media addiction in young people using social media. These strategies can focus on the ways young people (Generation Z) use and experience social media and discuss the motivations and dynamics that help guide their search for digital status. In this direction, digital media literacy consultancy services have become a necessity, especially for young people. For further studies, it is thought that research on the correlation between individuals' Internet use motivation, addiction levels and cyberbullying should also contribute to the field. Also, future research could investigate the participants' (generation) motivation to use social media, their level of cyber victimization and psychological well-being by examining users' interactions with social media platforms with broader indicators.

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TABLES

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=390)

Demographic Variables	**Value**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**				
Gender	Male	199	51,0	Daily Average Usage of Social Media	4 hours		
	Female	191	49,0				
	Total	**390**	**100,0**				
Demographic Variables					**Value**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Age	$\overline{X}$ = 20,11			Social Media Usage Purpose	Sharing	28	7,2
					Entertainment	78	20,0
					Information	79	20,3
					Learning	73	18,7
	Total	**390**	**100,0**		Socializing	132	33,8
					Total	**390**	**100,0**

Table 2: Factor Structure of Social Media Usage

Factor	**Variables**	**Factor Loads**				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Socialization	**S19** If I don't spend time on social media, I can't spend my leisure time	,748				
	S22 I'll be unhappy if I spend little time on social networks	,730				
	S18 I trust social media platforms	,709				
	S21 I can make friends more easily on social media	,647				
	S1 It allows me to express my feelings that I cannot express in person	,541				
	S16 I never stop using a social media account	,520				
	S17 I invite my friends to social media platforms	,512				
Information Acquisition	**S5** I use social media to get information		,755			
	S2 I use social media to keep up with my interest areas		,709			
	S20 I get up to date news from social media platforms		,625			
	S4 I transfer the news and videos to my friends		,581			
Sharing	**S3** I can easily share my ideas through social media			,831		
	S12 I think social media is a place of freedom			,668		
	S11 I can easily share my ideas on social media			,654		
Following	**S6** I use social media to follow my friends				,711	
	S7 I use social media to spend time				,652	
	S9 I check the number of people following me				,595	
	S14 My social media memberships allow me to be an extrovert person				,512	

Making Use of Leisure Time	**S13** In my leisure time, I spend time on social media networks					,539
	S8 I use social media for gaming					,533
	S15 I compare myself with what I see on social media					,527
	S10 I think it's easy to learn through social media					,516
Eigenvalue			6,52	2,21	1,33	1,10
Variance Explained			15,47	11,00	10,66	10,33
Total Variance Explained			55,61			
KMO			,883			
Barlett Test			2998,517 (p=,000)			
Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability)			,871			

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Usage

Variables	$\overline{X}$	**Std. D.**
S2 I use social media to keep up with my interest areas	4,10	,95
S4 I transfer the news and videos to my friends	4,03	1,01
S5 I use social media to get information	3,83	1,01
S20 I get up to date news from social media platforms	3,74	1,11
S6 I use social media to follow my friends	3,66	1,16
S7 I use social media to spend time	3,66	1,15
S3 I can easily share my ideas through social media	3,50	1,12
S9 I check the number of people following me	3,48	1,30
S3 I can easily share my ideas through social media	3,46	1,18
S10 I think it's easy to learn through social media	3,43	1,17
S13 In my leisure time, I spend time on social media networks	3,41	1,11
S1 It allows me to express my feelings that I cannot express in person	3,37	1,28
S16 I never stop using a social media account	3,21	1,24
S12 I think social media is a place of freedom	3,21	1,18
S15 I compare myself with what I see on social media	3,17	1,21
S21 I can make friends more easily on social media	3,08	1,20
S17 I invite my friends to social media platforms	3,07	1,28
S14 My social media memberships allow me to be an extrovert person	2,99	1,19
S8 I use social media for gaming	2,86	2,37
S18 I trust social media platforms	2,49	1,32
S19 If I don't spend time on social media, I can't spend my free time	2,46	1,27
S22 I'll be unhappy if I spend little time on social networks	2,44	1,26

Table 4: Factor Structure of Cyber Victimization

Factor	Variables	Factor Loads		
		1	2	3
Virtual Harassment and Fraud	**S23** I received disturbing messages from social media accounts	,809		
	S25 I received threatening and insulting messages on social media	,740		
	S24 Fake accounts were opened under my name on social media	,670		
	S32 Exclusions are made more easily on social media platforms	,608		
	S33 There are people trying to imitate me on social networks	,559		
	S26 Strange people sent me infected messages	,531		
Sharing Private Information and Exclusion	**S28** I was mocked and disturbed on social media		,799	
	S27 Unreal information about me was published on social media		,790	
	S31 I get threatening psychological and physical abusive messages if I don't fulfill requests		,644	
	S29 They posted my photos on social media without my permission		,619	
	S34 Other users are disturbed through fake accounts in social networks		,561	
Virtual Struggling and Anxiety	**S36** If I encounter threats on social networks, I share it with my family			,790
	S35 I make my complaints to the relevant authority to combat cyberbullying			,694
	S30 The longer I spend time, the more likely I am to suffer			,568
Eigenvalue		4,78	1,62	1,28
Variance Explained		22,16	21,07	11,63
Total Variance Explained		54,88		
KMO		,862		
Barlett Test		1896,035 (p=,000)		
Cronbach's Alpha (Reliability)		,814		

Table 5: Descriptive Cyber Victimization Statistics

Variables	$\overline{X}$	Std. D.
S35 I make my complaints to the relevant authority to combat cyberbullying	3,62	1,33
S30 The longer I spend time, the more likely I am to suffer	3,28	1,30
S32 Exclusions are made more easily on social media platforms	3,21	1,34
S23 I received disturbing messages from social media accounts	3,02	1,49
S36 If I encounter threats on social networks, I share it with my family	2,99	1,38
S33 There are people trying to imitate me on social networks	2,72	1,31
S25 I received threatening and insulting messages on social media	2,55	1,37
S26 Strange people sent me infected messages	2,48	1,38
S24 Fake accounts were opened under my name on social media	2,39	1,45
S29 They posted my photos on social media without my permission	2,22	2,41
S34 Other users are disturbed through fake accounts **i**n social networks	2,21	1,30
S27 Unreal information about me was published on social media	2,06	1,17
S31 I get threatening psychological and physical abusive messages if I don't fulfill requests	2,03	1,21
S28 I was mocked and harassed on social media	1,98	1,15

Table 6: Social Media Usage and Cyber Victim Dependence Correlation Analysis

			Socialization	Knowledge Acquisition	Sharing	Following	Making Use of Leisure Time	Virtual Harassment and Fraud	Sharing Private Information and Exclusion	Virtual Struggling and Anxiety
Social Media Usage	Socialization	r	1							
		p								
	Knowledge Acquisition	r	,197**	1						
		p	,000							
	Sharing	r	,421**	,394**	1					
		p	,000	,000						
	Following	r	,488**	,366**	,473**	1				
		p	,000	,000	,000					
	Making Use of Leisure Time	r	,356**	,227**	,349**	,419**	1			
		p	,000	,000	,000	,000				
Cyber Victimization	Virtual Harassment and Fraud	r	,285**	,097	,204**	,271**	,114*	1		
		p	,000	,056	,000	,000	,025			
	Sharing Private Information and Exclusion	r	,503**	-,083	,093	,127*	,092	,545**	1	
		p	,000	,100	,066	,012	,069	,000		
	Virtual Struggling and Anxiety	r	-,080	,135**	,047	-,014	-,009	,214**	,116*	1
		p	,115	,008	,359	,786	,857	,000	,022	

**. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

*. The correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

Table 7: Social Media Usage and Cyber Victimization Regression Analysis Results

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Standardized Coefficients	t-statistics	p value	Standard Error
		Beta			
Social Media Usage	Cyber Victimization	,326	6,79	,000	,721
R^2		,106			
Adjusted R^2		,104			
F statistics		46,150 (p = 0,000)			