

The Growing Theft of Souls: The Effects of Peer Bullying and Lynching Culture on Youth – Evidence from Türkiye and Media-Based Illustrations

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Abstract:

With the integration of social media into our lives, peer bullying, which already existed among young people, has been carried to a higher level and its sphere of influence has expanded. Especially lynching acts carried out more systematically and easily on social media through anonymous identities have made peer bullying a more widespread problem today. This situation leads to negative consequences such as lack of self-confidence, becoming more withdrawn compared to peers, experiencing psychological problems, and even engaging in self-harm behaviors. Our aim is to examine and identify the negative effects that peer bullying and lynching culture may cause on young people and to protect youth by minimizing these effects. In the first part of the research, a detailed literature review was conducted, and the information obtained formed the theoretical framework. In the second part, a quantitative research technique was used, and a data collection tool called the “Peer Bullying Scale” was prepared and applied to the sample groups. The population of our research consists of students studying in the Besiktas district, and the sample group consists of 141 students selected through a disproportionate sampling method. As a result of the survey, it was observed that the classes most exposed to bullying were Preparatory and 9th graders. This can be explained by younger age groups newly acquiring the ability to defend and express themselves. In addition, the results revealed that the group most at peace with themselves consists of those who have not been exposed to bullying.

Keywords: bully, lynching, adolescent, social media

INTRODUCTION:

A single post, a comment, or even a moment can be enough to turn an individual into the target of hundreds, sometimes thousands, of voices. What once might have remained within the boundaries of a classroom or a small social circle can now spread instantly, reaching audiences far beyond its original context. In this sense, the experience of being exposed to bullying is no longer limited to physical spaces; it can follow individuals into digital environments, often leaving deeper and more lasting effects. In recent years, the everyday lives of young people have become increasingly shaped by digital environments, particularly social media platforms. These platforms have transformed not only how individuals communicate, but also how they

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observe, judge, and respond to one another (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Ünal, 2020). As a result, behaviors such as peer bullying, which have long existed within school settings, have begun to extend into online environments, where they become more visible and more persistent.

Peer bullying is generally understood as repeated harmful actions directed toward individuals who are perceived as weaker or less able to defend themselves (Gürhan, 2017; Genç, 2007; Coloroso, 2003). These actions may take different forms, including verbal humiliation, physical aggression, exclusion, and social isolation. Research suggests that such experiences can have significant psychological consequences, including low self-esteem and negative self-perception (Ben, 2017; Murat, 2019). While these behaviors were traditionally associated with face-to-face interactions, technological developments have introduced new forms such as cyberbullying, which expands the reach and intensity of these actions. Online environments allow individuals to act with a degree of anonymity and distance, which may reduce personal responsibility and increase the likelihood of harmful behavior (Binark, 2007). In this context, the boundaries between individual actions and collective reactions often become blurred. One of the most striking outcomes of this transformation is the emergence of a digital form of lynching culture. Unlike isolated acts of bullying, these situations involve the rapid accumulation of negative reactions directed at a single individual, often without a full understanding of the situation.

Lynching culture can be defined as collective and often excessive reactions directed at individuals due to their opinions, behaviors, or identities (Bilgin, 2019; Bora, 2014). While it has historically appeared in physical environments, it has increasingly shifted into digital spaces, where it manifests as mass criticism and social exclusion. The speed and scale of these reactions make them particularly difficult to control and may create intense psychological pressure on individuals. In the context of Türkiye, this issue has become increasingly visible both in everyday experiences and in media reports. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of students are exposed to bullying in school environments, and this situation is further intensified by social media use. These developments suggest that the distinction between offline and online experiences is becoming less clear, as conflicts that begin in physical settings can continue and escalate in digital spaces.

For this reason, it becomes necessary to examine peer bullying and lynching culture not as separate issues, but as interconnected processes that influence one another. Their combined effects can shape how young individuals perceive themselves and interact with others, particularly during adolescence, when identity formation is still ongoing. Based on this perspective, the present study aims to explore how peer bullying and lynching culture affect young individuals within the context of Türkiye. By combining theoretical background with empirical findings, the study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this issue and to support the development of strategies aimed at reducing its impact.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. Peer Bullying

Peer bullying refers to behaviors in which an individual or group who sees themselves as stronger exhibits harmful and humiliating actions toward a weaker individual or group. It

begins in early social environments and continues in school settings (Gürhan, 2017; Genç, 2007; Coloroso, 2003). Smith and Sharp (2002) describe bullying as actions such as insulting, threatening, hitting, pushing, ignoring, or excluding others.

1.1.The Effect of Peer Bullying on Adolescents

Studies show that adolescents exposed to bullying may experience psychological and physical symptoms such as headaches, sleep problems, personality disorders, and depression.

1.1.1. The Relationship Between Body Image and Peer Bullying

Body image is a subjective perception formed by individuals' thoughts and feelings about their bodies (Murat, 2019). It develops from early childhood and continues throughout life (Cengiz, 2011). Cultural, social, and individual factors influence whether this perception is positive or negative (Healey, 2014). Individuals with a positive body image have higher self-confidence, while those with a negative body image may feel worthless and behave more critically toward themselves (Ben, 2017).

1.2. Types of Peer Bullying

Peer bullying studies date back to the 1970s, with Olweus defining it as repetitive harmful behavior directed at a weaker individual (Crothers & Levinson, 2004). It is divided into direct and indirect types. Direct bullying includes physical and verbal actions such as hitting, mocking, and insulting. Indirect bullying involves social exclusion, ignoring, and spreading rumors (Crothers & Levinson, 2004).

1.2.1. Cyberbullying

In recent years, new technological devices have become an indispensable part of life. Unfortunately, bullying behaviors are also observed in the virtual environments added to people's interaction spaces. As a result of these technological developments and the widespread use of social media, cyberbullying has become a more common phenomenon, especially among young people.

2. Culture

Culture is defined as a system of meanings, beliefs, and customs that shape individual and collective life (Parekh, 2000). It is a dynamic process that evolves over time (Fiske, 1999). All values, norms, and social relationships learned within a society are considered elements of culture (Özkalp, 1995).

2.1. Characteristics of Culture and Turkish Culture

Gökalp defines culture 'hars' as the sum of a nation's moral, religious, and aesthetic values and as the totality of value judgments within society (Gökalp, 1913). Turkish culture represents the unique way of life of Turkish society, including both material and non-material elements (Yavuz, 1977). Culture requires social belonging; therefore, behaviors acquired outside society are excluded (Güvenç, 1985). Individuals are born into a cultural structure and continuously interact with it throughout life (Doğan, 2000).

2.2. Popular Culture

According to the TÜBİTAK Encyclopedia, popular culture means “folk culture.” According to the Turkish Language Association dictionary, it is defined as “the totality of cultural elements that are valid for a certain period, produced rapidly and consumed rapidly.” Although popular culture has been widely used as the culture of the people throughout history, today its causes and functioning differ significantly from earlier periods. Today, popular culture is not determined by the people; rather, it influences society through mass media such as the internet, television, and social media. Popular culture, which particularly attracts young people, has led them toward uniformity and the exclusion of those who are different from themselves. This situation has increased the perception of strong and weak among youth and, consequently, peer bullying.

2.3. Lynching Culture

Lynching is defined as extrajudicial punishment carried out by a group (TDK, 2011). While it historically occurred in physical environments, today it also appears in digital forms. Various factors such as ethnic, political, and cultural elements contribute to lynching.

Lynching is one of the most severe forms of social violence, where individuals attempt to enforce their own judgments (Bilgin, 2019). As Bora states, societies where lynching becomes normalized lose their social cohesion (Bora, 2014, p. 10). With the rise of social media and anonymity, lynching has become more widespread and easier to carry out.

3. Mass Media

Mass media refers to tools that deliver information to large audiences, such as newspapers, television, and the internet. It has become one of the most influential forces in modern society.

Technological developments have increased communication speed and accessibility. The effects of mass media vary depending on social structure, development level, and cultural context. It also enables interaction between different cultures.

3.1. The Internet as a Mass Communication Tool

The internet allows large amounts of information to be transmitted quickly and interactively (Binark, 2007: 21). Its usage has increased significantly, reaching 88.8% in 2024 (URL 2). While it offers many advantages, it also brings risks such as misinformation, addiction, and cyberbullying.

3.2. Social Media

Social media has transformed communication by allowing users to interact, share content, and express opinions. It is widely used for entertainment, information, and social interaction (Ünal, 2020: 240-241). With Web 2.0, users have become content producers, leading to a more participatory media environment (Yeğin, 2021: 119; Cerrah, 2016: 1395; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 53). According to TDK (2022), it is a platform for communication and information sharing.

Social media has also changed how individuals present themselves and perceive others. It has created new social dynamics, including influencer culture, and has significant cultural and

psychological effects.

3.2.1. Lynching Culture and Peer Bullying on Social Media

Modern societies act collectively, and social media has made this behavior more visible (Keyman, 2013). As a result, lynching culture has moved into digital environments.

Social media lynching involves collective criticism and aggressive discourse directed at individuals. It spreads rapidly and can create intense psychological pressure. Some individuals have even attempted or committed suicide due to such exposure (Bilgin, 2019).

In addition, peer bullying has extended into social media, increasing cyberbullying among youth. Approximately 12% of students in Turkey report being exposed to cyberbullying (URL 3), and this rate continues to rise.

Social media also increases appearance-based comparisons, affecting body image (Tosun ve Çoban, 2020; Engeln et al., 2020; Marengo et al., 2018). Increased exposure to visual content is associated with greater body dissatisfaction (Fox and Rooney, 2015; Lonergan et al., 2019). Individuals present idealized versions of themselves, which also influences peer bullying (Rosenberg and Egbert, 2011; Walther, 2015).

3.2.1.1. News Reports on Lynching and Peer Bullying in the Turkish Media

“There is not a single day without a fight! Violence has spread to children” (URL 4). In Büyükçekmece, Istanbul, 8 children lynched another child, bringing peer bullying and youth violence back to the agenda.

“The person he called ‘my dear friend’ tore Yusuf away from life! His ex-girlfriend stood by and watched the murder...” (URL 5). Yusuf Mutlu died after a student fight in Sultangazi despite all interventions, highlighting the severity of peer violence.

“The hope born on social media ended on social media! A family, a father, a donation campaign, lynching, and death” (URL 6). Umut Kardeş, who was running a donation campaign for his daughter’s treatment, faced severe criticism on social media and later took his own life, showing the destructive impact of digital lynching.

“The lynching campaign on social media cost him his life: He had a heart attack while reading the comments” (URL 7). Fisherman Ömer Karakaya suffered a heart attack after being targeted online, with claims that the incident was misrepresented and escalated into a lynching campaign.

“The ‘901 Crowwing’ cyberbullying gang: They make money through threats and blackmail involving young girls” (URL8). A cyberbullying group organized on Discord was found to be exploiting young girls through threats and blackmail.

METHODOLOGY:

This study examines how peer bullying and the accompanying lynching culture affect young people. It focuses on how students who are at peace with themselves are affected, whether income level is a determining factor, how awareness can be raised among students who engage in bullying, and how income level influences bullying. The main hypothesis is that lynching, carried out more easily on social media through anonymous identities, has made peer bullying

more widespread, leading to a lack of self-confidence and serious social consequences. It is also hypothesized that younger age groups are more frequently exposed to bullying, that self-perception improves as students mature, and that students with lower income levels are more exposed. The study assumes that participants answered honestly and is limited to students in the Beşiktaş district.

Both literature review and quantitative (survey) methods were used. A theoretical framework was established through books, articles, and theses, followed by the application of the “Peer Bullying Scale”. The sample consists of 141 students selected through disproportionate (simple random) sampling (Karasar, 2004), which is considered appropriate within the 30–500 range suggested by Rescoe (Ural, Kılıç, 2005). The scale includes demographic variables (gender, grade, income, school type, social media use, exposure to bullying, number of siblings) and 18 Likert-type questions (reduced from 30). Participation was voluntary, and permissions were obtained. Data were analyzed using SPSS 27, and factor analysis was used to evaluate grouped variables through their means and standard deviations.

FINDINGS:

The data obtained in the research were presented in terms of frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation according to the subject area. Instead of presenting the opinion distributions related to each question in separate tables, the scale was grouped through factor analysis, and evaluations were carried out considering these data.

1. Demographic Variables of the Peer Bullying Scale

In this section, the frequency and mean values of the demographic variables of the Peer Bullying Scale will be presented in tables.

1.1. Gender Variable

Table 1: Gender Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Female	110	78.0	78.0
	Male	31	22.0	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

1.2. Grade Variable

Table 2: Grade Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Prep	15	10.6	10.6
	9	40	28.4	39.0
	10	19	13.5	52.5

	11	20	14.2	66.7
	12	47	33.3	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

1.3. School Type Variable

Table 3: School Type Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Project School	21	14.9	14.9
	Vocational	51	36.2	51.1
	Religious School	6	4.3	55.3
	Anatolian High School	46	32.6	87.9
	Private	17	12.1	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

1.4. Social Media Use Variable

Table 4: Social Media Use Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Uses It and Shares Posts	91	64.5	64.5
	Uses It but Does Not Share Posts	42	29.8	94.3
	Does Not Use It	8	5.7	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

1.5. Exposure to Bullying Variable

Table 5: Exposure to Bullying Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Physical	10	7.1	7.1
	Social-Verbal	52	36.9	44.0
	Cyber	2	1.4	45.4
	Not Exposed	77	54.6	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

1.6. Income Variable

Table 6: Income Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Poor	4	2.8	2.8
	Average	77	54.6	57.4
	Good	60	42.6	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

1.7. Number of Siblings Variable

Table 7: Number of Siblings Variable

		n sample	Percentage %	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	None	15	10.6	10.6
	1	76	53.9	64.5
	2	31	22.0	86.5
	3 and more	19	13.5	100.0
	Total	141	100.0	

2. Reliability, Validity, Factor and Normality Analyses

The concept of reliability is necessary for every measurement because it expresses the consistency between the items in a reliable test or survey and the extent to which the scale used reflects the issue of interest (Kalaycı, 2010). This method investigates whether each question in the scale represents a homogeneous whole. This coefficient, which takes values between 0 and 1, is called the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Kalaycı, 2010).

When we examine the reliability analysis test result in Table 8, the reliability coefficient (Alpha) was found to be 0.610. This rate indicates that the research scale ($0.60 \leq \alpha \leq 0.80$) is quite reliable.

Table 8: Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.610	.610	18

As seen in Table 9, when we examine the Hotelling's T-Squared tests, since the significance value was found to be $P < 0.001$, our scale is valid.

Table 9: Validity Analysis

Hotelling's T-Squared	F	df1	df2	Sig
574.727	29.944	17	124	.000

Factor analysis is a technique that aims to represent a set of variables with fewer unrelated and meaningful hypothetical variables (Çinko, Durmuş, Yurtkoru, 2013). As seen in Table 10, the questions of the scale were grouped under 5 different factors.

Table 10: Factors of the Scale

1.	Personal Perspective
2.	Exposure to Bullying
3.	Sanction
4.	Media Sharing
5.	Attitude Toward Environment

At this stage of our research, the demographic variables and the Peer Bullying Scale will be analyzed. A normality test was conducted for the grouped versions of the variables to be included in the analysis according to factor analysis.

As seen in Table 11, since the K-S significance values of the factors “Personal Perspective, Exposure to Bullying, and Attitude Toward Environment” are $P > 0.05$, the H_0 hypothesis cannot be rejected, and it is concluded that the variables are normally distributed. In this case, parametric tests (t-test, Anova) will be applied for normally distributed factors.

Since the K-S significance values of the factors “Sanction and Media Sharing” are $P < 0.05$, the H_0 hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that the variables are not normally distributed. In this case, non-parametric tests (Mann Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis) will be applied for non-normally distributed factors.

Table 11: Normality Test

		Personal Perspective	Exposure to Bullying	Sanction	Media Sharing	Attitude Toward Environment
N		141	141	141	141	141
Normal Parameters a,b	Mean	.0000000	.0000000	.0000000	.0000000	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.00000000	1.00000000	1.00000000	1.00000000	1.00000000
Absolute		.066	.064	.093	.076	.059

Most Extreme Differences	Positive	.033	.064	.055	.049	.034	
	Negative	-.066	-.043	-.093	-.076	-.059	
Test Statistic		.066	.064	.093	.076	.059	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)c		.200 ^d	.200 ^d	.004	.043	.200 ^d	
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)e	Sig.	.137	.162	.004	.045	.265	
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.128	.152	.002	.040	.254
		Upper Bound	.146	.171	.005	.050	.276

3. Parametric Tests (Independent Samples Test – Anova)

In this section, parametric tests were conducted for the normally distributed factors “Personal Perspective, Exposure to Bullying, and Attitude Toward Environment” and differences between groups were identified.

3.1. Grade Variable

Table 12 presents the results of the Anova test between grades according to the grade variable. As a result of the analysis, since the Sig. value is $P < 0.05$ for the factors Personal Perspective and Exposure to Bullying, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 12: Grade Variable Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Perspective	Between Groups	12.904	4	3.226	3.452	.010
	Within Groups	127.096	136	.935		
	Total	140.000	140			
Exposure to Bullying	Between Groups	9.359	4	2.340	2.436	.050
	Within Groups	130.641	136	.961		
	Total	140.000	140			

When Table 13 is examined, it is seen that the group most at peace with themselves is the 12th graders, while those most exposed to bullying are the Preparatory and 9th grade students.

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics for Grade Variable

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
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Personal Perspective	Prep	15	-.5596393	1.18629101	.30629902
	9	40	-.0990558	.73420391	.11608783
	10	19	.1658860	.76821245	.17624002
	11	20	-.3223726	.98051781	.21925045
	12	47	.3330306	1.11784677	.16305471
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519
Exposure to Bullying	Prep	15	.3472893	1.35056256	.34871375
	9	40	.2556404	.90325197	.14281668
	10	19	-.1432302	1.03543376	.23754480
	11	20	.0837943	.93384730	.20881460
	12	47	-.3061589	.90191300	.13155753
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519

3.2. Income Variable

At this stage, an Anova test was conducted to examine whether there is a difference among students according to their income status. When Table 14 is examined, since the Sig. value is $P > 0.05$ for the factors Personal Perspective, Exposure to Bullying, and Attitude Toward Environment, there is no statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 14: Income Variable Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Perspective	Between Groups	.136	2	.068	.067	.935
	Within Groups	139.864	138	1.014		
	Total	140.000	140			
Exposure to Bullying	Between Groups	5.203	2	2.601	2.663	.073
	Within Groups	134.797	138	.977		
	Total	140.000	140			
Attitude Toward Environment	Between Groups	.306	2	.153	.151	.860
	Within Groups	139.694	138	1.012		
	Total	140.000	140			

When Table 15 is examined, although no statistically significant difference is observed between the groups, it is seen that the low-income group is more exposed to bullying.

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics for Income Variable

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Personal Perspective	Poor	4	-.1792411	1.33031223	.66515612
	Average	77	.0005559	.90510968	.10314682
	Good	60	.0112360	1.10694044	.14290540
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519
Exposure to Bullying	Poor	4	.9147195	1.37548339	.68774169
	Average	77	.0732886	1.00017778	.11398084
	Good	60	-.1550350	.94863444	.12246818
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519
Attitude Toward Environment	Poor	4	-.2527630	1.81881668	.90940834
	Average	77	-.0082775	.93283009	.10630585
	Good	60	.0274737	1.03854957	.13407617
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519

3.3. School Type Variable

An Anova test was conducted to examine whether there is a difference among students according to their school types. When Table 16 is examined, since the Sig. value is $P < 0.05$ for the Attitude Toward Environment factor according to the school type variable, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 16: School Type Variable Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude Toward Environment	Between Groups	11.221	4	2.805	2.962	.022
	Within Groups	128.779	136	.947		
	Total	140.000	140			

When Table 17 is examined, it is seen that students studying in Anatolian High Schools tend to envy their surroundings more.

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics for School Type Variable

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error

Attitude Toward Environment	Project School	21	.1382780	.99944959	.21809778
	Vocational	51	-.1829593	.96197413	.13470332
	Religious School	6	-.4215660	1.29848877	.53010582
	Anatolian High School	46	.3414822	.85043162	.12538930
	Private	17	-.3971586	1.16070631	.28151263
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519

3.4. Exposure to Bullying Variable

When Table 18 is examined, since $P < 0.05$ for the factors Personal Perspective and Exposure to Bullying according to the exposure to bullying variable, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 18: Exposure to Bullying Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Perspective	Between Groups	8.629	3	2.876	3.000	.033
	Within Groups	131.371	137	.959		
	Total	140.000	140			
Exposure to Bullying	Between Groups	50.599	3	16.866	25.847	.000
	Within Groups	89.401	137	.653		
	Total	140.000	140			

When Table 19 is examined, it is seen that the group most at peace with themselves consists of those who have not been exposed to bullying, while the group most affected by bullying consists of those exposed to cyber and physical bullying.

Table 19: Descriptive Statistics for Exposure to Bullying Variable

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Personal Perspective	Physical	10	-.8932296	.87448868	.27653760
	Social-Verbal	52	.0760096	.87885696	.12187553
	Cyber	2	.0595843	1.05738491	.12050019

	Not Exposed	77	.1959047	.35161617	.24863018
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519
Exposure to Bullying	Physical	10	.9003963	.80536603	.25467910
	Social-Verbal	52	.5842536	.97124730	.13468777
	Cyber	2	1.0790202	.58201649	.41154781
	Not Exposed	77	-.5395219	.67973345	.07746282
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519

3.5. Number of Siblings Variable

When Table 20 is examined, since $P < 0.05$ for the Personal Perspective factor according to the number of siblings variable, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 20: Number of Siblings Variable Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Perspective	Between Groups	8.587	3	2.862	2.984	.034
	Within Groups	131.413	137	.959		
	Total	140.000	140			

When Table 21 is examined, it is seen that the group most at peace with themselves consists of those with one sibling.

Table 21: Descriptive Statistics for Number of Siblings Variable

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Personal Perspective	None	15	-.3885564	.94136981	.24306064
	1	76	.2214150	.85063344	.09757435
	2	31	-.2665799	1.08929503	.19564316
	3 and more	19	-.1439590	1.27237827	.29190360
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519

3.6. Social Media Use Variable

When Table 22 is examined, since $P < 0.05$ for the Personal Perspective factor according to the social media use variable, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 22: Social Media Use Variable Anova

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal Perspective	Between Groups	10.348	2	5.174	5.507	.005
	Within Groups	129.652	138	.940		
	Total	140.000	140			

When Table 23 is examined, it is seen that the group most at peace with themselves consists of those who use social media and share posts.

Table 23: Descriptive Statistics for Social Media Use Variable

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Personal Perspective	Uses It and Shares Posts	91	.1958157	.87330973	.09154773
	Uses It but Does Not Share Posts	42	-.4004069	1.12495262	.17358396
	Does Not Use It	8	-.1252670	1.14173787	.40366529
	Total	141	.0000000	1.00000000	.08421519

4. Non-Parametric Tests (Mann Whitney U Test – Kruskal Wallis Test)

In this section, non-parametric tests were conducted for the non-normally distributed factors “Sanction” and “Media Sharing”, and differences between groups were identified.

4.1. Gender Variable

As a result of the analysis conducted in Table 24, since the Sig. value is $P < 0.05$ for the Sanction factor, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 24: Gender Variable Mann Whitney U Test

	Sanction
Mann-Whitney U	934.000
Wilcoxon W	1430.000
Z	-3.838
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

When Table 25 is examined, it is seen that female students think that more sanctions should be imposed on those who engage in bullying.

Table 25: Descriptive Statistics for Gender Variable

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Sanction	Female	110	78.01	8581.00
	Male	31	46.13	1430.00
	Total	141		

4.2. Exposure to Bullying Variable

When Table 26 is examined, since the Sig. value is $P > 0.05$ for the factors according to the exposure to bullying variable, there is no statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 26: Exposure to Bullying Variable Kruskal Wallis Test

	Sanction	Media Sharing
Kruskal-Wallis H	1.897	1.790
Df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.594	.617

When Table 27 is examined, it is seen that those exposed to physical bullying think that more sanctions should be imposed on those who bully, and they are also the group that engages in media sharing the most.

Table 27: Descriptive Statistics for Exposure to Bullying Variable

		N	Mean Rank
Sanction	Physical	10	77.19
	Social-Verbal	52	66.70
	Cyber	2	68.00
	Not Exposed	77	67.45
	Total	141	
Media Sharing	Physical	10	85.30
	Social-Verbal	52	72.92
	Cyber	2	67.00

	Not Exposed	77	67.95
	Total	141	

4.3. School Type Variable

According to the School Type Variable in Table 28, since the Sig. value is $P > 0.05$ for the factors, there is no statistically significant difference between the variables. However, when Table 29, the descriptive statistics table, is examined, it is seen that Religious School students think that more sanctions should be imposed on those who bully, and that they engage in less media sharing compared to students in other high schools.

Table 28: School Type Kruskal Wallis Test

	Sanction	Media Sharing
Kruskal-Wallis H	3.654	2.676
Df	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.455	.613

Table 29: Descriptive Statistics for School Type Variable

		N	Mean Rank
Sanction	Project School	21	73.33
	Vocational	51	67.88
	Religious School	6	100.83
	Anatolian High School	46	69.26
	Private	17	71.65
	Total	141	
Media Sharing	Project School	21	72.48
	Vocational	51	75.18
	Religious School	6	51.33
	Anatolian High School	46	66.63
	Private	17	75.41
	Total	141	

4.4. Income Variable

According to the Income Variable in Table 30, since the Sig. value is $P < 0.05$ for the Media Sharing factor, there is a statistically significant difference between the variables.

Table 30: Income Variable Kruskal Wallis Test

	Media Sharing
Kruskal-Wallis H	7.420
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.024

When Table 31 is examined, it is seen that the group that engages in media sharing the most consists of those who are economically well-off.

Table 31: Income Variable

		N	Mean Rank
Media Sharing	Poor	4	18.00
	Average	77	69.78
	Good	60	74.70
	Total	141	

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the survey, it was found that Preparatory and 9th grade students are the groups most exposed to bullying, which may be related to younger individuals still developing the ability to defend and express themselves. It was also observed that students with lower income levels are more exposed to bullying, while 12th grade students are the most at peace with themselves, likely due to increasing maturity and personality development. Similarly, individuals who have not been exposed to bullying show higher levels of self-perception, indicating the negative impact of bullying on self-confidence. Students who actively use and share on social media appear to be more at peace with themselves, and those with higher income levels engage more in social media sharing, possibly due to greater access to activities. In contrast, religious school students tend to share less media. The findings also reveal that students exposed to cyber and physical bullying are the most negatively affected. In terms of attitudes, female students and those exposed to physical bullying are more likely to support stronger sanctions against bullying, as are religious school students. Based on these findings, increasing awareness of bullying at earlier educational stages and supporting it through school programs and media campaigns may help reduce its impact globally.

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