The Effects of Digital Violence on the Mental Status of Communication Faculty Academicians

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Abstract
In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine the views and suggestions of communication faculty academics about how they behaved against digital violence. The data were analyzed qualitatively by inductive technique. According to the results obtained in the research, the majority of the participants stated that they encountered harassment on social networking sites, and the desire to communicate with fake social media accounts caused the participants to worry. On the other hand, participants who faced threats from social media found a solution by complaining about individuals who used digital violence on the sharing site. Participants who faced digital violence tried to prevent digital violence by taking legal action. In cases of encountering digital violence on social media, they filed a criminal complaint with the police department and stated that a new legal department should be opened by the participants and emphasized that the digital violence unit should be opened in order to prevent digital violence. According to the results obtained in the research, the majority of the participants stated that they encountered harassment on social networking sites, and the desire to communicate with fake social media accounts caused the participants to worry. On the other hand, the participants, who faced threats from social media, found a solution by complaining about individuals who used digital violence on the sharing site. Another result obtained from the research is that the participants who encountered digital violence tried to prevent digital violence by resorting to legal means. He made a criminal complaint to the police department about the situations of encountering digital violence on social media and stated that the participants should open a new legal department and emphasized that the digital violence unit should be opened in order to prevent digital violence of the participants.
Keywords: Communication and Media, Digital Violence, Social Media, Internet.

Introduction

Violence is becoming a very serious public health problem that can exist wherever humanity is and is increasing rapidly in the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as "when physical force or a force intentionally results in physical harm to oneself, the other person, a group or a community or increases the likelihood of physical harm, psychological collapse, death, problems in the development process of the individual. It is used in a threatening way or actually used in a way that leads to life or causes deprivation (Zara and İnce, 2008). Physical violence, sexual violence and psychological violence are the leading types of violence against individuals. Both in private life and in society, which includes the suppression of the right to freedom, which is the basis of the right to life of the academicians in the faculty of communication, as well as the fact that the academics in the faculty of communication end up with any damage to their bodies or are exposed to physical or mental pain in the case of violence by the academicians in the faculty of communication, or that the academicians in the faculty of communication are exposed to threats. It is a set of actions that include all types of violence based on gender discrimination. Although acts of violence against individuals occur all over the world, this situation is considered to be a serious human rights problem that has always been ongoing since the history of humanity, except that there are some differences in terms of the power applied to women according to various characteristics of the countries (Yüksel and Başterzi, 2013).

Digital violence is based on various variables such as occupation, literacy rate, gender, age, etc., in almost all cities around the world. As a result of these studies, it is seen that exposure to digital violence is a serious problem in almost every country. In addition to all these, some problems occur in female individuals who are exposed to digital violence. It is known that how and how these problems are seen varies according to the personality traits of the individuals, depending on their personality resilience. While people with strong personalities are more healthy, people with weak personalities are more affected. Considering the personality traits of individuals who have been subjected to digital violence, it is seen that there are people with negative self-esteem, people with shy personality, people with depressive moods, people whose friendship or social relations are not developed enough, people who are not successful in anxiety and stress management, and people whose self-confidence is not developed enough. Since the person is psychologically affected negatively in the face of this violence, the

worsening of the emotional state creates serious problems for the person (Mitsu & Dawood, 2022). Especially those who are shy and have difficulties in acquiring a social environment are presented as people who do not like socialization and are not happy at the same time because they think that they will be criticized by the people around them, that they will not be liked by their environment, or that they will be excluded by being inadequate against the people around them (Arık & Kütük, 2020; Aksu, 2017).

Digital violence has a significant impact on people's mental states. At the beginning of these situations, the feeling of intense fear, the realization of panic processes and the intense feeling of stress occur. When these negative emotions cannot be controlled and the individual is faced with increasing uncertainty, they become much more intense and complex, causing the individual to lose their vital enthusiasm in their own life (Hazelwood & Koon Magnin, 2013; Arıklı, 2016). In addition to all these, when the use of social media is examined according to various factors, it is concluded that it affects the mental health of users positively as well as negatively (Baker & Algorta, 2016).

Today, the most used social media tools are Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. Whatsapp application replaces normal messaging nowadays, almost everyone sends and receives messages from this application, teachers communicate with their students by establishing a whatsapp group. Facebook social media environment has become an important part of our lives that many people use today. On this platform, instant messaging, communicating with friends, creating a group with a group of friends and sharing various contents are made. We spend almost a large part of our lives on social media platforms. Instagram application is also seen to be very important on digital platforms. Thanks to its many features, it provides its users to have a good time. Twitter application is a social media platform where people can freely express their ideas. With the importance of digital education today, students spend their entire lives in these social media. Despite the benefits of social media in many areas of our lives, it has also revealed many negativities.

The rapidly developing technology and internet usage areas in the world make the life of humanity easier in many areas, and it can also disturb humanity in many situations. At the beginning of this disorder, the rate of exposure to some disturbing behaviors and discourses brought by cyberbullying in relation to using social media channels, which are the communication tools we frequently use, also increases (Bayram & Saylı, 2011). Although technological developments have many benefits for the life of humanity, it is seen that some negative behaviors and attitudes are used to harm people (Peker et al., 2012).

With the rapidly developing technology and developments in the internet world, especially with the use of internet in every field, its use is spreading to wide areas all over the world. This spread leads to the emergence of digital violence, which is a new type of violence. Digital violence occurs when a person is pressured to communicate electronically by the other person or persons if he or she does not want to communicate with the person on the other side. Especially in the applications on social media platforms, sending various inappropriate messages, e-mails and photos to the other party, deliberately using the person's photos as a threat or blackmail in order to disturb them without permission, etc. actions and actions lead to the formation of digital violence (Cebecioğlu & Altıparmak, 2017).

Digital bullying encompasses everything that happens electronically. In particular, networks that provide messaging can be social media networks as well as the act of uploading videos to various sites. It is known that the bully, who disturbs him with many events, continues his aggressive and disturbing behaviors without getting tired of hiding his name. The bully who commits this violence that takes place in the digital environment manifests itself as an act of persistence in his actions, repeating this behavior and harming the person (Yaman et al., 2010). Social media areas, which have become platforms that people can easily access, maintain their popularity since they first came out and become the focus of attention of people. At the beginning of these, the demand for many social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, My Space, which are easily accessible and popular, is increasing and new social media platforms are emerging every day (Rzayeva, 2018). People using social media have had the opportunity to set up a special media for themselves by using these various platforms (Al-Deen & Hendricks, 2012). In addition, thanks to social media platforms, users have the opportunity to easily reach large audiences and organize events (Ryon, 2011).

It is seen that the majority of university academics who use social media actively spend their time on social media (Obee, 2012). The increase in social media platforms parallels the widespread use of the internet. Young people who use these platforms not only to communicate with each other, but also to obtain information from various social media, play different games, chat with each other, and the fact that social media channels have many features and easy access to these platforms continues to be popular. (Tektaş, 2014).

This study investigates how female teacher candidates react to digital violence they experience today. It reveals the difficulties faced by female teacher candidates on digital platforms. Today, there are studies on violence against women, but there are very few studies on digital violence.

Based on all this information, it can be said that digital violence is a violence that affects the individual and creates many mental problems in the individual, like other violence that can occur wherever digital violence is related to technology. The aim of this study, which was carried out at this stage, is to contribute to the literature by determining the psychological perceptions and attitudes of academicians in the faculty of communication in case they are exposed to digital violence. In addition, in this study, it has been tried to learn how the academicians in the communication faculty encounter violence on digital platforms and how they feel when they encounter digital violence. Therefore, this research is a qualitative study based on what kind of digital violence the academicians in the communication faculty are exposed to in social media and how their mental states are affected. In this study, answers to the following questions were sought.
1. Have you experienced violence on digital platforms? Tell us about what kind of violence you have encountered?
2. What did you do to protect yourself when faced with digital violence?
3. What sanctions should be implemented to prevent digital violence?

Method
Research Model
In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to determine the opinions and suggestions of academicians in the faculty of communication about how they behaved against digital violence. It was analyzed qualitatively by inductive technique. Qualitative research is defined as a research method that includes detailed data collection from studies in any field. In qualitative research, data collection is generally done in three different ways. These; 'observation', 'interview', and 'examination of written documents' (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The data of this research will be collected through a semi-structured interview form in order to analyze the in-depth answers qualitatively. In semi-structured interviews, a series of questions are prepared to be used in all interviews, and answers are obtained by asking all the individuals interviewed without breaking the order of questions. However, the interviewee is allowed to respond by using as much time as he/she wants during the interview. While the interviewer is asking the questions, he/she can make explanations about the questions as much as necessary to the individual interviewing him/her. With semi-structured interview questions, both objectivity and in-depth analysis are provided (Atasoy, Özden & Kara, 2020).

Participants in the study were included in the study on the basis of the principle of voluntariness. In order to collect data in the research, data collection was made by creating interview forms. Before these interview forms were prepared, the interview questions to be included in the form were created in detail in the literature.

Working group
The study group of the research consisted of communication faculty academicians working at a private university.

Analysis of Data
The raw data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed and interpreted using the "content analysis technique" (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In addition, in order to increase the internal-reliability and validity of the research findings, frequent quotations were made from the students' opinions. Before the interview, it was stated by the researcher that the interview would be confidential to the academicians participating in the research. Immediately after the researcher made all of the data casting, the inductive analysis method was used for the analysis of the data. The researcher has created categories by classifying the obtained data in order to perform the inductive analysis for the analysis of the data. The existing information was organized with the aim of reducing, categorized and coding method was used. Immediately after the filing of the reduced codes, the process of creating themes was started. Themes are defined as concepts that the researcher derives from his data. The researcher created themes during the semi-structured interview of the students by associating them with the information in the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2017). In the process of creating the themes, the researcher first read the data in the coding files, then gave a title to the data that could be collected under the same heading, and tried to organize the data by making use of student responses appropriate to these headings. The titles obtained as a result of this process formed the themes of the research, and the sub-titles formed the sub-themes. After the researcher created the themes, similar answers given by the students were in the same category, and different answers were in another category. After these processes, the data analysis of the research was completed and the findings of the research were reached. While transferring the expressions in the analysis; Necessary grammatical corrections were made without spoiling the student's original writing. In order to determine which participant the written opinion notes belong to, the interview notes are given in quotation marks by using footnotes. Then, the participant of the

interview is indicated in parentheses.

Findings and Discussion
The findings of the research consist of female teacher candidates studying at a private university participating in the research. Nine themes and sub-themes of each theme are obtained from the answers given by the participants to the questions asked. The themes that make up the findings of the research are listed as follows:
Have you experienced violence on digital platforms?
Tell us about what kind of violence you have encountered?
28 female participants were asked questions about their exposure to digital violence on social media, and the views of the participants were tried to be determined. The opinions of the students regarding the question in the first dimension are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Exposure To Digital Violence On Social Media

Themes	N	%
Threat	8	28,5
Desire to communicate with strangers	9	32,1
Abuse	11	39,2
Total	28	100

When the table is examined, the majority of the participants (39.2%) stated that they were harassed on social media, on the other hand, some (32.1%) of the participants were worried that they wanted to communicate with people who created fake accounts on social media. Some of the participants (28.5%) were also threatened on social media.

Participants who encountered digital violence while using social media stated that this situation was very worrying and worrying.

Regarding the question asked by one of the participants,
'An account was opened by misusing my name and I received a threat that messages would be sent to my family and friends from there' (P21).
Unreal accounts about digital violence are opened on social media, and those who threaten people cause fear and anxiety in the individual.
Another of the participants;
'Writing by people I don't know and asking for photos' (P10).
This digital violence encountered through social media has caused the person to experience fear. Another one of the participants;
'Threats and harassment (such as taking nude photos by others or being asked by me' (P7).
This threat and harassment on social media has left women in a difficult situation.

2. What did you do to protect yourself when faced with digital violence?
28 female participants were asked questions about what they do to protect themselves when faced with digital violence, and the views of the participants were tried to be determined. The opinions of the students regarding the question in the second dimension are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pre-service teachers' encounters with digital violence

Themes	N	%
Blocking Contacts	12	42,8
Don't complain about people	11	39,2
Taking legal action	5	18
Total	28	100

When the table is examined, the majority of the participants (42.8) tried to prevent people in cases of encountering digital violence on social media, some of the participants (39.2) complained about digital violence, and a small part of the participants (18%) tried to prevent violence by resorting to legal means.
One of the participants;

'I found a solution to myself by blocking people who disturb me on social media' (P5).
'I prevented digital violence from bothering me by complaining about it on social media' (T23).
Another of the participants;
'I made a complaint to official institutions for digital violence in social media' (P26).

3. What sanctions should be applied to prevent digital violence?
28 female participants were asked questions about what to do to prevent digital violence, and the views of the participants were tried to be determined. The opinions of the students regarding the question in the third dimension are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Sanctions to prevent digital violence

Themes	N	%
Make a complaint	15	53,5
New legal department	7	25
IT strains unit	6	21,4
Total	**28**	**100**

When the table is examined, it is seen that the majority of the participants (53.5) filed a criminal complaint with the police department in case of encountering digital violence on social media, and some of the participants (25%) said that a new legal department should be opened, while a small part of the participants (21.4) stated that they used cyber crimes to prevent digital violence. emphasized that the unit should be opened.

Attention was drawn to the need for new institutions to prevent digital violence on social platforms, as stated by the participants.
One of the participants;
'I blocked the person when I was exposed to violence on social media. He continued to abuse a lot, so I filed a criminal complaint with the police' (P6).
Another of the participants;
'Complaining sometimes doesn't work. Because the person cannot use his own name. The police cannot file a criminal complaint because they are not sure of what the person did. I've been told you either wait for something to pop up or you have to show conclusive proof. Both are risky and very difficult methods. I think a new department should be opened for this. In this way, it can be easily found where the person opened the account and by which digital tool (P27).
Another participant;
'There should be a digital violence unit where crimes made through social media will be met with a clear and severe response' (P20).

Conclusion and Recommendations
According to the results of the research, the majority of the academicians stated that they encountered harassment on social networking sites, and the desire to communicate with fake social media accounts caused the participants to worry. Digital violence should not be considered as less damaging than real-life experiences and other forms of violence (Lewis, Rowe, & Wiper, 2017). Because with the developing technology, the hand that raises the woman continues to exist not only physically but also in the digital environment. On the other hand, the participants, who faced threats from social media, found a solution by complaining about individuals who used digital violence on the sharing site.

Another result obtained from the research is that the participants who encountered digital violence tried to prevent digital violence by resorting to legal means. In cases of encountering digital violence on social media, he filed a criminal complaint with the police department, stating that the participants should open a new legal department and emphasized that the digital violence unit should be opened in order to prevent digital violence from the participants. It would be beneficial to provide women with training on safe use of the internet (Çelik and Tekin, 2015).

The fact that academics in the faculty of communication, who were exposed to digital violence through fake accounts on social media, could not do anything legally in the research is a very important factor. More severe sanctions may be applied for such violence (Çınar, 2021). Along with digital technologies, the tools used by academicians have also taken their place, unlike traditional education (Kara, 2022). This study is limited to academics. Studies can be conducted on the academicians of all universities in the TRNC. This research was conducted with limited participants. More participants can be reached and a more detailed study can be done in different studies. This research is a qualitative study. Other studies can also be done quantitatively.

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