

Full Length Research Paper

Examination of the relation between the values of adolescents and virtual sensitiveness

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The aim of this study is to examine the relation between the values adolescents have and virtual sensitiveness. The study is carried out on 447 adolescents, 160 of whom are female, 287 males. The Humanistic Values Scale and Virtual Sensitiveness scale were used. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient and multiple regression analysis techniques were used as statistical analyses. As a result of the study, it was found that responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and having tolerance were significant predictors for explaining virtual sensitiveness; however, it was found that respect and honesty values were not significant predictors of virtual sensitiveness. On the other hand, it was revealed that there was positive significant relation between responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and respect which are the sub dimensions of virtual sensitiveness and humanistic values. However, it was found that there was not a significant relation between honesty and tolerance sub dimensions and virtual sensitiveness.

Key words: Adolescent, value, virtual sensitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid developments in technology provide new and different communication means and each new communication technology brings about some problematic behaviors. Developments in communication technology increased the use of the technological tools like the Internet and cell phones; however, this also brought about problems such as the misuse of these devices. Another phenomenon that is to be emphasized and that accompanies Internet addiction is cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is defined as “activities that supports deliberate, repetitive and hostile behaviors which includes the misuse of information and communication technologies like electronic mail, cell phone, beeper, short message service and web sites to harm others” (Arıcak, 2009; Baker and Kavşut, 2007). According to another definition, cyber bullying is the exhibition of deliberate, repetitive, hostile behaviors by an individual or a group of people with an intention of harming others by using information

and communication technologies like e-mail, cell phone, instant messaging, vilifying individuals or arranging on-line surveys to vilify people with individuals (Belsey, 2008;). Patchin and Hinduja (2006) points out that possibility of spoofing in cyber bullying enables the offenders to disturb and scare victims and make them feel helpless. Besides, it is stated that the lack of the compulsion to observe social norms enables the cyber bully reach his/her aims easily, feel free to exhibit outrageously. According to Arıcak (2011), cyber bullying “means all the technical or relational harmful behaviors committed against an individual or a group of people; or private or legal entity by using information and communication technologies”. Cyber bullying is also defined as “activities that supports deliberate, repetitive and hostile behaviors which includes the misuse of information and communication technologies like electronic mail, cell phone, beeper, short message service and web sites to

harm others" (Agatston et al., 2007; Ang and Goh, 2010; Patchin and Hinduja, 2006; Totan, 2007; Wright et al., 2009). For adolescents not to be exposed to such behaviors, they are to avoid such stimulants, which require them to behave sensitively. Sensitiveness can be defined as the act of avoiding threatening stimulants and eschewing any encounter with them (Bayezid, 2000). Sensitiveness is one of the solutions individuals use when they face worrisome stimulants. While some people encountering worrisome stimulants try to ignore or suppress them, some raise their consciousness about these stimulants and try to keep worrisome situations away from them (Krahé et al., 2011; Rohrmann et al., 2003). Threat that leads to sensitiveness can be a real physical danger, and it can also be related with the prevention of dysphonic emotions or forbidden motives. People with high level of sensitiveness have low stimulation threshold for emotional threats. People with high sensitiveness are observed to be very watchful, check the environment, try to recognize possible threats and develop precautions to avoid the harms of threatening situations or stimulants (Budd and Clopton, 1985, cited in Bayezid, 2000).

Hill (1991) defines values as "beliefs individuals prioritize and allow them to direct their lives". Veugeler (2000) defines values as "the judgment of good and bad". Morrow (1989) who approached the concept of value from a different perspective argued that rules and principles are to be used to mean values. According to Morrow (1989), values mean the same as rules and principles formed in the society. Halstead and Taylor (1996) explained values as "judgments and principles that direct our behaviors, and as standards to judge the correctness or wrongness of certain behaviors. According to Schwartz (1992), values are criteria which people use to assess people, including themselves and events, choose actions and justify them. According to Theodorson and Theodorson (1979), values are abstract, generalized behavioral principles which provide a basic standard to judge private actions and objectives and which are formed with strong emotional attachment of a group of people (Cited in Özensel, 2003). It is impossible for values to be accepted as "values" at the same level globally. According to Birch and Rasmussen (1989) norms and cultures are social rules which emerge in certain societies. Values do not only change from society to society, but also defined as subjective perceptions (Zajda, 2009). It cannot be expected that these rules are valid in all societies (Fataar and Solomons, 2011). Winter et al. (1998), who classify values into three different categories, speak of three different value categories: social values, individual values, and family values. Cohen (1985) who approached the issue from a different perspective, presented values in five different categories intrinsic, extrinsic, individual, moral, and knowledge based values. Raths, Harmin and Simon are other researchers who express values abstractly. According to them, the beliefs and behaviors individual are proud of

doing are called values (Raths et al., 1966). According to Hansson et al. (2010), values are abstract notions like desire and proud and each individual has values in his/her self and people adopt them without being aware of them. Values direct how we lead and organize our lives. Values are related with cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of our behaviors (Powney et al., 1995). Values are individuals' preferences and individuals come together to form societies. Therefore, just as the things individuals prioritize, the things societies prioritize become values. Besides, values mean more than simple beliefs because believing in a value means observing the behaviors that comply with it. However, it is not so easy to establish this connection. While showing the behavior that complies with the value, we have to fall into step with the environment as well that is, as Pring (1984) states that the social structure is to be suitable for the behaviors to be conducted.

The values people have play effective role in determining individual's status in the society, establishing effective communication with others and social status. The concept of value also plays an important part in people's communication processes. This process of communication is also valid on virtual environments. Individuals with values also pay attention to social, cultural, economic and material and spiritual elements in communication processes. It is possible that people who have values and practice them in their life also respect the personalities of people who they establish communication in virtual environments.

This study aims to examine the relation between adolescents' values and virtual sensitiveness. Besides, it was investigated whether adolescents' values significantly explain virtual sensitiveness.

METHOD

Participants

In this study relational screening model was used. Relational screening is carried out to determine the relation between two or more variables and to obtain clues about cause-effect relation (Büyükoztürk et al., 2008). The study group is composed of 447 adolescent attending six different education institutions in Konya. 160 of them are female and 287 are male.

Data collection

Data of the study were collected using the Humanistic Values Scale and Virtual Sensitiveness Scale. The means of measurement were administrated to the students by the researchers in the fall terms of 2012 and 2013 academic year.

Humanistic values scale (HVS)

In this study, the "Humanistic Values Scale", which was developed by Dilmaç (2007) for adolescents, was used to determine humanistic values of students. In the scale, humanistic values are measured under six dimensions with 42 items: a. Responsibility (7

Table 1. Relation between values and virtual sensitiveness.

	Responsibility	Friendliness	Being peaceable	Respect	Honesty	Tolerance
Virtual sensitiveness	.28**	.26**	.35**	.30**	.05	-.20

** $p < .01$.

items) b. Friendliness (7 items) c. Being peaceable (7 items) d. Respect (7 items) e. Tolerance (7 items) f. Honesty (7 items). This scale is a Likert scale which can be applied individually or as a group. The items in the scale are expressed as five point Likert scale items (A: Never, B: Rarely, C: Sometime, D: Frequently, E: Always). The items were scored as follows: A:1- B:2- C:3- D:4- E:5. While the higher scores indicate that individuals adopted humanistic values more, lower scores indicate that humanistic values are less adopted. For the reliability, the inner reliability coefficient of HVS (Cronbach's Alpha) was calculated. The inner consistency coefficient for the "Responsibility" sub-dimension, which is composed of 7 items was calculated to be alpha, .73. The inner consistency coefficient for the "Friendliness" sub-dimension, which is composed of 7 items was calculated to be alpha, .69. The inner consistency coefficient for the "Being peaceable" sub-dimension, which is composed of 7 items was calculated to be alpha, .65. The inner consistency coefficient for the "Respect" sub-dimension, which is composed of 7 items was calculated to be alpha, .67. The inner consistency coefficient for the "Honesty" sub-dimension, which is composed of 7 items was calculated to be alpha, .69. The inner consistency coefficient for the "Tolerance" sub-dimension, which is composed of 7 items was calculated to be alpha, .70 and for the 42 item whole scale the inner consistency coefficient was found to be alpha .92. These stability factors were found to be .73 for "Responsibility", for "Friendliness", .91, for "Being peaceable", .80, for "Respect", .88, for "Honesty", .75, for "Tolerance", .79. The stability factor for the whole scale was found to be, .87 (Dilmaç, 2007).

Sensitiveness scale with regard to cyber bullying

The scale is composed of 14 items and answered on a trinary (Yes, Sometimes, No) scale. The scoring of the scale is follows: no=1, sometimes=2 and yes=3. The lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 14 and the highest score is 42. The height of the score on the scale indicates high sensitivity to cyber bullying. Following from the data obtained, 15 items which were thought to reflect sensitiveness to behaviors related with cyber bullying were determined. Explanatory factor analysis was used to test construct validity of the scale, and to calculate inner reliability coefficient Cronbach's Alpha analysis and to find test-retest reliability Pearson correlation technique was used. Similarly, the confirmatory factor analysis of the scale was carried out using AMOS 16 program, and the construct which came about as a result of explanatory factor analysis was tested with confirmatory factor analysis. In the first analysis, when the component matrix was examined, it was seen that all items except for the second item were collected under single factor. Therefore, the second item was omitted and factor analysis was repeated and it was seen that all items were collected under the first factor. This single factor explains of the total 27.70% variance. The factor loads under the single factor ranged between .32 and .73. This single-factor construct was tested with confirmatory factor analysis and it was seen that the model is acceptably suitable ($\chi^2/df=2.06$ and RMSEA=.078). The remaining 14 items in the scale were significantly collected under single factor. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the whole scale was found to be .7 and test-retest reliability coefficient was found to be .67 (Tanrikulu et al., 2013).

Data analysis

SPSS 16.0 was used in order to evaluate the data which were collected by the scales employed in the research. The Pearson correlation coefficient technique was used to determine the relationship between values and virtual sensitiveness in adolescents. Multiple regression analysis was used to search whether values significantly explain virtual sensitiveness

RESULTS

When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that there is a significant relation between virtual sensitiveness and the following sub-dimensions of humanistic values scale: responsibility ($r=.28$, $p<.01$), friendliness ($r=-.26$, $p<.01$), being peaceable ($r=.35$, $p<.01$), respect ($r=.30$, $p<.01$), honesty ($r=.048$, $p<.05$) and tolerance ($r=-.020$, $p>.01$). Positive significant relation between responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and respect sub-dimensions and virtual sensitiveness were found. No significant relation was found between honesty and tolerance sub-dimensions and virtual sensitiveness.

According to the results shown in Table 2, responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and tolerance values are each significant predictors of virtual sensitiveness; however, respect and honesty values are not predictors of virtual sensitiveness. Responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable, respect, honesty and tolerance values, which were the independent variables in the study, explain 20% of the variability in virtual sensitiveness. When the parameters in Table 2 are examined, it is seen that the respective importance of predicting variables according to the standardized regression coefficient is as follows: being peaceable, friendliness, responsibility, tolerance, and honesty and respect values. Among independent variables responsibility ($t=2.97$, $p<0.01$), friendliness ($t=3.29$, $p<0.01$), being peaceable ($t=4.82$, $p<0.01$) and tolerance ($t=-2.71$, $p<0.01$) values are each significant predictors in explaining virtual sensitiveness.

DISCUSSION

When the obtained results are considered, responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and tolerance values are significant predictors in explaining virtual sensitiveness; however, respect and honesty values are not significant predictors in explaining virtual sensitiveness. Responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable, respect, honesty and tolerance values, which were the independent variables in the study, explain about 20% of the variability in

Table 2. Results of multiple regression analysis with regard to the prediction of the values for virtual sensitiveness score.

Variables	Standard scores		Non-standardized scores	
	B	Se	Beta	T
Constant	26.01	2.21		11.79**
Responsibility	0.15	0.05	0.15	2.97**
Friendliness	0.17	0.05	0.16	3.28**
Being peaceable	0.23	0.05	0.25	4.82**
Respect	0.07	0.05	0.07	1.30
Honesty	-0.11	0.07	-0.07	-1.57
Tolerance	-0.13	0.05	-0.12	-2.71**

R=0.436, R²=0.19, F=17.31.

**p<0.01.

virtual sensitiveness. When parameters are examined, it is seen that, according to standardized regression coefficient, the variables that are the predictor of virtual sensitiveness in order of importance are as follows: Being peaceable, friendliness, responsibility, tolerance, honesty and respect values. Among dependent variables responsibility k ($t=2.97$, $p<0.01$), friendliness ($t=3.29$, $p<0.01$), being peaceable ($t=4.82$, $p<0.01$) and tolerance ($t=-2.71$, $p<0.01$) values are each significant predictors of virtual sensitiveness. Another result of the study is that there is a significant relation between virtual sensitiveness and responsibility ($r=.278$, $p<.01$), friendliness ($r=-.262$, $p<.01$), being peaceable ($r=.353$, $p<.01$), respect ($r=.297$, $p<.01$). No significant relation was found between virtual sensitiveness and honesty, and tolerance.

To the best of our knowledge, there is not a study matching this study model or parallel to the results of this study in the literature results. However, in this section although we could not discuss directly related studies, the discussion was made by citing results which we thought to be indirectly related with the study. The results of the study by Dilmaç and Aydoğan (2010) on the relation between humanistic values and cyber bullying of secondary school children support the result of this study. The results of the study indicates that there is a relation between secondary education students' responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable, respect, tolerance and honesty values and virtual bullying. In a study carried out by Dilmaç (2009) to determine the relation between cyber bullying and personality features, it was found that bully-non-victim had more perseverance character compared to self-victims and bullying victims. Perseverance is the only variable that predicts virtual bullying. While perseverance values increase, the rate of being subject to virtual bullying decreases Cunningham (2007). According to Haynie et al. (2001) and Pellegrini et al. (1999), bullies, victims and bully victims have different psychological and social characteristics. Adolescent bullies generally tend to be sentimental and their self-controls are low. It was observed that bullies exhibit both proactive and reactive aggressive behaviors and used proactive aggressiveness

as a means to establish superiority to their peers and to be the leader (Juvonen et al., 2003; Pellegrini et al., 1999).

In their study Patchin and Hinduja (2006), it was stated that almost 30% of the adolescents were the victims of virtual bullying by being ignored, not being respected, not showing respect, by dubbing, by being threatened, teased or mocked or via spreading rumors about them. Preventive activities for victims of cyber bullying to teach them to protect themselves from bullying and diminish its effects prevent the emergence of new victims. Therefore, those who have not been subject to bullying so far are to be informed about bullying behaviors and which behaviors makes them susceptible to cyber bullying and their awareness is to be raised (Liau et al., 2008) and they are to be helped to gain sensitiveness about cyber bullying. When the victims are asked how they feel, one of the victims stated that s/he was angry, sad, depressed, stressed and in complex emotions and another victim stated that they felt helpless, little, very lonely and in need of help (Kowalski and Witte, 2006). Individuals who have experienced such negative emotions not only show low academic success but also suffer from such psychological effects of them like depression, loneliness, weak social relations, low self-esteem, sadness, anger, fear, anxiety and paranoiac ideations (Benan and Li, 2005; Hawker and Boulton, 2000; Nishina et al., 2005).

The overall assessment of the study results suggests significant relation between virtual sensitiveness and responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and respect. When these results are considered, it can be concluded that works to increase virtual sensitiveness of adolescents should duly focus on activities to increase such values as responsibility, friendliness, being peaceable and respect. Besides, it will be appropriate to enhance the activities aimed for increasing the above-mentioned values as a part of counseling services at schools.

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