

This is an electronic reprint of the original article. This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Aggression, Victimization and Sexual Harassment among Young Adolescents in Turkey

Ulubas-Varpula, Isik; Björkqvist, Kaj; Österman, Karin

Published in:
European Journal of Social Science Education and Research

DOI:
[10.26417/ejser.v5i2.p234-244](https://doi.org/10.26417/ejser.v5i2.p234-244)

Published: 01/01/2018

[Link to publication](#)

Please cite the original version:

Ulubas-Varpula, I., Björkqvist, K., & Österman, K. (2018). Aggression, Victimization and Sexual Harassment among Young Adolescents in Turkey. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research*, 5(2), 234–244. <https://doi.org/10.26417/ejser.v5i2.p234-244>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Aggression, Victimization and Sexual Harassment among Young Adolescents in Turkey

Isik Z. Ulubas

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Kaj Björkqvist

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Karin Österman

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Abstract

The study investigates sex differences and regional differences in both victimization and perpetration of aggression and sexual harassment in Turkey. A questionnaire was completed by 482 young adolescents (9–15 years of age) from four regions in Turkey. Six different forms of aggression (physical, verbal, indirect, cyber, verbal sexual harassment, and physical sexual harassment) were examined in relation to sex and region. Sex differences were found both regarding victimization from and perpetration of aggression. Boys were found to perpetrate and become victimized more from sexual harassment than girls. Regional differences were found, with young adolescents from the Southeast region scoring higher than others on some forms of victimization and perpetration of aggression. The results are compared with previous findings and possible causes for the aggression are discussed.

Keywords: Aggression, Victimization, Sexual Harassment, Adolescents

Introduction

Aggression is a common social problem among young adolescents, and it may seriously affect their psychological well-being (Chang, Lee, Chiu, His, Huang, & Pan, 2013; Wigderson & Lynch, 2013). School aggression among adolescents take many different forms, such as direct and indirect. Physical and verbal aggression are common direct forms; physical aggression occurs in the form of e.g. hitting, kicking, punching, and taking or damaging belongings, while verbal aggressive behavior appears as teasing, taunting, threatening, and shouting (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Cyber aggression is another type of aggression, which has been defined as 'willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text' (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006, p. 152). Indirect aggression (Björkqvist, Lagerpetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992) damages the victim's social relationships, and occurs for instance in the forms of spreading destructive rumors and social exclusion of the victim. Sexual harassment, as another form of aggression, has been claimed to be difficult to define in order to fulfil all legal, societal, feminist, and psychological points of view (McMaster, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2002). However, in the present study, the term 'sexual harassment' was anyway preferred instead of the term sexual aggression, which refers to harsher and more hurtful behaviors.

According to a study investigating the occurrence of different forms of aggression in the EU ($N = 25,142$), 19% of young adolescents were victimized from aggression in some way (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011). Their involvement in different forms of aggression was as follows: physical 20.8%, verbal 53.6%, indirect 51.4%, and cyber aggression 13.6% (Wang, Ianotti & Nansel, 2009). Also in Turkey, involvement in aggression in schools has been found (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). In a study by Kapçı (2004), 40% of the responding adolescents reported being victim or bully-victim of some forms of aggression.

Wang et al. (2009) found that 12.8% of young adolescents had been victimized from physical aggression and 13.3% had themselves perpetrated physical aggression. In a Turkish study, the prevalence of victimization from the following forms of physical aggression among young adolescents were: pushing 63.7%, damaging clothes or materials 45.2%, pinching

38.5%, kicking 27.2%, biting 22.8% and punching 16.4% (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). Similarly, Kapçı (2004) found that 54% of the young adolescents reported being pushed, while 23% were slapped or kicked at least sometimes.

Wang et al. (2009) found that 36.5% of their respondents were victimized from verbal aggression, and 37.4% reported perpetration of verbal aggression; the most common form of verbal aggression being name-calling. Swearing, making fun of, name-calling and insulting are common forms of verbal aggression also in Turkey (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). Twenty-eight percent of young adolescents reported that they were made fun of and insulted, and 26% of them were called inappropriate names at least sometimes (Kapçı, 2004). Another study conducted among 14-17 year-old adolescents in the Central Anatolia region found that 35.3% of them were victimized from verbal aggression (Kepenekci & Çinkır, 2006).

In regard to indirect aggression, young adolescents from the US reported that 41% of them were victimized from indirect aggression (social isolation or spreading rumors), and 27.2% of them had perpetrated indirect aggression (Wang et al., 2009). In Turkey, Yurtal and Cenkseven (2016) found that the most common indirect aggression forms were spreading rumors about someone and social exclusion. In the study by Kapçı (2004), 51% of young adolescents reported victimization from social exclusion or spreading rumors at least once in their lives, and of these, 6% reported victimization from spreading rumors and 4% from social exclusion, often or every day.

Turning to cyber aggression, Kowalski and Limber (2007) suggest that the possibility of anonymity on the internet might attract bullies more than physical environments. A study among European children reported that 6% of the participating young adolescents were victimized from cyber aggression, and 3% reported having perpetrated cyber aggression (Livingstone et al., 2011). Wang et al. (2009) found the prevalence of young adolescents' victimization from cyber aggression to be 9.8%, while the figure for perpetration of cyber aggression was 8.3%. In a Turkish study, unwanted phone calls, text messages or comments on the phone, or on the internet were reported to be the most common forms of cyber aggression among the young adolescents (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). In another study, 23.8% of young adolescents reported themselves to be both perpetrators and victims of cyber aggression, 35.7% were perpetrators only, and 5.9% victims only (Aricak et al., 2008). Yilmaz (2011) found that 17.9% of the responding young adolescents reported victimization from cyber aggression, and 6.4% of them reported perpetration of cyber aggression, -with 'posting mean or hurtful comments online' being the most common form of cyber aggression.

Sexual harassment is an apparent form of aggression among young adolescents, but this problem has been investigated to a lesser extent than aggression among young adolescents per se. The prevalence of victimization from any sexual form was found to be 4.4% among 10-13 year-old adolescents, and 16.4% among 14-17 year-old adolescents (Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, & Hamby, 2013). Moreover, in the same study, 15.8% of the adolescents, who were 14-17 years of age, were found to be victimized from sexual harassment. In a longitudinal study, about 12% of young adolescents reported both victimization from and perpetration of sexual harassment (Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012).

Sexual harassment among Turkish adolescents in a school context is usually an ignored and avoided subject, due to the societal structure in Turkey; hence there are only few studies on the topic to be found in the existing literature. The prevalence of victimization from verbal sexual harassment (at least once) among young adolescents in Turkey has been found to be as high as 40.6%, and from physical sexual harassment, the percentage was 13.1% (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). Kapçı (2004) found that 5% of young adolescents (4th and 5th grades) reported victimization from physical sexual harassment often or every day, and 18% of them sometimes. Results from same study showed that 7% of the participating adolescents were victimized from verbal sexual harassment often or every day, and 10% sometimes.

Differences between results on aggression prevalence might occur when countries and regions of the same country are compared with each other. Cross-national studies have found great variation in young adolescents' aggression scores (Craig et al., 2009; Livingstone et al., 2011). Turkey is a multicultural nation with several minorities, such as the Kurdish and Suryani. Especially in the Southeast region, the Kurdish population is the majority, in coexistence with Suryani, Arab, and Turkish people; hence regional differences might be found in the examination of adolescents' aggression due to cultural diversity. To our knowledge, no studies so far have investigated regional differences in young adolescents' aggressive behavior in Turkey. Therefore, the present study may serve as an initiative towards the examination of this issue.

Sex differences in adolescents' aggression

Boys involve themselves more in physical and verbal forms of aggression than girls, while girls are more indirectly aggressive (Owens, et al. 2010; Wang et al., 2009), especially during young adolescence (Owens, 2010). Likewise, studies

from Turkey indicated that boys are victimized more than girls from physical forms of aggression such as kicking, punching, and damaging clothes and property (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016; Kepenekci & Çinkır, 2006). On the other hand, no sex difference were found in verbal aggression, with the exception of swearwords which boys used more, and, surprisingly, more victimization from social exclusion (indirect aggression) were found in boys than in girls (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). Overall, boys were found to perpetrate more aggression than girls (Saglam & Ikiz, 2017); they were also more victimized from all types of aggression, including the indirect forms (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016).

Sex differences during young adolescence emerge also in regard to cyber aggression, a form of aggression which has received much attention in studies from a wide variety of countries. Boys have been found to perpetrate more cyber aggression than girls (Wang et al., 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Li, 2006), while girls are more likely to be victimized from cyber aggression (Wang, et al., 2009). However, in Sweden and Canada, almost no sex difference in victimization from cyber aggression has been found (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Li, 2006). In Turkey, boys have been found to both perpetrate and become victimized from cyber aggression more than girls (Yilmaz, 2011; Erdur-Baker, 2010; Topçu, Erdur-Baker, & Çapa-Aydin, 2008). Likewise, Yurtal and Cenkseven (2016)'s study also found that boys were victimized from cyber aggression more than girls.

No sex difference has been observed among young adolescents in perpetration of sexual harassment (Espelage et al., 2012). Among older adolescents in the US, 17.4% of girls and 4.2% of boys reported victimization from sexual harassment while they were younger (Finkelhor et al., 2013). Similarly, 21% of boys and 37% of girls reported victimization from verbal sexual harassment, and 11% of boys and 21% of girls reported victimization from physical sexual harassment in 2013 (Mitchell, Ybarra, & Korchmaros, 2014). According to a study conducted among young adolescents in the Aegean region, Turkey, more boys were victimized from verbal sexual harassment than girls, and no sex difference was found in physical sexual harassment, while the prevalence of victimization from physical sexual harassment was 12.2% for girls and 14.3% for boys (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016).

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of young adolescents ($N = 482$, 272 girls and 210 boys) from six different schools and two different after school courses, in six cities located in four different regions in Turkey. Schools were selected from low, middle and high socioeconomic status districts, but in Marmara and Central Anatolia regions, it was only middle SES district. The implementation of the questionnaire was rejected by three school principals due to sensitivity of sexual harassment items. The participants were young adolescents from the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade, and the age range was 9 to 15 ($M = 12.6$, $SD = 1.2$ years). Ten percent of the data was collected from the Central Anatolia region, 5% from Marmara, 57% from the Aegean region and 27% from Southeast Anatolia.

Instrument

Data were collected with a questionnaire, which existed in both online and paper forms. The questionnaire was divided into several sections. There were twelve items measuring either (a) victimization or (b) perpetration of aggression: six items for victimization and six for perpetration. Every item aimed at measuring a specific form of aggression including sexual harassment, i.e. physical aggression, verbal aggression, indirect aggression, cyber aggression, verbal sexual harassment, and physical sexual harassment. In order to clarify what was meant with each form of aggression, several examples were provided under each section, as presented in Table 1. A five-point scale from 0 = never to 4 = very often was used in order to collect responses.

Table 1. *Items for the Measurement of Victimization and Perpetration of Different Forms of Aggression and Sexual Harassment*

I have been subjected to the following... (Victimization from aggression and sexual harassment)
<i>Physical aggressive behavior</i> (someone has e.g. come in your way, punched you, hit you, scratched you, bit you, pulled your hair, grabbed your clothes, or destroyed your things... etc.)
<i>Verbal aggressive behavior</i> (someone has e.g. shouted at you, said hurtful comments about your character, style or economic situation, called you with a bad name... etc.)
<i>Indirect aggressive behavior</i> (someone has e.g. talked behind your back, kept you out of a group, spread rumors about your honor, dignity, and reputation, or humiliated you because of your family... etc.)

<p><i>Cyber aggressive behavior</i> (someone has e.g. insulted you with unpleasant text messages or comments, insulted or humiliated you on the internet because of your pictures or shared posts, harassed you by sharing your pictures... etc.)</p> <p><i>Verbal sexual harassment</i> (someone has e.g. said inappropriate comments about your sexual character, verbally sexually harassed you)</p> <p><i>Physical sexual harassment</i> (someone has e.g. tried to touch or touched your sexual body parts in an inappropriate way without your permission)</p>
<p>I have done myself... (Perpetration of aggression and sexual harassment)</p> <p><i>Physical aggressive behavior</i> (I have myself e.g. come in someone's way, punched, hit, scratched, bit someone, pulled someone's hair, grabbed someone's clothes or destroyed someone's things... etc.)</p> <p><i>Verbal aggressive behavior</i> (I have myself e.g. shouted at someone, said hurtful comments about someone's character, style or economic situation, called someone with a name... etc.)</p> <p><i>Indirect aggressive behavior</i> (I have myself e.g. talked behind someone's back, excluded someone from a group, spread rumors about someone's honor, dignity and reputation, or humiliated someone because of her/his family... etc.)</p> <p><i>Cyber aggressive behavior</i> (I have myself e.g. insulted someone with unpleasant text messages or comments, insulted or humiliates someone on the internet because of her/his pictures or shares posts, harassed someone by sharing her/his pictures... etc.)</p> <p><i>Verbal sexual harassment</i> (I have myself e.g. said inappropriate comments about someone's sexual character, verbally sexually harassed someone)</p> <p><i>Physical sexual harassment</i> (I have myself e.g. tried to touch or touched someone's sexual body parts in an inappropriate way without her/his permission)</p>

Table 2. *Number of Items and Reliability Scores (Cronbach's α) of the Scales Measuring Victimization and Perpetration of Aggression and Sexual Harassment (N = 482).*

Victimization from aggression and sexual harassment ($\alpha = .84$)

I have been subjected to the following...

- Physical aggression
- Verbal aggression
- Indirect aggression
- Cyber aggression
- Verbal sexual harassment
- Physical sexual harassment

Perpetration of aggression and sexual harassment ($\alpha = .82$)

I have done the following...

- Physical aggression
- Verbal aggression
- Indirect aggression
- Cyber aggression
- Verbal sexual harassment
- Physical sexual harassment

Procedure

An online and a paper form of the questionnaire were shared with a random choice of schools in the regions in question. The distribution of the questionnaires was made by specific and trained research assistants. Instructions about anonymity and voluntary participation was provided to the participants. The questionnaires were filled in classrooms or at after-school courses. The participants completed the questionnaire in approximately 20 to 45 minutes (depending on whether they were

Turkish native speakers or belonging to a minority group). Data from the paper forms were manually merged with the online data.

Ethical considerations

The data were collected with informed consent from parents, the children themselves, and school officials. The study adheres to the principles concerning human research ethics of the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013), as well as guidelines for the responsible conduct of research of The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012).

Results

Table 3 provides information about the prevalence (in percentage) of how many respondents (girls and boys separately, and adolescents from the four regions separately) had responded 'often' or 'very often' to the questions about how often they been victimized from, or themselves perpetrated, the six different forms of aggression and sexual harassment in the study.

Table 3. *Prevalence of Adolescents Who Have Responded 'often' or 'very often' to Variables Measuring Victimization and Perpetration to Six Types of Aggression and Harassment*

Victimization	Sex, %		Region, %				
	Total, %	Girl	Boy	Aegean	North-West	Central Anatolia	Southeast
Physical	15.4	10.3	25.9	9.8	12	16.4	27.3
Verbal	20.7	18.8	23.3	17.9	16	14.3	30.3
Indirect	12.3	8.8	16.7	8.8	16	6.1	21.2
Cyber	12.7	8.4	18.1	9.5	8	10.2	21.2
Verbal sexual	10.8	8.1	14.2	6.9	8	12.2	19
Physical sexual	9.8	6.6	13.8	5.1	12	8.2	19.7
Perpetration							
Physical	10.9	6.2	17.1	9.1	4	8.2	17.5
Verbal	12.7	10.6	15.3	11.3	8	10.2	17.4
Indirect	6.2	4.1	9	4	8	4	11.4
Cyber	6.2	3.3	10	5	4	2	10.6
Verbal Sexual	6.6	2.2	12.4	4	4	8.2	12.1
Physical sexual	3.9	0.8	8.1	2.6	8	2	6.8

Table 4 presents correlation coefficients for different forms of *victimization* from and *perpetration* of aggression and sexual harassment. As the tables show, correlations between the variables were either high or medium high; all of them were significant at the .001-level.

Table 4. *Correlation coefficients for Victimization for below the Diagonal, and for perpetration above the Diagonal (N=482)*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Physical aggression		.58***	.54***	.38***	.45***	.35***
2. Verbal aggression	.54 ***		.60***	.35***	.35***	.30***
3. Indirect aggression	.46 ***	.47 ***		.44***	.39***	.36***
4. Cyber aggression	.41 ***	.37 ***	.49 ***		.53***	.45***
5. Verbal sexual harassment	.48 ***	.43 ***	.51 ***	.56 ***		.55***
6. Physical sexual harassment	.44 ***	.39 ***	.41 ***	.52 ***	.64 ***	

*** $p < .001$

The Effect of Sex on Victimization and Perpetration

Two one-way MANOVAs were performed with sex as an independent variable and victimization from aggression and sexual harassment and perpetration of aggression and sexual harassment as dependent variables. The results are presented in Tables 5-6 and Figures 1-2. As the tables indicate, the effect on four of the variables about victimization was significant, with the boys scoring higher, and the effect on perpetration was significant with boys mostly scoring higher on all variables.

Table 5. Results from a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Sex as Independent Variable and Six Forms of Victimization from Aggression and Sexual Harassment as Dependent Variables (N = 482), cf. Figure 1.

	F	df	p ≤	η_p^2	Group differences
<i>Effect of sex</i>					
Multivariate analysis	4.13	6, 475	.001	.05	
<i>Univariate analyses</i>					
Victimization from physical aggression	15.24	1, 480	.001	.031	♀ < ♂
Victimization from verbal aggression	1.59	"	ns	.003	
Victimization from indirect aggression	2.64	"	ns	.005	
Victimization from cyber aggression	10.60	"	.001	.022	♀ < ♂
Victimization from verbal sexual harassment	13.32	"	.001	.027	♀ < ♂
Victimization from physical sexual harassment	11.59	"	.001	.024	♀ < ♂

Table 6. Results from a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Sex as Independent Variable and Six Forms of Perpetration of Aggression and Sexual Harassment as Dependent Variables (N = 482), cf. Figure 2.

	F	df	p ≤	η_p^2	Group differences
<i>Effect of sex</i>					
Multivariate analysis	9.03	6, 475	.001	.102	
<i>Univariate analyses</i>					
Perpetration of physical aggression	17.39	1, 480	.001	.035	♀ < ♂
Perpetration of verbal aggression	2.42	"	ns	.005	
Perpetration of indirect aggression	13.08	"	.001	.027	♀ < ♂
Perpetration of cyber aggression	15.04	"	.001	.03	♀ < ♂
Perpetration of verbal sexual harassment	34.56	"	.001	.067	♀ < ♂
Perpetration of physical sexual harassment	36.56	"	.001	.071	♀ < ♂

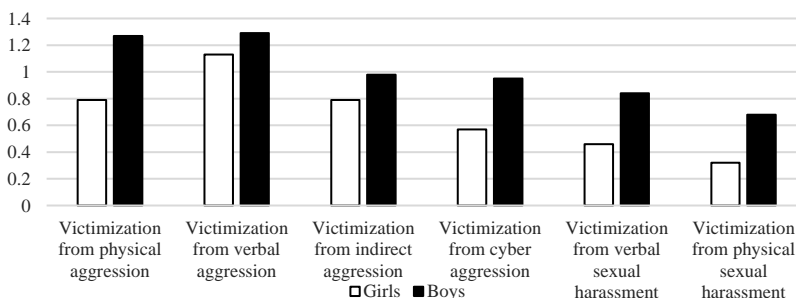


Figure 1. Sex differences in victimization from aggression and sexual harassment among young adolescents in Turkish school settings (N = 482), cf. Table 5.

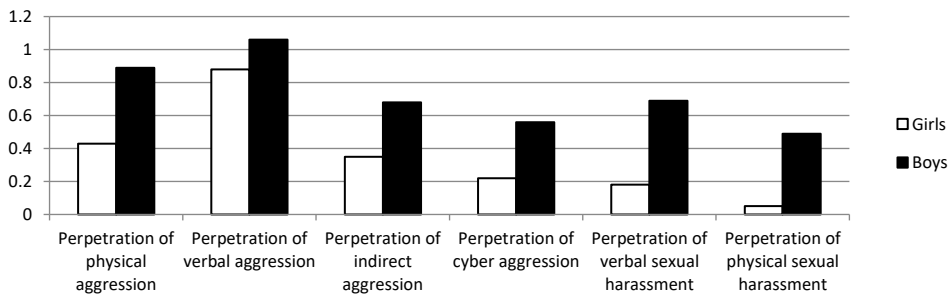


Figure 2. Sex differences in perpetration of aggression and sexual harassment among young adolescents in Turkish school settings ($N = 482$), cf. Table 6.

The Effect of Region on Victimization and Perpetration

Two one-way MANOVAs were performed with region as independent variable and six types of victimization from aggression and sexual harassment and perpetration of aggression and sexual harassment as dependent variables. The results are presented in Tables 7-8 and Figures 3-4. As Table 7 and Figure 3 indicate, *victimization* from aggression and sexual harassment showed significant regional differences in most of the cases with adolescents from Southeast Anatolia region scoring higher. Similarly, as Table 8 and Figure 4 indicate (although the multivariate analysis was not significant), *perpetration* from aggression and sexual harassment showed significant regional differences with the adolescents from Southeast Anatolia scoring higher on perpetration of physical aggression, indirect aggression and physical sexual harassment. There was a tendency regarding perpetration of cyber aggression and verbal sexual harassment, with adolescents from Southeast Anatolia scoring higher.

Table 7. Results from a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Region as Independent Variable and Six Types of **Victimization** from Aggression and Sexual Harassment as Dependent Variables ($N = 482$), cf. Figure 3.

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	η_p^2	Group differences
<i>Effect of region</i>					
Multivariate analysis	2.07	24,1900	.002	.025	
Univariate analyses					
Victimization from physical aggression	5.02	4, 477	.001	.04	4>1,3
Victimization from verbal aggression	4.0	"	.003	.032	4>1,3
Victimization from indirect aggression	4.74	"	.001	.038	4>1,3
Victimization from cyber aggression	1.26	"	<i>ns</i>		
Victimization from verbal sexual harassment	5.73	"	.001	.046	4>1
Victimization from physical sexual harassment	7.6	"	.001	.06	4>1,3

* Aegean = 1, Marmara = 2, Central Anatolia = 3, Southeast Anatolia =4

Table 8. Results from a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Region as Independent Variable and Six Types of **Perpetration** of Aggression and Sexual Harassment as Dependent Variables ($N = 482$), cf. Figure 4.

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	η_p^2	Group differences
<i>Effect of region</i>					
Multivariate analysis	1.21	24, 1900	<i>ns</i>	.015	

Univariate analyses

Perpetration of physical aggression	2.79	4, 477	.026	.023	4>1,2,3
Perpetration of verbal aggression	1.4	"	ns		
Perpetration of indirect aggression	4.63	"	.001	.037	4>1,3
Perpetration of cyber aggression	2.13	"	.057	.019	4>1
Perpetration of verbal sexual harassment	2.29	"	.058	.019	4>1
Perpetration of physical sexual harassment	2.92	"	.021	.024	4>1,3

* Aegean = 1, Marmara = 2, Central Anatolia = 3, Southeast Anatolia = 4

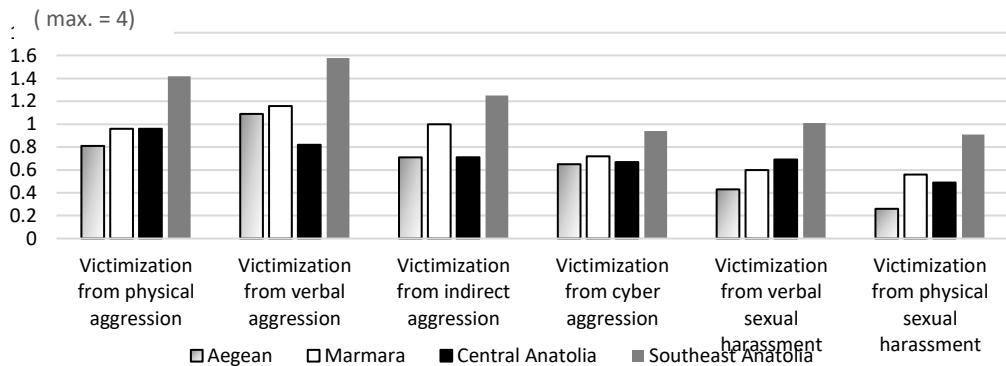


Figure 3. Regional differences in *victimization* from aggression and sexual harassment among adolescents in Turkish school settings ($N = 482$), cf. Table 7.

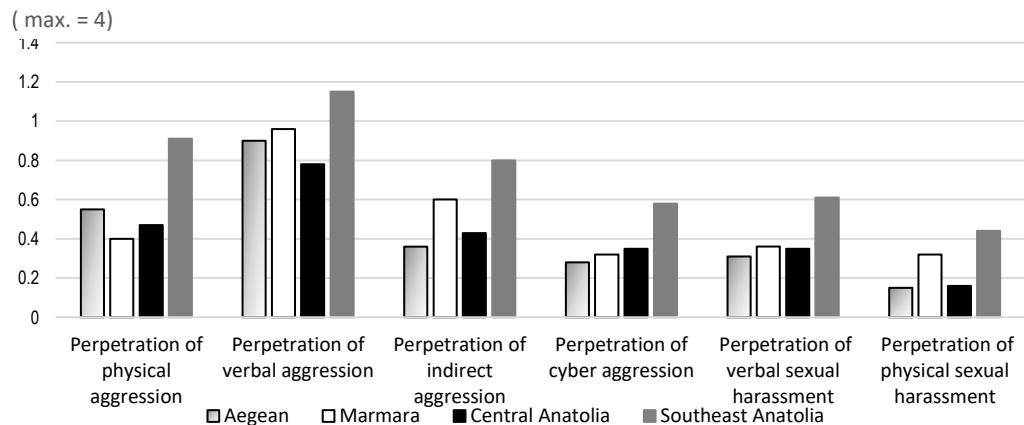


Figure 4. Regional differences in *perpetration* of aggression and sexual harassment among adolescents in Turkish school settings ($N = 482$), cf. Table 8.

Discussion

Young adolescent boys in the sample engaged in physical forms of aggression to a greater extent than girls; this finding was expected and in line with the results by Yurtal and Cenkseven (2016), Owens (2010), and Kepenekci and Cinkir (2006). Boys and girls did not differ from each other in regard to verbal aggression; this result is also consistent with previous findings from Turkey (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016). There was a sex difference regarding perpetration of indirect aggression; however, boys performed more of this type of aggression than girls, the latter is more common in international studies (see for instance Björkqvist, 2018). In regard to victimization from indirect aggression, there was no sex difference, as in line with a previous Turkish study (Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2016).

There were regional differences regarding physical, verbal and indirect aggression: mainly, the Southeastern region had the highest scores. This finding may be due to cultural circumstances in combination with the occasional exposure to armed conflicts in this region, and its ongoing effects on young adolescents living there. It has been suggested that the adolescents in this area experience themselves humiliated and accordingly show a tendency to join illegal groups (Bilgin, 2013). Studies from other conflict areas have shown that the existence of armed conflicts is associated with increased levels of childhood aggression (Quota, Punamäki, & El Sarraj, 2008), and that the trauma of experiencing armed conflict during early childhood may lead to aggression in adolescence (Kerestes, 2006).

The results concerning sex differences in cyber aggression was also in line with previous studies (Erdur-Baker, 2010; Topçu, Erdur-Baker, & Çapa-Aydin, 2008; Yilmaz, 2011). The results are also consistent with Erdur-Baker's (2010) study on the relation between traditional aggression and cyber aggression. However, in the Southeastern region, this relationship was not found.

The results concerning victimization from sexual harassment were partially consistent with Yurtal and Cenkseven's (2016) study, which found a sex difference regarding victimization from verbal sexual harassment, but not regarding physical sexual harassment. In the present study, boys scored higher on victimization from both verbal and physical sexual harassment, which was somewhat surprising. The present study had data from several regions in Turkey, whereas the data by Yurtal and Cenkseven were from the area around Seyhan/Adana, which is located in the Mediterranean region in Southern Turkey.

Young adolescents from the Southeastern region scored higher on victimization from sexual harassment, and also on the perpetration of physical sexual harassment. This finding may be due to a higher tolerance for aggression conducted by men, which is in line with the slightly more oppressed position of women in the Southeast region of Turkey (Ökten, 2008). Moreover, talking about sexuality is a taboo in Turkey, and avoided in particular in this area, which leads to lack of information about healthy sexual behavior, which prepares the ground for sexual harassment.

The fact that boys involve themselves more than girls in sexual harassment, both as perpetrators and victims, might be explained with, as Erdur-Baker (2010) suggests, higher tolerance of aggressive behavior among boys, whereas girls are taught to control their aggression. Another reason for the existence of sexual harassment among young adolescents might be the lack of education about such matters in schools. The educational curriculum should include information about sexual harassment, and how to avoid and counter it in daily life. Even though increased awareness about sexual harassment among young adolescents and children has been attempted by some non-governmental campaigns, these initiatives have largely been ignored by the authorities. Related to that, as Alikasifoglu (2006) indicates, sexual harassment is usually not reported in Turkey, since spreading information about such behavior often is considered to cause loss of the victim's (and the victim's family's) reputation. Being a victim/perpetrator of sexual abuse might even result in honor killings within some clans or families.

The study has some limitations that should be noted. First, the study used the term 'sex' instead of 'gender', stressing the biological sex rather than gender identity. This choice of wording may have excluded some individuals from participating. Second, there were unequal number of responses from the different regions; they were especially low in Central Anatolia and Marmara (the Northwest). Third, mobile phone calls were not mentioned as examples of cyber aggression, which they probably should have been, considering their importance in today's society. This neglect might excluded responses about unwanted phone calls, which is an important form of cyber aggression.

Overall, the results show that boys in Turkey are highly involved in aggression and sexual harassment, which underscores the need for an effective and comprehensive initiative towards aggression and sexual harassment. The study might be

informative also for researchers and policy makers of other countries that has a focus on young adolescents who have migrated from Turkey. To our knowledge, it is the first study comparing regional differences regarding adolescents' aggression in Turkey. In that sense, it emphasizes the importance of region-based policymaking and the significance of preventative education programs against aggression and sexual harassment. More detailed research about the reasons for sex and regional differences might broaden the perspective on the subject.

References

- [1] Alikasifoglu, M., Erginoz, E., Ercan, O., Albayrak-Kaymak, D., Uysal, O., & Ilter, O. (2006). Sexual abuse among female high school students in Istanbul, Turkey. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 247–255.
- [2] Aricak, T., Siyahhan, S., Uzunhasanoglu, A., Saribeyoglu, S., Ciplak, S., Yilmaz, N., & Memmedov, C. (2008). Cyberbullying among Turkish adolescents. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 11, 253–261.
- [3] Bilgin, R. (2014). Çatışma ve şiddet ortamında büyüyen çocuklar sorunu. *Firat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 24. <http://dergipark.gov.tr/firatsbed/issue/17003/177648>.
- [4] Björkqvist, K. (2018). Gender differences in aggression. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 19, 39–42. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.030
- [5] Björkqvist, K., Lagerpetz, K. M. J., & Kaukiainen, A. (1992). Do girls manipulate and boys fight? Developmental trends in regard to direct and indirect aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, 18, 117–127.
- [6] Butovskaya, M. L., Timentschik, V. M., & Burkova, V. N. (2007). Aggression, conflict resolution, popularity, and attitude to school in Russian adolescents. *Aggressive Behavior*, 33, 170–183.
- [7] Chang, F., Lee, C., Chiu, C., Hsi, W., Huang, T., & Pan, Y. (2013). Relationships among cyberbullying, school bullying, and mental health in Taiwanese adolescents. *Journal of School Health*, 83, 454–462.
- [8] Craig, W., Harel-Fisch, Y., Fogel-Grinvald, H., Dostaler, S., Hetland, J., Simons-Morton, B., . . . Pickett, W. (2009). A cross-national profile of bullying and victimization among adolescents in 40 countries. *International Journal of Public Health*, 54, 216–224. doi: 10.1007/s00038-009-5413-9
- [9] Erdur-Baker, Ö., & Kavut, F. (2007). Cyber bullying: a new face of peer bullying. *Eğitim Araştırmaları-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 7, 31–42.
- [10] Erdur-Baker, Ö. (2010). Cyberbullying and its correlation to traditional bullying, gender and frequent and risky usage of internet-mediated communication tools. *New Media & Society*, 12, 109–125.
- [11] Espelage, D. L., Basile, K. C., & Hamburger, M. E. (2012). Bullying perpetration and subsequent sexual violence perpetration among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 50, 60–65.
- [12] Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Shattuck, A., & Hamby, S. L. (2013). Violence, crime, and abuse exposure in a national sample of children and youth: an update. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 167, 614–621.
- [13] Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012). *Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland*. Helsinki: Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity.
- [14] Kapçı, E. G. (2004). İlköğretim öğrencilerinin zorbalığa maruz kalma türünün ve sıklığının depresyon, kaygı ve benlik saygısıyla ilişkisi. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi*, 37, 1–13.
- [15] Kepenekci, Y. K., & Çinkır, Ş. (2006). Bullying among Turkish high school students. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 193–204.
- [16] Keresteş, G. (2006). Children's aggressive and prosocial behavior in relation to war exposure: Testing the role of perceived parenting and child's gender. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 30, 227–239.
- [17] Kowalski, R. M., & Limber, S. P. (2007). Electronic bullying among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(6), S30.
- [18] Li, Q. (2006). Cyberbullying in schools. *School Psychology International*, 27, 157–170. doi: 10.1177/0143034306064547
- [19] Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). Risks and safety on the internet: the perspective of European children: full findings and policy implications from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 year olds and their parents in 25 countries. *London School of Economics and Political Science*. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33731/1/Risks%20and%20safety%20on%20the%20internet%20.pdf>
- [20] McMaster, L. E., Connolly, J., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. M. (2002). Peer to peer sexual harassment in early adolescence: A developmental perspective. *Development and Psychopathology*, 14, 91–105.
- [21] Mitchell, K. J., Ybarra, M. L., & Korchmaros, J. D. (2014). Sexual harassment among adolescents of different sexual orientations and gender identities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38, 280–295.

- [22] Ökten, S. (2009). Toplumsal cinsiyet ve iktidar: Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nin toplumsal cinsiyet düzeni. *Journal of International Social Research*, 2, 302–312.
- [23] Owens, L. (2010). Aggressive behavior amongst students in South Australian schools. In K. Österman (Ed.), *Indirect and direct aggression* (pp. 185–199). Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Peter Lang.
- [24] Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2006). Bullies move beyond the schoolyard: A preliminary look at cyberbullying. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4, 148–169.
- [25] Qouta, S., Punamäki, R. L., & El Sarraj, E. (2008). Child development and family mental health in war and military violence: The Palestinian experience. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 32, 310–321.
- [26] Saglam, A., Ikiz, F. E. (2017). The relation between tendency to violence and the level of school engagement. *Elementary Education Online*, 16, 1235–1246.
- [27] Slonje, R., & Smith, P. K. (2008). Cyberbullying: Another main type of bullying? *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 49, 147–154.
- [28] Topçu, Ç., Erdur-Baker, Ö., & Çapa-Aydin, Y. (2008). Examination of cyberbullying experiences among Turkish students from different school types. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11, 643–648.
- [29] Vitoroulis, I., Brittain, H., & Vaillancourt, T. (2016). School ethnic composition and bullying in Canadian schools. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 40, 431–441. doi: 10.1177/0165025415603490
- [30] Wang, J., Iannotti, R. J., & Nansel, T. R. (2009). School bullying among adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 45, 368–375. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.03.021
- [31] Wigderson, S., & Lynch, M. (2013). Cyber-and traditional peer victimization: Unique relationships with adolescent well-being. *Psychology of Violence*, 3, 297–309.
- [32] World Medical Association (2013). Declaration of Helsinki: Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. *JAMA*, 310, 2191–2194. <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects/>
- [33] Yılmaz, H. (2011). Cyberbullying in Turkish middle schools: An exploratory study. *School Psychology International*, 32, 645–654. doi: 10.1177/0143034311410262
- [34] Yurtal, F., & Cenkseven, F. (2016). İlköğretim okullarında zorbalığın yaygınlığı ve doğası. *Türk Psikolojik Danışma Ve Rehberlik Dergisi*, 3:28. <http://pdrdergisi.org/index.php/pdr>