

Bullying Among Special Education Students

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine traditional and cyberbullying among the students with special education needs attending special education schools. Additionally, traditional and cyber victimization among special education students have been examined in terms of gender and grade levels. A sample of the present study consists of 295 students with special education needs (177 gifted, 118 deaf) attending segregated special education schools. The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, the Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory-II, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and a demographic data sheet were employed to collect data. Results of the study indicated that of the total 295 students with special education needs, 28.1% of the students with special education needs were bullies and 39.3% were victims of traditional bullying. Furthermore, 13.5% of the students with special education needs were identified as cyberbullies, and 23.3% of them were found as cybervictims. When gender and grade level were examined in regard to traditional and cyber victimization, significant gender differences were found in 9 and 10 grade levels. Male students with special education needs obtained higher scores for victimization than female students with special education needs. The results of the study were discussed in the light of literature.

Keywords

Disability, bullying, well-being, mental health, IQ, intelligence

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Data Availability Statement included at the end of the article

Introduction

Bullying is one of the most urgent and challenging issues that affect all societies in the world. However, prior to the 1970s bullying was not perceived as a problem that needed to be taken into consideration. First systematic research on bullying initiated in the early 1970s by Dan Olweus, a Swedish psychologist (Duncan, 2013). Following that time, scholars from all over the world, involving the United States, Australia, Japan, Korea, and the U.K., have investigated school bullying (Kanetsuna et al., 2006; Koo et al., 2008; Side & Johnson, 2014). Bullying is generally defined as a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students (Olweus, 1993). Over the years, a substantial amount of literature has been cumulated in terms of the nature and severity of bullying and how various variables were related to it. The concerning findings are that bullying destroys school atmospheres, social and psychological well-beings of students are harmed (Houbre, 2006; Vidourek et al., 2016). Such results indicated that bullying needs further attention as a research topic, and urgent prevention and intervention programs were needed in schools and school environments.

Despite all these efforts, the experiences of students with special education needs remain to be relatively less known, especially in Turkey. Rose et al., 2011a carried out a literature review regarding bullying and victimization frequencies among the students with special education needs via EBSO database. They found out that there are 32 articles fitting their criteria. Existing research reveals that not only students with special education needs were more likely to be targeted as victims (Hershkowitz et al., 2007; Huffman, 2015; Mañano et al., 2016; Sveinsson & Morris, 2005; Young et al., 2012) but also bullying among the students with special education needs was common (Baek, 2015; Fink et al., 2015; Nabuzoka & Smith, 1993; Swearer et al., 2012). A study examining victimization frequency among the students with special education needs and chronic illness in 11 western countries (France, Ireland, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Latvia, Netherland, Bulgaria, Wales and Canada) found that despite varying rates of victimization (from 14.3% to 27.1%), bullying exists across countries (Sentenac et al., 2011). Several other studies involving the students with special education needs also indicated that victimization frequency for students with special education needs exceeded more than 50% (Kuhne & Wiener, 2000; Van Cleave & Davis, 2006). Compared to the above-mentioned countries and international literature, little is known about bullying among the Turkish students with special education needs. Therefore, careful attention must be placed on bullying dynamic among the students with special education needs.

Bullying studies related to the students with special education needs are generally based on comparison between the students with special education needs and without special education needs (Malecki et al., 2020; O'Moore & McGuire, 2021). Research findings reported that students with special education needs were generally at greater risk of being bullied compared with the students without special education needs (Bauman & Pero, 2010; Bear et al., 2015; Christensen et al., 2012; Dev & Burdulis,

2007; T. W. Farmer et al., 2012; Fisher et al., 2012; Nettelbeck & Wilson, 2002; Sentenac et al., 2011). Several characteristics that the students with special education needs have may escalate victimization rates of the students with special education needs. Their poor social competencies to cope with bullying (Nettelbeck & Wilson, 2002), lack of protection skills (Fisher et al., 2012) and language impairment (Conti-Ramsden & Botting, 2004) make them vulnerable to bullying. In this sense, Kiriakidis (2014) noted that the existence of some special needs was related with an increased risk of bullying even when third demographic and health factors such as gender, age etc. Were statistically controlled. For instance, Blake and his colleagues' (2012) carried out a study on prevalence of bullying among the students with special education needs across the USA revealed that students with special education needs as a group were likely experience bullying more than 1.5 times as compared with the students without special education need.

When specific special education needs are taken into account, the findings revealed that the students with emotional and behavioral problems (Swearer et al., 2012), sight difficulties (Pinquart & Pfeiffer, 2011) intellectual disabilities (Emerson, 2010; Glumbic & Zunic-Pavlovic, 2010; Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007) autism spectrum (ASD) (Bitsika & Sharpley, 2014; Chen & Schwartz, 2012) learning disabilities (Dev & Burdulis, 2007; Rose et al., 2011b) expose higher frequencies of bullying than the students without special education needs. Beside to these results, few researchers investigated bullying involvements of the gifted students who are categorized as students with special education needs (Peterson & Ray, 2006a). In Turkey, gifted students were defined as the one who performs better than his peers in intelligence, creativity, art, sports, leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields (Regulation on Special Education Services, 2018). The Science and Art Center is the institution providing educational programs for gifted students in Turkey. The BİLSEM (Science and Art Centre) has been developed as an after-school program with the aim of increasing the potential of gifted students in primary, middle, and high schools outside the regular school day (Sak et al., 2016).

The results of few studies cumulated into two main approaches about bullying among the gifted students (Rondini & Silva, 2021). One approach argues that gifted students have been victimized as much as non-gifted students' have (Peters & Bain, 2011). The opposite approach regarding gifted students and bullying claims that gifted students are vulnerable to being victimized by other students due to some characteristics they have. Their unique characteristics, such as over excitabilities (Ackerman, 2009; Bailey, 2007), emotional sensitivity (Rinn & Reynolds, 2012) and asynchronous development (Silverman, 1997), make them weaker to bullying. For instance, a study examining bullying and victimization among the gifted students indicated that 11% of the gifted students were repeatedly victimized (Peterson & Ray, 2006b).

Understanding bullying dynamics as both bully and victim among the students with special education needs to be related to several variables that make them vulnerable to bullying. Rose (2010) argued that special educational placement, severity of the disability, and disability characteristics may place the students with special education

needs at a greater risk for being bullied. Scholars indicated that students with special education needs in the segregated settings engage in bullying more than the other group of students in both inclusive and mainstream settings (Hartley et al., 2015; Morrison et al., 1994; Rose, 2010; Sweeting & West, 2001).

When types or forms of bullying that the students with special education needs experience are taken into account, they are frequently the target of the physical, verbal and relational bullying (Swearer et al., 2012; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). For instance, Arulogun et al., (2012) examined the type of victimization that deaf students experience in segregated special education schools. According to results, deaf students were subjected to verbal (32.4%) and physical victimization (13.2%). They pointed out that intervention programs are needed to reduce the victimization deaf girls experienced. Moreover, Carran and Kellner (2009) indicated that types of bullying experienced by the students with special educational needs were verbal bullying (51%), and physical bullying (43%). Considering the findings, verbal and physical victimization are prevalent among the students with special education needs. In the current study, the students with hearing impairments and students diagnosed as gifted have been selected as the target groups. In Turkey, deaf students receive education at the preschool, primary, and secondary education levels in special education schools. Except for preschool education, deaf students can be taught in the boarding school. By the end of the final quarter of 2022, approximately, 10,000 deaf students are educated in Turkey (MoNE, 2022). There are several different types of hearing loss, depending on the rate of hearing loss. They use sign language to communicate with people. It should emphasize that the students with hearing impairment attending the present study were deaf and hard of hearing. Deaf students attending segregated special education schools where they spend whole school days with the other deaf students. Their lower level of social and communication skills elevates the risk of being bullied (Weiner et al., 2013). Therefore, deaf and hard-of-hearing students continuing to the segregated special education schools constituted the sample of the present study. Moreover, bullying among gifted students is a controversial issue among the researchers (Dalosto, 2011; Maciel, 2012). One group of researchers argues that gifted students are very sensitive against bullying (Laffan et al., 2022; Peterson & Ray, 2006a). Other groups claim that gifted students experience bullying like other mainstream students (Estell et al., 2009; Peters & Bain, 2011). Turkish literature is lacking studies reporting bullying frequencies occurring among gifted students. Therefore, both deaf and gifted students who are described as students with special education needs in the Turkish education system were selected as a target population for the current study.

Gender appears to be an important variable in understanding and intervening bullying among the students with and without special education needs. Grasping distinctions in manifestation of bullying among the male and female students with special education needs may help us to provide a better understanding of the bullying phenomenon. Research findings typically showed that males tend to engage in physical bullying (Casper & Card, 2017). Besides, females use relational bullying such as exclusion of someone from a group or talking behind someone more than males

(Bradsha et al., 2007; Silva et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012; Smith & Gross, 2008). As gender and students with special education needs are taken into account, inconsistent results were revealed due to method and criteria used in research. For instance, Swearer and her colleagues (2012) used both students with special education needs and without special education needs as a sample in their study. They found no gender difference on bullying and victimization among the students with special education needs. When Conti-Ramsden and Botting (2004) used students who have the same type of special education needs as sample in their study with 242 students with language impairment, they reported that male students with special education needs were more victimized than the female students with special education needs. The prevalence of victimization is higher in younger adolescents (i.e., eighth grade and below) compared to their older counterparts (ninth grade and above), with no gender-based differences observed (Lekhal & Karlsen, 2021). For instance, Rose et al., (2009) reported that middle school students enrolled in special education (SE) were victimized more frequently than their peers in general education.

Although bullying is generally viewed as a school-based phenomenon, developing technology changed forms of bullying. Internet, smartphones and so on allow bullies to expand their bullying beyond the schoolyard. This new type of bullying is called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as afflicting others using technological devices such as e-mail, instant messages, chat rooms, and websites (Campbell, 2005). A great number of studies have been published on cyber bullying and related variables for mainstream students in the international literature as well as Turkish literature (Marciano et al., 2020; Topcu, 2014). There has been a small body of research conducted on understanding cyberbullying and victimization experiences of the students with special education needs. For instance, Heiman et al., (2015) investigated the prevalence of cyberbullying among the students with and without special education needs. They found that students with special education needs were more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than students without special education. Further studies would shed into light on the nature and severity of cyberbullying among the students with special educational needs.

Victimization affects the adjustment of the students with special education needs. Students who are victims of both physical and emotional bullying are at high risk of behavioral and emotional problems (Yeung & Leadbeater, 2010) and this circumstance directly affects the adjustment of the students with special education needs (Rueger & Jenkins, 2014). Several studies also showed that the bullying and victimization experience of the students with special education needs is associated with a range of psychosocial adjustment problems, such as internalizing psychological disorders (Vaillancourt et al., 2013), anxiety (Saylor & Leach, 2009). Previous studies on bullying and adjustment reported that there is a reciprocal relationship between bullying and adjustment (Davidson & Demaray, 2007; Morin et al., 2015). According to them, bullying causes maladjustment and students with adjustment problems are more prone to bullying.

Special Education in Turkey can be defined as the training that is performed in an environment which proper for the disabled children through the aid of qualified professionals and programs (Ozsoy, 1985). Turkey currently has more than 1000 segregated special schools in both different educational levels and disability types with 9700 teachers and, 240,000 students (Ministry of National Education, 2014). The majority of the students are in the elementary schools. Integration of students with SEN which based on principle of lest restricted environment has been increasing and the number of enrollments in special schools has been decreasing. Students with special education needs in segregated special schools spend all school days with the students who have the same disability. Students attending to special education schools are usually perceived as the most vulnerable students (Wei et al., 2015). However, bullying literature in Turkey were generally focused on prevalence and types bullying in the different mainstream school levels (Arslan-Özdinçler & Savaşer, 2009; Ayas & Pişkin, 2011; Dölek, 2002; Kapçı, 2004; Kartal, 2008; Pişkin, 2010; Tural-Hesapçioğlu & Yeşilova, 2015; Yurtal & Cenkseven, 2007; Öksüz et al., 2012) and some variables such as school attachment and loneliness (Duy & Yıldız, 2014), the quality of school life (Önder & Sari, 2012), submissive behavior (Atik et al., 2012), students' empathy level (Topcu, 2008), school climate (Bayar & Uçanok, 2012). To date, there is no study encountered in Turkish literature related to bullying and victimization among the Turkish student with special education needs. Therefore, it is necessary to examine frequency of bullying and dynamics affecting bullying and victimization among the Turkish students with special education needs. The first way to prevent bullying among the students with special education needs is to understand frequency and nature of bullying and victimization.

The main aim of this study is to examine bullying (cyber and traditional) and victimization frequency among students with special education needs attending segregated special educational schools. In addition, bullying, victimization and adjustment levels of students with special needs were investigated with respect to gender and grade level.

Our specific research questions are:

- 1) What is the frequency of traditional bullying and victimization among the students with special education needs in samples of special education students coming from different special school types?
- 2) What is the frequency of cyberbullying and victimization among the students with special education needs in samples of special education students coming from different special school types?
- 3) Are there significant gender and grade differences in traditional and cyberbully scores among the students with special education needs from different special education school types?
- 4) Are there significant gender and grade differences in traditional and cyber victimization scores among the students with special education needs from different special education school types?

Method

Overall Design of this Study

The main goal of this study was to examine bullying frequencies (traditional and cyber) among the students with special needs attending segregated special education schools (gifted and deaf schools). In addition, the roles of gender, grade level and bullying experience in the psychosocial adjustment of the students with special needs were assessed. Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996), Revised CyberBullying Inventory-II (Topcu, 2014), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997; Goodman et al., 1998) and demographic data sheet were administered in order to collect data. In this study, descriptive statistics, MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) were employed to analyze data.

Sampling Procedure

Target population of this study were students with special needs, specifically students attending segregated special education schools involving students with deaf and gifted students from Malatya and Elazığ. Students of these schools, particularly geographically located in this part of the country, have been less studied. The participants were selected from five segregated special educational schools in the cities of Malatya and Elazığ through convenient sampling procedures.

Participants

Deaf and gifted students attending the segregated special education schools constituted the sample of the present study. The study was conducted in Science and Arts Education Centers (BİLSEM) and boarding schools for deaf students. The goal of science and art centers is to help gifted students develop their talents, develop their potential, and use it to the highest possible level, from preschool through secondary education. The aim of the boarding school for the deaf students is to facilitate students' acquisition of spoken language abilities within a context that approximates the natural language situation and provide them with the requisite preparation for university entrance examinations. Deaf students and gifted students were specifically selected because of behavioral characteristics and various educational needs they may have. For instance, the deaf students may be at escalated risk for victimization since their hearing lost and bullies may think that they cannot express what really happened. This study aims to represent populations of these two groups. Although more than 40,000 deaf and gifted students have been attending special education schools in the Turkish special educational system, little is known about bullying incidents that occur among deaf and gifted students. In the present study, two complementary sample sets (samples for the pilot study and main study) were utilized. The first sample consisted of the 176 students with special education needs (75 females, 101 males) attending segregated special education schools

in Elazığ and Malatya. The data set obtained from this sample was utilized to check the reliability and validity of the measures. Grade levels and school types were reported in Table 1.

The accessible sample from which the data set was drawn for the main study consisted of 295 students with special needs ranging from 5 to 10 grades. Ages of the students with special needs range from 10 to 16 ($M = 13.58$; $SD = 2.04$; Median = 13; Mode = 13). Participants' grade levels and school types were shown in Table 2.

Instruments

Instruments used to obtain data were introduced. The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996) was employed to measure the bullying and victimization experiences of the students with special education needs. Revised CyberBullying Inventory II (Topcu, 2014) was utilized to yield cyberbullying and victimization experiences of the students with SEN. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) was used to measure the adaptation level of the students with special needs, and a demographic data sheet was utilized in order to collect demographic information regarding participants.

The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (ROBVQ). The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (ROBVQ) was developed by Olweus (1996) to measure bullying and victimization experience among students. ROBVQ comprised of 40 items with a 5 point Likert scale. (1 = never, 2 = once or two times, 3 = twice or three times in a month, 4 = Once in a week, 5 = several times a week) to assess frequency and types of bullying acts, locations where bullying happens in the school, how often students tell bullying to teachers and their parents, and intervention strategies that teachers use to stop bullying, if they witness. In order to identify victims and bullies, the method suggested by Solberg and Olweus (2003) was utilized. A Turkish adaptation of the questionnaire was performed by Dölek (2002). This revised questionnaire was

Table 1. Grade Levels and School Types of Pilot Study.

Grade level	Gifted students <i>n</i> = 108		Deaf students <i>n</i> = 68		Total <i>n</i> = 176	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
5	4	6	3	5	7	11
6	17	20	7	6	24	26
7	14	11	6	7	20	18
8	5	4	5	6	10	10
9	7	10	6	5	13	15
10	3	7	4	8	7	15

Table 2. Grade Levels and School Types of the all Participants.

Grade level	Gifted students <i>n</i> = 177		Deaf students <i>n</i> = 118		Total <i>n</i> = 295	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
5	11	16	10	11	21	27
6	23	17	13	8	36	25
7	23	11	7	7	30	18
8	19	15	8	11	27	26
9	9	16	15	2	24	18
10	10	7	22	4	32	11

frequently utilized by Turkish scholars (Atik, 2006; Duy & Yıldız, 2014; Kapçı, 2004). A study conducted by Atik (2006) reported the internal consistency coefficient as .75 for traditional victimization and .71 for traditional bullying for this questionnaire. In the present study, only items that assess the frequency of traditional bullying and victimization during the last educational year were utilized. One sample item from the bullying section is “I spread false rumors about him/her and tried to make others dislike him/her,” and one sample item from the victimization section is “Other students left me out of things, excluded me from their group of friends, or ignored me.” Cronbach alpha coefficient was checked to assess the reliability of ROBVQ. Internal consistency of the coefficient for victimization and bullying were found as .75 and .70.

The Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory (RCBI) II

The Revised Cyberbullying Inventory (RCBI II) was developed to measure frequency and forms of cyberbullying and victimization by Topcu (2014). The RCBI II comprised of two forms: one for cyberbullying and one for cyber victimization. The form related to the cyber bullying has 10 items. Similarly, a form for cyber victimization consisted of 10 items. Students filled items on a 4-point Likert type rating scale, changing from 1 = It has never happened to me to 4 = It happened more than five times. Score that participants would take changes between 10 and 40 points. Higher scores indicate that participants have experienced higher levels of cyberbullying and victimization. One item from cyberbullying section is “I set up web pages for embarrassing, slandering someone,” and a sample item from cyber victimization section is “Someone sent me embarrassing, hurtful SMSs”. In the reliability study, Internal consistency was found as .75 for cyberbullying and as .81 for cyber victimization for the current study.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

SDQ was developed to describe adolescents' adaptation levels. It is a widely used measure of adolescence adjustment aged between 4 and 16 years old (Goodman, 1997; Goodman et al., 1998). The SDQ consists of five subscales, which are emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity-inattention, peer problems for difficulties, and prosocial behavior for strength. Items are scored on a 3-point scale with 0 = not true, 1 = somewhat true, and 2 = certainly true. SDQ was adapted into Turkish by Güvenir et al., (2008). A sample item from the Questionnaire is "I get along better with adults than with people my own age". Higher points students take from the scale indicate that students have more psycho social difficulties. The total points method was used to assess general psychosocial difficulties in the present study. The Questionnaire was administered to 514 adolescents in order to validate the psychometrical properties of the questionnaire (Güvenir et al., 2008). Internal consistency of the coefficient for this study was found as .64.5.

Demographic Data Sheet. A Demographic Data Sheet was developed by the researcher to ask participants' gender, age, and special education school type.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected during the spring of the 2016 academic year. Approval of the Middle East Technical University Ethics Committee was obtained in the fall of 2015. Later, selected special education schools through convenient sampling methods were contacted by researchers via e-mail and phone. The purpose and significance of the study were explained to school principals. School principals informed teachers in staff meetings. A consent form indicating purpose and procedures for the study was sent to parents in students' backpacks. Teachers of the students with special education needs told that participation in this study is voluntary, and if they want, they could give up responding at any time during the survey or skip any questions they do not want to answer. Afterward, the self-report questionnaires were implemented in classrooms of 10–12 students during the school days. Special education teachers had facilitator and translator roles because of the characteristics of the students with SEN have. 40 minutes were given to the students with SEN for completion of questionnaires. If any students want more times, it was allotted by the teachers.

Data Analyses Procedure

The data analysis of the study took place in several steps. The first step of the data analysis procedure was to conduct descriptive statistics. Traditional and cyber victimization frequencies were measured twice due to ongoing debate for the measurement of victimization in the literature. After presenting results obtained from global questions, frequencies acquired from ROBVQ (for traditional bullying and

victimization sections) and RCBI-II (for cyberbullying and victimization) were reported. Second, grade and gender mean differences on traditional bullying, cyberbullying, traditional victimization and cyber victimization were tested by MANOVA.

Before main analysis, assumptions of MANOVA analysis were checked. The main assumptions of MANOVA were independence of observations, normality and homogeneity of population. All assumptions were controlled according to criteria suggested by [Gravetter and Wallnau \(2014\)](#). Firstly, obtained scores of participants on the variables were independent of each other and independence of observation assumption was ensured. Secondly, normality was tested through skewness and kurtosis values, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk values, and histogram. Q-Q Plots values were checked. Skewness and kurtosis values are satisfied in terms of the assumption of MANOVA because skewness and kurtosis values are between -3 and $+3$.

Results

Frequency of Traditional Bullying and Victimization

Based on findings from ROVQ, 28.1% of the students with special education needs were identified as bullies. Similarly, 39.3% of the students with special education needs were determined to be victims of traditional bullying. [Table 3](#) shows the frequency of traditional bullying and victimization. Regarding gender differences, findings indicated that 29.4% of the male students with special education needs and 18.4% of the female students with special education were found as bullies of traditional bullying. Moreover, 40% of the male students with special education needs and 38.4% of the female students with special education needs were identified as victims of traditional bullying.

Based on findings from ROVQ, the most common ways of traditional bullying acts among the students with special education needs were: exclusion of someone from the group (29.8%, $n = 88$) calling mean names (25.8%, $n = 76$), was made fun of, or teasing in a hurtful way (25.7%, $n = 76$), hitting, kicking and pushing (18.9%, $n = 56$). As special education students were categorized as gifted and deaf students, the most common bullying acts among the deaf students were: calling mean names (35.6%, $n = 42$) and exclusion from groups (44%, $n = 52$). In addition, the most common traditional bullying act among gifted students was the exclusion of someone from the group

Table 3. Frequency of Traditional Bullying and Victimization.

	Gifted Students		Deaf Students		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Traditional bullies	21	7	62	21	83	28.1
Traditional victims	52	17.6	64	21	116	39.3

(20.4%, $n = 36$). [Table 4](#) shows the frequency of acts of traditional bullying in terms of categories of special education students.

The most common ways of traditional victimization among the students with special education needs were being called mean names (38.3%, $n = 113$), having untrue rumors spread about them (27.5, $n = 81$) and being bullied about my speaking (33.2%, $n = 98$). As special education students were categorized as gifted and deaf students, the most common bullying victimization among the deaf students were being called mean names (40.6%, $n = 46$) and having untrue rumors spread about them (39%, $n = 46$). In addition, the most common traditional victimization among the gifted students were being called mean names (36.8%, $n = 65$), and being teased about appearance (31.6%, $n = 56$). Traditional victimization [Table 5](#) shows the frequency of acts of traditional victimization in terms of categories of special education students.

Frequencies of traditional victimization for the global question indicated that of the total 295 the students with special education needs, 27% of them (82) were victims of traditional bullying during the current educational year.

Frequency of Cyber Bullying and Victimization

Of the whole sample, 13.5% of the students with special education needs (40) were identified as cyberbully. On the other hand, 23.3% of them (69) were found as victims of cyberbullying. [Table 6](#) shows the frequency of the cyberbullying and victimization. The findings indicated that 12% of the female students with special education needs (15) and 14.7% of the males with special education needs (25) were found to be cyberbullies. Furthermore, 21.6% of the female students with special education needs (27) and 24% of the male students with special education needs (42) were identified as cyber victims.

Table 4. Frequency of the Traditional Bullying Acts in Term of Special Education Students Categories.

	Gifted students $n = 177$		Deaf students $n = 118$		Total $n = 295$	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
To call mean names to others	34	19.2	42	35.6	76	25.8
To isolate someone from group	36	20.4	52	44	88	29.8
To hit, kick someone	18	10.1	38	32.2	56	18.9
To spread untrue rumors about someone	6	3.4	41	34.7	47	15.9
To take money from someone by force	5	2.8	28	23.7	33	11.2
To tease someone' appearance or speech	28	15.9	48	40.6	76	25.8
To bully in another ways	3	1.7	6	5.1	9	3.1

Table 5. Frequency of the Traditional Victimization Acts in Term of Special Education Students Categories.

	Gifted students <i>n</i> = 177		Deaf students <i>n</i> = 118		Total <i>n</i> = 295	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Being called mean names	65	36.8	48	40.6	113	38.3
Being isolated from group by someone	29	16.5	47	39.8	76	25.8
Being hit, kicked by someone.	11	6.4	39	32.7	50	17
Having untrue rumors spread about me	35	19.8	46	39	81	27.5
Having my money taken by force	16	9.1	35	30.5	51	17.2
Being teased about my appearance or speech	56	31.6	42	36.5	98	33.2
Being bullied in another ways	10	5.7	10	4.8	20	6.7

**p* < .05.

Table 6. Frequency of Cyber Bullying and Victimization.

	Gifted Students		Deaf Students		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Cyber bullies	19	6.4	21	7.1	40	13.5
Cyber victims	40	13.5	29	9.8	69	23.3

Based on findings from RCBI-II, the most common ways of cyberbullying among the students with special education needs were: insulting (20.4%, *n* = 60), threatening (14.8%, *n* = 44), and gossiping (12.6%, *n* = 37). When types of special education students were examined, the most common cyberbullying acts among deaf students were: insulting (25.4%, *n* = 30) and threatening (18.7%, *n* = 22). In addition, the most common cyberbullying acts among gifted students were: insulting (17%, *n* = 30) and sending embarrassing SMS (13.6%, *n* = 24).

Of the total 295 students with special education needs, the most common ways of cyber victimization among the students with special education needs were: being gossiped (21.7%, *n* = 64) and being insulted by someone (16.6%, *n* = 49). When students were categorized, the most common cyber victimization acts among the deaf students were: being insulted by someone (29.6%, *n* = 35) and being gossiped (18.6%, *n* = 22). In addition, the most common cyber victimization acts among the gifted students were: being gossiped (23.8%, *n* = 42) having their secrets spread without their permission by someone (11.3%, *n* = 20). [Tables 7](#) and [8](#) show the frequency of cyber bullying and victimization in terms of special education students's categories.

Gender and Grade Differences in Traditional Bullying and Victimization

A two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine the effect of six levels of grades (five through 10) and gender on two dependent variables (traditional bullying and traditional victimization). The mean and standard deviation of the traditional bullying and victimization relating to the grade and gender were showed in Table 9.

The results of the 2×6 MANOVA revealed that there is significant interaction between gender and grade on the traditional bullying and victimization score (Wilks's $\lambda = .93$, $F(2, 292) = 1.94$, $p = .037$, $\eta^2 = .3$, small effect). However, there has not been found significant main effect for the gender (Wilks's $\lambda = .98$, $F(2, 292) = 2.18$, $p = .73$) and main effect for the grade (Wilks's $\lambda = .96$, $F(2, 292) = 1.96$, $p = .31$).

Since the interaction effect was found to be significant, the analyses of the simple main effect for each dependent variable (traditional bullying and victimization) were carried out as follow-up tests. Benferroni adjustment for multiple comparison was used in order to control Type-I error. Table 10 presents the results of multiple comparisons of traditional bullying and victimization across the gender and grade levels. Multiple comparisons revealed that differences in traditional bullying and victimization were not consistent between the male and female students with special education needs. Results of the comparisons by gender across grade levels showed that within some grade levels of traditional bullying experience, there were statistically significant gender differences in traditional bullying. Male students with special education needs' scores on traditional bullying have been found higher than the female students with special education needs.

Table 7. Frequency of Cyber Bullying Acts in Term of Special Education Students Categories.

	Gifted		Deaf		Total	
	students		students		n = 295	
	n = 177	n = 118	n = 118	n = 118	n = 295	n = 295
	f	%	f	%	f	%
To reach account of someone	15	8.4	8	6.8	23	7.8
To humiliate someone's account without approval of them	6	3.4	9	7.6	15	5
To threaten someone	22	12.3	22	18.7	44	14.8
To insult someone	30	17	30	25.4	60	20.4
To send embarrassing, hurtful SMSs	24	13.6	11	9.3	35	11.8
To share a photo or video with others that makes owner feel uncomfortable	7	4	7	5.9	14	4.7
To spread a secret to others without permission	9	5.1	6	5.1	15	5
To gossip	21	11.9	16	13.6	37	12.6
To create profile on behalf of someone without taking permission	7	4	9	7.6	16	5.2
To set up web pages for embarrassing, slandering someone.	2	1.2	1	.8	3	1

Table 8. Frequency of the Cyber Victimization Acts in Term of Special Education Students Categories.

	Gifted students <i>n</i> = 177		Deaf students <i>n</i> = 118		Total <i>n</i> = 295	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1-My account was reached by someone	20	11.3	8	6.8	28	9.5
2-To humiliate someone's account without approval of them	8	4.6	11	9.3	19	6.4
3-I was insulted by someone	14	7.9	35	29.6	49	16.6
6-My photo or video was shared with others that makes me feel uncomfortable	11	6.4	8	6.8	19	6.4
7-My secrets were spread without my permission	20	11.3	10	8.5	30	10.1
8-I was gossiped	42	23.8	22	18.6	64	21.7
9-Profile was created on behalf of me without taking my permission	9	5.1	11	9.3	20	6.7

Gender and Grade Differences in Cyber Bullying and Cyber Victimization

A 2 (Gender) \times 6 (grades) between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed for dependent variables: cyberbullying and cyber victimization scores. The results of 2 \times 6 MANOVA showed that there is a significant interaction between gender and grade on cyberbullying and victimization (Wilks's $\lambda = .94$, $F(10, 564) = 1.85$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .3$, small effect). Results also found a significant main effect for the grade (Wilks's $\lambda = .93$, $F(10, 564) = 2.18$, $p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .3$, small effect). However, there has not been found significant main effect for the gender (Wilks's $\lambda = .98$, $F(2, 282) = 2.64$, $p = .45$). The mean and standard deviation of the cyberbullying and victimization relating to the grade and gender were showed in Table 11.

Since the interaction effect found significant, analyses of the simple main effect for each dependent variable were performed as follow up test (Table 12). Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparison of simple main effect was executed to control Type-I error. Multiple comparison results indicated that differences in cyberbullying and cyber victimization experience among the different grade levels are not consistent between the male and female students with special education needs. Findings of the comparison in terms of gender differences indicated no significant differences between male and female students with special education needs regarding cyberbullying and victimization.

Table 9. Means and Standard Deviations for Traditional Bullying and Victimization.

		Traditional bullying			Traditional victimization		
		M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Female	Grade						
	5	7.59	1.05	27	9.52	3.66	27
	6	9.2	1.91	25	9.76	3.07	25
	7	8.67	2.3	18	8.56	1.50	18
	8	8.38	1.92	26	9.73	2.79	26
	9	8.17	1.58	18	8.94	3.47	18
	10	8.09	1.58	11	9.09	3.61	11
	Total	8.36	1.8	125	9.35	3.07	125
Male	Grade						
	5	8.19	2.32	21	8.24	2.07	21
	6	8.5	2.34	36	9.22	1.76	36
	7	8.9	2.58	30	9.53	2.42	30
	8	8.67	2.25	27	8.52	2.05	27
	9	9.46	1.84	24	10.13	2.89	24
	10	9.69	1.84	32	9.31	1.62	32
	Total	8.92	2.24	170	9.19	2.18	170
Total	Grade						
	5	7.85	1.73	48	8.96	3.1	48
	6	8.79	2.18	61	9.44	2.38	61
	7	8.81	2.46	48	9.17	2.16	48
	8	8.53	2.08	53	9.11	2.49	53
	9	8.90	1.83	42	9.62	3.17	42
	10	9.28	1.89	43	9.26	2.25	43

Discussion

The purpose of this explanatory study was to examine the traditional and cyber victimization experiences of the students with SEN attending segregated special education schools. Although a great deal number of research findings have been documented on bullying among the mainstream students and its detrimental consequences for them in the international literature and Turkish literature as well, few research findings have been found on bullying among students with special education needs. The findings of the descriptive analyses showed that 28.1 of the students with special education needs were identified as bullies. Moreover, 39.3% of the students with special education needs reported being bullied during this education year. These findings are parallel with the other studies conducted in the international literature. For instance, [Wei et al., \(2015\)](#) findings demonstrated that the frequency of traditional bullying among the students with special education needs attending segregated special

Table 10. Multiple Comparison of Traditional Bullying and Victimization Across Gender and Grade Levels.

Comparison (CB)	Traditional bullying			Traditional victimization		
	Mean differences	s.e.	95% CI	Mean differences	s.e.	95% CI
Gender						
Female students with special education needs versus Male	-0.6*	0.24	-1.039,-0.61	0.10	0.32	-0.52, 0.73
Grade levels						
5 female versus male	-0.6	-0.59	-1.76, 0.56	1.28	0.75	-0.2, 2.76
6 female versus male	0.70	0.53	-0.34, 1.74	0.53	0.67	-0.7, 1.86
7 female versus male	-0.3	0.6	-1.42, 0.96	-0.97	0.77	-2.49, 0.5
8 female versus male	0.28	0.55	-1.38, 0.81	1.12	0.71	-0.1, 2.61
9 female versus male	-1.29*	0.63	-2.54, -0.43	-1.18	0.8	-0.4, 2.76
10 female versus male	-1.59*	0.71	-2.99, -0.19	-0.2	0.9	-2, 1.55

education schools was around 27%. Moreover, [Carran and Kellner \(2009\)](#) indicated that 39.6% of the students with special education needs were victimized during the education year. Research findings revealed that the traditional bullying experience is a serious issue among the students with special education needs. If nearly one-third of the students with special education needs reported engaging in traditional bullying and there are other students who witnessed these incidents, the majority of the students in special education schools suffer from the impact of bullying. Therefore, researchers, and educators of the special education students need to expand their awareness about the bullying phenomenon and carry out further studies to shed into light nature and severity of bullying among the students with SEN.

Data for the present study were collected from the students with special education needs attending segregated special education schools. Therefore, we do not compare the frequency of bullying between Turkish students with special education and without special education. Previous studies on bullying prevalence among the Turkish mainstream school students reported bullying frequency between 12% and 30.2%, based on education level of sample ([Pişkin, 2010](#); [Topcu, 2014](#)). Findings of the current study exceeded above-mentioned ranges. Therefore, these findings revealed that bullying is a serious concern for the student with special education needs. Regarding frequency differences between deaf and gifted students, findings revealed that deaf

Table 11. Means and Standard Deviations for Cyber Bullying and Victimization.

		Traditional bullying			Traditional victimization		
		M	SD	N	M	SD	N
Female	Grade						
	5	10.37	1.08	27	10.78	1.62	27
	6	11.44	1.5	25	12.12	2.26	25
	7	11.94	2.65	18	12.06	2.41	18
	8	10.35	1.41	26	10.96	1.82	26
	9	11.17	1.76	18	11.56	1.92	18
	10	10.81	.75	11	12.36	2.5	11
	Total	10.96	1.69	125	11.52	2.09	125
Male	Grade						
	5	10.76	1.48	21	10.52	.87	21
	6	10.52	.81	36	10.83	1.81	36
	7	11.57	2.21	30	11.93	2.29	30
	8	11.33	2.32	27	11.96	2.47	27
	9	11	.98	24	11.58	2.04	24
	10	11.71	1.55	32	12.0	2.0	32
	Total	11.16	1.68	170	11.49	2.06	170
Total	Grade						
	5	10.54	1.27	48	10.67	1.34	48
	6	10.9	1.22	61	11.36	2.09	61
	7	11.7	2.36	48	11.98	2.31	48
	8	10.85	1.97	53	11.47	2.21	53
	9	11.07	1.35	42	11.57	1.96	42
	10	11.49	1.44	43	12.09	2.11	43

students were more likely to be both victims and bullies than gifted students. Findings revealed that 21.1% of the deaf students were bullies, and 21.7% of them were victims of traditional bullying. 7% of the gifted students were found as bullies, on the other hand, 21.7% of them were found as victims of traditional bullying in the current study. These findings are parallel with international literature. A group of researchers argued that students having an observable or visible disability may increase being the target of bullying victimization (Carter & Spencer, 2006; Swearer et al., 2012; Weiner & Miller, 2006). When students with special education needs take revenge, they were labeled as bullies. Deaf students would be an easy target of bullying because they do not speak when they were victimized. Another perspective is that gifted students are less likely to be victims compared to other student populations (Sureda et al., 2020). Peters and Bain (2011) indicated that 4.3% of gifted students were identified as bullies. Therefore, gifted students in the present study were less likely to be involved in bullying incidents than deaf students because of their own characteristics.

Table 12. Multiple Comparison of Cyber Bullying and Victimization Across Gender and Grade Levels.

Comparison (CB)	Cyber bullying			Cyber victimization		
	Mean differences	s.e.	95% CI	Mean differences	s.e.	95% CI
Gender						
Female students with special education needs versus Male	-0.13	0.19	-0.5, 0.25	0.16	0.24	-0.3, 0.65
Grade levels						
5 female versus male	-0.39	0.47	-1.32, 0.54	0.25	0.58	-0.9, 1.41
6 female versus male	0.91*	0.42	0.75, 1.75	1.28*	0.52	0.25, 2.32
7 female versus male	0.37	0.48	-0.58, 1.33	0.12	0.6	-1.06, 1.31
8 female versus male	-0.98*	0.44	-1.87, -0.1	-1.01	0.56	-2.09, 0.93
9 female versus male	0.16	0.51	-0.8, 1.17	-0.28	0.63	-1.27, 1.21
10 female versus male	-0.9	0.57	-2.02, 0.2	0.36	0.7	-1.02, 1.75

When acts of bullying and victimization among the students with SEN are investigated, students with special education needs to experience a various type of bullying and victimization involving physical, verbal and relational bullying (Andreou et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2015; Kloosterman et al., 2013). Our findings were congruent with the previous results. The most common act of bullying was relational bullying (excluding someone from a group) in the present study. But a group of researchers found that the most common bullying forms among students with special education needs were verbal and physical bullying (Braun, 2001; Fumes & Oliveria, 2013; Vessey & O'Neill, 2011). Verbal bullying is also a frequent form of bullying found in Turkish studies on bullying among the mainstream students (Atik, 2006; Pişkin, 2010). To date, there is no Turkish publication to be encountered on bullying among students with special education needs to compare findings of the present study. These differences may stem from different sample groups (students with learning disabilities, autistic, blind vs.) and measurement tools used to assess bullying. Moreover, it is not surprising to find that the most common acts among deaf students were relational bullying. They do not speak due to their disability. In addition, results of Pearson Chi-Square analyses revealed that there are significant differences in the form of bullying acts between gifted and deaf students in this sample population.

When gender differences were taken into consideration, male students with special education needs reported a higher frequency of traditional bullying (29.4%) and traditional victimization (40%) than female students with special education needs (18.4% and 38.4%, respectively). Gender differences are in agreement with other findings derived from other research. Male students with special education needs were more likely to engage in traditional bullying either a bullies or victims than female students with special education needs. The current study did not aim at providing an explanation why gender differences exist between male and female students with special education students. This study is descriptive/correlational. Despite this, differences may stem from difficulties girls with special education needs face in social interaction with peers (Andreou et al., 2013) such as low self-esteem or instilled gender roles. It would be harder for students with special education needs to establish and maintain mutual friendship with peers than male students with special education needs. Culturally, girls in Turkey were raised under closer supervision and aggressive behaviors demonstrated by boys were more likely to be tolerated (Erzur-Baker, 2010). Gender of students with special education needs should be considered when examining frequencies of bullying. Further research is needed to justify why gender differences exist between males and females on bullying involvement. Although in the international literature, grade differences about traditional bullying were not investigated in depth. Swearer et al. (2012) found that there is no significant grade difference among students with special education needs.

Earlier studies conducted on victimization revealed that the students with special needs were more victimized than students without special education needs (Sentenac et al., 2011; Braun, 2001; Estell et al., 2009; Zeedy et al., 2014; Norwich & Kelly, 2004; Hershkowitz et al., 2007; Rose et al., 2009; Nabuzoka, 2003; Rowley et al., 2012). The present study revealed that nearly 40% of the students with special needs were victims of traditional bullying. Results of frequency regarding traditional victimization are relatively higher than some studies conducted in the other. Blake et al. (2012) found victimization rates between 24.5% and 34.1% for the students with special needs in a national representative sample. In the Chen and Schwartz (2012) study, 28% of the students with special education needs reported being bullied during the current school year. Moreover, van Roekel et al., (2010) findings based on teacher reports revealed that 30% of the students with SEN in special education schools were victimized weekly. Factors that lead to an increased rate of victimization for the students with special education needs are communication difficulties, lack of social skills, behavior problems, psychological distress or low self-esteem (Conti-Ramsden & Botting, 2004; Fisher et al., 2012; Nettelbeck & Wilson, 2002; Rose et al., 2009).

The present study revealed that in terms of the main effect for the gender and grade, there was no significant difference found on either traditional bullying or victimization. Significant interactions were determined between the gender and grade level of the students with special education needs. Multiple comparisons revealed that the male students with special education needs were involved in traditional bullying more than the female students with special education needs. This finding is in accordance with

other studies reporting that males with special education needs are more like to be bullies than females with special education needs in bullying incidents (Glumbic & Zunic-Pavlovic, 2010; Reiter & Lapidot-Lefler, 2007). Results of the present study do not generate answers why gender differences exist. Yet speculations could be made. Bullies tend to be socially dominant, are perceived to be popular (Farmer et al., 2012). Girls who view themselves as the ladylike may sneer at other females who seem more masculine (Skillman, 2014). In this respect, culturally male students expected to be extraverted assertive in the Turkish culture.

Furthermore, one of the important purposes of the current study is to examine cyberbullying and victimization among the students with SEN. Overall, cyberbullying and victimization among those students with special education needs were found as 13.5% and 23.3%, respectively. A few studies examined cyberbullying among the students with SEN in the international literature (MacFarlane & Mina, 2018). Frequencies in international literature on cyberbullying were reported between 12.6% (Heiman et al., 2015) and 19.6% (Baek, 2015). Findings of the current study were close to the above-mentioned ranges. As far as is known, this is the first study to investigate cyberbullying among Turkish students with special education needs. A great deal of research findings have been published about cyberbullying among the mainstream school students in Turkish literature. For instance, Özdemir and Akar (2011) found that cyberbullying frequency for 336 high school students was found to be 10%. Another study conducted by Avcak (2009) revealed that 19.7% of mainstream students ($N = 695$) engaged in cyberbullying. Results of the present study are parallel with other studies conducted in Turkey. Therefore, cyberbullying is an important concern for the students with special education needs in the sample special education schools. Further research is needed to assess the nature and severity of cyberbullying among the students with SEN

One of the important issues revealed in the findings of the present study is that deaf students reported more frequent cyberbullying and victimization than gifted students. The current study did not provide a cause and effect relationship. Technological developments such as text messaging or instant messaging aided deaf students to communicate with others easily. Findings of the current study reported that 60% of deaf students have a cellphone and 50% of them connected to the Internet by self-phone. Beside the benefits of technological advancement for deaf students, this availability of technological devices sometimes leads to cyberbullying. The result of the present study supported the findings of Bauman and Pero (2010) who argued that deaf students were more likely to be victimized than hearing students.

The results of this study revealed that male students with special education needs are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying and victimization than female students with special education needs. Cyberbullying involvement between male and female students with special education needs peaked at nine and ten grades. Reaching the Internet and self-phone at that grade level would be easier than previous grade levels. Male students with special education needs spend more time on the Internet than females with special education needs. Research on gender differences and cyberbullying among students

with special education needs showed inconsistent results in the international literature. For instance, [Didden et al. \(2009\)](#) reported no significant relationship between gender and cyberbullying among students with special education needs. However, [Heiman et al. \(2015\)](#) found out that female students with special education needs were more likely to be cyber victims than male students with special education needs. These differences might be related to role socialization, such as girls show higher level of empathy than boys ([Topcu & Erdur-Baker, 2012](#)).

Findings of the present study pointed out that deaf students reported a higher frequency of traditional and cyber victims than gifted students. This study does not have data on why these differences exist between deaf and gifted students. Some speculation can be made. Deaf students may not be aware of the risk of communication tools ([Bauman & Pero, 2010](#)). Informing deaf students about safe usage of the Internet may reduce cyberbullying involvement among deaf students. Special education schools may provide parent training about parental monitoring for deaf students. The majority of deaf students engaged in traditional bullying (21.1), as compared to cyberbullying (7.1%). Our findings may be parallel with previous studies conducted in other countries ([Bauman & Pero, 2010](#); [Slonje & Smith, 2008](#)). However, this circumstance was not the case with gifted students.

Limitations

Although the results of the present study significantly foster Turkish bullying literature, it has several limitations. First, the sample of this study just consisted of students with special education needs chosen from Elazığ and Malatya and the numbers of the students with SEN were not disproportionate. Future studies would collect data from different special education school types, including schools for students with physical impairment, schools for students with learning disabilities, or blind students. Second, the current study relied on the self-report of the students with SEN. Interpretation of the students with special education needs about questions was important in the self-report studies. It is possible that participants may provide a response that is perceived as more socially acceptable, rather than giving a genuine and truthful answer. Therefore, for future research, it is necessary to obtain data from multi-informant sources such as parents of students with special education needs and their teachers. The third limitation of the study is related to generalization of the findings. Since data have been obtained from the five segregated special education schools, it is not appropriate to make generalizations about other segregated special education schools located in the different parts of Turkey.

Conclusion and Implications for the practice

Findings of the current study suggest several implications for understanding traditional and cyberbullying among the students with special education needs. Findings of the present study revealed that bullying and victimization among the students with SEN at

segregated special education schools have frequently occurred. Relying on these findings, educators working at segregated special education schools may increase their awareness toward bullying incidents taking place in their school. These findings may help educators of special education, school counselor and researchers step up preparing bullying prevention program for the students with special education needs and findings can be used as a dataset for the comparative studies.

One of the main purposes of this study was to investigate the cyberbullying and victimization involvement of the students with SEN. Developing technology may enable students with SEN to communicate with other people via text messages or the Internet. However, hundreds of articles and several books were published on cyberbullying among the typically developing students, few studies focused on cyberbullying among the students with SEN. It also shed light on the fact that cyberbullying is a serious problem for the students with SEN. This study would be the starting point for further Turkish research about cyberbullying and related variables such as loneliness, depressive feelings etc. Parent education and counseling are the crucial strategies used in preventing cyberbullying. Training of parents of the students with special education needs about Internet usage and cyberbullying would help students with special education needs to reduce the amount of cyberbullying they experienced and improve their psychological development. Training students with SEN about how to use the Internet safely would be a protective factor for them. As a part of increasing awareness and preventing cyberbullying, school personnel, including school administrators, teachers of special education, and school counselors would be educated about basic concepts of cyberbullying or online behavior; after teaching them, they may teach their students with SEN

School counselors could be a special place for both intervening and preventing cyberbullying among the students with SEN. School counselors can increase awareness about cyberbullying for school personnel, parents and students. They can also implement cyberbullying interventions at special education schools. Possible intervention strategies for school counselors are to teach students with SEN how they can define cyberbullying and report it. The Ministry of National Education might create websites where parents and students may find useful information about the Internet and the prevention of cyberbullying; in this sense, public awareness will increase. The websites enable teachers, parents and educators to reach practical information relevant to cyberbullying prevention.

The present study contributed to Turkish bullying literature. Findings from the present study revealed that further studies are needed to investigate bullying and victimization at segregated special education schools as well as inclusive school settings. Future research concerning protective and risk factors such as social support, peer relations or coping skills for bullying among the students with SEN might provide valuable information in order to understand the bullying dynamic in segregated special education schools.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. These data are not publicly available due to [restrictions, e.g., their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants].

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