Education as prevention of cyberbullying

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Abstract: The number of IT users is rapidly increasing, and most of them belong to the young population. In addition to numerous possibilities, modern technology also brings many risks. The aim of this work is to determine how much and for what purposes young people use digital devices and the Internet, how they expose themselves to the risks of digital communication and to what extent young people are involved in various forms of, as well as how to react in case they are victims of cyberbullying. In this paper we used descriptive statistic methods. The sample consisted of 98 pupils from two primary schools. The results showed that most pupils who use the Internet, are aware of the measure of protection, but do not use them enough, and as a result, they are most often exposed to the harassment on social networks. In the case of violence, pupils are rarely asking for help, and teachers mostly warn them of possible danger.

Keywords: cyberbullying; education; prevention.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Internet and modern achievements of information technology (IT) are talked about more than all other media combined. The number of users each year grows, and contents are becoming richer and more diverse. The development of global computer network opened new possibillities that lead to a series of irregularities and abuse of the use of technical achievements.

Due to the lack of education regarding the dangers to which they are exposed on social networks, inexperienced users thoughtlessly leave information and multimedia content on their profiles that can be abused by variously motivated Internet users. Thus opening the way for the expansion of different forms of violence. Defining the parameters of cyberbullying (for example, which communication technologies are involved, how they can be abused, or on whom, and with what effect) are somewhat proven difficult, partly because the methods used by cyber bullies are diverse. The violence includes many different types of behavior. However, in its essence cyberbullying includes bullying through the use of technologies such as the Internet and mobile phones.

Cyberbullying can include any form of multi-messages sent over the Internet or mobile phone, which aim to injure, disturb or otherwise damage the child, youth or adults who cannot protect itself against such procedures. It may be in the form of a text or a video messages, photos or calls, and violence increasingly expands to several forms of communication, including sounds, images, animations and photos, [1].

For years, the literature has shown us examples of many types of this type of violence [2, 3]:

- Electronic messages that contain vulgarity and insults (flaming);
- Sending threatening messages;
- Defamation and accusing the other sending rumors and lies to destroy someone's reputation or ruining relations with others;
- Under false pretenses, bullies present themselves as another person (using his/her nickname or password, etc.), therefore, doing the things that are destroying the reputation of another person, or placing it into conflict with others;
- Indiscretion - revealing one's secrets, information and images that are not intended for others;
- Turn off - eject someone from a forum, mailing list, etc.;
- Sending inappropriate sexual material (sexting).

2. ORGANIZATION OF RESEARCH

This research was conducted in order to provide information on how much and how pupils use digital technology and how much they are exposed to the risks, as well as which factors of exposure to risk and violence through the Internet, are connected. The results of this research should serve as a basis for prevention of abuse on digital media and to raise awareness among pupils, teachers and parents about the role of digital media in modern life.

The focus of the research were the following forms of digital violence:

- Harassment through emails (insults, threats, bad jokes and similar);
- Harassment on social networks;
- Harassment on the websites: concealing identity, taking the identity, impersonation, using other people's accounts, uploading photos and videos of others without their approval, setting up false and offensive content, sending viruses.

Method of research: The research is of a questionnaire type. For the purposes of this research a questionnaire for pupils of the eighth grade was made. The questionnaire was developed starting from the questionnaires from the research that is part of the project "Stop Digital Violence", [4].

Data processing techniques: Methods of descriptive statistics - frequencies and percentages has been used. For data processing I SPSS statistical software was used.

Sample: The survey was conducted on a sample of 98 primary school pupils, of which 46,9% of the pupils were boys and 53,1% of the pupils were girls. Examinees are consisted of four eighth grade classes from two primary schools in Cacak. *The variables*: gender and frequency of using a computer.

Flow examination: Testing pupils was conducted at the beginning of the October, the school year of 2013/2014. Estimated time to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Possession of digital devices and Internet access

Among eight grade pupils who use the Internet, more than half use the Internet every day (49%) or almost daily (37,8%), while a very small percentage of them use once or twice a

month, only 1%.

Most parents use the Internet (90,8%).

Pupils find that 52% of parents know how to use the computer and internet worse than them, one third (32,7) knows how to use the Internet as well as their parents, while the rest of the pupils considered that parents know how to use a computer better than them.

When pupils were asked at what age they first entered the Internet, 32,7% of pupils first had access to the Internet at age of ten, half the pupils (15,3%) have joined the Internet at age of seven. Most pupils first joined the Internet from 7 to 11 years of age.

3.2. Activities of pupils on the Internet

Pupils most often use the Internet to visit a social network daily (72,4%), watch videos, series or movies on the Internet (45,9%), also to browse Web pages (42,9%); 37,8% of pupils plays games every day and talks via chats. Pupils rarely visit the forums and read or write blogs. Once or twice a week, pupils use the Internet for learning for school (40,8%).

Pupils accept friendship request from people they do not know in 57,1%. Leaving the personal information on profiles/blogs are 30,6% of pupils. 27,5% of pupils responds to the stranger's messages, and 30,6% corresponded with strangers actively.

Pupils know to apply protective measures on the Internet in a high percentage (like blocking people on social networks, privacy settings, finding information on the Internet, and how to safely use the internet), while 53,1% of pupils do not know how to block the person from whom they do not want to receive an e-mail.

According to obtained data, in most cases (93,9% of children who have a profile), personal information can only be seen by people who are their friends on social networks.

E-mail and exchanging e-mails is the least popular form of communication among pupils. Therefore, there is no disturbance of e-mails as a common form of cyberbullying.

To the harassment on the social networks are exposed up to 16,3% of the pupils. Frequency of exposure is not a decisive factor, because one photo can be enough to jeopardize pupils.

In the case of harassment, most of the pupils did nothing. They tried to talk or have tried to return the same way, as responded to 2% of pupils. Only 1% told their parents, and 3% told his/her friend. None of the pupils has never contacted a teacher or a school psychologist, suggesting that schools should be involved more in this problem.

3.3. Helping children by adults in case of cyberbullying

Parents are trying to find out what their children are doing on the Internet (50,1%), and equal per cent know how to determine which sites they visited. Only 27,6% of parents are applying technical measures of protection. Parents warn children about possible dangers (80,6%), and provide advice for the protection on the Internet (64,3%). Teachers warn pupils about possible risk (90,8%), while parents give advice for the protection on the Internet in a slightly smaller percentage (87,8%).

3.4. The frequency of using computer by gender

The girls, compared with boys, are visiting more social networks. Attendance for girls was 80,8% and 63% for boys. Girls also talk more via chats.

Boys are more concerned with technical measures to protect computer and updating programs and applications (30,4%), as well as activating firewall (13%).
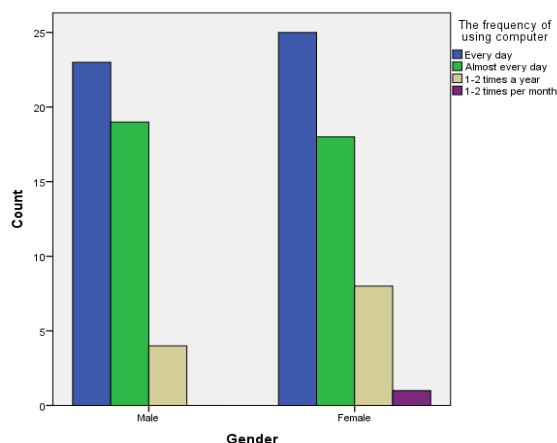
Figure 1. *The frequency of using computer by gender*

Fig. 1 shows the differences between boys and girls at the frequency of Internet use.

From the perspective of pupil's parents, they have sought to find out what the girls are doing on the Internet (61,5%), and those parents would warn them of possible dangers (96,2%), also give them an advice on how to protect themselves on the Internet (78,8%), while parents of boys do less monitoring and warning them of possible danger.
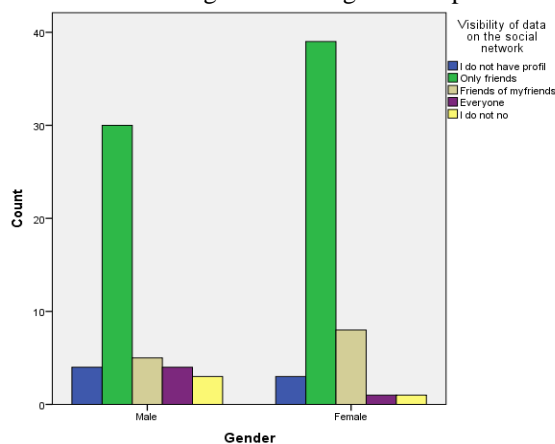

Figure 2. *Visibility of data on the social network by gender*

According to the analyzed results, (Fig. 2), the largest number of respondents (98% of children with profile) say that information about themselves can be seen only by people who are their friends on social networks. However, girls (15,4%) slightly less boys (10,9%) while having a profile and sharing private data with others.

3.5. Acceptance of friendship from unknown persons through frequency of using of the Internet

Pupils who go online daily, often accept a request for a friendship from unknown people, while those who use the internet once or twice a month are not exposed to such a risk, [5].
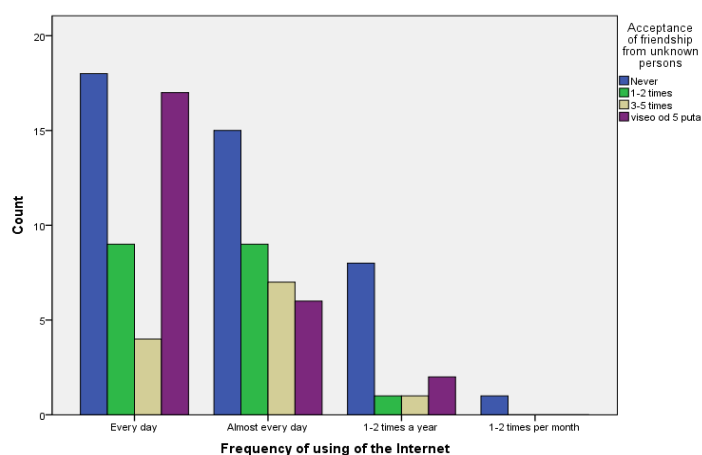
Figure 3. *Acceptance of friendship from unknown people through frequency of using of the Internet*

4. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Children need to develop a trustworthy relationship with some of the adults worth trusting (teacher, parent, or someone else reliable), so that they can talk about problems that they have experienced on the Internet. They should use the privacy settings on accounts that they use. This will certainly reduce the risk of violence through internet, [6].

Parents need to educate their children about the rules of behavior on the Internet. They also need to monitor children's activities while online, especially in the initial phase of the researching the Internet. Parents must give their children freedom, privacy and accountability. They will not be able to monitor their children constantly, so it is essential to maintain communication with children, so that they would be willing to say if they encountered unpleasant or disturbing experiences, [7].

There are many preventive steps that teachers can take to help reduce the number of incidents of cyberbullying that occur at school and outside of school. Key components of an effective program of prevention of violence can easily adapt to include the segments of cyberbullying prevention. An important step towards the implementation of effective violence prevention programs is through systematic approach, [2].

Pupils may be required to create posters against violence that will be shown in the school. Older pupils can make a short presentation for the younger pupils about the importance of using technology. The point is to condemn the behavior (without a conviction of the perpetrator!), sending a clear message to the rest of the school community that violence in any form is not acceptable, [7].

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research results allow us to conclude several aspects of prevention, and above all: informing children, parents and teachers. Safety education of young people is a very important factor in the prevention of cyberbullying. Preventative solutions should include the education of parents, teachers/school children, as well as enhanced system of control and punishment measures.

Parents' education plays an important role in the prevention of solving this problem. Parents must be aware of the problem of cyberbullying as well as with preventive measures, using specialized programs to control and block unwanted sites.

Children need to learn about and be educate about the threats on the Internet, to recognize when the situation can be classified as risk and to respect the rules of behavior on the Internet. In addition to the indispensable support of parents in the prevention of electronic violence, it is also important and necessary to support the teachers and schools, and the entire community throughout the media and educational campaign to raise awareness of the abuse over the Internet, of safe Internet usage, the preventive measures.

Only combined education of parents, teachers/schools and children leads to solving the problem of cyberbullying, because it will consequently increase the safety on the Internet.

It is said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and the weakest link in any system is usually human. The most important thing is applying constantly education for all users, especially the young population, as well as setting the boundaries to access and use the Internet, each year moving towards younger generations, as they are the most vulnerable to electronic violence.

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