



UNICEF

STUDY GUIDE



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1. Letter from Secretary General

Esteemed participants,

I am honored to welcome you all here as the Secretary General of the first edition of MUNEA'25.

Our Academic team has created these guides to lead a pathway in your journey. They are meant to support your research and make your experience more productive, both during your sessions and throughout the conference. We will be inspired to closely watch your progress in the committees as both the Academic and Organization team.

In addition, I would like to extend my special thanks to my DSGs, Alp Arslan Şahin and Yağız Eren Şahin who helped me a lot and also tired me out. Even though we disagreed on most of the points we discussed, I am really proud of them.

As the Secretary General of the conference, and with our goal of contributing the development of a qualified Turkish youth, I wish all our participants, from first timers to experienced ones, a meaningful three-day journey in advancing their diplomatic skills and knowledge.

2. Letter from Under-Secretary General

Esteemed delegates of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, It is my pleasure to welcome you all to MUNEA'25, a highly prestigious conference of its kind,

I am your Under Secretary General Ceylin and I am an 11th grader in Ankara Erman Ilıcak Science High School. Before we continue, I would like to give my special thanks to our wonderful Secretariat Melis, Alp and Yağız for giving me this opportunity and their relentless work on this conference.

With Kerem we tried to make one of the most unforgettable UNICEF of all the times with the agenda we have decided "Decreasing Potential Threats for Children in Social Media". Despite this being a current topic I believe this agenda is also something that everyone can relate and learn something from. So I encourage every single one of you to read the guide, search for solutions and speak accordingly to your given country's policy. And please do not hesitate to contact me via my mail if you have any questions about the committee.
(ceylin040828@gmail.com)

I cannot end this letter without thanking my dear Academic Assistant Kerem. I know that without his help writing this study guide would be like a torture to me so I am really grateful to all of his efforts on this committee.

I wish all of you comprehensive and fruitful debate. See you at the conference!

Your sincerely,

Ceylin ÖZCAN

3. Letter from Academic Assistant

The most valuable participants of MUNEA'25

As the Academic Assistant of UNICEF Committee in MUNEA'25, I would like to welcome you all to this prestigious, honorable and new conference. I hope you will all have fruitful discussions. My name is Kerem AKTAŞ, I am a high school student studying at Ankara ASELSAN Vocational and Anatolian High School. Before I continue with the rest of the letter, I should warn you that this is going to be a long letter as this will be my first ACAS experience.

One of the main reasons we chose this topic—beyond the trending discussions on social media—is the deeply rooted and well-known issue of "rights" and their shortcomings in our country. This guide serves not only as an introduction to the topic but also as a comprehensive resource for you, dear delegates, to support your research and understanding.

Ceylin and I have dedicated a great deal of time and effort to ensuring that this guide is both informative and accessible. Our goal was to present the subject in a clear and structured manner, making it easier for you to engage with the complexities of the issue at hand.

I have no doubt that you, as delegates, will approach this matter with diligence and insight, ultimately formulating the most effective and well-thought-out solutions to address this critical and undeniable challenge—both for our country and the world.

keremmarshall7@gmail.com

Warm regards,

Kerem AKTAŞ

4. Introduction

4.1. Introduction to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established in 1946 with the aim of protecting the rights and well being of all children, across more than 190 countries and territories after World War II . UNICEF provides education, health care, nutrition, water and sanitation, and child protection to ensure that every child has access to a safe and healthy environment without poverty and violence. Its efforts are driven by the commitment to equality, ensuring that regardless of their background every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. By collaborating with international and non governmental organizations, UNICEF determines a better future for every child.

4.2. Introduction to the Agenda Item

With digitalization and the increasing usage of the internet, it became normal for everyone to have their own technological devices, including children.

In recent years with platforms such as Youtube, Instagram, Tiktok and X social media usage has become very popular among children. While this popularity brings creativity, development of social connections and makes it easier to learn, on the contrary it carries potential risks for children. Excessive usage can lead to decreasing face to face interactions which can affect the child's social skills and academic success while it also brings health issues especially mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, along with it.

One of the most growing problem of all is, cyberbullying among peers where the aftermath of these actions may end with long-term psychological effects, distress and even to suicide in some cases. Additionally the large scale of contents in such social media platforms contain inappropriate contents whether it's explicit images, harmful challenges, or negative influences that can affect their mental and emotional well-being. These risks can overshadow the benefits of social media without proper guidance for the young.

5. Reasons of Overly Social Media Usage by Children

5.1. Communication Issues

5.1.1. Communication Issues with Parent

In this generation, where everyone uses the internet and social media it becomes hard for old generations to keep up, because of the change in traditions which leads to communication gaps between the children and their parents.

With the internet everything changed; communication styles, relationships, getting information, shopping and more. Eventually old generations who just started to learn how to use and follow up with the updates are having a rough time getting used to it. Especially when there is someone from the new generation, born with the internet and using it in the individual's daily life actively, at home the comparison with them makes everything worse. This is where the miscommunication starts between the children and their legal guardians.

This situation makes the parent feel frustrated and helpless since the traditional methods seem to fall short in the new world. Meanwhile their kids, immersed in the digital world, may find it easier to express themselves through screens. Considering the position that the families in currently they may experience issues with separation and might as well start using social media to close their relationship with their children. Although loneliness stems from less or less satisfying relationships than one might want, research shows that adolescents detailing social media use with parents also report more prominent overall communication with parents.

Providing a supportive environment and perceived social support for adolescents plays a crucial role in communication with their parents. In supportive environments where the children feel safe, guided and empowered, it is more likely for them to use social media responsibly while understanding the risks and benefits of it. A research done to understand the effect of parental attitudes and perceived social support on the child's internet addiction shows that adolescents who have internet addiction have less perceived social support and difficulty in expression of their feelings and emotion regulation. Additionally, internet addicted adolescents' parents have insufficient involvement and monitoring with less emotional availability. These data show that perceived social support from family plays a great role in problematic usage of social media. In families where parents are approachable, understanding, and willing to engage in discussions about their online experiences, the children are more likely to open up to their parents when encountering difficulties in online platforms, properly use social media and

decrease the feeling of loneliness which encourages adolescents to communicate face to face. This proves that a supportive environment can maintain positive adaptation in the usage of social media.

To offer a supportive environment to kids and adolescents, parents should talk with them about their usage of social media and what they see and learn from it without a fear of punishment, teach their children privacy, misinformation and cyberbullying, set limits to social media usage and inappropriate content that they can face from online platforms and lastly do the things that can be a model for their child on social media.

5.1.2. Asociality Among Peers

Today's kids are always on their phones texting from various kinds of platforms and watching videos whenever they have time to spare because they fear they might miss a message or a trend which is called "Fear of Missing Out". This is a fear most children have, especially the ones who have excessive usage of social media. The root of this problem is also them, in social media every post or an action has a big impact on the adolescents. When one of them does not know about the thing that has been just shared, that person cannot keep up with the conversation with others and make that person feel left out. To not feel this exclusion, children become more and more addicted to their phones and give most of their time to surf on social media.

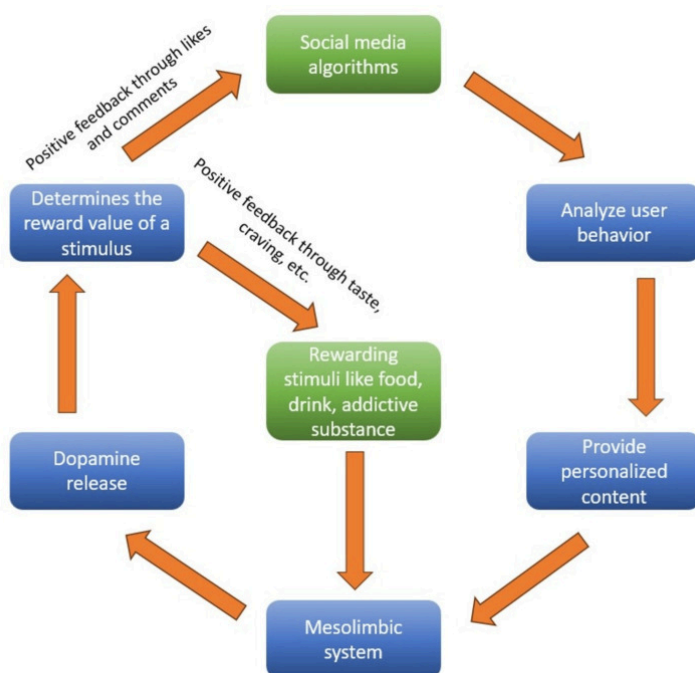
Additionally, nonstop texting among adolescents has an unavoidable impact on them. When the kids spend their time texting with their friends,

socializing online, they do not realize that they lose the communication skills that they need in real life. This reduces face to face interaction, decreases empathy, weakens the verbal skills and nonverbal cues, makes the person anxious in public spaces which are the signs of antisociality in person.

5.2. System of Applications

Social media companies develop algorithms that flash personalized content and stimulate the brain's reward mechanism with the contents that are shared in platforms to keep people on their phone for a significant amount of time in order to compete with other companies and increase their income.

5.2.1. Reward Mechanism of Brain



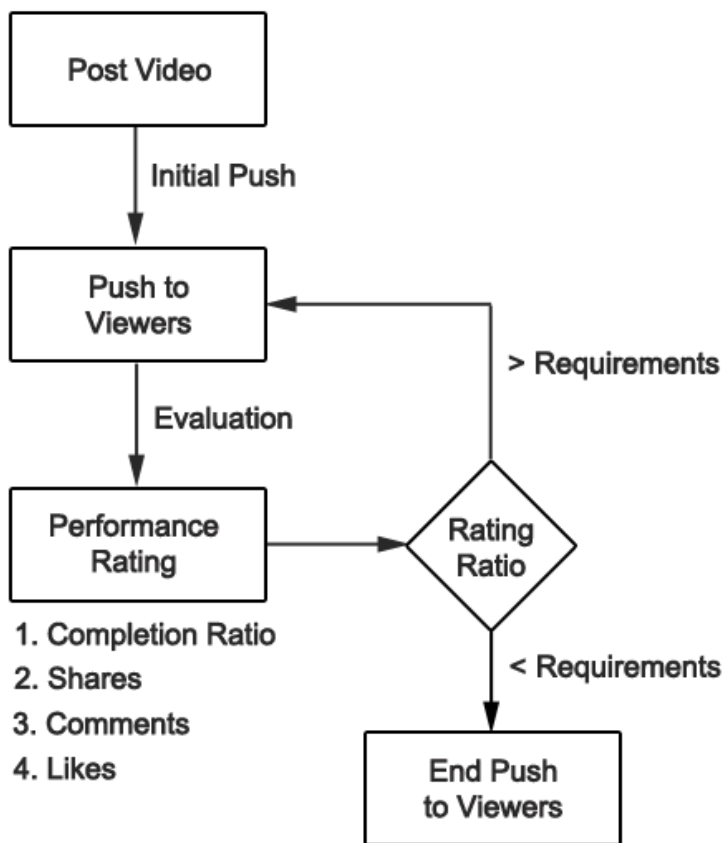
The brain's reward system is a mechanism that reinforces behaviours necessary for survival. Core of this system is the mesolimbic dopamine pathway. When a person experiences something that makes him feel pleasure the Ventral Tegmental Area (VTA) releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that makes us feel pleasure, then dopamine goes through amygdala and

amygdala sends dopamine to nucleus accumbens which coordinates motor skills in a person. From nucleus accumbens dopamine goes to the prefrontal cortex which helps in motivation and concentration in

person .VTA also sends the dopamine to the hippocampus in the temporal lobe which is responsible for the regulation of the memories. Then the individual feels pleasure. The activators for the release of dopamine may be physical intimacy, food, social interaction and drugs. When a person experiences one of those, dopamine goes through those pathways to make the person feel pleasure.

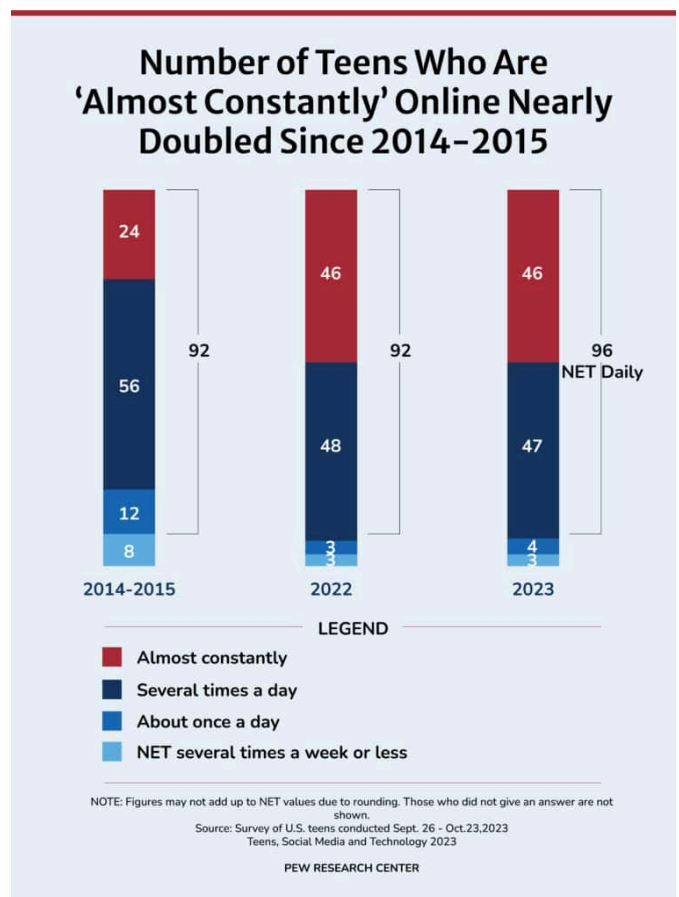
While using social media the brain considers the videos that we watch from social media platforms as a releasing factor of dopamine. So people feel pleasure after scrolling videos. However when dopamine releases serotonin hormone, a hormone that controls satisfaction, secretion decreases so the person who was scrolling videos wants to keep scrolling and the dopamine keeps releasing. Then users find it harder to unplug due to the expectation of rewards (feeling of pleasure). This situation is called the "neurological cycle of addiction". Social media systems are taking advantage of the increasing dopamine release via algorithms and digital footprints. With technological advancements and machine learning algorithms of social media this situation gets more alarming day by day.

5.2.2. Algorithms



Algorithms are set up by the social media companies to show users personalized content. Algorithms filter the contents and advertisements according to your interests, and presents you with some priorities such as time, number of followers, likes and shares, the words and hashtags that you used, the contents that you watched before etc. The priorities change with the platform. For example in facebook and instagram when you are seeing the latest shared posts, in X the posts that

you see in your profile is not affected by the time but affected with the popularity of the tweet or while ,again, in facebook and instagram you see the things from the people you follow first, in Tiktok the contents from people that you do not follow comes first. The differences in algorithms are uncountable however they have a thing in common, and it is the purpose of the



algorithms , keeping the people in the application by showing the things that they like. With the help of algorithms, users keep being engaged with applications and see more of the advertisements that they might like or love. Through this process companies make more profit and increase their income. Companies are being more and more competitive every day for popularity and earnings while the situation is becoming more and more serious for both children and adults in the mean of addiction.

For children, due to algorithms effect and the popularization of technological devices over the world the average screen time for per child has risen. According to the survey results made in the United States, in 2020, U.S teens' average usage on social media platforms was 2.5 hours a day; however by 2024 this number rose to 3.9 hours per day. This being a side algorithm may also affect kids by showing them things that are not right for their age since these algorithms focus on showing the contents which have strong reactions with more likes, views or comments. Because of this the children may feel bad or feel unstable while it can also lead to mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety and loneliness.

6. The Impact of Social Media on Children

6.1. Physical Effects

Excessive use of social media has become a problem for many children, especially with the development of technology. Of course, it was inevitable that this excessive use would also have harms. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), individuals who spend more than

3 hours a day in front of the screen have a 20 percent higher obesity rate due to decreased physical activity and movement. This misuse also causes posture disorder, eye damage, sleep disturbance, bone calcification and joint pain. According to data from the National Sleep Foundation, 60% of adolescents who use social media before bedtime experience sleep deprivation, which negatively affects their academic and cognitive performance.

Prolonged use of social media and screens increases the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders due to the repetitive strain on hand and joint movements. Keyboard use on mobile devices and prolonged periods of work on computer keyboards can cause serious pain in your joints. At the same time, posture disorders while using mobile devices or computers can cause spinal problems such as scoliosis, kyphosis and chronic back pain. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP, 2023) states that “tech neck” syndrome, which is caused by looking at screens in the wrong neck position for long periods of time, is on the rise, especially at younger ages, and can lead to cervical spine problems in the long term.

People's daily screen time also significantly affects their visual health. Various studies have shown that people's screen time use and eye health are inversely proportional. According to the research of the American Optometric Association (AOA, 2022), it has been seen that long-term screen use negatively affects visual health at a level that cannot be ignored. Various diseases such as headache, blurred vision, dry eyes, slow reflexes and eye fatigue have been observed in 70% of children. In addition, it is known that

the blue light emitted from screens disrupts melatonin production and indirectly affects sleep quality. A study conducted by Harvard Medical School (2021) revealed that the aforementioned blue light reduces sleep time by up to 45% depending on the amount, and this also negatively affects cognitive development and academic performance. Children who constantly complain and suffer from these problems may exhibit a decrease in attention span, a decrease in problem-solving skills and increased behavioral problems.

Besides all this, excessive social media use can cause bad eating habits. Most children and adolescents isolate themselves from the social world while in a digital environment, refuse to eat, or do not eat without being in a digital environment. Data from the research shows that children with prolonged and excessive screen use are more likely to consume snacks and harmful foods while using social media. According to a study which is published in the Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics (2023), children who use social media during meals can consume up to 25% more calories when compared to children who do not use their phones during meals. This hunger causes excessive interaction of neurons in the part of the brain responsible for hunger, causing the brain's natural nutritional balance to be disrupted. Besides all these effects, they may be exposed to many contents such as unhealthy food content and advertisements on social media, and unrealistic body standards, and these can negatively affect nutritional behaviors and diet choices.

In addition to all these effects, excessive and unnecessary social media use increases children's stress levels due to overstimulation. According to the findings of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2022), it has been determined that incorrect and excessive social media use increases cortisol levels in children and adolescents, increases stress and causes deterioration in functions such as immunity and anxiety. Constant warnings and notifications from the screen, online communication and content create overstimulated environments that are not suitable for children, which contributes to chronic fatigue and burnout.

Finally, we need to mention the physical harm that children experience from the content they are exposed to on the internet. Videos with sudden light and sound changes made to trigger epilepsy patients, those who write software to mislead disabled children and profit from this situation, adolescents trying to fit into stereotypes because of inappropriate sexual content sharing, self-harm due to incidents such as cyberbullying and abuse, and many other examples can be given.

For solutions, experts recommend that children's screen time be kept under control, children be encouraged to participate in outdoor activities, and appropriate and safe digital usage training be provided more frequently. Parents and educators should be aware of the actions of adolescents and children in the digital environment, encourage them to take frequent breaks, and invite them to spend time together. It is very important for the individual affected by harmful content to feel that they are not alone. At the same time,

conferences that will tell individuals their rights and what they should do are a good solution.

6.2. Psychological Effects

Psychology is another discipline affected by children's use of social media. Due to excessive and improper use of social media, anxiety levels in children may increase, children may become depressed and self-esteem values may decrease significantly. According to the meta-analysis data of Twenge (2021), it is possible to make many inferences. As a result of this research, it was observed that children who used social media for more than 5 hours a day were twice as likely to have symptoms of depression compared to children who did not use social media. While child abuse is on the rise, online bullying is at least as critical as this problem. According to Pew data, 37 out of every hundred children have been harassed online. These negative effects can even lead people to suicide from time to time.

Majority concerned about impact of social media on children's mental health, say parents are most responsible to prevent harm

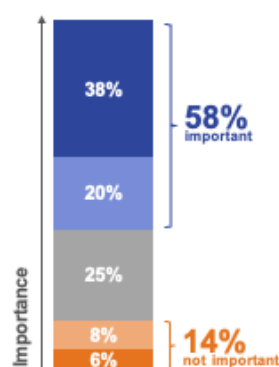
Concern for impact of social media on children's mental health

(All Americans)



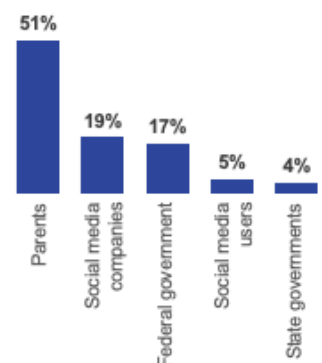
Importance of federal government addressing the impact of social media on children's mental health

(Americans at least "not very concerned")



Who should be most responsible for preventing harms on... the impact of social media on children's mental health?

(All Americans)



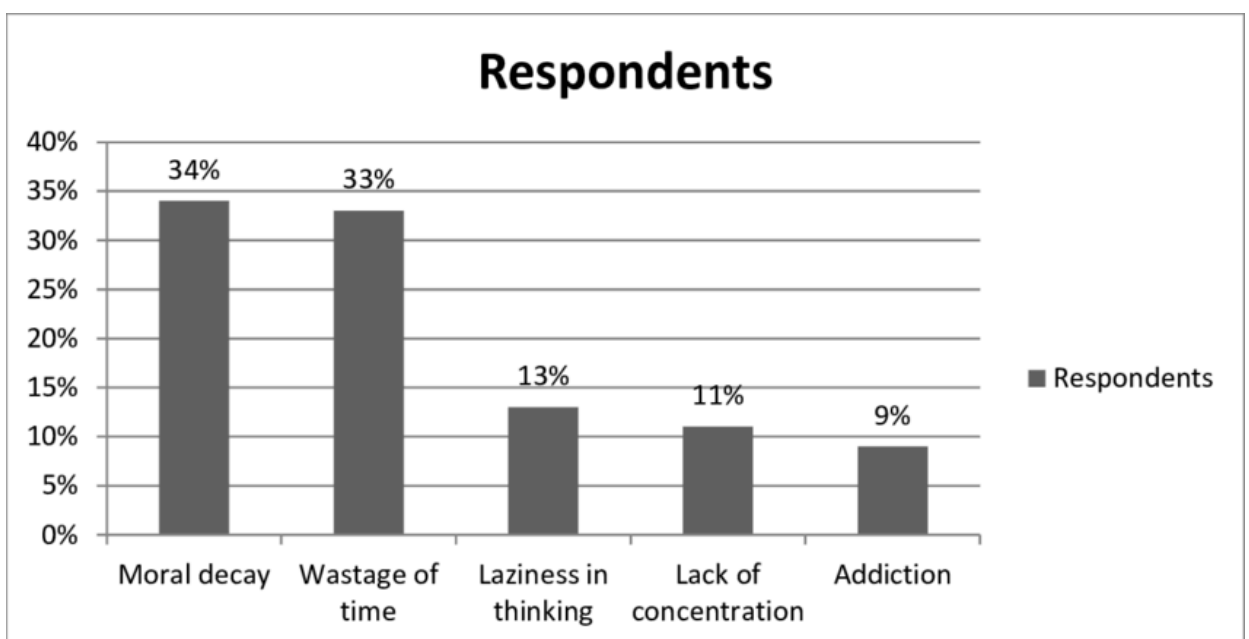
Source: Knight Foundation/Ipsos poll, fielded January 27-29, 2023
Base: All Americans (N=1,021); At least "Not very concerned" for "The impact of social media on children's mental health" (N=962)

Children are affected not only by strangers but also by the content on social media. In particular, the visual content shown by applications that use algorithms shaped according to the “Explore” pane, i.e. people's data; beauty perception, ideal body types, unrealistic content and many other harmful videos are presented in front of them. This situation causes misguidance and lack of self-confidence in children. According to many different research data (APA, 2022), adolescents who use social media have been observed to compare themselves with others. According to the findings of the American Psychological Association, this rate is 60% among adolescents and continues to increase day by day. This comparison leads to a decrease in self-esteem and negatively affects psychological health. During adolescence, which is one of the personal development processes, such problems negatively affect individuals and lead to lack of self-confidence and self-perception.

These effects not only affect the person's social life, but also trigger the development mechanisms of social media use at the neurobiological level. According to the results of a study conducted by Montag (2019), excessive and incorrect social media use increases dopamine uncontrollably and unnecessarily. This situation consists of an effect similar to that of an unauthorized application. For example, comments and likes on a post shared by a girl affect her significantly. It may be thought that the girl who receives a small number of comments and likes is outside the beauty norms and this

situation may be dragged into the person. Constantly following the statistics of these contents at the same level may lead to the processing of personal details. Such relationships and damages may pave the way for long-term concerns.

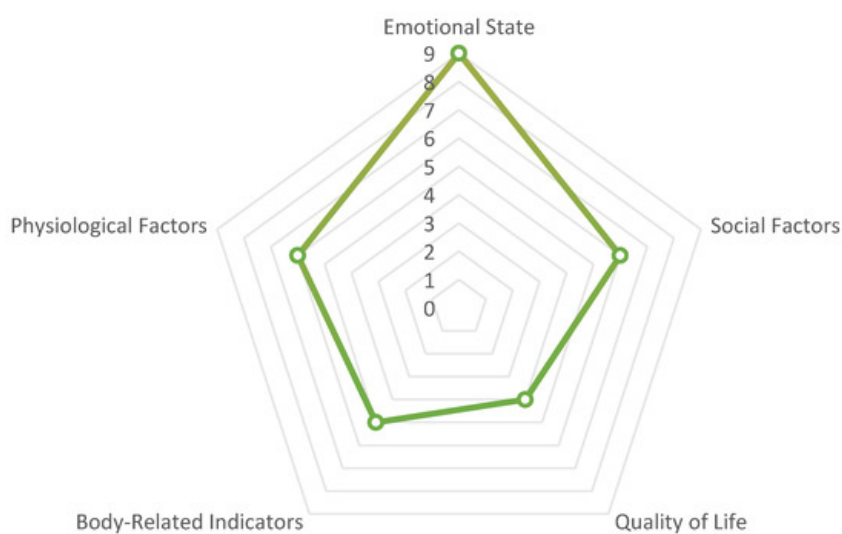
The psychological effects, like the physical effects, cannot be ignored, as well as the damage it causes to academic and cognitive success. Many different studies have shown that excessive social media use shortens the focus time of individuals due to notifications and rapid consumption of fluid content, and this has negative effects on the person's success. For example, the Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2022) revealed the aforementioned findings in a study they conducted in 2022. To summarize the effects, active stimuli in cyberspace increase the level of stress and anxiety in children, while causing chronic fatigue, brain laziness, shortening the focus time and damaging their development.



To prevent the harms and effects of this use and to minimize the harms, experts recommend supervisory software and limited use. Again, experts have stated that social awareness is important in these matters and that problems cannot be solved without society being a part of the process. While it is recommended to do a digital detox when necessary, continuing to solve problems by strengthening communication within the family is one of the healthiest and most sustainable choices of solutions.

6.3. Social Effects

Another of the many negative effects of social media is its social effects. If this issue is not handled layer by layer and carefully, it can cause serious damage to countries in long-term situations. Excessive and incorrect use of social media can lead to an unconscious young generation with weak social skills.



Social media is undoubtedly one of the technologies that make life easier today. For this reason, it plays an important role in the cognitive development of children. Of course, this technology, which makes it possible to

communicate with a relative or friends on the other side of the world, also has

harmful aspects. According to the data obtained from Pew Research Centre (2023) research, it has been determined that social media reduces face-to-face communication skills and 45 out of every 100 children suffer from this problem. Being constantly online on social media platforms can negatively affect children's capacity to communicate in the real world and their social skills and can lead to children's isolation from the outside world.

Cyberbullying is perhaps the factor that causes the most serious negativities in the use of social media. Many paedophiles, bullies, perverts and traffickers hiding behind the laws of privacy and protection of personal data on the Internet are in this cyberspace. According to the data of the National Bullying Prevention Centre (2022) research, traditional and physical bullying has gradually lost its effect next to online bullying. It has been proven in the same study that online bullying causes more negative psychological conditions in the long term compared to traditional bullying. Feeling inadequate and low self-confidence, these children started to isolate themselves from society day by day. While entrepreneurship and creating new job opportunities are so important for countries today, countries that ignore such an effect may face serious negative situations in the long term.

7. Harmful Content In Social Media

7.1. Sexual Content

In today's world, social media has become one of the most important tools for freedom of thought and expression. Although it provides individuals with the opportunity to produce content that can have a national impact, sexual

content on these platforms poses a danger that cannot be ignored in terms of both ethics and security. These harms and threats can be categorized in many different areas. Explicit pornography, images that arouse sexual desire, harassing messages, inappropriate and obscene language, defining minors as sexual objects and sexual abuse are just a few of these categories. Countries' policies on the issue vary considerably. While consensual pornography between adults is legal in many countries, content targeting children is considered a universal crime under international law and serious sanctions are imposed.

Many different data have been obtained from research on the subject, but the most striking of these data is undoubtedly the 2022 research of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). According to IWF data, over 250.000 child abuse images and sexual videos involving children were detected in just one year, and it was revealed that most of this content was shared via social media and messaging systems. Another study by UNICEF found that the age at which children are exposed to such sexually explicit videos is steadily decreasing. The same study also revealed that this problem will have serious negative effects on children's psychosocial development in the long run. Finally, according to World Health Organization (WHO) research data, access to such pornographic content at an early age negatively affects young people's understanding of sexuality, consent, body perception and human relationships and can cause trauma (WHO, 2018).

With the developing technology, many social media companies have introduced rules and filters against sexual content and tried to make these systems autonomous. Although they try to prevent it, algorithmic highlighting methods such as hashtags, trending content and automatic suggestions make the blocking stages more difficult. Especially young people who have seen and interacted with such content before are frequently exposed to such content in the “Explore” tab consisting of their own data. For example, according to the TikTok Transparency Report of 2021, more than 2 million videos containing sexually explicit images of children aged 13 and under have been removed.

The sexuality sector, which has become a rising trend with increasing demands and the development of the sexual content sector, has created new content on social media. Subscription and payment-based platforms, especially systems such as OnlyFans, where content producers receive direct payments, have emerged and new content continues to be produced on these platforms. To continue with the numerical data, the OnlyFans platform has exceeded 190 million monthly active users and over 10 billion dollars in total has been paid to content producers (Statista, 2023). Although such platforms are consensual systems, there are problems such as underage individuals opening accounts, insufficient identity checks, and content leaks outside the platform. Finally, OnlyFans is considered illegal in some countries and subject to censorship laws on religious/moral grounds.

In terms of country policies, countries have very different policies. In the US, adult access to pornography is protected by the constitutional right to

freedom of expression, while the production of child exploitation material is criminalized as a federal offense. Another obligation was introduced by the European Union's Digital Services Act (2022). This law requires the swift removal of any illegal content on social media platforms. The United Kingdom's law, the Online Safety Act, imposes a “duty of care” on social media platforms to prevent the sexual abuse of children and imposes serious sanctions in case of violation. Other countries such as China, Iran, Russia and Türkiye have banned pornography altogether. Even though it is banned, the illegal circulation of content continues. On the other hand, the public has accepted these controls as violating freedom of expression and there have been polarizations and tensions among the public.

To conclude, such sexually explicit posts on social media cause serious harm to children on a global scale. Not only that, this situation, which threatens the safety of children and adults, is becoming an increasingly serious problem due to platform policies, technological control inadequacies and legal differences between countries. Multi-stakeholder, human rights-centered and child-protective international cooperation is essential for an effective fight.

7.2. Racist Content

A lot of racist content is circulating on social media today and the number of such content is increasing day by day. Racist content can be defined as any content that targets individuals' ethnicity, skin color, language, religion or national identity in order to provoke and create hostility. Although posts are made on social media on the basis of anonymity, this situation has prepared a

suitable ground for the sharing of many harmful content such as racist content. In particular, the content shared by platforms such as “Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube TikTok” is frequently encountered in the form of cartoons, caps, hashtags, comments and videos.

In today's world, crimes such as racism have ceased to be an attack on individuals and have become a type of content that deepens the polarization in society, aims to exclude a group of individuals and causes physical violence. Exposure to such provocative content on social media can have a significant negative impact on the mental health of individuals exposed to such content. If we need to talk about these effects, psychological problems such as anxiety disorder, depression, loss of self-confidence and loneliness of young individuals arise. It is the adolescents who are affected by this negative situation and the effects on them are often incurable.

Although the psychological effects are many, racist content has many different effects. Social effects are one of them. Racist posts on social media play a leading role in creating false and prejudiced perceptions about certain ethnic groups or minorities. While there are various effects of this situation, the most important one is undoubtedly that the public develops negative attitudes towards certain groups and this paves the way for the legitimization of discrimination. For example, the constant and regular sharing of social media content about skin color discrimination can lead to public discrimination and even embargo against individuals. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2021, 64% of American citizens

stated that they frequently encounter hate speech on social media or on the internet and are under the influence of it.

Racist posts on social media are not limited to these effects. Racist posts, which also have a negative impact on public debates, lead to an increase in individuals who hesitate to express themselves in digital environments and do not show the necessary sensitivity to participate in democratic processes. As a result, trust in the definition and term “egalitarian public sphere”, which is one of the social media policies, is shaken and the function of this policy is weakened. Since many racist content also contains hate speech, the boundary between freedom of expression and hate speech is becoming less and less clear every day. This situation continues to threaten individuals and society with their peace and security.

To conclude, racist social media posts are a very serious, multi-layered problem that not only affects individuals, but also harms societies, negatively affects individuals' mental health and damages the democratic values of the country. Increasing the digital media literacy of individuals and the development of systems by multinational social media platforms to combat and monitor such content are critical and important steps to prevent and tackle the problem of racist posts. In addition, legal frameworks at national and international level need to be restructured to prioritize the fight against hate speech in order to prevent the exploitation of backdoors and loopholes in the law.

7.3. Propaganda Content

Another type of harmful content on social media is propaganda content. The definition of propaganda content is any content in the digital environment that aims to direct, influence or manipulate the public in favor of a particular ideology, political opinion, religious belief, ethnic stance or national policy. Social media, which differs from other digital media with many features, has become one of the digital media where harmful content is published the most. For example, although these programs, which are low-cost, quickly accessible and can appeal to large audiences, play an important role for freedom of thought and expression, propaganda posts are also shared especially on social media for these reasons. Thanks to algorithms that use people's data to improve the user experience, propaganda content is especially targeted at those who are prone to such incidents.

There are many different types of propaganda content and each type targets a different outcome. A few examples of these endless possibilities include text-based posts, images and videos, fake news, autonomous bot accounts and deep fake videos with content trending and manipulative images. We frequently see this propaganda content in most of the hot developments in countries. Wars, crises, new laws, anti-government posts and social polarization or manipulation of the public are highly preferred today. To use numerical data, during the 2016 US presidential elections, it was found that Russian-origin accounts and connections reached millions of users on Facebook and Twitter and tried to influence political preferences (U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee Report, 2019).

The majority of propaganda content aims to undermine the public's capacity to make informed decisions and is published by groups or individuals. Due to today's uncontrolled use of social media, citizens and social media users are often exposed to unconfirmed propaganda content, making it difficult for individuals to access accurate information and research. In 2021, a study conducted by the Stanford History Education Group found that 82% of young users could not identify sponsored content as propaganda. It is possible to make many inferences based on these findings. Specifically, radicalization, polarization and decreased commitment to the values of the country in adolescents and young people is one of the biggest harms of this content.

Another harmful aspect of propaganda content is that it threatens social peace. In particular, the incitement of ethnic, religious or political enmities has become easier through mass manipulation on social media. In the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, the UN reported that Facebook enabled the spread of propaganda-based hate content and encouraged violence (UN Human Rights Council, 2018). Similarly, radical organizations in the Middle East (e.g. DAESH) have made extensive use of social media platforms as propaganda tools to influence and recruit young people.

Propaganda content is also frequently used for economic and political purposes. State-sponsored “troll armies” run organized campaigns to discredit rival parties, polish government policies, or manage perception in times of

crisis. Research on countries such as Turkey, Russia, Iran and China has shown that social media manipulation in these countries is state-sponsored (Oxford Internet Institute, 2020). This content can be used not only domestically but also in foreign policy processes as a means of influencing public opinion and gaining international legitimacy.

To summarize all these negative effects and findings, propaganda content is one of the most harmful content in today's world, which does not stop with information pollution, targets the fundamental rights and will of individuals, undermines trust in the values of the country, leads to social polarization and sometimes causes riots. In order to solve these problems, social media companies and digital platforms should be responsible for developing artificial intelligence systems to automatically block such harmful content. Not only that, it is crucial to include campaigns to increase users' media literacy and to implement transparent, rights-based regulations at the national level.

8. Past Actions Upon Agenda

8.1. Past Actions by Member States

8.1.1. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment, 2021

The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development is an international organisation which does knowledge hub data analysis and best practices in public which works with over 100 countries to build stronger,

fairer and cleaner societies since 1961. The Organisation works with policy makers, stakeholders and citizens to establish international standards and support their implementation, and find solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.

Adaptation of the Recommendation on the Protection of Children Online made by OECD in 2012 (2012 version of the Recommendation) on 31 May 2021 the Recommendation revised because of the advances on technology, policy and legacy and renamed as the Recommendation on Children in Digital Environment. The Recommendation addresses the evolving challenges and opportunities that the digital world shows to children. It works on policy intervention to ensure a trusted environment for children, introduces the risks that children may encounter such as exposure of inappropriate or harmful materials and urges digital service providers guidelines on privacy, accountability and transparency. In summary the target of the Recommendation is to find a balance between protecting the children from the risks and promoting opportunities that the digital world can provide.

8.1.2. Council of Europe Guidelines on Child Protection in the Online Environment, 2008, updated 2018

Unlike most of the other nations, the Council of Europe recognized the impact of developing technology on children early on. Subsequently, with the “Guidelines on Child Protection in the Online Environment” published in 2008, a framework aimed at protecting children's rights in digital and cyber

environments was prepared and presented to the council member states. This document, which was decided to be updated in 2018 for some reasons, aims to ensure that children are safe, supportive and aware of their rights in cyber and digital spaces. The Council of Europe, which has taken many steps towards these goals, has set itself the goal of preventing online abuse, cyberbullying, misuse of personal data and exposure to harmful content and continues to work towards this goal. This agreement places clear responsibilities on governments, the private sector, educational institutions and families.

The 2018 update of the Guidelines emphasizes an approach based on the protection of children's rights, respect for children's privacy and the best interests of the child in line with technological developments and the increase in the use of social media. It also brings the “online rights of the child” into the digital environment in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and recognizes both the passive protection of children (protection from harmful content) and their right to active participation (safe content creation and freedom of expression online). With these principles, the Council of Europe emphasizes not only risk-based protection, but also the enhancement of children's digital competencies and the development of media literacy (Council of Europe, 2018).

8.1.3. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

GDPR is a data privacy law that came into effect in 2018 around the European Union. The Regulation protects the fundamental rights and freedoms

of people and their right to the protection of personal data under seven key principles;

Lawfulness, fairness and transparency: lawfulness is any personal data processing that carried out by a controller must have a legal basis under GDPR, fairness is that any processing of personal data must be fair towards users' in means of detrimental, unexpected, misleading and deceptive, lastly transparency is that the data processing of information is clear to individuals and regulators, information of the processing of users' personal data must be provided by the controllers with their personal data in a format that is concise, easily accessible, easy to understand and in clear and plain language.

Purpose limitation: the purpose of the collection of data must be specified, explicit and legitimate and not be further processed in a manner that is incompatible. This principle's purpose is to ensure that the controllers are clear and open from outset about the proposed processing of personal data and to ensure that the reasonable expectations of individuals' are in line with the purposes.

Data minimisation: minimum amount of personal data which are essential and required for the processing of the operation should be taken by the controllers. The principle supports data protection by design and by default while helping organisations to ensure that the data they have are accurate and up to date.

Accuracy: this Principle requires controllers to take every reasonable step to ensure personal data are accurate and kept up to date, every personal data which are inaccurate must be deleted or rectified without a delay.

Storage limitation: personal data must be held in form which permits the identification of the individuals for no longer than is necessary upon the purposes by the controllers. Personal data can be stored for longer periods in terms where the data will be processed for statical, scientific, historical research or archiving purposes in the accordance of GDPR and where there are technical and organisational measures to safeguard the rights of the individuals. For this GDPR suggests establishing time limits to make controllers delete the personal data as soon as it ceases to be necessary. And depending on the circumstances the data can also be anonymous when it is no longer necessary for the person to be identified.

Integrity and confidentiality: procession of personal data must be in a manner that ensures appropriate level of security and confidentiality including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss, destruction or damage. In order to achieve this controllers must utilise appropriate technical and organisational measures. Which means to put security measures to protect against accidental or deliberate harm, loss or discrimination of personal data by the controllers.

Accountability: this principle sets out that controllers are responsible for the other principles of data protection. Compliance with other principles of data protection will itself assist in accountability. Other measures to demonstrate with the principles of data protection may be adopting internal policies, codes of conduct or certification schemes, reporting personal data breaches where it is necessary and implementing privacy policies. Data Protection Officer (DPO) ensures that they are involved in the measures upon

data protection with maintaining records of processing activities, drafting clear contracts and carrying out data protection impact assessments.

8.1.4. Digital Services Act (DSA)

The Digital Services Act is a regulation by the European Union (EU) that came into force in 2022 in order to create a safer and more digital space for users while their rights are being protected. DSA aims to increase the transparency, protect minors, make the platforms accountable for illegal contents in the platforms and online services perform under EU, especially on Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) such as Facebook or Tik Tok and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs) like Google or Bing. The Act, empowers users to report illegal content, goods and services on the online platforms, puts obligations to very large online platforms about users' rights and bans on targeted adverts on online platforma directed at minors or using sensitive personal data. In summary The Digital Services Act sets global standards on regulating tech companies, empowers users and makes the internet safer for vulnerable groups and minors.

8.2. Past Actions by United Nations

8.2.1. UNICEF

8.2.1.1. Global Kids Online

With the collaboration of UNICEF, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and EU Kids, Global Kids Online is a research project that aims to learn about how children use digital platforms. With the data and

probes obtained from the researches, academicians, governments and non governmental organizations intend to make the digital world safer for children. Additionally the data got from these researchers is also being used to develop implementations about the risks and benefits that children face on online media. Global Kids Online intends to support the comfort and the rights of the children by making an international network where the experiences of child's from different countries is being examined with comparison and helps to shape the policies upon this issue.

8.2.1.2. Disrupting Harm

The project of Disrupting Harm aims to collect and generate evidence on technology that facilitated sexual exploitation and abuse of children with the collaboration of International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT International). This research project was established in 2019 with the fund of Safe Online. By interviewing justice professionals, frontline workers, law enforcement officers and young survivors, household surveys and analysis on policies and legislations it tries to protect children from child sexual exploitation and abuse (OECD).







Across Eastern and Southern Africa with Southeast Asia the project was successfully completed in 13 countries along with additional research which took part in Latin America and Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia in 12 countries.

The Disrupting Harm project collected national data from 25 countries until now to use this information for strengthening prevention and response mechanisms in the countries that the research took place in.

8.2.1.3. We Protect Global Alliance

"Protecting children from abuse and exploitation is everyone's business. The sexual exploitation of children online cannot be dealt with by any one country, company or organization working in isolation; It demands a coordinated global response by governments, international organizations, technology companies and civil society"

WeProtect Global Alliance was established in 2014 in the United Kingdom to put an end to sexual exploitation and abuse of children online. With the belief it has, it unites over 300 members including governments, private companies, international organizations and intergovernmental organizations to create a safer environment for children in online platforms. This international coalition collaborates with member organizations to create frameworks and strategies which mention online child abuse and sexual exploitation, cooperates with governments, private companies and non profits to share knowledge and resources, and raises global awareness about the risks that children may face online.

Enablers	Capabilities	Outcomes
Cross sector, multi-disciplinary collaboration	Policy and Governance  <div> <div>1</div> <div>Leadership: An accountable National Governance and Oversight Committee</div> </div> <div> <div>2</div> <div>Research, Analysis and Monitoring: National situational analysis of CSEA risk and response; measurements/indicators</div> </div> <div> <div>3</div> <div>Legislation: Comprehensive and effective legal framework to investigate offenders and ensure protection for victims</div> </div>	Highest level national commitment to CSEA prevention and response <p>Comprehensive understanding of CSEA within the highest levels of government and law enforcement. Willingness to work with, and co-ordinate the efforts of, multiple stakeholders to ensure the enhanced protection of victims and an enhanced response to CSEA offending.</p>
Willingness to prosecute, functioning justice system and rule of law	Criminal Justice  <div> <div>4</div> <div>Dedicated Law Enforcement: National remit, trained officers; proactive and reactive investigations; victim-focused; international cooperation</div> </div> <div> <div>5</div> <div>Judiciary and Prosecutors: Trained, victim-focused</div> </div> <div> <div>6</div> <div>Offender Management Process: Prevent re-offending of those in the criminal justice system nationally and internationally</div> </div> <div> <div>7</div> <div>Access to Image Databases: National database; link to Interpol database (ICSE)</div> </div>	Effective and successful CSEA investigations, convictions and offender management <p>Law Enforcement and judiciary have the knowledge, skills, systems and tools required to enable them to perform victim-focused investigations and secure positive judicial outcomes. CSEA offenders are managed and reoffending prevented.</p>
Supportive reporting environment	Victim  <div> <div>8</div> <div>End to End Support: Integrated services provided during investigation, prosecution and after-care</div> </div> <div> <div>9</div> <div>Child Protection Workforce: Trained, coordinated and available to provide victim support</div> </div> <div> <div>10</div> <div>Compensation, remedies and complaints arrangements: Accessible procedures</div> </div> <div> <div>11</div> <div>Child Helpline: Victim reporting and support; referrals to services for ongoing assistance</div> </div>	Appropriate support services for children and young people <p>Children and young people have access to services that support them through the investigation and prosecution of crimes against them. They have access to shelter; specialised medical and psychological services; and rehabilitation, repatriation and resocialization services.</p>
Aware and supportive public and professionals, working with and for children	Societal  <div> <div>12</div> <div>CSEA Hotline: Mechanism for reporting online CSEA content; link to law enforcement and internet service providers</div> </div> <div> <div>13</div> <div>Education Programmes: For: children/young people; parents/carers; teachers; practitioners; faith representatives</div> </div> <div> <div>14</div> <div>Child Participation: Children and young people have a voice in the development of policy and practice</div> </div> <div> <div>15</div> <div>Offender Support Systems: Medical, psychological, self-help, awareness</div> </div>	CSEA prevented <p>Children and young people are informed and empowered to protect themselves from CSEA. Parents, carers, teachers and childcare professionals are better prepared to keep children safe from CSEA, including addressing taboos surrounding sexual violence.</p>
Sufficient financial and human resources	Industry  <div> <div>16</div> <div>Takedown Procedures: Local removal and blocking of online CSEA content</div> </div> <div> <div>17</div> <div>CSEA Reporting: Statutory protections that would allow industry to fully and effectively report CSEA, including the transmission of content, to law enforcement or another designated agency</div> </div> <div> <div>18</div> <div>Innovative Solution Development: Industry engagement to help address local CSEA issues</div> </div> <div> <div>19</div> <div>Corporate Social Responsibility: Effective child-focused programme</div> </div>	Industry engaged in developing solutions to prevent and tackle CSEA <p>Industry has the power and willingness to block and remove online CSEA content and proactively address local CSEA issues. Industry proactively reports online CSEA.</p>
National legal and policy frameworks in accordance with the UNCRC and other international and regional standards	Media and Communications  <div> <div>20</div> <div>Ethical and Informed Media Reporting: Enable awareness and accurate understanding of problem</div> </div> <div> <div>21</div> <div>Universal Terminology: Guidelines and application</div> </div>	Awareness raised among the public, professionals and policy makers <p>Potential future offenders are deterred. CSEA offending and reoffending is reduced.</p>
Data and evidence on CSEA		

8.2.2. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The oldest agency of the UN family since 1865, ITU is an organization that facilitates connectivity in communication networks. This organization consists of 194 member states and more than 1000 companies, universities and international and regional organizations. ITU provides a trusted multilateral platform to broker international agreements and standards, share knowledge, build capacity, and work with members and partners to spread technology around the world.

The Union organizes training programs about online grooming, sextortion, reporting mechanisms and responsible usage of media for teachers, policymakers and telecom regulators and law enforcement, runs awareness campaigns to promote safe internet use with the events like Safer Internet Day, WSIS Forum and Cybersecurity Month while it also works with UN bodies, governments and tech companies to coordinate reporting mechanisms and build a safer digital environment for children.

8.2.2.1. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

WSIS is a global initiative by ITU and United Nations General Assembly to bridge the digital divide and promote information and communication technologies (ICTs). Initiative encourages partnerships and innovation, fosters digital inclusion, promotes access to information and technology around the world and strengthens cybersecurity and child protection online.

In 2003 a summit held in Geneva concluded with the Declaration of Principles and Action Plan which consists of 11 action lines: C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, and C11. This Action Plan was implemented after the summit held in Tunis in 2005.

Action Line C5 Building Confidence and Security in the use of ICTs, cooperates with governments, private companies international and non governmental organizations to ensure a safe environment for ICTS, establishes protection systems against cyberattacks, promotes reporting systems, age verification and content filtering to protects children, ensures that personal data is not misused and advocates for laws on users' privacy to protect the information of individuals.

8.2.2.2. Child Online Protection Initiatives

In order to promote awareness of child safety in digital world and develop tools to assist governments, industry and educators ITU launched a multi stakeholder network "The Child Online Protection (COP) Initiative" with the collaboration of ChildOnline Africa, End Violence Against Children, European Commission, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, Violence Against Children, Parentzone, UK Safer Internet, WeProtect Global Alliance, UNESCO, Together Against Cybercrime and Safety and Security Online. As part of the initiative ITU published guidelines for 4 groups; children, parents, guardians and educators in 2009. These guidelines are aimed to raise awareness of online child protection, ensure educators and school administrators are trained to identify and adequately respond in suspected or confirmed cases of child victims and abuse, invest in

and align the development monitoring and evaluation of frameworks and activities, ensure that the child protection mechanisms are in place to identify, respond and report any sort of harm to children that occurs online, strengthen regulatory agency responsibility for the development standards relevant to children's rights and ICTs and ensure international cooperation between law enforcement agencies around the world.

8.2.3. United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC)

UNCRC (United Nations Convention on Rights of a Child) is an international agreement established to protect civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child regardless of their race, religion or abilities in 1989. With its 54 articles CRC explains how governments and adults must work for the sake of children while the articles cover all aspects of a child's life and sets out rights for every child. With articles 13, 16, 17 and 19 the convention encourages children to speak up and urges governments to put on laws if a child faces any kind of harm to protect them which also applies for social media. Even though the Convention does not have a specific action towards the threats a child may face on social media, it protects the children from social media with the articles it has.

Article 13 Freedom of Expressions

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or

(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals. Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks

Article 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

To this end, States Parties shall:

(a) Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;

(b) Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;

(c) Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;

(d) Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;

(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

Article 19 Be Safe From Violence

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

9. Country Profiles

9.1. United States

The US has tried many ways in the past to protect children's rights in cyberspace. New laws and regulations are among the prominent ones. Although the US has many efforts on the subject, the two most important regulations are the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA). These laws aim to protect children's data with clear boundaries while protecting information technology. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), passed and enacted in the United States in 1998 and enforced by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), protects the data of individuals aged 13 and under, increases online privacy and anonymity, and requires parental consent for the use of websites, mobile applications and digital services (FTC, 1999). It aims to protect personal data by setting very strict and clear boundaries for service providers that offer services by collecting children's data such as personal addresses, phone numbers, IP addresses. This is a very important step to prevent the increasing use of the Internet from harming children's data.

Another regulation, the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA), is a step taken to increase children's online safety, just like COPPA. KOSA, colloquially referred to as “COPPA v2”, aims to require social media platforms and other digital media or services to make improvements to protect children from online harm (United States Senate, 2022). Although KOSA has many benefits, its main goals and objectives are to prevent harmful content, protect mental and psychological health, and get parents more involved in

their children's use of social media (Hartzog & Richards, 2023). The most significant difference from COPPA is that KOSA not only aims to protect children's data, but also mandates that the content to which children are exposed must ensure that it will not cause harm.

Although the benefits of these two laws are beneficial to the country, the enforceability of such laws is still debated today. Multinational corporations are changing their systems to comply with COPPA's data collection policies, exploiting the loopholes in COPPA and continuing to provide services, which is just one of the findings that COPPA is inadequate today (Livingstone et al., 2021). KOSA, on the other hand, while preventing harm to children, deprives children of other rights under the law and is still controversial in today's world as it poses potential threats to freedom of expression and privacy.

9.2. Russian Federation

Russia enacted the regulation called 'Sovereign Internet Law' in 2019. This law has enacted this law as fast as possible to increase Russia's control over the use of the internet in the country. The content of the law consists of a general authorisation. It authorises the Russian government to monitor and manage network traffic in the country and, when necessary, to separate its own network from the rest of the world. In these cases, infrastructures suitable for establishing a 'local network' have been built (Deibert, 2020). This arrangement allowed the Russian government to make many changes and regulations for national security purposes. Due to the political policies of

Western states, Russia was accused of dictatorship and was subjected to serious criticism by digital rights advocates.

Another regulation, the 'Federal Law on Information, Information Technologies, and Protection of Information' is undoubtedly one of the most radical regulations on the Internet and information technologies. Enacted in 2021, this law binds data sharing in the country to rules with clear boundaries and internet providers are forced to come under state authority due to the increasing demands of the government (Lonkila, 2022). This law also obliged multinational companies to keep the data of Russian citizens within Russian borders and to provide access to many data at the request of Russian authorities (Turovsky, 2023). Although Russia has ensured data security thanks to this policy, citizens were not happy with the non-anonymous polity.

One of the last and perhaps one of the most important laws is perhaps the 'Children Protection from Harmful Information Law'. The problem that the law aims to solve is to ensure that children are not psychologically and morally affected by the content on the internet (Pomerantsev, 2019). Although there are many regulations and restrictions in the content of the law, prohibited substance use, violence, 'non-traditional sexual relations' and suicide promotion are some of the most prominent ones (Russian State Duma, 2013). Although this law plays an important role in protecting children, it has been heavily criticised by freedom advocates and human rights defenders.

Specifically, the banning of LGBTQ+ content on social media has caused many different opinions to branch out about Russia's censorship policy.

While each of the above-mentioned laws and regulations are officially aimed at protecting children's data, they have created loopholes that are very easy to be abused by the government. These laws have made it easier for the government to control the flow of data and information in the country. While Russia generally aims to protect the digital unity in the country, it also tries to connect the internet to the central authority. Although successful, this situation poses serious threats to individuals' right to freedom of expression.

9.3. China

China has a clearer and tougher policy on social media than many other countries. The Chinese government's policies aim to ensure that the state has full authority over the public internet. Implementing strict controls in this direction, China enacted the “Cybersecurity Law of the People's Republic of China” in 2017. With the law, it strictly limits data exchange, internet traffic and digital infrastructure within the country. It requires all companies, whether domestic or foreign, to keep their data within China and gives the government full authority. Censorship practices, which have become systematic with advancing technology, are carried out in the name of “national security” and, according to the government, protect “socialist” values.

In 2019, the “Provisions on the Online Protection of Children's Personal Information” law was enacted to make this law, which concerns all

citizens, specific for children. In the content of the law, serious regulations have been made for children under the age of 14; explicit consent of children, limited data retention and blocking third-party sharing are just examples of these (Chen, 2020). In 2021, the “Regulations on the Protection of Minors in Cyberspace” were introduced in order to solve problems arising from loopholes in the law. The law introduced automatic inappropriate content blocking systems, screen time limits and other important steps to reduce online addiction, in other words, to increase digital health. Although the benefits of the regulations are demonstrated with numerical data, the treatment of children as “Racehorses” and the expansion of the state's surveillance mechanism cause the public to have doubts.

9.4. Türkiye

Türkiye is one of the countries that has been on the agenda of the local and world press. Türkiye's first regulation on internet systems and the digital environment is the “Law No. 5651 on the Regulation of Publications on the Internet and Combating Crimes Committed Through These Publications”, which entered into force in 2007. The law imposes responsibilities on companies and internet providers. In detail, it made it possible to quickly block access to criminal content. This law, which was deemed insufficient, was expanded in 2020. Following this regulation, the obligation to block content was also introduced for access blocking decisions, and at the same time, new ways were opened for citizens to seek individual rights. While the benefits of the law have not been ignored, the vague definitions of expression and the broad powers of administrative authorities have exposed the

government to intense criticism due to the inalienable right to freedom of expression (Freedom House, 2023).

Another regulation on the subject is the “Social Media Law” numbered 7253, which was adopted in 2020. The law imposes serious obligations on internet providers and social network platforms. The obligation to have a representative in Türkiye, to host data in Türkiye, to respond to complaints within the period specified in the law, to remove content and to implement court decisions quickly are just a few of the many responsibilities. Although this law, which has also made waves in the international media, has increased the state's control over social media, serious concerns have begun to emerge around the world that the control of political content will increase even further.

Not content with all these harsh laws, Türkiye has once again put itself on the world agenda with the “Law No. 7418 on Combating Disinformation” enacted in 2022, one of the most controversial laws ever enacted to control the flow of information online. The content of the law officially criminalized acts that would cause public alarm, fear, panic or acts aimed at disrupting public order. In addition to all this, it criminalizes the intentional sharing of “false information”, which is punishable by imprisonment. Of course, “misleading information”, which is a loophole in the law, is not clearly outlined. For this reason, many citizens who make political posts can be assumed as criminals by the government. Türkiye, which has received serious negative criticism and reactions from national and international legal frameworks, has not backed down, saying that more laws will be enacted if necessary.

9.5. Iran

Iran, like many other countries, has done a lot of work to increase the government's control over the Internet and to keep digital content under control. 'Regulations on Cyberspace and Protection of Children's Rights' is a regulation published in 2020 that serves this purpose. It is a regulation that protects children from online threats and increases supervision. However, this regulation was seen by many citizens as an agreement that facilitates the censorship of online content (Azizi, 2021). It imposed strict controls on companies to create content and media elements suitable for children. Not content with this, it authorised the government to monitor every move children make in cyberspace (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Human rights defenders and libertarians, on the other hand, strongly oppose this law and see it as a means for the state to expand internet censorship and violate individual privacy.

Another of Iran's most important regulations on the subject is the 'National Information Network Policy'. As in many other countries, this law separates Iran from the data traffic in the rest of the world and transfers the data flow in the country completely to state control. Iran has an intranet system designed in a similar way to the 'Great Firewall of China', taking China as an example in this important issue. This allows the state to control everything on the Internet (Dehghan, 2023). While Iran imposes this law on its citizens under the guise of national security, every person living in the country complains about this law. The vast majority argue that NIN has removed

freedom from the Internet and that the public only has access to state propaganda.

Unlike the Iranian media and press, another regulation that hit the world agenda is ‘The Protection of Users in Cyberspace Bill’, also known as the ‘Resurrection Bill’, which came to the agenda in 2022 and shook the country's agenda. The law restricted social media platforms and international digital service providers with very clear and strict limits. It was made obligatory for these companies to cooperate with the state (Alimardani & Ververis, 2022). The verifications and identity requirements for citizens to use the Internet have virtually eliminated anonymity. Protesters argue that this regulation is used by the government to identify individuals opposed to the regime.

All these laws and regulations still play an important role in Iranian media and politics today, and the public clearly shows how uncomfortable they are with this system. Despite all this, the Iranian authorities, who argue that control should belong to the state, do not step back. To conclude, Iran is undoubtedly one of the most repressive countries in terms of internet freedom and digital rights.

9.6. United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is one of the countries that have taken the most decisive steps in today's world. The 2023 ‘Online Safety Bill’, which binds social media platforms, search engines and other online services with

important responsibilities to detect and remove harmful content, is undoubtedly one of the most important steps taken by the United Kingdom (UK Government, 2023). Heavy obligations have been imposed on technology companies to protect children from online abuse and illegal content. Large international platforms have to cooperate with the state in certain cases. Companies that have to cooperate in certain cases such as hate speech, terrorist propaganda and cyberbullying continue to work to prevent these dangers. Although it is a near-perfect law, civil society organisations have expressed concerns about freedom of expression (BBC News, 2023).

Another important work of the United Kingdom to protect children is the 'Age Appropriate Design Code'. This law, which requires digital services to be designed in accordance with the age of children in the target audience, entered into force in 2021 (ICO, 2021). With the law, companies are obliged to process children's data at the lowest possible level, prevent them from being exposed to harmful content, and introduce systems to protect their privacy. This regulation is similar to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and has the same objectives. While the UK protects its children with confident and decisive steps, some technology companies have doubts that this regulation will restrict innovation.

9.7. North Korea (DPRK)

North Korea today is a remarkable and different country in many ways. The fact that North Korea is referred to as 'closed and impossible to open' is in fact the country's isolation from the rest of the world. Kwangmyong is a law

that contributes to this isolation and introduces digital regulations. This law, which separates North Korea from the rest of the world and offers only state-approved content to the public, is one of the strictest laws in today's world. With this law, North Korea has established a closed intranet system and this system is not connected to the global internet. North Korea, which follows an isolation policy, developed this system in the early 2000s. This system enables the government to completely block content from the outside world, while transferring all data to the government (Haggard & Noland, 2017). Kwangmyong, which blocks all conceivable external data, is also very limited in itself. There is almost no internet use except for news, official e-mail and academic articles containing state propaganda. In addition to all these, all kinds of access to information platforms independent of internet providers in Western countries is strictly prohibited (Williams, 2021). Although there is a department created by the state only for this law, it monitors all activities of citizens. Among these activities, anti-regime activities are especially penalised with very serious sanctions.

While the government considers Kwangmyong as an indispensable regulation for national security and the ideological stability of the country, international human rights organisations describe it as ‘an unethical censorship law that completely eliminates freedom of expression’ and criticise it harshly (Reporters Without Borders, 2023). The isolationist policy pursued by the country leads to the isolation of the people from the outside world and a false perception of reality. This situation strengthens the regime's propaganda, and the public's opinions are influenced only by the content the government wants.

For these reasons, Kwangmyong is currently assumed to be the biggest power and trump card in the hands of the regime, but it is definitely a violation of human rights.

10. Questions to be Considered

1. What actions can be taken to raise awareness about children's rights in social media?
2. How can the United Nations cooperate with companies to detect and eliminate harmful content on social media?
3. What can be done legally for people who use the loopholes in the laws of countries to post sexual, racist and propaganda contents and cause child abuse?
4. What are the short and long-term negative effects of the overly usage of social media?
What measures can be taken in order to reduce these effects?
5. How can the United Nations be included in the co-op process with international companies?
6. How can the United Nations collaborate with non-governmental organizations to decrease the effects of social media on children?
7. What measures can be taken to help children who have been physically, psychologically or socially harmed by social media to recover?
8. What can be done in order to use the budget of the actions during this whole process more efficiently?

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