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Caught between Risks and Pleasures: Children's Digital User Profiles, Their Right-Based Experiences and Self-Rights Awareness in Digital Media Areas in the Light of Multicultural Children's Human Rights Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the digital user profiles of children, rights-based experiences, and their awareness of digital rights within the framework of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No 25. Highlighting the paradoxical position of children as a unique yet underappreciated user group, the research also explores how digital environments impact their well-being and best interests, and why children's human rights education, suitable for multiculturalism, is important in the digital age. The research data were collected from 1430 children's open-ended questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. The findings reveal that children primarily access digital platforms through tablets and phones, spending one-third of their daytime hours on gaming, entertainment, and social interaction. Emotionally, these experiences oscillate between intense pleasure and anger. While children demonstrate a protective stance toward personal data and recognize the benefits of digital tools for education, communication, and freedom of expression, they face significant risks regarding exposure to violent, sexual, and commercial content. Crucially, the current study identifies a gap in children's awareness of their digital rights, with many reporting frequent violations through cyberbullying and harassment. The results indicate a disconnect between children's digital user tendencies and their rights awareness, underscoring an urgent need to integrate digital literacy and children's rights education in digital areas, grounded in intercultural sensitivity, to better protect their interests in an increasingly digitized society.

Keywords: children's rights, digital user profiles and tendencies, rights awareness, rights-based experiences in digital media areas, children's human rights education

1. Introduction

Just like children are an essential part of society and the center of development and plans in various political, social, and economic aspects (Hareket & Kartal, 2021), they, in the present, represent a large, unique, and underappreciated user group of digital technologies (Gillett-Swan & Sargeant, 2018). Besides, as a striking reality, the fast-developing information and communication technology environment is reshaping children's lives for better and for worse already in high-income countries, fast expanding in middle-income countries, and increasingly evident in low-income countries (Livingstone & Bulger, 2014). Therefore, the protection of children and their rights is among the issues of increasing importance in the digital age. It means that children are in a particular situation that requires a unique interpretation of human rights regarding social conditions and universal status in a digitized world (Öhman & Quennerstedt, 2017). This bidirectional situation points to an issue that needs to be emphasized when considering the best interests and well-being of children who were born in the digital world. It also leads children's rights experts to ask: "On what principles and with what qualities of environments and content should access to and participation in digital media as a right be based in a way that includes children's best interests?" (Hareket and Kartal, 2024). However, it is not easy to answer this question because even child rights experts and sector representatives are still unable to establish cooperation and understanding on promoting and respecting children's rights in digital environments and overlook the nature of the problems in this regard (Livingstone, 2021).

As a crucial and progressive movement, fortunately, "General Comment No. 25 on the Rights of the Child in Relation to the Digital Environment", published by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2021, emerges as a guide for us. This crucial official Declaration, which addresses the protection of children's rights in digital environments, highlights the need to improve the digital literacy of children, parents, childcare providers, and educators. At this point, it is foreseen that the user profiles of children in digital environments can guide us in terms of the steps to be taken to protect both themselves and their rights. At this point, there are some exemplary and even inspiring studies in the literature. For example, one of them was conducted by Cino et al. (2023), and they investigated children's and young people's digital engagement in informational, communication, and entertainment activities in ten EU countries. In light of this perspective, these findings on children's and young people's user tendencies in digital media can also guide us in determining which areas of digital literacy should be included in children's rights education processes, alongside multicultural, rights-based education.

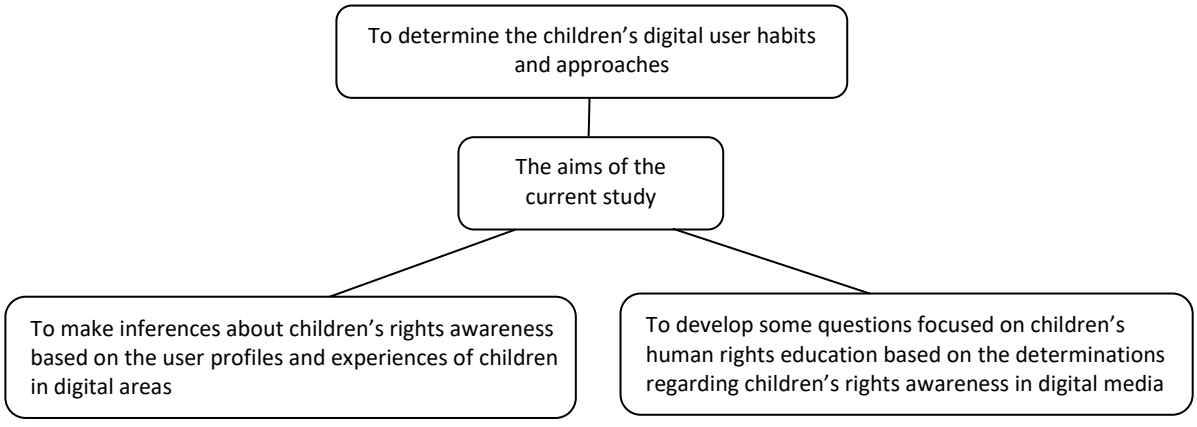

Figure 1. The aims of the current research

So, in the scope of the current study, too, it was aimed to extract the digital user profiles of children and discuss the findings regarding children's rights awareness and the importance of children's rights education in the digital age. Also, it tried to present a perspective on the role of intercultural, multi-rights education in mitigating risks in digital environments and on how digital literacy can support the protection of children's rights in multicultural educational settings. From this perspective, the current study has some differences in points compared to other studies in the research literature on children's rights and digital childhood.

First and foremost, this study, drawing on General Comment No. 25 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, will contribute to the existing literature on children's rights and awareness in the digital world. A review of existing research in this field reveals that studies tend to focus on issues such as how children have become passive consumers of digital technologies or the risky scenarios they face on digital media platforms (particularly social media) (Cino et al., 2023; Njagi, 2023; Livingstone & Görzig, 2014). In this study, however, children are positioned as unique subjects with their own distinct dynamics, vulnerabilities and needs; consequently, an effort has been made to emphasize that their tendencies and experiences regarding digital use go beyond being merely the result of their status as passive users and consumers, and to explore what these mean when viewed through a rights-based lens. The current study's key originality lies in its examination, within a single framework, of the emotional fluctuations children experience during their intensive use of digital platforms, their technical practices, and the risks they face, such as cyberbullying and digital exploitation, alongside their lack of knowledge regarding their own legal rights; in this way, it highlights the critical requirements for children's human rights education. The current research also focuses on the disconnect between children's practical skills in protecting their personal data or utilizing digital tools, and a higher level of legal awareness, namely, awareness of children's rights in digital media. Furthermore, it possesses a unique structure in that it addresses the need for digital literacy not merely as a technical competence, but in an integrated manner from the perspective of a multicultural children's rights education; this points to an innovative, holistic theoretical framework for the globalizing digital society that could also guide policymakers.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This research was conducted using an explanatory mixed research design approach (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The mixed research method, which is defined as the process of combining quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches in one or more successive studies and combining the obtained data (Creswell, 2013), takes the strengths of the two methods and complements the weaknesses of each other, and allows for more effective and comprehensive research. Accordingly, quantitative descriptive data were initially collected during the research process, and these data were further elaborated with qualitative interview data to allow for a more detailed examination.

2.2. Participants of the Study

The participant group in the research consists of 1430 children aged 9 to 18 in Türkiye during the years 2023 and 2024. The average age of the children participating in the study was 14.7. Participants included 744 girls (52%) and 686 boys (48%) in the current research. An accessible

sampling method was used to determine the participant group of the research, meaning that no special criteria were used to determine the children participating in the research. Children who wanted to participate in the research and whose parents' permission was obtained were included in the research. The child participants were selected from eleven government schools in various regions of Türkiye. Assistant data collectors who helped in the data-collection process are doing internships at these schools. These data collectors have undergone certified training in children's rights and have also completed a four-week training course in scientific research methods for this research process.

2.3. Data Instruments

A questionnaire was used to obtain the data for the current study. The questionnaire was completed by 1430 children. In addition, one-on-one online interviews were conducted with 26 children. Parental permission was obtained for these interviews. The interviews lasted between 30 and 40 minutes on average. These data tools were tested with a pilot group of children before full implementation. They were finalized following consultation with independent researchers who are experts in child development and qualitative research methodology.

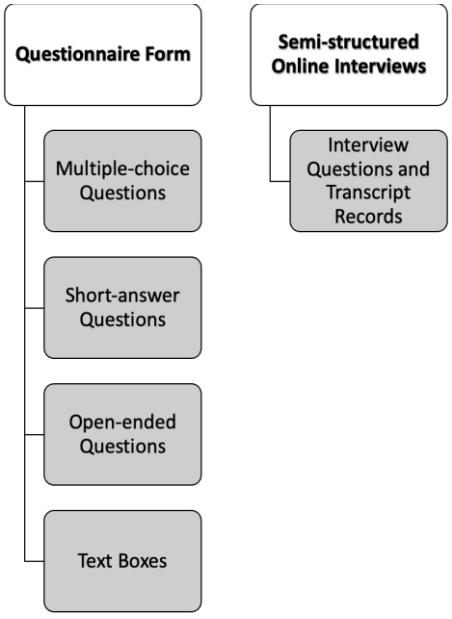

Figure 2. The structure of data-obtaining tools in the current study

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The records of these interviews were transcribed and turned into written documents. The current study's data were collected with a group of co-researchers who participated in the author's three children's rights education projects, which were completed between 2018 and 2021. The research data were analyzed with thematic content analysis and descriptive analysis. According to Berg (1998), content analysis is used to systematically interpret interviews and field notes that are overlooked or deemed inappropriate for analysis. Initially, a data set was created consisting of information about children's user tendencies, preferences, and experiences in digital media through a questionnaire form. The first motivation point of the current study for the creation of

this data set was to reveal the user profiles of children in digital environments. In this direction, open-ended questions, short-answer questions, and multiple-choice questions were used. The second motivation source of the current study was to determine children's experiences with digital media in terms of the awareness of children's rights. At this stage, free writing boxes were used in which children expressed their digital experiences under various headlines. These free writing areas helped me to identify events and facts related to children's rights and rights violations in digital areas. Based on these data, a coding list was created related to children's digital user profiles and experiences. In addition to this, interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and children were asked about their transcript formats.

2.5. Validity and Reliability of the Study Data

To ensure reliability and validity of the data gathering and analysis process, the survey form and interview questions were piloted on a group of child participants before the main practice. These children were not subsequently included in the main study group. Once the final version of the questionnaire designed to collect descriptive quantitative data had been finalized, the main survey was launched. Subsequently, data from sixteen participants whose questionnaires were found, for various reasons, to have been incomplete or to contain inconsistent responses were excluded from the analysis set. After completing the first part, the process of collecting quantitative descriptive data began, and one-to-one interviews were organized accordingly. All descriptive data were checked, and a part of the qualitative data was separately coded by an independent researcher who has experience in qualitative research methodology. To determine the coherence rate of the coding process, all descriptive data sets and 25% of the transcribed texts were separately scored. Following the calculation of Cohen's Kappa (1960), it was reached an average score of .92 was reached for both structure and content. As a satisfactory result, this score is in the category of "almost perfect (>.80)" according to Landis and Koch's (1977) scale.

Regarding ethical issues, during the entire process of the current study, there was a commitment to the Declaration of Helsinki for the present study. All procedures involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee. Participants were asked to voluntarily agree to join the current study, and all participants provided written informed consent. Also, parental permission of participants was obtained, and participants were informed that they could leave the research at any time.

3. Results

The findings reveal children's digital user profiles and also highlight certain indicators that allow us to examine what these user trends imply in terms of children's rights awareness. The research findings have been presented under these main themes: "the user tendencies and preferences in digital environments", "the benefit and harm potential of digital environments", "the effects of digital environments", "the rights violations in digital environments", and "the expectations from digital environments and rights awareness."

3.1. The Digital User Dispositions of Children

Firstly, Table 1 reveals that smartphones (68.6%) and tablets (42.8%) are prominent among the most preferred digital tools by children. It is seen that children have a very low interest in TV and PS/Knect. These figures have been calculated based on the variety of media devices used by children.

Table 1: Digital tools most frequently used by children

Tool	N	%
Smartphone	982	68.6
Tablet	616	42.8
Laptop	307	21.4
TV	249	17.4
PS and Kinect	47	3.2

In Table 2, it is seen that children mostly access digital media at home (56.2%) and at school (28.8%). This finding reminds us of the important position of parents, childminders, babysitters, and education workers in protecting children against digital risks, making them more conscious users, and raising children's awareness of their rights in digital environments.

Table 2: The most preferred places by children for accessing digital areas

Place	N	%
Home	805	56.2
School	413	28.8
Public Transport	136	9.5
Shopping Centers and Other Public Spaces	61	4.2
Libraries	13	1.1

Table 3 shows that the majority of children (52.2%) spend an average of 4-7 hours a day in digital environments. This is undoubtedly a considerable amount of time in terms of children's well-being and their health.

Table 3: Average time spent by children using digital tools (daily)

Hour	N	%
0-1 Hour	81	5.6
1-4 Hours	352	24.4
4-7 Hours	747	52.2
Over 7 Hours	250	17.4

In Table 4, it is seen that one out of every two children, on average, feels happiness, pleasure, and peace (53.1%) while spending time in digital media areas. On the other hand, the majority of children stated that they felt nervous, angry, anxious, tense, and bored (44.9%) while spending time in digital environments. So, it is seen that the emotional effects of digital applications used on children are concentrated in two main poles: stress/anger and pleasure/happiness.

Table 4: Emotions felt by children while spending time in digital media

Emotional Reaction	Kind of Emotions	N	%
+	happiness, peaceful, and pleasure	760	53.1
-	nervous, bored, frustrated, pensive, and anxious	642	44.9
+	calm, comfortable, and free	349	24.4
(n)	neutral sense	215	15.0
-	guilty and unhappy	212	14.8
+	curious and excited	204	14.2
-	meaningless and abstracted	165	11.5
-	dependant	157	10.9
+	self-confident	155	10.8

In Table 5, it is seen that the most used digital platforms by children are Instagram (53.6%), YouTube (44.4%), and WhatsApp (43.5%). Also, the fact that fewer children are using platforms such as Snapchat, Discord, and Tinder is both a pleasing and a worrying finding. Surprisingly, it is understood that digital platforms with development- and education-oriented content/applications are not among children's primary usage preferences. These figures have been calculated based on the variety of apps used by children.

Table 5: Digital platforms most used by children

App	N	%
Instagram	767	53.6
YouTube	636	44.4
WhatsApp	623	43.5
TikTok	391	27.3
Snapchat	214	14.9
Twitter	161	11.2
Netflix-Blu TV-Disney+	98	6.8
Spotify	88	6.1
Discord	81	5.6
Reddit	75	5.2
Twitch	74	5.1
MS Office/Adobe	72	5
Telegram	61	4.2
Tinder	58	4
Amazon Prime	50	3.4
Pinterest	48	3.3
Facebook	45	3.1
Others (steam, zoom, kwai, wattpad, clubhouse, etc.)	42	3

3.2. The Reasons Why Children Use Digital Media Platforms

Table 6 reveals that children primarily participate in digital environments for spending time (41.3%), communicating (36.5%), doing homework (30.9%), studying, learning languages, and watching videos, animated movies, and cartoons (30.9%). On the other hand, we see that the purpose of playing digital games is expressed by fewer children.

Table 6: The main reasons for spending time in digital media

Reason	N	%
Spending time/blowing off steam/having fun	592	41.3
Communicating	522	36.5
Doing homework, studying and learning languages	443	30.9
Watching videos, movies, cartoons	440	30.7
Playing digital games (Minecraft, League of Legends, Valorant, PUBG, Call of Duty, etc.)	234	16.3
Doing research and getting information	207	14.4
Following the news and agenda	148	10.3
Listening to music	115	8.0
Creating and sharing posts	114	7.9
Following trends and watching the lives of famous people	66	4.6
Meeting new people and making friends	65	4.5
Shopping	49	3.4
Creating memories with pictures and videos	30	2.9

3.3. The Risk Factors in Digital Media Areas According to Children's Past Experiences

Table 7 shows that sharing sexual content (38.5%), the presence of malicious people (28.5%), and sites that carry out activities such as betting, gambling, and fraud (24.6%) are the areas most often cited by children as risky issues in digital environments. As a remarkable finding, although there are serious risks regarding digital games, these are considered risky by a very few children.

Table 7: Issues seen as risky by children in digital media areas

Risky situation	N	%
Sexual offers	551	38.5
Presence of malicious persons	408	28.5
Betting-gambling-fraud actions	352	24.6
Encouragement (substance use and violence)	285	19.9
Personal data theft	271	18.9
Cyberbullying and cyber harassment	204	14.2
Children's display	198	13.8
False and misleading information	144	10.0
Political and religious propaganda	139	9.7
Malicious link offers	136	9.5
Digital games	118	8.2

3.4. What Children Encountered with Dangerous Contents in Digital Media Environments

In Table 8, it is seen that most of the participants (90.7%) stated that they encountered dangerous content in digital environments. This content is mostly related to some sensitive areas such as sexuality (49.6%), violence, death, derogatory speech (47.6%), and insult (43.1%). However, the findings show that at least one in four children who use digital devices is exposed to betting-product advertisements and false or misleading information in these environments. These contents are followed by discrimination, racism, lynching, cyberbullying, and slang, which are experienced by fewer children.

Table 8: The dangerous contents encountered in digital media areas

Encountering situation	N	%
Yes	1297	90.7
No	133	9.3
Kinds of content		
Sexual posts	710	49.6
Posts containing violence, injury and death	682	47.6
Psychological attack, discourses containing slanging, cursing, and insulting	617	43.1
Product ads	408	28.5
False and biased information sharing	306	21.3
Malicious betting ads	300	20.9
Posts with an emphasis on racism and discrimination	258	18
Lynch discourses	256	17.9
Cyberbullying and harassment	249	17.4
Religious and political discourses	218	15.2

3.5. The Beneficial Aspects of Digital Environments

Table 9 reveals that children's views on the beneficial aspects of digital environments focus on obtaining information (31.9%), access to educational materials (21.8%), and easy/effective

communication possibilities. However, it is seen that the useful applications that support personal development, socialization, and provide self-expression are used by fewer children.

Table 9: Beneficial aspects of digital environments from the eyes of children

Field of benefit	N	%
Easy access to knowledge	457	31.9
Supplemental educational resources	312	21.8
Easy and effective communication	205	14.3
Avoiding boredom-pass time	155	10.8
Entertaining and motivating	99	6.9
Personal Improvement	87	6
Socializing environment	84	5.8
Agenda tracking	79	5.5
Shopping possibility	67	4.6
Management and saving of time	61	4.2
Earning opportunities	44	3
Personal expression areas	32	2.2

3.6. The Potential Negative Effects of Digital Media on Children

Table 10 demonstrates that the vast majority of the children stated that digital environments made their time management skills weaker (59.1%). Further, children stated that they are exposed to negative effects of digital environments, such as physiological disturbances (34.1%), digital addiction (27.6%), and mental/psychological confusion (15.1%). However, the negative effects, including starting to use harmful substances, sharing personal and private information, and leading an inactive and unsociable life, are experienced by fewer children.

Table 10: The negative effects of digital media on children

Effects	N	%
Losing time management ability	846	59.1
Physiological problems	489	34.1
Being addicted to digital tools	396	27.6
Mental and psychological confusion	217	15.1
Being exposed to false information	104	7.2
Exposure to images with inappropriate content	96	6.7
Sharing personal information	94	6.5
Living without exercise	88	6.1
Becoming willing to use harmful substances	54	3.7
Disrupting school responsibilities	53	3.7
Estranging oneself from social life	30	2.0

3.7. The Children's Personal Privacy Rights in Digital Environments

In Table 11, it is seen that children generally tend not to share (73.5%) their personal data in digital environments. The reasons for this situation were stated as not trusting (38.6%), not knowing people (19.9%), and the danger of using personal data in bad faith. However, we see that fewer children tend to share their personal data in digital circles, which is a worrying finding. According to these findings, children mostly share their personal data for socializing (46.5%) and participating in digital games (31.2%). Another important finding is that very few children have stated family control (9.8%) as a deterrent to sharing private data.

Table 11: The situation of sharing personal and private data in digital media apps

Sharing situation	**N**	**%**
To share	378	26.5
Not to share	1052	73.5
The reasons for sharing	**N**	**%**
Socializing and making new friends	176	46.5
Participating in digital games	118	31.2
Accessing educational content	56	14.8
Shopping	30	7.9
Flirting	28	7.4
The reasons for not sharing	**N**	**%**
No trusting	407	38.6
Not knowing people	210	19.9
Fearing personal information theft	182	17.3
Preferring privacy	156	14.8
Not wanting to be disturbed	112	10.6
Parental control	104	9.8

Table 12 shows that most of the participants (53.9%) tend to enter virtual chat sites and rooms. The desire to chat with digital game partners and meet new people is among the reasons why children use these digital platforms.

Table 12: Children's preferences for joining virtual chat rooms

Preference	**N**	**%**
Yes	771	53.9
No	659	46.1
Usage reasons	**N**	**%**
Talking with gaming partners	443	57.4
Getting to know new people	246	31.8
Accessing educational shares	150	19.4
Following the discussions on the agenda	125	16.2

3.8. The Expectations from Digital Environments in The Context of Multicultural Children's Rights Education

According to Table 13, children's expectations from digital environments remain within a limited framework. Within this expectation framework, requests for quality training content (26.2%) and more security controls (24.21%) are prominent.

Table 13: The expectations of children from digital environments

Expectations	**N**	**%**
Qualified educational content	375	26.2
More security controls	345	24.1
Free applications for personal development	220	15.3
Content that promotes digital literacy	184	12.9
Functional user criteria	181	12.6
Open access information networks	139	9.8
More economical usage opportunities	100	7.1

Table 14 shows that the vast majority of children (63.5%) reported not having comprehensive knowledge or sufficient awareness of their rights in digital environments. It is also seen that the rights to the protection of personal data (43.2%), freedom of thought and expression (36.7%), privacy, and legal remedies (21.7%) are prominent among the rights experienced by children in digital environments.

Table 14: Self-right awareness and rights experienced

To have awareness of rights in digital media	**N**	**%**
Yes, I do!	664	46.5
No, I do not!	766	63.5
The rights experienced by children in terms of multicultural rights-based education	**N**	**%**
Protection of personal data	287	43.2
Freedom of thought and expression	244	36.7
The right of privacy	154	23.1
The right to legal remedies	144	21.7
The rights of information and communication	85	12.8
Gaming and entertainment	47	7.0
Protection against discrimination	45	6.7
Protection against harmful digital visual content	34	5.1
Equal access to educational digital content	24	3.6

In Table 15, it is seen that almost half of the children (49.3%) stated that they did not encounter any rights violations in digital environments at least once. However, there is a considerable number of children (41.7%) who stated that their rights have been violated at least once or that they are constantly exposed to them in these environments. It is noteworthy that some children stated that they did not pay attention to this or did not notice the violation of rights. It is also seen that cyberbullying (49.4%), prohibiting the freedom of thought and expression (28.1%), and recording of personal data (20.9%) are stated as the most common violations of rights by children in digital media environments. On the other hand, it is understood that children are less exposed to violations of rights such as inequality in access to educational content, restriction of the right to play and entertainment, and exposure to sexual messages.

Table 15: The violations of children's rights in digital media, with the necessity of multicultural rights-based education

Situation	**N**	**%**
I have encountered	597	41.7
I have not encountered	705	49.3
I'm not aware / I didn't pay attention	128	8.9
The forms of rights violations	**N**	**%**
Cyberbullying (based on discrimination)	295	49.4
Prohibiting freedom of thought and expression	168	28.1
Recording of personal data	125	20.9
Violation of privacy and exposure	112	18.7
Being manipulated with false information	56	9.3
Not having equal access to educational content	24	4.0
Limiting the use of the right to play-entertainment	22	3.6
Being exposed to sexually explicit and dating messages	19	3.1

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings surfaced some crucial points in terms of children's well-being and the protection of their rights in digital environments. The findings also highlight the vulnerability of children to digital risks in intercultural educational settings and the importance of appropriate intercultural children's rights education processes for these environments.

The fact that the most preferred digital tools by children are smartphones and tablets may make it more difficult for parents, childminders, and teachers to monitor and control children's behavior in digital environments. In addition, smartphones can cause children to become more dependent on digital areas. As a matter of fact, addiction is one of the most frequently expressed negative effects of digital environments by children. This opinion is based on scientific evidence regarding the negative physiological and psychological effects that excessive use of smartphones can have on children. In sum, it can be said that these usage preferences of children have the potential to cause some risky consequences for themselves. As another result, children mostly access digital media at home and at school, which brings to mind that we may need to examine the contents and levels of digital security elements in these places. This finding means that children and the people closest to them should have digital literacy skills in the context of children's rights rather than acting as controllers. Because we know that when it comes to children, adults tend to prioritize what they already know over what they hear from the children and may dictate these things with controlling attitudes (Hareket, 2025). So, this situation raises the importance of new studies that can examine the level of knowledge and awareness of parents, caregivers, and school workers on the protection of children's rights in digital environments. Furthermore, the fact that one out of every two children spends 4-7 hours in digital environments daily is an attitude that can not be expected from children who are conscious of their right to grow up, develop, and be protected from the negative effects on their health of digital media.

Although the majority of children stated that they felt positive emotions during the time spent in digital environments, the results show that many negative emotions are also felt by children while spending time in digital environments. As part of this result, the positive emotional impact of digital media activities on children can be understood more easily with the findings of de Leeuw and Buijzen (2016). At this point, it can be said that digital environments can create both supportive and violating effects on children in terms of children's right to feel good, psychological well-being, and happiness. This result is supported by Kostyrka-Allchorne et al. (2022); they, in their study, clearly demonstrated the relationships between mental and emotional health problems experienced by adolescents and their digital user experiences. Similarly, Cino et al. (2023) found that social and psychological well-being, and, remarkably, emotional problems, are significantly related to all kinds of digital activities.

The results also demonstrate that social media tools and activities in these kinds of apps are prominent in children's preferences for the digital platforms they use. This result, related to children's aims of socialization and entertainment, looks like it replicates another result of the research that they conducted by Cino et al. (2023). However, it seems that platforms such as Tinder, Snapchat, and Discord that contain elements that may pose a risk for children are also used by some children. Since these platforms have features that can expose children to a range of risks and harms, they may be insufficient to protect children's best interests and shield them from digital dangers. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures to make children more conscious of their rights to be protected against risks in digital environments and the forms of rights violations on

these platforms. We might say that it would be more appropriate for these measures to be steps that strengthen children's awareness of their own well-being and the risks associated with it, rather than being purely prohibitive or aimed at preventing use.

When we look at the essential reasons children engage with intensive digital media, it is seen that children generally spend time in digital environments for reasons such as having fun, spending free time, communicating, and watching visual media content. When we look at it from this perspective, it can be said that digital environments offer content and experience areas suitable for children to effectively experience their rights to access, communicate, and have fun in visual media content. It is a remarkable finding that the reasons related to the right to follow current developments and access information are in the background, and that the purpose of expressing themselves, sharing their thoughts, and conveying their requests/complaints to the decision-making mechanisms has not been expressed by any child. However, digital technologies have brought about changes such as easier and faster access to information, greater ease in creating and disseminating content or communicating with others, and the possibility of organizing collective actions or campaigns remotely (Martinez-Sainz & Hanna, 2023). The fact that attitudes related to these rights are not expressed by children among the reasons for taking part in digital environments may be due to different reasons. For instance, when it is considered that Twitter, which is one of the most preferred social media tools in terms of the right to freedom of thought and expression, is used by very few children, a question comes to mind: "Do the socio-cultural background and political attitudes have an impact on this situation in terms of related rights?" The answer, potentially, would be yes, and so this answer may open new perspectives for discussions on digital activism or children's voices in digital media. Exactly as highlighted by Byrne and Lundy (2019), "each day and in every country, children and young people are at the receiving end of policies that have been developed and implemented by public officials; policies that can have the potential to further children's well-being and development."

As one of the crucial results of the current study, the fact that the majority of children do not see digital games as digital products that may have inappropriate or dangerous content for them indicates that children are not aware of the possible negative effects of digital games with inappropriate content on them. Yet, considering the contents of the mentioned games in the current findings, it would be stated as a partially pleasing finding for us. This is because these games are in the risky category, as they have negative, exemplary content for children. However, there is one point we should pay attention to: Behind the fun and playful activities available for children online lie complex revenue models, creating value for companies by feeding children's data into algorithms and self-learning models to profile them and offer personalized advertising or by nudging children to buy or try to win in-app items to advance in the games they play (Van Der Hof et al., 2020). Depending on the results of the current study, it is possible to say that children are in a vulnerable position against risky content in digital games and that they may have made evaluations with an entertainment-based understanding rather than the suitability of the content of the games for them. Therefore, as a requirement of the right to be protected against dangers in digital games, it is an important requirement that children be informed about the inappropriate content they may encounter in these games and the negative effects they may be exposed to. It may be possible to reduce these risks and their negative impact on children with educational digital game platforms that should be designed with an awareness of sensitivity to the innocence and rights of children, and children's rights education processes related to digital environments.

As another significant result, children are confronted with potential content areas that will lead to the violation of rights in digital environments. It is seen that these disturbing contents that children are exposed to are especially related to sexuality, violence, death, product advertisements, psychological attacks, and derogatory discourses. As a matter of fact, Livingstone et al. (2014), too, in their study pointed out that although children enjoy many stimulating and valuable experiences on the internet, they also encounter something dangerous, and that makes them upset, nervous, and sad. Based on these results, it may be said that content areas on these subjects should be more tightly controlled, and digital environments should be made safer for children and sensitive to children's rights. Moreover, it can be assumed that children should be made aware of these content areas that will raise the issue of rights violations and the ways to combat them.

As a surprising result, it is seen that just a few arguments related to the beneficial aspects of digital environments are put forward by children. These elements are mostly linked to actions within the framework of getting information, access to educational resources, and communication rights. It is seen that the actions related to the right to participation, freedom of thought, self-expression, and the right to support personal development are not expressed among the beneficial aspects by the vast majority of children. This situation shows us that children should be made aware of the information about these rights in digital environments, the way they are experienced and violated, and the behaviors in line with the essence of the right. Also, when we look at the children's determinations about the negative effects of digital environments, it is seen that the loss of time management, physical health problems, addiction to digital tools, and mental-psychological confusion are prominent. In this sense, it is understood that digital environments have negative effects on children, such as digital addiction, loss of time management skills, and physical problems. According to Reid Chassiakos et al. (2016), the risks of media include negative health effects on sleep, attention, and learning; a higher incidence of obesity and depression; exposure to inaccurate, inappropriate, or unsafe content and contacts; and compromised privacy and confidentiality. So, these different findings of studies look to coincide. This result is supported by Dienlin and Johannes (2020), who found that the intensity of digital technology use has a significant negative impact on the well-being of children and adolescents. Therefore, it would be said that children should be more conscious of the negative effects of digital environments on areas related to their right to healthy growth, well-being, and development, and about ways to protect against them.

Furthermore, the vast majority of children are conscious about the protection of their personal data and privacy. This is a meaningful result; that's because the more children's lives become digital-by-default, the more the design and functioning of the digital environment matters, as does children's understanding of and capacity to manage their data and privacy online (Stoilova, Livingstone, & Nandagiri, 2020). As a similar result, these researchers found that, in their study, children were keen to describe their privacy strategies in terms of the way they handle the data they know they give -the pictures they post online, the links they share, the information they enter when registering for platforms- to protect their privacy, relationships, and reputation. However, it is understood that some of the participating children lack this awareness and tend to share their personal data with strangers online for various reasons. Just repeating a previous piece of advice that was put forward by Hareket and Yel (2017), it has been stated that children should be included in educational activities that will enable them to act more consciously in these matters. Further, it should not be ignored that children and those closest to them should have sufficient

knowledge and awareness about the importance of protecting personal data and privacy rights in digital environments, and the forms of violation of these rights, because home and school are the most preferred areas for children in accessing digital media.

In light of the results of the current research, it can be said that virtual chat platforms preferred by children are also used by adults for various purposes, such as sexting, virtual dating, inviting for radical purposes, and propagating political and religious messages. This result is not extraordinary for us. In the same direction, Rice et al. (2016), in their study, found a similar result: negative uses of social media, such as cyberbullying, cyber racism, and the exchange of sexually explicit content between minors, are common, with limited approaches to dealing with this at the community level. This means that children may encounter risks such as manipulation, delinquency, incitement to harmful substance use, and exposure to inappropriate sexual images on these platforms. The dangerous content areas encountered by children in digital environments also strengthen this prediction. In addition, unfortunately, it is known that while it remains uncertain whether there is actually more bullying (or other risks) today than there was before the internet, it is likely that bullying (along with some other risks) is becoming more all-encompassing and difficult to escape (Livingstone, 2015). So, awareness-raising educational activities for children, parents, and educators should be carried out, and digital inspections must be expanded because these platforms have a wide content potential that will cause violations of children's rights.

In digital environments that make intercultural interaction and educational settings more widespread and robust, children's rights are largely unrecognized and unfulfilled across several critical areas. In parallel, the findings of the current study, too, reveal that rights such as protection from discrimination, equal opportunities in education, protection from harmful content, and the right to play are experienced by very few children. The majority of children are unaware of their rights in these spaces, indicating a significant need for educational activities that build rights awareness. The results also demonstrate that while access to educational content is acknowledged as one of the key benefits of digital environments, children do not benefit equally from this right, making it a critical responsibility for digital market managers and content creators to prioritize equal access to educational content. So, EdTech industry bodies and all providers should act to raise standards regarding both the proven educational benefits of EdTech and their compliance with data protection laws (Day et al., 2022). Furthermore, it shows that children are frequently exposed to disturbing content, including sexuality, violence, death, humiliating statements, and insulting posts, and the right to be protected from such content and its negative effects remains largely unrealized, leaving children in a digital environment that is broadly insensitive to their fundamental rights. Similarly, Livingstone and Görzig (2014), in their study, put forth the risks of adolescents getting sexual messages on the internet.

As a striking result, there is a noteworthy discrepancy between lived experiences in digital environments by children and their awareness of rights violations. It is literally a remarkable result that although disturbing approaches creating rights violations are encountered in digital environments, some of these are not recognized as rights violations by children, as seen in the case of discourses containing lynching and psychological attacks. Similarly, the results demonstrate that while some disturbing approaches, such as exposure to false and biased information, are faced by a relatively large number of children, they are identified as rights violations by far fewer. Conversely, the data of the current study also show that certain situations, such as cyberbullying and discrimination, are experienced as rights violations by the vast majority of children, yet described

as merely disturbing by a much smaller group. Taken together, these findings suggest that a significant majority of the children participating in this research have not considered some inappropriate situations they encountered in digital environments as rights violations or lack the consciousness to do so. At this point, as significant advice, CRC should offer a structure for addressing provision, protection, and participation rights in relation to children's online and offline experiences (Livingstone & Burger, 2014). Furthermore, the research indicates that some children, despite facing attitudes and approaches that constitute violations of their rights, have not perceived these situations as disturbing or risky for themselves, underscoring the urgent need for multicultural children's human rights-based digital literacy education.

Depending on these results, a few new questions and reflections would be highlighted for future research designs:

• Would the digital ethnography research, in which children's attitudes in digital environments will be examined/observed in the context of human rights theory, provide a driving force in content development and design processes for children's human rights education?

• Is it possible to direct the attitudes and approaches of children in digital environments in line with the requirements of human rights awareness in the context of multicultural rights-based education? Would a standard content-feature framework be created for educational arguments that can be used for this purpose?

• What are the similarities and differences between the attitudes of children in digital environments and their attitudes in real life in terms of rights consciousness? Do these two areas have an impact on each other in terms of the attitudes of children within the framework of rights awareness?

5. Limitation and Implementation

This study, while offering comprehensive insights into children's digital rights awareness and their user tendencies, has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it must be noted that the data relies on self-reported questionnaires and online interviews, which may be subject to social desirability bias; children might have underreported sensitive experiences, such as harassment or exposure to harmful content, due to the perceived authority of the researcher. Second, although the sample size is substantial, the reliance on online data collection methods may have inadvertently excluded children with limited internet access or lower digital literacy, meaning the findings primarily represent those who are more digitally connected. Third, the broad age range of nine to eighteen years covers a vast developmental spectrum; while this provides a holistic overview, the cognitive grasp of rights varies significantly across these stages, which may limit the specificity of the conclusions for certain age groups. Additionally, the current study is geographically focused on Türkiye, and given that local legal frameworks and cultural norms often shape digital rights, these findings may not be directly generalizable to different socio-political contexts. In sum, as this is a cross-sectional study, it provides a snapshot of a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Therefore, longitudinal studies would be necessary to track how children's rights awareness develops over time in response to changing technologies.

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