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## DIGITAL VIOLENCE: PERCEPTION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES FROM THE TERRITORY OF AP VOJVODINA<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** The goal of this research is to deepen the knowledge about the phenomenon of digital violence against children with and without developmental disabilities and to raise environmental awareness of the presence of digital violence in the population of children and youth with and without developmental disabilities in order to guide society in the direction of the possibility for protection from it.

In the research participated 5227 elementary school age students with and without disabilities. The data was collected in elementary schools and schools for students with developmental disabilities in the territory of AP Vojvodina within the project of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities "Violence on the Internet: How to prevent and fight against violence on the Internet?".

The results of the research showed that digital violence among children and young people with and without disabilities in the territory of AP Vojvodina is represented with a significant percentage. Research data shows that the largest number of children and young people access the Internet through their mobile phones, which supports the fact that the risk of children and young people experiencing this type of violence is significant. Likewise, the data analysis showed that the largest percentage of children and young people believe that they, their parents and teachers are responsible for protecting children and young people from digital violence. From this arises a clear need for education of children and young people, better communication between schools and teachers, students and parents and clearer procedures related to the prevention and protection of children and young people from violence on the Internet or procedures when violence occurs, all for the purpose of preventing numerous negative outcomes that digital violence can lead to.

**Key words:** internet; use of the Internet; violence + prevention and control; children; children with developmental disabilities.

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## 1. Introduction

The importance of digital technologies for everyday life is undeniably great. Today, there is almost no social activity in which they have not found application and contributed to faster and better performance of daily activities. Likewise, they make life easier for the individual, enabling him to quickly satisfy his social and cognitive needs (Milosević & Putnik, 2019). The development of the Internet also contributed to the growing use of digital technologies (Leiner, 2009). The number of Internet users is increasing day by day and the Internet has become an integral part of the lives of all people, both young and adult, regardless of gender, age, level of education and socio-economic status. Today, it represents the most prevalent form of communication among young people (Bošnjak, 2019; Veljković, Mihajlović, Dukić & Despotović, 2021).

The use of the Internet brings a range of risks to which children and young people are exposed, much more than adults, so the issue of the risks that children face on the Internet is becoming a priority area of action for an increasing number of countries. Children start to use the Internet at an ever-younger age, in a personalized way (from their own mobile devices), without proper parent/guardian insight into their activities, which has important implications for policy and practice (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2019).

Modern information and communication technologies give participants new ways to display violent behavior, which resulted with the emergence of a new social problem - digital violence (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Milićević, 2021). Digital violence is only one, but also the most serious of all the possible negative consequences of using the Internet. It mainly affects the younger population, as well as the population of children and youth with 'developmental disabilities, because their carelessness leads to a violation of their safety (Opić, Đuranović & Klasnić, 2016; Robotić, 2015; Veljković, Mihajlović, Dukić & Despotović, 2021).

Although the interest of the general public and the research community in the study of digital violence among young people has been growing in the last few years, there is still no consensus among authors on the definitions and ways of measuring the mentioned phenomenon (Vejmelka, Strabić & Jazvo, 2017). Some authors define it as aggressive and intentional behavior directed at individuals or a group via the Internet that is repeated and directed towards individuals who cannot easily defend themselves, while others speak of a widespread phenomenon that through aggressive behavior and intentional "harm" repeated during time aims to disrupt the social relations of others (Batori & Ćurlin, 2020). According to the author Li (2010), digital violence includes seven different forms of violence: 1. Expressing anger, that is, sending angry, unpleasant and vulgar messages directly directed at a person or a group on the Internet; 2. Harassment, which involves repeatedly sending threatening messages to a person; 3. Online stalking involving harassment that contributes to the harm or intimidation of an individual; 4. Defamation i.e. sending or publishing offensive, untrue or evil statements about a person to other people; 5. Masking or pretending that a person is someone else and sending or publishing material under the identity of another person that makes them look bad or a potential threat to others; 6. Betrayal and fraud which means sending or publishing material about a person that includes sensitive, private or embarrassing information including private messages and pictures of that person; 7. Exclusion i.e. activities that intentionally exclude a person from a group on the Internet. This new form of violence among peers is different from violence "face to face" in two aspects. The main difference is that there is no influence of physical force on the Internet, but a person must have access to the Internet and the intention of aggressive behavior. This is why it happens that people who most often experience physical violence are violent over the Internet. Another difference is that face-to-face violence stops when the abuser is not around the victim. In relation to physical violence, digital violence is more permanent, and the person experiences it even without the presence of the bully (Hobbs & E-Bullies, 2009).

Different researches say that the percentage of children and young people who have experienced and committed digital violence is from 20 to 40% (Tokunga, 2010). As the Internet allows people with disabilities or chronic conditions access to various sources of information and forms of support, removes physical barriers and limitations that exist in face-to-face interaction, so the use of electronic communication tools has expanded the context in which victimization of people with disabilities takes place, ensuring anonymity to persons who abuse or harass people from this population. Although the use of social networks has reduced the level of social isolation among children and youth with developmental disabilities, according to research various forms of digital violence have been reported more frequently (Milićević, 2021).

According to the data from the literature, the occurrence of digital violence, among other things, causes various physical, mental and psychosocial consequences. Digital violence can occur anytime and anywhere in the virtual world and therefore leaves greater consequences than traditional violence. People who experience digital violence can be abused 24 hours a day without stopping, and thus the negative consequences that arise as a result of this type of violence can have a more severe form and can also last longer (Batori & Ćurlin, 2020; Milićević, 2021). The result of this type of violence produces negative emotions and states in the individual such as sadness, anger, frustration, shame or fear. These emotions and states are associated with low self-esteem, poor school performance, delinquency, and interpersonal violence among youth in the real world. It is a well-known fact that under its influence, the most terrible outcomes in the real world have been recorded - suicides among the youth and adolescent population (Milošević & Putnik, 2019).

Perpetrators of digital violence are characterized by arrogance, seeking fame, desire to control others, justifying violence against others, disrespect of the law and jealousy. They believe that they cannot be caught in their abuse, and it is important that they learn that they still leave an electronic trail on the Internet and that their computer can be located with the help of an IP address (Abdelrazek & Eltantawy, 2020; Willard, 2007).

The most effective way to protect children from digital violence is based on activities at all levels: state, parents, school and media. Only the adequate action of all these agents can ensure children's safe use of the Internet (Rančić, 2018). It is necessary to create quality preventive programs whose purpose is to raise society's awareness of digital violence with the aim of reducing and suppressing this form of violence. Young people should be taught that threats and violence towards others is actually abuse of others and that it can leave lasting psychological consequences on the abused person. One of the most important factors in the reduction and prevention of digital violence is to make young people aware that they should not withdraw into themselves and that it is necessary to report any form of violence to an adult (Batori & Ćurlin, 2020; Willard, 2007).

The goal of this research is to show the perception of the experiences of children and youth with developmental disabilities and children and youth of the typical population of elementary school age about digital violence through the examination of their attitudes regarding digital violence, as well as through the examination of attitudes related to the possibilities to protect a child and young people from digital violence, in order to raise the awareness of the environment about digital violence that could lead to its reduction.

## **2. Methodology**

### Sample, time and place of research

In the research participated 5227 elementary school age students (from fifth to eighth grade) with and without developmental disabilities, of whom 5054 children from the typical population and 473 children with developmental disabilities. The data was collected in elementary schools and schools for students with developmental disabilities in 177 populated places (cities and villages) in the territory of AP Vojvodina within the project of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities "Violence on the Internet: How to prevent and fight against violence on the Internet?". The criteria for inclusion in the research were students from the fifth to the eighth grade of elementary schools and schools for students with developmental disabilities, as well as children who attend classes according to the IEP and have at least a mild intellectual disability or other difficulties or diseases in which the IQ at least at the level of mild intellectual disability.

### Measuring instrument

For the purpose of data collection, within the framework of the research of the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities - National Communities "Violence on the Internet: How to prevent and fight against violence on the Internet?", questionnaires were constructed for children and parents which are anonymous and consist of a part that refers to sociodemographic data, while the second part of the questionnaire refers to experiences with digital violence and attitudes about that type of violence, as well as the possibilities for protection from it.

For the purposes of this research, the data collected through a questionnaire filled out by students was used. The questionnaire filled out by students consists of questions related to gender, place of residence, age, time spent on the Internet, the place from which they most often access the Internet, and what they use it for. The second part of the question refers to whether they have ever experienced some kind of digital violence, the time when they encountered it, and if so, to state what they did about it. The last part of the questionnaire consists of statements related to protection from digital violence and offered answers agree, not sure, disagree.

### Statistical methods

SPSS 20.0 software package was used for data entry and processing. For the purposes of analysis and description of the structure of the sample according to relevant variables, frequency and percentage displays were used to show the representation of a certain category or response. Descriptive statistics methods were used to determine measures of central tendency (arithmetic mean), measures of variability (standard deviation) and extreme values (minimum and maximum) of observed numerical characteristics.

To check the reliability of the scale as a whole, the measure of internal consistency expressed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. Within the framework of comparative statistics, the T test for independent samples was used. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used in correlation analyses. In the applied tests, the limit values of the probability of risk are at the significance level of 95% ( $p < 0,05$ ) (difference in statistical parameters significant) and 99% ( $p < 0,01$ ) (difference in statistical parameters highly significant).

## 3. Results and Discussion

## Description of the sample - socio-demographic characteristic

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the examined sample

Description of the sample	Research group
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	2887 (52,2%)
Male	2640 (47,8%)
<b>Class</b>	
Fifth	1639 (29,7%)
The sixth	1404 (25,4%)
The seventh	1697 (30,7%)
The eighth	787 (14,2%)
<b>Population of children</b>	
Children without interference in development	5054 (91,4%)
Children with disturbances in development	473 (8,6%)

The sample consisted of 5227 children attending primary school; 52,2% of respondents are female, and of the total number, 473 (8,6%) children have developmental disabilities.

### Reliability of the questionnaire

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was checked by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and it is 0,621, which represents acceptable reliability.

### Hypothesis testing

When defining hypothesis one, it was assumed that the percentage of digital violence against children and young people of the typical population will be lower compared to children and young people with developmental disabilities. The presence of statistically significant differences between the two groups was checked using the pearson chi-square test for independent samples. The analysis of the results did not establish significant differences, and they are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences in relation to and experience with violence on the the internet

A variable	Group	P (%)	X <sup>2</sup>	df	pp
Experience with violence on the Internet	CTP	10,9%	6,981 <sup>a</sup>	2	,051
	CDD	8,5%			

**\*\*Note:** P=percentage; CTP= Children of the typical population; CDD= Children with developmental disabilities

The results showed that digital violence among children of the typical population is represented by 10.9%, while among children with developmental disabilities that percentage is slightly lower and amounts to 8.5%, both in the population of children with developmental disabilities and among children of typical population. In addition, 12% of children of the typical population and 9.3% of children with disabilities declared that they were not sure if they had experienced digital violence. Data from the literature supports the fact that there is a high rate of digital violence in the population of people with developmental disabilities, and that the prevalence of these phenomena is higher compared to studies that only included people from the typical population (Milićević, 2021). This is supported by a study in which 231 people with and without disabilities between the ages of 16 and 20 participated, the results of which showed that people with disabilities reported higher rates of digital violence compared to people without disabilities, namely 33.3% compared to 23.9% (Kowalski & Toth, 2018). The

results of a study conducted in the United States of America and which included 1389 students, including 145 students with disabilities, showed that compared to their peers in the typical population, students with disabilities had an increased rate of involvement in violence as victims, but not as bullies (Farmer et al, 2012). According to Holfeld and Stoesz and Montgomery (Holfeld, Stoesz & Montgomery, 2019), in the group of young people with autism spectrum disorder, the prevalence of digital violence compared to traditional violence was 17% and 26%, respectively.

In contrast to the previously mentioned research results, the research conducted by the author Carney Wieser (Karney, 2015) on a sample of 561 teenage students (of which 197 with developmental disabilities) showed that there is no significant difference in the rates of (digital) violence between students with developmental disabilities and students of the typical population. We obtained similar results in our research.

Considering that ten times more children of the typical population than children with developmental disabilities participated in this research i.e., if the same number of children with developmental disabilities were examined, we might have a true picture that would still show the opposite. It is also important to note that different authors had a much smaller number of respondents in their research, and that their results can be taken with a grain of salt. The data in the literature support the fact that the main reasons for the difference in the percentage of digital violence in research are differences between researches when it comes to the instruments used and the sample. perception and definition of digital violence, as well as the time frame in which it is studied (Brochado, Soares & Fraga, 2017).

When talking about the prevalence of digital violence in relation to age, previous studies have shown that experiences with digital violence increase as children grow, which leads to the assumption that children try to gain a reputation and position among their peers by committing violence, especially in the transition from elementary until high school (Trbojević & Šikuten, 2022; Šincek, Duvnjak & Milić, 2017; United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2016). In hypothesis two, it was assumed that the percentage of violence will increase with age. The authors Nikičević-Milković and Jerković expressed this opinion in their research (Nikčević-Milković & Jerković, 2016). According to their research conducted in the Republic of Croatia, the frequency of digital media increases with the age of students. Spearman's correlation coefficient was used in our research to check the connection between age and reporting on the existence of digital violence. In both groups of children, there was no statistically significant correlation between age and reporting (CTP:  $r_s = -.02$ ;  $p = .18$ ); (CDD:  $r_s = -.07$ ;  $p = .11$ ), and the correlation coefficient was negative, which means that younger children experienced digital violence more often, that is, the hypothesis was not confirmed, which is in accordance with the research conducted by the author Wang and associates. The results of their research showed that students of older grades showed a lower frequency of committing and experiencing digital violence compared to students of lower grades (Wang, Iannotti & Nansel, 2009).

The following table shows the correlation values obtained in our research.

*Table 3. The connection of digital violence in relation to the age of the examined sample*

A variable	Reporting on CTP violence	CDD violence reporting
Age	-,02	-,07

*Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; CTP= Children of the typical population; CDD= Children with developmental disabilities*

Given that digital violence is a frequent topic of research, the results of which are also transmitted through the media, it is assumed that it is the media that have contributed to the fact that children and parents are more aware of digital violence. The results of our research

lead us to the conclusion that older children are more aware of the risks that the Internet brings us, and therefore more cautions.

Although the research carried out in the world does not bring unequivocal results that link digital violence with gender, in the third hypothesis we assumed that boys will have more experience with digital violence compared to girls, both in the population of children and young people with developmental disabilities, and in children and young people of the typical population. Such results were presented by the authors Deniz in their research (Deniz, 2015), Li (Li , 2010), as well as Wang et al. (Wang, Iannotti & Nansel, 2010).

The presence of statistically significant differences between the two groups was checked using the t-test for independent samples. The analysis of the results did not establish any significant differences, and they are shown in Table 4. Descriptive statistics measures determined the exact percentages of experience with violence in both groups, and in the group of children and young people of the typical female population, 5,62% of respondents reported that they had experience with violence, and 5,32% of males, while in the group of children and youth with developmental disabilities, 5,28% of females reported experience with violence, and 3,17% of males.

The results of our research are in accordance with the research conducted by the authors Kowalski and Limber (Kowalski & Limber, 2007), as well as the authors of Cappadocia, Weiss and Pepler (Cappadocia, Weiss & Pepler, 2012). In addition, the author Diden et al. (Didden et al., 2009) in their work found no significant differences in relation to gender when it comes to digital violence among adolescents with intellectual disabilities and other developmental disabilities aged 12 to 19 years.

The results of our research lead to the assumption that the digital world and access to the Internet is a space in which today girls are at a greater risk of being victims of digital violence, but also that they themselves are becoming more and more violent.

*Table 4. Differences of the examined sample in relation to gender and their experience with violence on the Internet*

A variable	Group	P (%)	tT	Df	Pp
Experience with violence on the Internet	CTPF	5,62	-,842	5052	0,400
	CTPM	5,32			
	CDDF	5,28	-1,710	471	,08
	CDDM	3,17			

**\*\*Note:** P=percentage; CTPF= Children of the typical female population; CTPM= Children of the typical male population; CDDF= Children with disabilities in the development of the female gender; CDDM= Children with disabilities in male development

With hypothesis number four, we assumed that children who had experience with digital violence spent more time on the Internet than their peers who had no experience with the same, both in the population of children and youth with developmental disabilities, and in children and youth of the typical population. Numerous studies have shown that parents who reported cases of digital violence against their child allowed their children more access to the Internet, with less supervision and parental control compared to parents who did not report digital violence, and that students who experienced some unpleasant experience on the Internet spent more time per day on the Internet than those who did not have an unpleasant experience (Punte, 2018; Šincek, Tomašić Humer & Duvnjak, 2015) , which was also shown in the research by the authors Alhaboby, Barnes, Evans and Short (Alhaboby, Barnes, Evans & Short, 2019).

Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to check the connection between the time spent on the Internet and reporting on the existence of digital violence in our research. In both groups of children, there was no statistically significant correlation between time spent on the Internet and reporting (CTP:  $r_s = -.02$ ;  $p = .10$ ); (CDD:  $r_s = -.04$ ;  $p = .36$ ) which is shown in table number 5.

*Table 5. Correlation of the experience of digital violence in relation to the time spent on the Internet*

A variable	Reporting on CTP violence	Reporting on CDD violence
Time spent on the Internet	-.02	-.04

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; CTP= Children of the typical population; CDD= Children with developmental disabilities

Similar data was presented in the research conducted on the territory of the Republic of Serbia in 2019 as part of the Children of Europe on the Internet project (UNICEF, 2019), which speaks in favor of the fact that children and young people know certain ways to protect themselves from digital violence and that spending a lot of time on the Internet does not imply involvement in the same.

In the following hypothesis, we assumed that children and youth with developmental disabilities, as well as children and youth of the typical population, most often access the Internet from their mobile phone or family computer. Using the measures of descriptive statistics, it was determined that the most common way to access the Internet is from your mobile phone or family computer, thus confirming the hypothesis. In the group of children of the typical population, as many as 4,650 children (92%) used the mentioned method to access the Internet, while in the group of children with developmental disabilities, that number was 434 (91,8%). Other results are available in the following table.

*Table 6. The most common ways of accessing the Internet*

Method of access	Percentage of CTP	Percentage of CDD
From your mobile phone	92%	91.8%
With mobile phone members families	4,9%	4,7%
From a friend's mobile phone	0,1%	0%
From your computer	1,2%	1,3%
From a shared home computer	1,6%	2,1%
From the computer at school	0,1%	0,2%
From a friend's computer	0%	0%

Data in the literature states that children should not use a mobile phone at all from the aspect of radiation as a direct harmful effect, but also the fact that in this way the Internet is generally always available to them without any restrictions or control (Bašić & Viduka, 2014). The results of our research support the fact that the majority of children of primary school age have their own mobile phone, which leads us to the conclusion that a large number of children are at risk of experiencing digital violence. Similar results were obtained in their research by the authors Šincek, Duvnjak and Milić (Šincek, Duvnjak & Milić, 2017). In a sample of 225 children of primary school age, similar results were also presented by the author Kunić and colleagues (Kunić, Vučković, Matić & Sindik, 2017). The research conducted on the territory of the Republic of Serbia within the Children of Europe project on the Internet revealed that two thirds (65%) of the youngest respondents from the sample (age 9-10 years) and almost all students (98%) from the oldest age group (age 15-17 years old), according to their own statements, access the Internet daily from a mobile phone (UNICEF, 2019).

The results of our research showed that only 1,6% of children and young people of the typical population i.e. 2,1% of children and young people with developmental disabilities



access the Internet from the family computer, which is a devastating circumstance considering that one of the ways to protect children from digital violence by accessing the Internet from a computer located in the room where the family usually stays together, so that parents can have constant supervision over the child and the content he/she follows. This data is quite different from the data on the use of information and communication technologies in the entire household. Through the 2016 survey of the Republic Institute of Statistics, the content of which was related to information and communication technologies in the Republic of Serbia, data was obtained that 72% of households access the Internet via a personal computer, while 76.5% of households access the Internet using a mobile phone. Given that the survey was completed by adults, it can be assumed that a large number of parents believe that they have control over the internet content their children access (Viduka, Bašić & Lavrnjić, 2018). Perhaps one should still ask if this is really so, considering that parents are often unaware of the fact that their child is a victim of digital violence.

In addition, some authors believe that involvement in digital violence mostly depends on the quality of time that children spend on the Internet (UNICEF, 2019). When we talk about the use of the Internet, most children and young people with and without developmental disabilities use the Internet to access various sources of information in their area of interest, which is what we assumed in hypothesis number five. Using the measures of descriptive statistics, it was determined that the most common reason for using the Internet is to access various sources of information in the field of one's interests, thus confirming the hypothesis. In the group of children of the typical population, as many as 4552 children (90,1%) stated this as reason for accessing the Internet, while in the group of children with developmental disabilities, that number was 423 (89,4%). Other results are available in the following table.

*Table 7. The most common reasons for using the Internet*

Method of access	Percentage of CTP	Percentage of CDD
To watch shows in the field of my interests (films, series, music videos, sports competitions, etc.)	90,1%	89,4%
To research on various school-related topics	0,9%	0,4%
To exchange messages by electronic mail (email)	0,1%	0,2%
To visit social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, MySpace...)	4,7%	5,1%
To talk with others (e.g., Discord, Snapchat, Viber, Whatsapp...)	1,7%	1,9%
To play games	2,3%	2,5%
To follow online classes	0,2%	0,4%

The fact that 0,9% of children and youth in the typical population and 0,4% of children and youth with developmental disabilities use the Internet to research various school-related topics may be concerning. It is true that we can collect a lot of useful information on the Internet in order to inform ourselves and improve our knowledge, but the question arises whether the virtual world can have a negative effect on children of primary school age, considering that at that age they use it mainly for leisure purposes. Numerous studies whose authors dealt with this topic showed different data. According to research conducted by the author Kunić and colleagues (Kunić, Vučković & Matić, 2017), primary school-aged children most often cited communication on social networks, playing online games, listening to music, watching movies and using it for educational purposes as the reason for using the Internet. Data from research conducted in the territory of the Republic of Serbia also confirm these results. According to the results of the same survey, almost 40% of students never or almost never use the Internet for schoolwork, while more than two-thirds of children and young people (74%) stated that

they have a profile on a social network or platform for playing video games. games (Veljković, Mihajlović, Dukić S & Despotović, 2021). In addition to all of the above, the data from the research is worrying that frequent playing of games on the Internet, along with exposure to violent content while playing, positively correlates with the frequency of committing and experiencing digital violence among children and young people (Vejmelka, Strabić & Jazvo, 2017).

According to data from the literature, it can be noted that there is a small percentage of children and young people with and without developmental disabilities who do not use the Internet for leisure purposes, which leads us to the conclusion that children and young people with and without developmental disabilities need to be pointed out the positive aspects of the use of digital technologies, as well as the facts related to the negative aspects associated with them, and thus provide protection to children from the harmful effects that digital technologies bring with them.

When talking about protection from digital violence, research has shown that children are aware of the risks it can bring. The percentage of agreement was over 60% on all statements related to protection from digital violence, except for the last one, which related to the fact that school employees should report this type of violence, which is shown in table number 8.

*Table 8. Descriptive values of respondents' answers regarding protection from digital violence*

Claim	Percentage of agreement with the statement
It is important that I know as much as I can about online violence so I could protect myself	88,8%
I have to learn How to protect myself from everything of online violence to be safer	88,8%
When someone experience violence on the Internet, mandatory he needs to tell someone.	88,8%
It is important that parents also know as much as possible about violence on the Internet so that they can protect their children.	89,4%
Children will be safe if their parents know how they can protect them from violence on the internet.	86,9%
When a child experiences violence on the Internet, his parents must say that to someone.	66,8%
It is important that students learn as much as possible at school about violence on internet so you can protect yourself.	88,2%
Students in school should learn how they can to protect from the violence on the the internet to make them feel safer.	71,9%
When one of the students experiences violence on the internet, school employees must it to tell someone.	11,8%

Only 11.8% of children and youth with and without disabilities believe that school employees should report this type of violence. According to the monitoring carried out in our region in 2019, most of the surveyed students (71%) feel safe in their school, while almost a third think otherwise (UNICEF, 2019).

The previously mentioned information indicates the attitude of today's children and young people towards the school. Given that the school is the first institution that a child comes into contact with after the family, it has the greatest influence on the development of children

and young people. Children spend most of their time at school, and in the most sensitive period of their lives, when school is the most fertile ground for various external influences, both positive and negative (Zubak, 2007). If the school does not react to violence, it promotes that violence, and it is necessary to awaken the awareness of children and young people that the school is an institution for education and upbringing, and that it is a place where they should be protected. Children should be educated that violence in general must be reported to parents, as well as teachers and school employees so that they can further react.

Given that children and young people with and without developmental disabilities in the largest percentage believe that they themselves, as well as parents and schools, are most responsible for protecting children and young people from digital violence, which is confirmed in the following hypothesis, it is clear that according to their opinion that responsibility is shared. Descriptive statistics measures were used to determine the exact values of the responses of children and young people, and in the following table they are shown in the respondents' responses.

*Table 9. Descriptive values of respondents' answers regarding responsibility for protecting children from digital violence*

Claim	Percentage of CTP	CDD percentage
The most responsible for protection children from the digital violence are children/young people.	13,5%	11,8%
The most responsible for protection children from the digital violence are parents.	33,5%	34%
The most responsible for protection children from the digital violence is school.	2,1%	2.1%
The most responsible for protection children from the digital violence are children/youth, parents and school.	40,2%	39,1%
I don't know	10,7%	12,5%

Data from the literature shows that children and young people agree with the fact that mostly the responsible persons and institutions failed in the moments when they needed their help the most, and some even made it difficult for them to solve the problem of digital violence with their advice (Bilić & Balog, 2019).

In order to reduce the negative impact of digital technologies and avoid the worst possible outcomes, it is necessary to accept the responsibility and weight that it can bring, and to work together to reduce it through various educations and workshops, both for children and parents, as well as for teachers and employees in school. Data from the literature shows that it is necessary to organize educational programs and workshops for both teachers and experts who work with children, because they are often less computer literate than the young people they work with. Only when parents, teachers, professionals who work with children are provided with sufficient information, they will be able to properly help children and young people and provide appropriate support. The most important thing is to build a relationship of trust with children and young people. Raising public awareness about this increasingly common problem, training experts for working with children, cooperation with parents and children can be an effective prevention programs that would give positive results when talking about reducing digital violence (Veljković, Mihajlović, Dukić & Despotović, 2021).

#### 4. Conclusion

The information obtained in this research indicates that the prevalence of digital violence in the population of children with and without disabilities of primary school age in the territory of AP Vojvodina is almost equal and large enough, and that there is a need for different programs that deal with the education of children and young people and how to focus on healthy relationships in friendships and relationships, as well as various programs that would support children and youth who have experienced digital violence.

The data from the research that the largest number of children and young people access the Internet through their mobile phones speaks in favor of the fact that the risk of children and young people experiencing this type of violence is significant. Likewise, the data analysis showed that the largest percentage of children and young people believe that they, their parents and teachers are responsible for protecting children and young people from digital violence. From this comes a clear need for the education of children and young people, better communication between schools and teachers, students and parents and clearer procedures related to the prevention and protection of children and young people from violence on the Internet or procedures when violence occurs, all for the purpose of preventing numerous negative outcomes that digital violence can lead to.

The limitations of this research include the fact that almost ten times more children of the typical population than children with developmental disabilities participated in it, which could affect the results of the research. Another limitation relates to the instrument that was used. Authors of research around the world who deal with this topic use different instruments in their research, and it is possible that this is why there are differences in research. In addition, the question arises whether all the students in the examined sample were honest and objective, given that children and young people tend to fit into society by giving answers, not as they really are, but as they should be. In order to reduce this influence, at the very beginning of the questionnaire, there is a note that the questionnaire is anonymous.

Considering that in our research we obtained information that girls had more experience with digital violence, both in the population of children with developmental disabilities and in the population of children of the typical population, it is additionally necessary to examine whether they are more often involved in the same as victims or as bullies, which could be the subject of some future research.

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