

Which role do different bullying definitions play?

Inconsistencies of within-country prevalence rates of (cyber)bullying and (cyber)victimization in large scale cross-national datasets

Shan Hu¹, Dagmar Strohmeier^{2, 1}, Takuya Yanagida^{3, 1}, Simona C. S. Caravita¹, Peter Smith⁴



¹Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education, University of Stavanger, Norway

²School of Medical Engineering and Applied Social Sciences, University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Linz, Austria, and Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education, University of Stavanger, Norway

³Department of Developmental and Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria, and Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education, University of Stavanger, Norway

⁴Unit for School and Family Studies, Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London

Introduction

- Previous research documented substantial within-country discrepancies in prevalence rates of (cyber)bullying victimization when comparing the results of different cross national large-scale surveys¹.
- One explanation for these discrepancies is the use of different measurement approaches across these surveys.

Aim

This study examines whether the type of bullying definition can shed light on the observed within-country discrepancies, when controlling for as many variables as possible that systematically varied between studies.



Concrete behavioural examples without using the term "bullying".

Classic definition comprising of hostile intent, repetition, and power-imbalance², using the term "bullying".



Method

- **Participants:** Data gathered from 19 overlapping countries in EUKO and HBSC will be used. The sample sizes are 123.206 students.
- **Analysis:** Multilevel modelling was conducted in Mplus using Bayesian estimation. Outcome variables are prevalence rates of traditional bullying (TB), bullying victimization (BV), cyberbullying (CB) and cybervictimization (CV).

Results

Country	EUKO		HBSC	
	TB (%)	BV (%)	TB (%)	BV (%)
1 Belgium	14	24.7	11.2	21.3
2 Croatia	3.5	5.4	21.7	22.1
3 Czech	11.3	20.8	13.1	18.1
4 Estonia	12.2	19.5	28.1	35.1
5 France	9.1	20.1	11.3	16.4
6 Germany	11.4	23.3	17.4	21.3
7 Ireland	3.9	13.1	13.4	32.1
8 Italy	0	10.2	12.1	13.0
9 Lithuania	5.8	14.3	44.6	51.7
10 Malta	15.3	27	15.1	30.5
11 Norway	7.1	18.0	8.6	16.4
12 Poland	26.5	26.3	27.4	23.5
13 Portugal	11.8	18.5	9.8	18.7
14 Romania	17.9	21.9	30.9	31.6
15 Russia	19.7	29.8	30.4	35.9
16 Serbia	15.9	20	15.4	18.1
17 Slovakia	2.5	4.8	25.8	20.6
18 Spain	15.9	25	11.7	10.8
19 Switzerland	0	17.5	none	none

Country	EUKO		HBSC	
	CB (%)	CV (%)	CB (%)	CV (%)
1 Belgium	12.7	24.3	5.6	8.6
2 Croatia	2.9	5.8	13.9	14.0
3 Czech	8.8	16.6	7.5	10.4
4 Estonia	10.0	17.9	10.5	15.8
5 France	6.0	10.8	4.6	7.7
6 Germany	7.1	17.0	7.4	10.1
7 Ireland	2.2	11.7	8.1	15.8
8 Italy	1.0	5.4	6.6	8.0
9 Lithuania	3.9	10.3	19.8	21.4
10 Malta	13.3	24.9	8.8	14.3
11 Norway	6.4	14.8	3.5	7.5
12 Poland	25.5	27.8	16.2	18.7
13 Portugal	8.8	14.9	5.2	8.0
14 Romania	16.5	23.7	18.2	18.1
15 Russia	23.6	33.6	16.7	20.9
16 Serbia	13.5	21.9	8.5	10.5
17 Slovakia	2.5	6.0	9.5	11.1
18 Spain	9.3	16.4	2.9	5.0
19 Switzerland	0	17.2	4.7	8.6

There was a statistically significant higher prevalence of bullying and victimization in the HBSC study compared to EUKO, whereas the prevalence of cyberbullying and cyber victimization was lower in HBSC compared to EUKO.

	TB	BV	CB	CV
Within level				
Slope prevalence rates (lenient) on study	0.104	0.104	0.048	-0.135*
Prevalence rates (lenient) on				
Age	0.044*	-0.078*	0.096*	0.038*
Sex	-0.146*	-0.001	-0.094*	0.056*
Age_M	0.009	-0.143*	-0.110*	-0.008
Sex_P	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Smeth_0	-0.079	-0.092*	-0.082	-0.096*
Smeth_2	-0.021*	-0.018*	-0.005	-0.002
Between level				
Means of slope	0.202	0.345	0.151	-0.630

When controlling for sample characteristics (age and gender), and study design (average age of the participants, proportion of girls, and sampling method), there were no effects of study in prevalence rates considering all countries except for CV.

