Normative beliefs about cyberbullying: comparisons of Israeli and U.S. youth

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## Sample

Israeli participants included 1097 (418 boys, 498 girls, 181 unidentified) students from three rural late elementary, middle, and high schools. The largest ethnic groups proportionally among Israeli youth were Jews
(49.6%), Muslims (21.4%), and Druze (19.4%).

# Abstract

We examined how normative beliefs about cyberbullying influenced the choice of electronic aggression in hypothetical peer-to-peer scenarios. Data was collected from 1097 Israeli and 1196 U.S. students in grades 5th-10th, who completed self-report surveys examining normative beliefs about cyberbullying, aggressive cyberstrategies, face-to-face verbal and relational aggression, and access to electronic devices. Israeli students had higher levels of all aggression measures than U.S. students, but access to electronic devices was similar across the two countries. Normative beliefs about cyberbullying were positively associated with verbal and relational aggression. In Israeli, normative beliefs in boys were higher than girls in 5th and 6th grade, similar in 7th and 8th grade, and then higher again in 9th and 10th grade. In the U.S., boys had higher normative beliefs about cyberbullying than girls, and older students had higher beliefs than younger students. Findings using logistic regression indicated that normative beliefs about cyberbullying were predictive of Cyber-aggression even when taking into account grade, country, gender, access to electronic devices, and face-to-face relational aggression. Cyber-aggressive strategies were more likely to be present at the highest level of normative beliefs. Ways to change student beliefs using a social cognitive perspective are discussed.

# Outcome

In their study, Peled, Medvin, Pieterse and Domanski (2019) found that for normative beliefs, Israeli students had higher scores than U.S. students, but this effect was moderated by a grade by gender interaction. More specifically, Israeli boys had higher normative beliefs in the 5th and 6th, as well as 9th and 10th grades, but were similar to girls in 7th and 8th grades. In the U.S., boys had higher scores than girls, and normative beliefs increased with age. adolescents' endorsement of collectivism was negatively related to their use of overt and relational aggression whereas positive associations were found between the endorsement of individualism and adolescent aggression while adolescents’ conflict level and social status insecurity accounted for a significant part of these associations. For cyber-aggressive choices, both country and gender were the strongest influences, with Israeli males more likely to choose an aggressive strategy,
following a similar pattern to normative beliefs. higher beliefs about the appropriateness of cyber aggression were associated with a higher likelihood that students would choose a cyber-aggressive act in peer-to-peer hypothetical scenarios, accounting for 28.2% of the variance in cyber-aggressive scores.