Digital Uses, Victimization and Online Aggression: A Comparative Study Between Primary School and Lower Secondary School Students in France

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# Abstract

With the growing use of electronic communication among children and adolescents, the Internet has become an important tool for their socialization and has opened up new perspectives for network and community building opportunities. However, the Internet and electronic communication tools can be used either positively or negatively and the spread of its use in these recent years has led to online risky behaviours and harm. This questionnaire survey was completed in five primary schools and seven lower secondary schools in the South of France. It sets out to assess the digital uses, risk taking and negative experiences online among primary and secondary school students in France (N = 4200). Findings show that primary school students are pretty well involved in digital communication since they spend an average of 150 min per day online vs. 190 for secondary school participants. Social networking is also part of their lives with 17 % of primary school children and 50 % secondary school students who use Facebook. In terms of risk taking, only 49 % of primary students and 39 % of secondary school students report they personally know all their online friends. Cyberbullying figures show that quite a few respondents have been affected with negative experiences among which some were repeatedly victimized (14 % in primary schools and 5 % in secondary schools). These findings highlight the necessity to take the issue of educating towards a positive and safe use of the Internet seriously and that primary school children also need to be provided with proper guidance towards a safer Internet.

# Outcome

Our findings show that bullying and cyberbullying are significantly correlated aspreviously showed by Hemphill et al. (2012). The school climate is predictor of peerviolence and bullying (Debarbieux2006) and as we could see in this research, being avictim in the school environment is clearly associated to being a victim in cyberspaceand to a lesser extent what is going on online does affect traditional victimization inschools. As Patchin and Hinduja (2012) stress a poor school climate, that is a schoolclimate where the feeling of insecurity is high, rules are not clear and discipline isperceived as unfair, where students have a negative representation of the quality ofrelationships and do not feel respected and protected, generates bullying and violence.