Epidemiology of Cyberbullying across Europe: Differences between Countries and Genders

# Details

## Year

2019

## DOI

Epidemiology of Cyberbullying across Europe: Differences between Countries and Genders

## Issued

2019

## Language

English

## Volume

19

## Issue

2

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Educational Sciences: Theory Practice

# Abstract

Epidemiological studies on the prevalence of cyberbullying and cybervictimization in different countries, using the same procedure and the same measures, are of relevance in understanding differences in results that are not due to methodological factors. The current study was conducted in 8 European countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Spain), involving a total of 4,847 students, using an online anonymous questionnaire (the Tabby online questionnaire). The results were analyzed by comparing differences between countries and between genders. Cyberbullying and cybervictimization were most prevalent in Bulgaria and Hungary and least prevalent in Spain. Boys committed more cyberbullying than girls in all countries, but there were no overall gender differences in cybervictimization. However, girls were more often cybervictims in four countries and boys were more often cybervictims in the other four countries. The results are discussed with regard to the importance of cross-national studies of cyberbullying and cybervictimization and the use of online data collection in order to reduce methodological bias.

# Outcome

Overall, more than one in four adolescents reported being a victim of cyberbullying in the previous six months, with boys globally more involved than girls. Compared with girls, two to five times as many boys reported cyberbullying. This finding is consistent with those from other studies that have found gender differences in cyberbullying and cybervictimization (Tokunaga, 2010). For example, Kowalski and Limber (2007) reported that, among a middle school sample, boys were more likely to be cyberbullies than girls. Similarly, another study found that significantly more girls were cyberbullied in the past month compared with boys (Dempsey, Sulkowski, Nichols, 2009). In our study, we did not find that girls were more likely to be cybervictimized than boys, except in France.