



The Importance of Measurement Issues on Prevalence Rates of (Cyber)bullying in International Large-Scale Assessments

Why bullying rates differ across international large-scale surveys: examining how measurement choices shape results and what this means for research, policy, and cross-national comparisons.



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BIO:

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

My research examines how bullying and cyberbullying are defined and measured in international large-scale surveys. It asks how different methods affect reported rates across countries. This matters because policies rely on these data, which may vary depending on the measurement used.

ONE KEY FINDING

(Cyber)bullying and (cyber) victimization rates do not systematically differ between measurement approaches across countries.

Using different definitions of bullying does not consistently change reported rates. Instead, differences vary across countries, suggesting that results depend more on context than on the measurement approach itself.

No consistent difference were found between EU Kids Online (EUKO) and Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) across countries.

WHY IT MATTERS

Bullying and cyberbullying data are widely used to guide research and policy. If differences are not caused by definitions alone, comparing countries or studies without caution may lead to misleading conclusions.

KEY CONCLUSION

Differences in (cyber)bullying rates between international large-scale surveys cannot be explained by definitions alone. Country context and survey conditions play a crucial role and must be considered when interpreting results.

Inside the Research

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This study compares how (cyber)bullying and (cyber)victimization are measured in two international surveys (EUKO and HBSC). Using data from over 120,000 students aged 10–16, it examines whether different measurement approaches lead to different reported prevalence rates.

STUDY AT A GLANCE

country: 19 countries included in both EUKO and HBSC surveys.

participants: 123,206 students across the two international surveys.

age group: Students aged 10–16 years.

method: Multilevel logistic regression using Bayesian estimation.

focus: How measurement affects reported (cyber)bullying and (cyber)victimization prevalence rates.

FINDING 1

(Cyber)bullying and (cyber) victimization rates do not systematically differ between measurement approaches across countries.

different definitions do not consistently change bullying rates across countries (please refer to the chart below).

FINDING 2

Survey conditions influence reporting

where and how students are surveyed can affect how often bullying is reported (please refer to the chart below).

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

(Cyber)bullying and (cyber)victimization prevalence rates in international large-scale surveys are shaped by multiple factors, not definitions alone. Country context and survey conditions play a key role. Reliable comparisons require careful attention to how data are collected and interpreted.



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