

Online Bullying among Elementary School Children: Dyadic Perceptions of Children and Parents

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How to cite this paper: Olenik-Shemesh, D., & Levi, K. (2021). Online Bullying among Elementary School Children: Dyadic Perceptions of Children and Parents. *Creative Education*, 12, 1517-1531.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2021.127116>

Received: June 3, 2021

Accepted: July 6, 2021

Published: July 9, 2021

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Abstract

The aim of the current study was to examine online bullying among pre-teen elementary school children and compare their knowledge and perceptions with those of their parents. The study included one hundred and twelve participants, fifty-six dyads of parents and their children in grades 4 - 6 in two elementary schools in Israel. The data was gathered through questionnaires, regarding children's involvement and the parents' awareness of their involvement in online bullying. Similar questionnaires were given to the children and their parents. It was found that 14.3% of the children reported they had been hurt online, while 34.1% reported they knew someone hurt by online bullying. Compatibility between the children's reports and that of their parents regarding the different facets of online bullying have revealed gaps between the children and the parents for all facets. These gaps included children reporting that they had been involved as either victims, perpetrators or bystanders, while their parents were unaware of it, and few instances where the parent reported on children's involvement in online bullying, but the children did not report any involvement. Yet, there were instances in which a full compatibility was found, and the parents were aware of their child's involvement in online bullying. The study's findings contribute to understanding, coping and preventing bullying among pre-teens in the virtual space, focusing on parents' role.

Keywords

Online Bullying, Children, Parents, Dyadic Perceptions

1. Introduction

One can define the virtual environment as the "new neighborhood". While pre-

viously children used to meet in the neighborhood streets or people's backyards during free time and after school hours in order to play and make friends, nowadays, in the age of developing technology, many of the children's social encounters take place in the virtual space, through a simple mouse click and an ever-growing variety of developing technological means. Their world revolves around and takes place on the Internet during many of their free hours. The group of children who are aged 8 - 12 today were born into the Internet and their childhood is characterized by many digital aspects, while the average age for receiving a first smartphone is ten (Bezek, 2020).

Part of this world, similar to the "neighborhood" world beyond the Internet, involves acts of online bullying and violence aimed at other children. This includes online behaviors expressed as violence, aggression, slander, teasing, impersonation and even ostracizing of classmates. This harassment is carried out on various types of media such as: social networks, forums, emails and the use of mobile devices. And yet, unlike the "old neighborhood" which is physical and visible, the virtual space is an elusive "place" where parents have less knowledge of what goes on there. This study examines the characteristics of online bullying among young children and compares them with their parents' perceptions of their child's involvement. Hardly any studies have compared how children perceive this issue with how their parents perceive it, especially when it comes to younger children, in order to discover any gaps between them with the goal of closing them in order to cope with and prevent online bullying while the children are still young. At this age when children and parents' relationships are close, parents may be involved in preventing the development of the phenomenon as well as handling with it.

2. Online Bullying—Definitions and Characteristics

The definition of online bullying (cyberbullying) that most researchers use usually includes several characteristics or the complete definition of traditional bullying, with the addition of the electronic detection of the means through which the bullying is carried out (Smith et al., 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009). This definition is based on Olweus' definition of traditional bullying as "Negative or antisocial behavior on the part of one or a number of people that is intentional and long-term, the aim of which is to cause damage or take advantage of the weakness of a victim who cannot protect themselves" (Olweus, 2003: p. 15). This type of bullying can be direct: physical, verbal, or social (e.g., ostracization), or indirect (e.g., spreading rumors). With online bullying, these actions take place through the use of electronic means of contact (Mason, 2008; Smith et al., 2008).

Online bullying is also called Cyberbullying, electronic harassment, mobile bullying, online bullying, video bullying, bullying through Internet sharing, etc. With the advances in technology and the appearance of new apps that are taking place at breakneck speed, the potential for bullying is constantly increasing all

the time, with new platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, various games and others. Online bullying takes the form of harassment, discrimination, wild behavior or incitement, playing tricks, spreading lies, slandering, disseminating personal information, spreading rumors, impersonating, misleading, boycott, ostracizing, threatening, scaring, and more. Some scholars think that when its dimensions and power grow and spread, it can sometimes become worse than physical pain, mainly for the following reasons (Barlett, 2017; Ansary, 2020):

- The lack of presence and physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim, which provides fertile soil for expressing the violence that is not constrained by the mechanisms of supervision and social control. The internet enables anonymity and lessens the bully's fear of being caught.
- Online tools allow the cycle of violence to include more perpetrators and victims within a short time. The large number of people watching and their ability to react increases the damage done, its intensity and scope.
- Sometimes the online bullying cannot be erased and is saved for an unlimited amount of time.
- Easy access and ease of use lead to quick deterioration from acts not intended to hurt anyone to hurtful violence.

Online bullying has social and psychological impact on the victim. Victims cannot defend themselves and may experience psychological distress such as frustration, depression, a sense of loneliness, a lowering in levels of self-esteem, and changes in behavior such as choosing to isolate themselves, or becoming aggressive (Mason, 2008; Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2014; Liu, Liu, & Yuan, 2020). The social rejection experienced as a result of online bullying during childhood may lead to negative outcomes for the victim over time.

It seems that the scope of the phenomenon is broad, especially on social networks. A study following 1094 Israeli adolescents (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2014) found that 27% of the participants reported being victims of online violence and 46% of them reported witnessing online violence. Rolider and Buniel-Nissim (2015) found that 47% of children and teenagers in Israel in grades 4 - 9 reported experienced being harassed in the virtual space, and 29% of them experienced being rejected by some kind of virtual group (e.g., Facebook or WhatsApp). Furthermore, 10% of them reported that a virtual group against them had been set up during the school year, 37% reported being the victim of mockery and insult via an electronic device, 25% reported acts of deception against them via the internet, 20% reported being threatened via an electronic device, and finally, 12% reported instances if impersonation during the use of the virtual space. According to Hinduja and Patchin (2019), in a sample of 4972 USA middle and high school students between the ages 12 - 17, approximately 37% of the students have reported being victims to online bullying. When asked about specific types of cyberbullying experienced in the previous 30 days, mean or hurtful comments (24.9%) and rumors spread online (22.2%) are among the

most commonly-cited. Approximately 15% of the students in this sample admitted to cyberbullying others at some point in their lifetime.

In terms of gender differences, the findings shown in the literature are ambiguous. While research on violence that occurs in face-to-face settings shows that boys are more involved in physical violence and harassment and girls are more involved in verbal violence that is indirect and covert (Olweus, 2003; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008), in online bullying, studies show that there is no particular difference in gender among victims or perpetrators and boys and girls are both equally represented (Tokunaga, 2010). Yet, Li (2006) found that boys tended to be perpetrators more often than girls, but girls report their being victims more often than boys. Amit (2011) claims that cases of ostracizing are more commonplace with girls than with boys in terms of girls hurting girls, whereas boys tend to harass other children (boys or girls) who are relatively weak or different. Sometimes the victims will take revenge through the internet, where they feel safer to do so as opposed to face-to-face.

3. Online Bullying among Children in the Context of Parents' Perceptions and Parent-Child Communication

Research concerning online bullying among young children is limited. Most studies focus on adolescents. An Australian study (Megan & John, 2010) involving 548 children aged 10 - 12 found that 49% of the children sampled had experienced some sort of bullying, and a pioneering Israeli study found that among 242 students aged 9 - 11, 18.4% of them reported they had been hurt by online bullying and about one third (31.7%) reported knowing someone who had suffered from online bullying. In the distribution according to the types of bullying, it was found that 72.8% of the students hurt had suffered one type of bullying. 25.0% of them by two types, and the rest (2.2%) by more than three types of violence (Olenik-Shemesh, Heiman, & Zuretz-Hannan, 2020).

The Israeli Bezek report (2020) found that children are afraid of online bullying similarly to being afraid of physical pain, and likewise, parents are more and more afraid of the internet and see it as an unsafe place for their children. They are mainly worried about sexual harassment, shaming, ostracization, and the spreading of negative information about their children online. The report shows that parents are active and make an effort to protect their children online and that 75% of the parents reported that they look through their children's WhatsApp messages and 37% of them use services for monitoring and filtering content in order to track their children online. Less than half of the victims had told their parents.

Furthermore, it has been found that victims of online bullying tend not to report it to the adults around them. For instance, in the study by Li (2010) approximately half of the students said they wouldn't do anything if someone were to hurt them, and only about 10% said that they would tell an adult. Children also often feel embarrassed about discussing where they made a mistake or how

they became victimized online, and so they are many children who are victims of online bullying and do not receive any help. It is important to mention that, as of now, there is hardly any research literature on the perceptions and attitudes of parents on the subject of online bullying and especially on how much they know about their children's involvement in online bullying. Furthermore, Zilka (2014, 2019) has shown that children often block channels of communication and sharing with parents and other adults, today more than ever. According to Zilka, this is due to the complexity of the environment in which children live, and so containing, supportive, and guiding parental involvement in the children's lives is of great importance.

A study on the characteristics of children who get involved in online bullying which attempted to evaluate the relationship with their parents found that 44% of the children who reported being involved in online bullying also reported a distant relationship with their parents, while 16% of them who reported a more stable relationship were still involved in online bullying (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). The researchers summed up their conclusions saying that when the parent-child relationship is not close, there is a higher chance of the child being involved in online bullying than when the relationship is stable and open. Similarly, Denise & Michael (2011) claimed that when children's relationships with their parents were distant in nature, they developed less effective coping strategies for coping with online bullying and they lack the support and guidance that could sometimes aid them in times of distress. The researchers claimed that children whose relationship with their parents is strong are found to be victims of online bullying less frequently than children whose relationship with their parents is distant.

Studies also show that many parents do not know whether their child is involved in online bullying or not (Dehue, Bolman, & Völlink, 2008; Symons et al., 2016). It was found that one-third of the parents indicated that they knew about their child's online activities. Mothers are more likely to think that they know who their children share information with online (Symons et al., 2016). Similarly, no association was found between parents' accurate knowledge and parental rule setting, including restrictions regarding the internet. It seems that parental knowledge is not only a product of what parents do to gain knowledge, but also of what children are willing to share with their parents (Stattin & Kerr, 2000).

Various studies revealed that family factors are especially important in the development of adolescents' internet use behavior (Chou, Chou, & Chen, 2016; Li, Garland, & Howard, 2014; Shi, Wang, & Zou, 2017). Liu & others (2019) have found that close communication with parents is associated with a higher level of satisfaction of psychological needs, which is negatively associated with adolescent problematic internet use (Liu et al., 2019). It seems that parental responsiveness enhanced the positive effect of parent-adolescent communication (Wu, Dongping, Bao, Yan, & Zhou, 2015; Zimmerman et al., 2013). Specifically, for the high parental responsiveness individuals, parent-adolescent communication

presents a protective effect for adolescent pathological internet use and a facilitating effect on psychological need satisfaction. High parental responsiveness may help children to feel supported which may lead to a greater sense of well-being and low pathological Internet use (Liu et al., 2019).

Researchers characterize various types of parental mediation and/or parent-child relationship about internet usage. It was found that restrictive mediation is the most frequently examined parental mediation practice, when speaking of internet use among children (Nielsen, Liddle, Favez, & Rigter, 2019). In an online survey of parents and their 12 - 17-year-olds, the adolescents' reports of parental monitoring and efforts to regulate specific forms of internet use were associated with reduced rates of online harassment. Specifically, the effect of parental monitoring was largely direct and 26 times greater than parental internet restriction. The latter was associated with lower rates of harassment only indirectly by limiting internet access in the adolescent's bedroom. These effects operated similarly for younger and older adolescents both male and female. Adolescents' perceptions of parental monitoring and awareness can be protective against online harassment. Specific restriction strategies such as regulating internet time and content can also help reduce the risk of online harassment.

Greater parental trust is also likely to facilitate more open discussions and greater self-disclosure (Zilka, 2019). In this study, no correlation was found between the extent of parental control over digital equipment at home and the extent to which children consult with them on coping with the risks of the Internet. Clarification of this issue in the interviews showed that the degree of consultation with parents, depends on the relationship that children and adolescents have with their parents and on the dialogue that usually exists between them. Those who tend to talk with their parents about various topics, also tend to talk with them about various experiences while surfing the internet, while those children and adolescents, who tend not to talk with their parents, do not talk with them about difficult experiences they have had while surfing on-line (Khurana, Bleakley, Jordan, & Romer, 2015; Zilka, 2019). Thus, it seems extremely important to examine the children's perceptions vis-à-vis those of their parents regarding involvement in online bullying.

4. Research Aims and Hypothesis

The aim of the current research is to describe online bullying among elementary school children, their emotional responses as victims and to examine the children's knowledge and perceptions vis-à-vis those of their parents regarding the children's involvement and their reporting of incidents of online bullying. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that the level of parental awareness of online bullying will differ from that of their children and that there would not be a full match between the children and their parents in the knowledge of the children's involvement in online bullying.

5. Method

Procedure

The study was conducted on 56 child-parent dyads, with children from two elementary schools in the center of Israel with pupils from average SES homes. The data were collected via questionnaires delivered to parents at home, while the pupils completed the questionnaires in class at school (1 hour). The pupils sampled were from grades 4, 5 and 6, following receipt of the appropriate approvals from the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education, the Institutional Ethics Committee and the school principals. A letter was sent to the pupils' parents so that they would complete the questionnaires intended for them and consent to the execution of the study in their child's class during school hours. The pupils whose parents had given consent completed the questionnaire in class after an explanation they received about the research topic. Both the parents and the pupils have introduced firstly to the definitions, the types of participants and the characteristics of online bullying. Both the parents and the pupils were told their anonymity would be preserved and that they could stop answering the questionnaires at any time.

Participants

The study involved 112 participants consisting of 56 child-parent dyads. Of the children, 53.6% were girls and 46.4% were boys, while among the parents, 89.3% were mothers and 7.1% were fathers. The children were studying in Grades 4, 5 and 6 (average age = 10.42; SD = 1.19) in two elementary schools in the center of Israel. 42.9% of the children were in Grade 4, 17.9% in Grade 5 and 39.3% in Grade 6. The average age of the participating parents was 31.7 (SD = 4.18).

Measures

Cyberbullying Questionnaire (Smith et al., 2008) on internet use and on line bullying (translation and adaptation for pre-teens by the paper authors). The children's questionnaire contained 29 questions addressing the following sub-topics: a) general information about internet use; b) what is online bullying; c) personal experience as a witness to online bullying; d) (ordinary) face-to-face violence and bullying. The parents' questionnaire contained 26 questions addressing the following sub-topics: a) general information about their child's internet use; b) comparative questions relating (ordinary) face-to-face violence and online bullying; c) parental awareness of their child's involvement in acts of online bullying as participants, witnesses or victims.

6. Results

Online bullying victims among children

In order to assess the degree of online victimization among the participants, the children were asked whether they had been victims to online bullying, and whether they knew anyone who was a victim to online bullying. The frequency of their answers is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1 shows that 17.8% of the children reported being the victim of online bullying 32.1% responded that they knew someone who had been a victim of online bullying, while 67.9% reported that they did not know any pupil who had been a victim. Examination of the frequency of the online harassment showed that 44 pupils (78.6%) responded that they had never been harassed online; 10 pupils (17.9%) responded that they had been harassed online only rarely, and 2 pupils (3.6%) reported having been harassed online several times.

In the context of online bullying, the emotional responses of the victims were also examined. **Table 2** presents the dispersion of the emotional responses of the children who reported online victimization.

Table 2 shows that the most frequent response is anger, rage and anxiety, followed by depressive mood and behavior changes.

Victims, perpetrators & bystanders to online bullying: compatibility between children and parents

In order to examine the compatibility between the children's perceptions and those of their parents regarding online victimization, the parents were asked similar questions to those asked of the children: do they know whether their child has been a victim of online bullying and do they believe their child knows anyone who has been a victim of online bullying? The degree of compatibility is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3 shows that 10 children (17.8%) reported being hurt by online bullying,

Table 1. Frequency of victimization according to the children's reports (N=56).

Child	Response	N	%
Have you ever been a victim of online bullying?	Yes	10	17.8
	No	46	82.2
Do you know anyone who has been a victim of online bullying?	Yes	18	32.1
	No	38	67.9

Table 2. Emotional responses to online harassment.

Emotional responses and behaviors	N	%
Worry	20	17.9*
Anxiety	12	10.7*
Anger, rage	28	25*
Frustration	26	28
Loss of appetite	4	3.6
Depressive mood	16	14.3*
Having problems at school	8	7.1
Having trouble falling asleep/sleeping	8	7.1
Behaving differently with friends	16	14.3*
Behaving differently at home	4	3.6
Absence from school	4	3.6

while 18 (32.1%) reported knowing someone who had been bullied online. When the parents were asked the same questions, only four parents (4.2%) reported knowing that their child was bullied online, while six parents (10.7%) reported that their child knew someone who had been bullied online. Thus, **Table 3** shows that in six cases, parents were unaware that their children had been victims of online bullying. With regard to knowing others who had been bullied online, the gap was wider, with 18 children reporting they knew a victim, while only six parents were aware of this. Crosstabs tests indicate that the differences are significant ($\chi^2 (2) = 28.3 p < 0.05$; ($\chi^2 (2) = 24.3 p < 0.05$)).

Subsequently, the compatibility between children's reporting and that of their parents regarding involvement in online bullying was examined with Crosstabs tests that showed that differences were significant. Details of the compatibility/incompatibility are shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4 shows the levels of compatibility between the children perceptions and those of their parents regarding online perpetrating—six children (10.7%) admitted being engaging in online bullying, while 14 parents (25%) responded that their child had participated in online bullying. Eight more parents reported their children as bullies while their children did not. Crosstabs tests indicated that the differences are significant ($\chi^2 (1) = 16.5 p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Comparison children/parents regarding online victimization (N = 112).

Child	Victim/no victim	N	%
Have you been a victim to online bullying?	Yes	10	17.8
	No	46	82.2
Do you know anyone who was a victim to online bullying?	Yes	18	32.1
	No	38	67.9
Parent	Victim/no victim	N	%
Has your child been a victim to online bullying?	Yes	4	4.2
	No	52	92.8
Does your child know anyone who was a victim to online bullying?	Yes	8	14.7
	No	48	85.3

Table 4. Comparison between children and parents regarding perpetrating and bystanding to online bullying (N = 112).

Child	yes/no	N	%
Participation in online bullying (perpetrator)	Yes	6	10.7%
	No	50	89.3%
Bystander to online bullying	Yes	16	28.6%
	No	40	71.4%
Parent	Yes/no	N	%
Knowledge of the child's being a perpetrator in online bullying	Yes	14	14.3%
	No	42	85.7%
Knowledge of the child's bystanding to online bullying	Yes	2	3.6%
	No	54	96.4%

Regarding bystanders to online bullying, the findings are reversed: 16 children (28.6%) reported they were bystanders to online bullying, while only two parents (3.6%) reported that their children were bystanders (a mismatch. In other words, 14 parents answered the question about their child having witnessed online bullying in the negative, while their respective children gave a positive answer. Crosstabs tests indicate that the differences are significant ($\chi^2(1) = 25.1$ $p < 0.05$).

7. Discussion

The current study examined online bullying among young children in elementary school through a comparison of the perceptions of parent-child dyads. Most of the research pertaining to online bullying is conducted on adolescents, with very little attention paid to pre-teens and the match between their perceptions and those of their parents regarding their child's involvement in online bullying, a topic that has scarcely been studied, especially in the format of parent-child dyads.

The findings indicate that both the children and the parents report online bullying occurring among pre-teens. It appears that its frequency among pre-teens is lower than among adolescents (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2014). It was also found that children report a wide range of emotional responses to being hurt, from worry to anger and distress, including psychosomatic reactions such as loss of appetite and sleep difficulties, while minorities report changes in behavior both at school and at home.

When the compatibility between the reporting of the children and that of their parents regarding the different facets of online bullying (victim, knowing a victim or being a bystander) was examined, and despite the fact that this initial sample is not large, as expected, gaps and mismatches were found between the children and the parents for all facets. These gaps included children reporting that they had been involved in online bullying (either as victims, participants or bystanders), while their parents did not report any knowledge of this. It is important to note that there were few instances in which there was full compatibility and the parents were aware of their child's involvement in online bullying episodes.

Furthermore, the incompatibility between parent and child reporting occurred in both directions. One direction is when the children reported on more instances of being hurt than the parents. In this case, parents were unaware of the child being a victim, a perpetrator or a bystander. The other direction is the gap that became evident when the parents reported their child's involvement in one or more of the facets of online bullying, but the child did not. Thus, in accordance with the research hypothesis that there would not be full compatibility between parents and children regarding incidents of online bullying, there were indeed gaps between the respective reports. Yet, the finding in the other direction is both interesting and unexpected, and worthy of further investigation into the nature of this phenomenon in more and bigger samples.

As stated above, the incompatibilities in the parent-child reports include children being hurt without their parents' knowledge of it. It is possible that

pre-teens who are involved in any facet of online bullying do not tell their parents about it since they are afraid their parents might prevent them from freely surfing the internet or supervise their surfing more strictly, thus limiting their 'freedom of movement' in the virtual space. Sometimes children do not tell their parents about online bullying because they are ashamed of being a victim as well as being a bully. When children are younger, rather than adolescent, it is easier for parents to supervise and impose sanctions regarding their child's conduct on the internet (Campbell, 2005).

However, it is actually when children are younger and coping with online threats and harassment in the current technological era, that the parents have a significant role to play in contributing to their child's safety—restricting access to approved websites, creating rules for web time, discuss with the children about implications and so forth.

Earlier studies have indicated that parental intervention and involvement affected the types of content children watch and parents who installed softwares that blocks certain websites created a situation in which the child cannot share personal information such as their address, email or school name. Hence, the gaps in reporting are highly important, since when this kind of reporting matches, the parents can deal with any emerging problem that results from the child involvement in online bullying.

It is possible that the fact that the results of the current study show responses where the child and the parent both reported that the child had not been involved in any online bullying may derive from the fact that at elementary school age, the children are just starting their engagement with the virtual world and they are using it much less than slightly older children. Indeed, it seems that this phenomenon becomes much more frequent in Grades 7 and 8, once children are in middle school (according to the US education system, in Tokunaga, 2010; Hinduja & Patchin, 2019). At the same time, it is possible that also because of the element of social desirability, parents, even if they knew about it, did not want to report that their child had been involved in online bullying in order to maintain privacy, despite the promised anonymity.

The internet enables plentiful exposure to diversified content and offers children almost limitless opportunities for playing, social communication and consuming (Mao, 2014). As mentioned, the internet can be not only a source of pleasure, but also of negative influences such as teasing, harassment, insult or incitement. In addition to the physical social world in which children need to cope, there is now a new virtual space in which they spend a significant part of their free time alone. Sometimes, it is an arena in which parents feel they are outsiders. It is possible that the source of the gaps found reflects, in part, the digital gap between adults and children, which makes the parents perceive the virtual space as one where they feel uncomfortable, where they do not belong as their children do, and so they give their children autonomy in a space in which things happen that they are unaware of. The digital gap is a technological gap

between the youngsters who were born into the reality of the internet, and the culture of the adults who were not. Unlike their parents, children feel comfortable trying out constantly changing websites and apps. Thus, we can sometimes predict a role reversal in which the parent/adult often asks the child for help operating the computer to find information online. The adults' lack of confidence in using the internet or apps on the one hand, and the uninhibited nature of the internet arena on the other, often lead to avoidance of enforcing efficient norms regarding safe and optimal use of the internet, perhaps because of the lack of skills of the responsible adults and their unfamiliarity with the "language" (Buniel-Nissim & Dao, 2009). Yet, a national report that examined the internet use habits of children regarding parental supervision found that 85% of the parents in 2019/2020 have tried to limit screen time to only three hours a day, as opposed to 57% in 2018 (Bezek, 2020).

As of today, there is very little research addressing online bullying among pre-teens, even though the age of internet use is going down. At the same time, the rapid development of social media and smartphones allow children online access throughout most of the day. It would appear that nowadays, part of the roles of parents is to deal with teaching, explaining, guidance and prevention online bullying from a young age, in order to enable children to benefit from the advantages of the internet, while being aware of its' disadvantages, thereby allowing them to surf safely while guarding themselves against the dangers and feeling equipped with strategies for coping with being hurt. Looking at the incompatibility between the children and their parents regarding online bullying, and despite the fact that the sample is relatively small, interesting results were obtained, indicating that such matching should be investigated further in more varied and larger samples. In addition, further research should examine the role of gender in this issue. Are there differences between mothers and fathers and between boys and girls. It is also worth examining differences between the various four kinds of dyads: daughter-mother, daughter-father, son-mother, and son-father and this should be done also for other age groups. We may assume that this generational gap will widen when the participants are adolescents and the relationship with their parents tends to be more complex. Hence, the findings of the study on elementary school pupils make a significant contribution to learning about, coping with, and preventing online bullying among young children and to the parents' role in the process of prevention of bullying among pre-teens in the virtual space.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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