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ORIGINAL PAPER

Cross-Cultural Patterns of Student Victimization in Israel and Chile

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Abstract School violence is a global concern that calls for international research using cross context methods. Although there are several international surveys that compare school violence across countries, they do not clearly address issues of similarities and differences in relative prevalence of different types of victimization and their relations with age, sex, and cultural group. We explored these questions among Israeli-Arab ($n = 13{,}606$), Israeli-Jewish ($n = 10{,}637$), and Chilean students in poor schools in a large Chilean city ($n = 4557$), using the same self-report questionnaire that measures verbal-social victimization, victimization by threats, physical victimization, and sexual harassment. As hypothesized, we found similarities in the patterns of relative prevalence of victimization types, as well as study group, sex, and age main effects and interactions. These effects were evident even when the lowest third SES group in Israel was compared with the Chilean students. These findings suggest group differences in prevalence of student victimization, and at the same time cultural invariance in relative prevalence of victimization types and their relations with sex and age. We discuss the need for more international comparative research in this field that takes into account cultural values and the structure and organizations of schools within the different educational systems.

Keywords School violence · Student victimization · Cross cultural

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Introduction

School violence is a global phenomenon "…that affects one of the core institutions of modern society to some degree in virtually all nation-states" (Akiba et al. 2002, p. 830). Indeed, reports from many countries indicate that youth violence in general, and school violence and bullying in particular, are a major public health concern (Elgar et al. 2015). Based on their review of the international literature, Benbenishty and Astor (2012a) concluded that issues of bullying and school violence are of concern to many countries around the world, and called for an international perspective on school violence. They suggested that cross-national comparisons could raise national awareness of the school violence problem. They further argued that findings of such comparative studies provide opportunities to develop theories of school violence.

There are several international surveys that compare school violence across many countries (most notably the Health Behaviour School-aged Children -HBSC, Global

school-based health survey- GSHS, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study-TIMMS, and Program for International Student Assessment—PISA). These important studies allow for comparing many countries simultaneously and examining hypotheses with regard to how country-level characteristics (such as GNP and inequality) are associated with student victimization. These studies, however, address many health and behavioral concerns simultaneously and therefore use very few questions to assess school violence behaviors, limiting their potential theoretical contribution to our understanding of the nuances of school violence.

Socioecological theories and empirical findings indicate that student school victimization is impacted by nested contexts that include complex interrelations between student´s characteristics and the social ecology in which these students and the schools are embedded (Benbenishty and Astor 2005; Espelage and Swearer 2010).

Theories and research have identified student characteristics that are associated with school violence. Sex and age are two of the most studied individual-level demographic characteristics associated with variations in victimization and perpetration. In general, boys report more perpetration and more victimization than girls, and younger students report much more victimization than students in upper grades. These effects, however, depend on the types of victimization (e.g., verbal-social vs. physical). For instance, sex effects are stronger for physical victimization and weaker for social and indirect types of victimization.

Students of the same age and sex may experience different levels of school violence depending on the families from which they come, and the neighborhoods in which they live and their school is located. A large body of research shows that the neighborhoods and families in which children and adolescents grow and develop play very influential roles in young people's relations with violence and school engagement. Community poverty, crime, discrimination, and lack of opportunities for education and employment have all been identified as important family and community risk factors for interpersonal violence (Benbenishty and Astor 2005; Chen and Astor 2011a, b, 2012; Garbarino 1995; Garbarino and Kostelny 1997; Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2004; Rivara and Le Menestrel 2016).

Another contextual factor studied extensively is the students´ cultural and ethnic affiliation. It appears that school violence rates differ by ethnicity and culture. Smith (2003) reported great variation among European cultures. In the United States, victimization and perpetration rates vary by ethnic background, but findings have been inconsistent (compare, for instance, Nansel et al. 2001 with Connell et al. 2015). Other researchers have noted such inconsistencies after comparing studies in the Nordic countries, Spain, and Canada (Maynard et al. 2016).

Such inconsistent findings and theories about cultural and ethnic identities caution against a simplistic view of the relations among ethnicity, culture, and school violence (Peguero and Bondy 2015). A more nuanced understanding will address several issues simultaneously, among them, the confounding of ethnic and cultural variables with socio-economic status. Cultural differences are sometimes attributed to a group when it is entirely possible that differences stem mainly from economic disparities among the groups, rather than cultural differences.

These contextual layers operate not only independently, but also interactively. To illustrate, sex or age differences may have variable impact on levels of victimization depending on the cultural context. While we are not familiar with any empirical study on this topic, one might suspect that in cultures in which seniority and hierarchy are more central, age differences may have stronger association with levels of victimization than in other cultural groups. Similarly, one would expect sex differences to reflect the cultural preferences regarding gender roles and relative power. In Israel, Benbenishty and Astor (2005) found indications that ethnicity interacted with sex effects, and identified three-way interactions between ethnicity, sex, and age.

Examining the impact of the contextual layer of a whole country, e.g. through cross-countries comparisons, is appreciably more complex than examining within country variations. These cross country comparisons need to acknowledge the many between- and within country contextual and structural variations. These include, among other issues, socio-economic and demographic features of the society, within-country variability in ethnic and cultural groups, the prevailing values of these countries and cultural groups, and the structural and organizational characteristics of the country educational system. For example, analysis of bullying victimization in 79 countries concluded that victimization was much higher in low per capita countries (Elgar et al. 2015).

A number of studies using international comparative designs, such as the HBSC, TIMMS, and PISA, provide clear evidence that levels of school violence vary across countries. For instance, in the international study carried out by the World Health Organization Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC), prevalence of self-reported male bullying in Lithuania and Belgium were about five times more than in Sweden. Similarly, while 52% of Armenian and 23% of Greek 15 years olds report participation in physical fights, these figures are 9% in Portugal and even slightly less for German youths. Similar large differences were found with regard to frequent involvement in physical fights in many other countries (Inchley et al. 2015).

There is also clear evidence that country contexts may interact with sex and age. Our review of the HBSC 2014

findings regarding frequent involvement in physical fights in 40 countries reveals two main patterns. First, the direction of sex and age effects are highly consistent: females were involved in fights less than males, and elementary school students were involved more than middle school students, who were involved more than high school students. Second, the size of the sex and age differential varies considerably across countries. To illustrate, the sex odds-ratio for 11 years olds vary between 12.5 in Armenia to 2.92 in Ukraine, and among 15 years old students from 16.32 in Hungary to 1.95 in Canada. Thus, although in all 40 countries males were involved more than females in physical fights, the sex differences vary widely.

Given this complex picture, Benbenishty and Astor (2005) suggested that while the prevalence of various types of victimization may differ across contexts, the structure and patterns may be more stable. Specifically, they suggested that more severe types of victimization are less frequent than less severe, and this is true for many different contexts. This means that if victimization types are rank-ordered by their prevalence, the more severe types (e.g., being cut with a knife or a sharp object) would rank much lower compared with less severe types (*e.g.*, being humiliated or cursed by another student).

They further argued that anomalies and differences in this relative prevalence of victimization types may reveal underlying cultural differences. For instance, in certain cultures, sexual harassment acts may be seen as less severe than in other cultures, and social behaviors such as ostracizing a student may be perceived as more severe, and will therefore be less prevalent. Consequently, these behaviors would be lower in their rank-order in one country and social group, and higher in another cultural group that may see it as "common and regular" and a less severe part of everyday social victimization.

With respect to social, demographic, and economic characteristics, Israel has about eight million inhabitants. About 80% of the population are Jewish. Israel is a country that attracted Jews from all parts of the world and it consists of many different Jewish cultural groups. Most of the minorities are Muslim Arabs, Christian Arabs, Druze, and Bedouin. GDP is $286.840 billion (PPP 2014), and is ranked 39th in GDP and 18th on UN´s Human Development Index. With a growth rate of 2.5% of its GDP in 2015, Israel is considered a technologically advanced country. GDP per capita is $35,833 (year 2014), and the average annual salary is US $13,754 and 6% unemployment. Inequality is high- Gini's index for 2014 was 0.371.

Chile has about 18 million inhabitants. Its economy is considered one of South America's most stable economies, and is ranked as high-income economy by the World Bank. GDP is $258 billion, with a growth of 1.9% and a GDP per capita of $17,047. In 2006, Chile became the country with the highest nominal GDP per capita in Latin America, and in May 2010, Chile became the first South American country to join the OECD. To date, however, Chile holds some of the worst statistics of all the OECD countries, for example, in tax revenues, and in social and educational inequalities. Although Chile has grown economically, it maintains high economic inequality, as measured by the Gini index (0.521).

With regards to their educational system, Israel has a free k-12 public education system. School attendance rates are very high. Schools are segregated by cultural groups: Secular Jews, Religious Jews, Ultra-Orthodox Jews, and Arab schools, which serve Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Bedouin. Most schools are either k-6 elementary schools, 7–9 middle schools, and 10–12 high schools, although other combinations exist, such as k-8 and 9–12, or k-6, and 7–12.

Israel has developed a national system to monitor school climate and violence both for every school and the country as a whole. This system is credited with increased awareness to issues of school climate, the development of means to address school violence, and eventually to a significant and consistent trend of lower levels of school violence (Benbenishty and Astor 2012b).

Chile has an educational system divided into two groups of schools, k-8 and 9–12. K-8 schools are called primary schools and attend to what most countries call elementary and middle school. However, in most schools, the higher grades (6th to 8th) have different curricular settings: students are likely to be taught by different teachers, and might also be taught in a different building than k-5 students, who are usually taught by one homeroom teacher.

Since 1980, Chile´s educational system also has a three-track system in terms of its economical administration: (a) public schools, financed by the State but administered by local municipalities; (b) private-subsidized schools, financed by the State and administered by private organizations, and (c) private schools, financed and administered only by private organizations. The State of Chile, through its Ministry of Education, has a national curriculum mandatory for all types of schools, but provides support and holds accountable only public and private-subsidized schools. Regarding cost for parents, public schools are free of charge; private-subsidized schools can charge parents through a fee of "shared finance", which can range annually from $US 20 to $US 200; and private schools charge a fee which ranges from $US 100 to $US 1000. This system has created a socio-economical tracking system, where low SES students attend public municipal schools, students from medium-level income families attend private-subsidized schools, and those from higher SES backgrounds attend private schooling.

In 2004, the OECD classified the Chilean school system as intentionally segregated based on families' SES, and

urged for structural changes. Although changes have begun –for example, in 2015 a new law on school inclusion was passed- these have not yet affected the overall segregated schooling system.

Culturally, most students are born in Chile. In the last decade, Chile has received immigrant groups from nearby South American and Latin American countries, mostly Peru and Colombia. These students tend to study in public municipal schools in the capital of Santiago de Chile. Ethnic minorities are, in the north, Aymara, and in the south of Chile, Mapuche.

Last, concerning cultural values, several international comparative studies of cultural values indicate that Israel and Chile differ on many value dimensions. For example, in Hofstede's study, Chile scored low on individualism and masculinity, whereas Israel scores were above the mean. While Israel scored very low on power distance, Chilean participants scored above the mean on power distance. Similarly, in Schwartz's (2006) study, there were many differences in values such as affective autonomy, mastering, hierarchy, and egalitarianism. Israel scored the lowest in harmony among the countries participating in the study, whereas Chile is high in harmony.

This set of findings indicates that the countries are very dissimilar in cultural values. Current theories, however, do not help in forming hypotheses as to how these differences translate to different levels of school violence, or to interactions between culture, sex, and age. Furthermore, given the major divisions in the Israeli educational system according to cultural groups that are clearly different in many values, one cannot assume value uniformity within each of the participating countries.

The aim of this study was to compare students' detailed reports of school victimization in two countries, Israel and Chile. Given the limitations of the current theoretical and empirical knowledge base, and the numerous differences between the Israeli and Chilean educational contexts and the differences in the degree of representativeness of the two samples, this is an exploratory study based on ongoing and long term collaboration between two country teams that have implemented a city-wide monitoring system, inspired by the Israel experience in this area (Benbenishty and Astor 2012b). The main goals were to examine similarities and differences across cultural groups in the relative prevalence of each type of school victimization and the extent to which victimization was associated with sex and age similarly across these groups. We hypothesized that there would be similarities in the patterns of victimization across study groups. First, we hypothesized that the following rank-order of the frequency prevalence of victimization types would be similar across the three groups studied: most frequent would be verbal victimization, followed by physical, threats, and then sexual victimization. Second, we hypothesized that sex and age differences would have the same direction in all study groups, with males and younger students being more victimized in the three study groups. Third, we hypothesized differences among the study groups, and interaction effects between study group, sex, and students' age group. We did not have specific hypotheses regarding these interactions.

Method

Participants

In Israel, we conducted a secondary analysis of the database of the 2013 National Monitoring of School Violence, a study conducted every 2 years by the Israeli Authority for Research and Evaluation (RAMA, http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/UNITS/Rama). The sampling method of this study was a two stage non-proportional stratified cluster sample. Fifteen strata were used: three school levels (primary (4–6), middle (7–9), and high (10–11)) by five ethnic group (Jewish-secular, Jewish-religious, Arab, Druze, and Bedouin). (Note: Because the numbers of Druze and Bedouin students are small, for the purposes of this study we combine all three Arab groups, as it is commonly done in research conducted in Israel). In the first stage, schools were sampled and in the second stage two classes in different grade levels were randomly selected in each of the sampled schools, and all their students were surveyed.

The sample included 474 schools (of the 476 planned), and 24,243 students. Professional proctors surveyed students in their classes using a paper questionnaire. Student response-rates ranged between 82% among Jewish males to 90% among Arab females). Sampling weights were computed and used in all the analyses to ensure representativeness of the sample, including the school-level socioeconomic status (SES). Among Jewish students, 51.2% were male and 48.8% were female, among Arab students, 46.8% were male and 53.2% were female.

In Chile, the data for these analyses came from the population of the 37 public-municipal schools from the city of Valparaíso, Chile. Almost all students attending these schools come from low and medium-low socioeconomic status backgrounds. Chile measures a school's SES through an index of school vulnerability (Indice de Vulnerabilidad Escolar, IVE) that ranges from 0 to 100 (the higher the value, the lower the SES). In the present sample mean IVE is 84.75 (SD = 7.39). This means they were all from medium-low and low SES backgrounds.

Participants were 4557 students from 4th to 12th grades, attending on the day of administration, corresponding to 65% of official enrollment, which is similar to the monthly

rate of school attendance in public municipal schools. The students were 44.2% male and 55.8% female.

Procedure

In Israel, students completed the questionnaire in their classes, in the presence of a research assistant. In Chile, the battery of instruments was administered on-line through a platform specially developed for this study in Lyme™ survey. Whole classes were brought to the computer room, and students answered the questionnaire on personal computers, supervised by designated personnel.

Measures

The instrument was the School Victimization Scale (SVS) developed by Furlong and associates (Furlong et al. 1991a, b) and modified for use in Israel (Benbenishty and Astor 2005). For the purposes of this study, the Chilean version used most of the items in the scale and added others to address the specific needs of the Chilean context (López et al. 2012). This study focuses on the shared items.

Students were asked about their victimization in the last month using a scale: 0 = I did not experience this last month; 1 = Once or twice; 2 = Three times or more. The scale includes victimization to specific violent behaviors in several areas. In each of these areas, we computed an index as the mean of the items included in the scale.

Verbal-social victimization

Students were presented with seven items, such as "a student humiliated you or made you feel bad and a student made fun of you because of your color of skin, origin, or religion" ($\alpha = .73$).

Victimization by threats

Four items presented regarding issues such as "student threatened to hurt you in or outside the school" and "you were blackmailed under threats by another student (for money, food, or to keep silence)" ($\alpha = .71$).

Physical victimization

Four items described physical victimization, such as "a student seized you or pushed you on purpose" and "a student who wanted to hurt you kicked you, hit you or slapped you" ($\alpha = .71$).

Sexual harassment

In middle and high schools there were four items asking about victimization to sexual harassment, including: "A student tried to kiss you when you did not want it", "a student took or tried to take your clothes off (for sexual reasons)", and "a student touched or tried to touch you or to pinch you in a sexual way without your approval" ($\alpha = .66$). The last item was not used in primary schools.

We removed from the data base students who did not respond to any of the victimization items of the questionnaire. For those included we assumed that no response indicates that the student was not victimized in this type of victimization and recoded the missing items accordingly.

Students' responses were anonymous and the identity of schools participating in this study was kept confidential. The study was approved by the ethical committees of the authors' respective universities.

Data Analyses

We first present the distribution of the individual items and the classes of items (e.g. verbal, social, physical) by three groups: Israeli-Jews and Israeli-Arabs (including Druze and Bedouins), and Chilean. We then conducted statistical analyses to compare study groups (Israeli-Jews, Israeli-Arabs, and Chile), sex, and age groups. Analyses of variance were conducted using SAS version 9.4 PROC SURVEYREG, a procedure that corrects sampling errors of estimators for within-school clustering, and employing the weights calculated for the Israeli sample. Bonferroni correction was used to compare between each of the cultural groups, sex and age groups, and their interactions. Interactions between sex and age groups were assessed separately for each cultural group.

Results

Prevalence

Table 1 presents the distribution of the various types of victimization in each of the four areas by the participating study groups. The table indicates that certain types of victimization were much more prevalent than others. Overall, verbal-social victimization was most prevalent, physical victimization was less prevalent, and victimization by threat and sexual victimization were least prevalent. Most of the frequently experienced victimization types were associated with social victimization, such as gossiping (34.9% in Chile), humiliation (25.9% among Israeli-Jews), and being the target of students inciting others to boycott and exclude the student (20.7% among Israeli-Arabs). Physical

Table 1 Percentages of victimization by study groups

	Jewish ($n = 16,863$)		Arab ($n = 7380$)		Chile ($n = 4683$)	
	Once or twice %	Three or more times %	Once or twice %	Three or more times %	Once or twice %	Three or more times %
Verbal-social victimization						
A student humiliated you or made you feel bad	19.2	6.7	17.7	6.0	18.7	9.8
A student gossiped about you or said bad things behind your back	9.1	2.5	9.6	3.3	22.1	12.8
A student made fun of you because of your color of skin, origin, or religion	7.0	3.7	7.0	3.4	12.2	9.5
Student tried to convince others to boycott-exclude you	7.9	2.4	16.1	4.6	10.5	6.1
You received insulting or mocking messages through the internet or cell phone	4.6	1.2	5.5	1.7	6.3	3.7
Other students boycotted/excluded you and did not want to talk or play with you	3.1	1.4	9.0	3.2	10.0	4.9
A student published a picture of you on the internet or through cell phone to hurt you	2.2	0.5	3.3	1.4	4.5	2.8
Victimization by threats						
A student threatened to hurt you in or outside the school	4.8	1.6	8.4	3.6	8.9	4.7
You received threats through the internet or cell phone	1.7	0.7	4.2	1.5	5.1	3.2
You were blackmailed under threats by another student (for money, food, or to keep silence)	0.9	0.7	4.1	1.9	5.6	3.4
A student threatened you with a knife or sharp object and you saw the knife or object	0.8	0.5	3.1	1.6	3.6	2.4
Physical victimization						
A student seized you or pushed you on purpose	7.2	2.1	11.1	3.5	16.6	7.2
A student who wanted to hurt you kicked you, hit you or slapped you	6.6	2.0	9.2	3.4	6.9	3.4
A student gave you a hard beating	2.7	1.4	5.1	2.8	5.1	3.2
You got into a fight, were hurt and received medical attention	1.4	0.6	5.6	2.4	3.7	2.6
Sexual harassment						
A student touched or tried to touch you or to pinch you in a sexual way without your approval[a]	3.7	1.3	5.6	2.2	4.0	2.2
A student tried to kiss you when you did not want it	2.3	1.5	4.7	3.1	7.3	3.7
A student took or tried to take your clothes off (for sexual reasons)	1.5	0.8	2.6	1.7	3.5	1.9

Note: All analyses of the Israeli sample are based on weighted data

[a] Not including elementary schools ($n = 17,222$)

Table 2 Mean (and Standard Deviations) of victimization indices by study groups and sex

	Jewish		Arab		Chile		ANOVA F-statistics			
	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	Ethnicity	Sex	Ethnicity × sex	Post hoc comparisons
Verbal-social	.13 (.24)	.11 (.22)	.18 (.28)	.12 (.22)	.24 (.37)	.23 (.34)	25.95***	27.68***	7.74***	[abc]
Threats	.05 (.19)	.02 (.12)	.13 (.29)	.05 (.18)	.15 (.36)	.10 (.28)	66.79***	140.29***	24.71***	[ab]
Physical	.11 (.29)	.03 (.15)	.19 (.36)	.08 (.24)	.19 (.39)	.13 (.30)	40.10***	165.08***	5.14**	[ab]
Sexual	.07 (.22)	.04 (.15)	.14 (.30)	.07 (.19)	.14 (.33)	.10 (.26)	58.97***	107.03***	16.49***	[ab]
Sum	.10 (.20)	.06 (.13)	.16 (.26)	.09 (.17)	.19 (.33)	.15 (.26)	45.87***	112.92***	13.74***	[abc]

[a] Jewish significantly different ($p < .01$) from Arab (Scheffe Post Hoc)

[b] Jewish significantly different ($p < .01$) from Chile (Scheffe Post Hoc)

[c] Arab significantly different ($p < .01$) from Chile (Scheffe Post Hoc)

$^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

victimization, in the form of another student seizing and pushing was also prevalent, especially in Chile (23.8% reported at least once in the last month). Certain behaviors were rarely reported, such as a student trying to take clothes off (for sexual reasons)—from 2.3% among Israeli-Jews to 5.4% in Chile, and being threatened with a knife (1.3% among Israeli-Jews, 4.7% among Israeli-Arabs, and 6.0% of the Chilean students in this study).

Patterns of Relative Prevalence

As hypothesized, the rank-order of the frequency of the four victimization classes was similar across the various groups: the most frequent was verbal, then physical, threats, and sexual was least frequent in all three study groups (see Table 2). A review of the specific victimization items indicates a more complex picture. First, for each group separately we determined the rank order of each victimization type in terms of its frequency. For instance, for the Chilean students the most prevalent victimization type was "A student gossiped about you or said bad things behind your back" and was ranked number 1, whereas for both Jewish and Arab students the victimization type ranked 1 was "A student humiliated you or made you feel bad". We then correlated between the rank orders of all items among the three groups. The correlations between the three sets were very high (between $r = .82$ to $r = .84$), indicating that the relative frequency of the victimization types is quite similar across the three study groups. An examination of the relative frequency of specific items indicates that the 4–5 most and least frequent items are similar in the three groups. Spearman rank-order correlation between Jewish and Arab students relative prevalence is rho = .816, and the correlation of Jewish and Arab students with Chile is rho = .837.

Nonetheless, some victimization types have different relative frequency across the study groups. Three victimization types stand out. First, while among Jewish and Chilean students the victimization type of "You got into a fight, were hurt and received medical attention" had very low relative frequency and ranked 16 for the Jewish students and 15 for the Chilean students, it ranked 9th for the Arab students. Also, whereas among Chilean students the behavior "A student touched or tried to touch you or to pinch you in a sexual way without your approval" was much less frequent compared to other victimization types (ranked 16th of 18 different types), among Israeli Jewish students this behavior had a much higher relative frequency (ranked 9th). Finally, discrimination-based victimization was reported by Arab students relatively less frequently (ranked 8th) compared with both Jewish (ranked 3rd) and Chilean students (ranked 4th).

In summary, it is safe to conclude that the hypothesis regarding the relative prevalence of victimization types was fully supported for areas of victimization and partially supported for specific types of victimization.

Prevalence by Study Groups, Sex, and Age

In most items, Chilean students reported the highest prevalence, followed by Israeli-Arabs, whereas the Israeli-Jewish students tended to report less victimization. This trend was evident in most items, but especially concerning the more extreme and severe behaviors. For instance, the percentage of Chilean students who reported that they were blackmailed under threats (9.0%) was almost six times higher than Israeli-Jewish students (1.6%), and higher than Israeli-Arab students (6%). Similarly, Chilean students in our study had more than four times higher chances of being threatened with a knife or sharp object compared with Israeli-Jewish students (6.0 and 1.3%, respectively). There was no victimization type that Israeli-Jews reported more victimization compared with their Chilean peers.

With a few exceptions, Israeli-Arab students tended to report more victimization than their Jewish peers did. Here

Table 3 Mean (and standard deviations) of victimization indices by study group and school level

	Jewish			Arab			Chile			ANOVA F-statistics			
	El	JH	HS	El	JH	HS	El	JH	HS				
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	Ethnic	Level	Group × level	Post hoc
Verbal-social	.13 (.22)	.14 (.25)	.10 (.22)	.16 (.25)	.15 (.27)	.13 (.24)	.28 (.38)	.21 (.35)	.17 (.31)	31.30***	12.88***	4.98***	[abc]
Threats	.04 (.13)	.04 (.19)	.04 (.19)	.10 (.24)	.09 (.26)	.07 (.22)	.15 (.35)	.11 (.31)	.08 (.28)	53.72***	7.37***	3.47**	[ab]
Physical	.09 (.24)	.07 (.25)	.05 (.22)	.17 (.33)	.13 (.31)	.08 (.25)	.21 (.38)	.13 (.33)	.09 (.28)	34.64***	31.78***	4.10**	[abc]
Sexual	.05 (.15)	.05 (.20)	.07 (.24)	.11 (.25)	.10 (.26)	.09 (.24)	.14 (.31)	.11 (.30)	.08 (.25)	32.51***	1.90	3.75**	
Sum	.08 (.15)	.09 (.19)	.07 (.19)	.14 (.22)	.12 (.24)	.10 (.21)	.21 (.31)	.15 (.29)	.11 (.25)	38.18***	13.11***	4.35**	[abc]

El elementary, *JH* junior high, *HS* high school

[a] Elementary significantly different ($p < .01$) from junior high (Scheffe Post Hoc)

[b] Elementary significantly different ($p < .01$) from high school (Scheffe Post Hoc)

[c] Junior high significantly different ($p < .01$) from high school (Scheffe Post Hoc)

**$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

again, this was most evident in the more severe types of victimization. For instance, 2% of the Jewish students reported that they got into a fight, were hurt and received medical attention, compared with 8.0% of the Arab students. Being humiliated by another student was reported by slightly fewer Arabs compared with Jewish students (23.7 and 25.9%, respectively). Arab-Israelis, on the other hand, reported more victimization compared with their Chilean peers with regards to two items only—You got into a fight, were hurt and received medical attention (8.0% compared with 6.3%) and student tried to convince others to boycott-exclude you (20.7 and 16.6%, respectively).

The findings (not presented due to space limitations, but available upon request from the authors) indicate that among the whole sample, males reported more victimization than females in 17 of the 20 items. This was especially evident with regard to sexual and severe physical victimization. For instance, while 15.1% of males reported a student who wanted to hurt them kicked, hit or slapped them, the prevalence among females was 5.6%. Similarly, 2.3% of females reported that they got into a fight, were hurt and received medical attention compared with 6.2% of the males. The two items in which females reported more victimization than males were associated with social victimization, and the differences were very small. The largest difference was that 18% of females reported that student gossiped about them or said bad things behind their back compared with 15.7% among males. As predicted, in all study groups, the sex differences were in the same direction.

The findings regarding age differences (not presented due to space limitations, but available upon request from the authors) show a clear trend: except for sexual victimization, the older age group of students report less victimization than younger students. The age trend was similar among Arab and Chilean students. In contrast, among Jewish students the victimization reported by the 7–9 grade levels was not consistently lower than the levels reported by the younger students.

Interactions between Study Groups, Sex, and Age

Table 3 compares the victimization indices by sex and study groups and presents the results of two-ways analyses of variance for each of the indices. There are significant sex and study group differences in all four areas. With regard to study groups, all four indices show the same pattern—Chilean students report more victimization than Israeli-Arab students who report more than Israeli-Jewish students did. The largest differences were with regards to victimization by threats—for instance, whereas the mean for males in Chile was .17 (SD = .36), it was .13 (SD = .30) among male Arab Israelis and 0.05 (SD = .18) among Jewish male students in Israel.

In all four indices, females report less victimization than males. This was especially evident with regards to physical victimization- the mean for physical victimization among Jewish males in Israel was .12 (SD = .30) and among females .03 (SD = .15), among Arab-Israeli males .19 (SD = .36) and females .08 (SD = .25), and in Chile .25 (SD = .41) among males compared with Chilean female students .15 (SD = .30).

In all these indices, there are significant study group by sex interactions. The strongest interactions were about threats and sexual victimization. In both, sex differences in Israel (both Jewish and Arab) were much larger than in Chile. For instance, sex odds ratios in sexual victimization were 2.58 for Jewish students and 3.27 for Arab students, and only 1.72 among Chilean students.

Table 3 presents indices of victimization by study group and grade level groups. Grade level groups had a significant effect on all four indices. In three of the indices, the general trend was of lower victimization in the higher grade levels, and the difference between the 4–6 and the 9–11 (9–12 in Chile) grade levels is significant in all types of victimization. Sexual victimization had a different pattern—there was a significant tendency of increase in victimization in the higher grade levels. Interestingly, in all indices there was a significant (although not strong) interaction between grade level and study group. In all the areas, the drop in reports of victimization between the 4–6 and 7–9 grade levels was larger in Chile than in the Israeli schools, whereas in the Israeli schools the drop between 7–9 and 10–11 was slightly larger than in Chile.

Exploring SES as a Potential Explanatory Variable

The findings above show consistent differences between the study groups: Chilean students are victimized more than Arab students in Israel who are victimized more than Israeli Jewish students. As we noted in the introduction, such differences may be due to many different factors. One such potential factor is SES. Arab students in Israel have lower socio-economic status than their Jewish peers. The Chilean sample came from schools that cater mainly to students from lower SES groups. In order to explore SES as a potential explanatory variable we examined whether there is evidence that in our study SES is associated with victimization. We first examined this question separately for each of the study groups. We found that the correlations between SES and the various victimization types were extremely low within the Jewish and Arab groups in Israel, ranging between $r = .03$ to $r = .06$. In the Chilean sample the correlations were higher, but still very low ranging between $r = .09$ to $r = .13$.

We further examined SES as a potential explanatory variable by comparing the Chilean group only with Israeli students that were in the lowest third of the SES index used in Israel, so that comparisons would be conducted only among poor students. A series of analyses of variance provided the same picture as presented in Tables 2 and 3 above: Even among the poor students, Israeli Jewish students had significantly lower victimization rates compared with Israeli Arab students who had lower victimization rates compared with the Chilean students. Hence, it is not likely that differences in SES are the source of the differences between the study groups.

Discussion

This study compared reports of school victimization made by students in Israel and in Chile, focusing on similarities and differences in the structure of these reports, mostly the relative frequency of the various victimization types and the sex and age differences in victimization. Given the paucity of theory that could guide hypotheses on cross-country differences in the structure and prevalence of victimization, we explored these issues, with the goal of moving one step further in developing such a theory. In this section we present the findings and our tentative interpretations, and propose future studies that could help create a more solid theoretical and empirical base regarding cross-cultural and cross-national similarities and variations in reports of school victimization.

With respect to cross context similarities and differences in victimization prevalence, Benbenishty and Astor (2005) suggested that while the prevalence of various types of victimization may differ across contexts, the structure and patterns might be more stable. The present study hypothesized that the relative frequency of the various types of victimization would be similar across groups and would reflect the potential severity of the victimization type. The results were somewhat mixed. As hypothesized, the frequencies of classes of victimization types ranked-order exactly the same in all groups: verbal-social was the most frequent, followed by physical victimization, threats, and then sexual victimization. The hypothesis was confirmed for classes of victimization (e.g. social-verbal, physical), it was not fully supported when particular victimization types were examined. On one hand, some specific victimization types were very frequent in all groups (e.g. 'A student humiliated you or made you feel bad') and others were the least frequent in all these groups (e.g. 'A student took or tried to take your clothes off for sexual reasons') and the correlations between the rank orders in the three groups were very high. On the other hand, there were several inconsistencies in rank-order of victimization items across the groups. These were most apparent with the high relative frequency among Arab students of needing medical attention after

being involved in a fight, their low relative frequency of reporting on discrimination-based victimization compared with the other groups, and the low relative frequency of Chilean students reporting on being victimized by sexual touching.

This set of findings is not very different from the consistency reported by Benbenishty and Astor (2005) in a study comparing Jewish and Arab students in Israel with students from several ethnic groups in California. Benbenishty and Astor (2005) suggested that when in a particular group a certain victimization type deviates in relative frequency from other groups, it might be a sign of cultural differences that are expressed in differences in rank-order. Some of the inconsistencies in the present study may be cautiously interpreted in terms of the unique context for each of these groups. Our tentative interpretation of the low rank ordering of the victimization type of 'A student made fun of you because of your color of skin, origin, or religion' among Arab students (compared with both Jewish and Chilean students) stems from the relative homogeneity of the Arab education system in Israel. The public educational system in Valparaíso, Chile, brings together all students from middle and lower SES groups in the city. This study, however, did not include a question asking to describe the student's skin color and therefore could capture the variation that exists among the Chilean students (Uhlmann et al. 2002). In Israel, although all Jewish schools are homogeneous in terms of religion, they bring together students from different cultural backgrounds and students with marked differences in skin color (e.g., Ethiopian Jews, Sephardi and Eshkenazi Jews). These subgroup of skin color differences however, were not measured in these groups either.

The low relative frequency of sexual touching among Chilean students may reflect a more conservative attitude in Chile toward permissive sexual sex interactions. These interpretations need to be tested in follow up studies. The nuances of cultural differences on these specific forms of interactions are subtle and context specific. Future mixed method studies would be most appropriate for these types of cross cultural research questions.

We also hypothesized that sex and age differences would have the same direction in all study groups- males would be victimized more, and younger students would be victimized more compared to older students. The findings clearly support the hypothesis that the direction of sex effects are similar across groups: males reported more victimization than females. The age differences were less consistent. Whereas in all groups the differences between the youngest (4–6) and oldest students (10–12) were in the same direction, the group of students in grades 7–9 behaved differently among Jewish students in Israel, and reported in some areas similar or even higher levels of victimization compared with students in the lower grades. We suspect that this consistency may be associated with the ways schools are structured. While in Chile the educational system consists of k-8 primary school and 9–12 high school, most schools in the Israeli system are k-6, 7–9, 10–12, with some variations, including some schools k-8 and some schools 7–12. These structural differences may explain some of the age-related patterns observed in this study. Future studies should further explore how the organization of schools affects levels of bullying across countries. It may very well be that these are not cultural difference *per se*, but differences in school structure within and between countries. We think this finding points to an important line of future context oriented school safety research.

It is important to note, however, that while the general direction of the sex and age differences were as predicted, significant interactions were also noted. That is, while in all study groups males were victimized more, the sex differential was lower among Chilean students. This sex difference, most evident in sexual and threat victimization, may be associated with different gender-role cultural values in the study groups. This pattern should be investigated in future studies to examine whether it is replicated and could be interpreted based on cultural differences regarding gender roles.

While the study found similarities across the study groups, consistent differences in prevalence were also present. In almost all items, Chilean students reported the highest prevalence, followed by Israeli-Arabs, whereas the Israeli-Jewish students tended to report less victimization. This is especially evident with regards to the most extreme and severe forms of victimization. These differences could be due to several sources. Socioeconomic status has long been known to influence the rates of self-reported victimization, such that schools embedded in lower-SES communities and in poorer countries tend to report higher rates of victimization, especially the more severe types of victimization (Inchley et al. 2015; Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2004). In this study, the Chilean sample was composed exclusively of low-SES public municipal schools, whereas the Israeli sample covered a representative range of students' SES. We explored the possibility that these findings reflect the differences in socio-economic status of the various groups. However, we could not find evidence that SES could explain variations in the prevalence of victimization and could not be the source of the differences we identified between the study groups.

These group differences might be related to other factors, such as cultural differences in power distance. According to Hofstede (2001), Chilean workers score above the mean on power distance, whereas Israelis score very low. This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power be

distributed unequally. People in societies exhibiting a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order. In societies with low power distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power. The implication of this cultural difference may be that powerful students (physically or socially) in a high-power distance culture may feel that they "have a right" to victimize others due to their social, socioeconomic, ethnic or other type of background, and other students "are obliged" to be victimized due to their skin color or socioeconomic status. In such school contexts, perhaps more severe and extreme forms of violence are overlooked and seen upon as more "natural". This could explain the findings on more extreme forms of violence in Chile, and perhaps also in Israeli-Arab, although there are no specific studies of within-country cultural values differences in Israel (Schwartz 2006).

Other factors could also account for the differences in victimization prevalence among the study groups. Differences in awareness, social norms and organizational priorities surrounding school violence may be responsible for the differences between the two participating countries. Specifically, Israel has systematically embraced school violence and school climate reforms, through a comprehensive monitoring system that has been implemented for over a decade. Israel has seen drops in victimization rates over the last decade, which might be reasonably attributed to the combination of nation-wide monitoring system, the reorganization of the counseling services so that they focus on school violence prevention, and the public awareness raised by the mass media.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The limitations of the study need to be considered when the implications of the findings are contemplated. First, this is an exploratory study with only a few specific prior hypotheses and with limited control over confounding variables, on the student and school levels. For instance, no information is known on the students' and their teachers' values and attitudes in areas that may be relevant to victimization and aggression, such as tolerance to victimization of younger students or females; nor was information collected on self-identified skin color (Uhlmann et al. 2002). The countries were not chosen based on a theory but on the opportunity to carry out the comparisons, based on very detailed reports on victimization in schools. While the Israeli sample was representative of the whole country, the Chilean sample was of one large city. We also note that due to the complexity of the multi-level design, we do not present effect sizes in the tables.

With respect to the study's implications, from a theoretical point of view, the study provides support to Benbenishty and Astor's (2005) hypothesis that victimization patterns and structure is similar across contexts. This study identified similarities in relative prevalence of victimization classes and in the direction of the effects of sex and age. Still, the study also showed that this hypothesis does not always hold on the level of a particular victimization event, and significant interaction effects of sex and age with study group, suggest that the theory should be developed more to account for such variations between and within countries.

There is a clear need for future studies that will help to develop further theory in this area. These studies should test specific hypothesis on factors that account for cross-context similarities and differences in prevalence and patterns of school victimization. Such studies need to measure the hypothesized explaining factors. For instance, it is important to assess students' cultural values expected to explain differences in prevalence, so that explanations are not ex post facto. Similarly, if structural properties of the educational system are hypothesized to account for cross country differences (e.g., school cultural homogeneity), it is important to select comparison countries which represent clear variations on this variable, or at least measure these structural properties.

Finally, we strongly recommend mixed-methods studies. Such studies could start with qualitative studies in comparison countries intended to advance hypotheses on values and structural characteristics of the educational system that may differentiate between countries. A follow up study may examine the hypotheses quantitatively. Furthermore, it would be important to conduct a qualitative study following the quantitative parts to explore interpretations of the findings and their potential implications for practice and policy.

We also recommend introducing changes in existing international studies to advance our understanding of the effects of cultural contexts on school victimization in multiple countries. Several international surveys that compare school violence across many countries (e.g., HBSC, GSHS, TIMMS, and PISA) have found cross-cultural differences both within countries (Smith 2003) and between countries (Connell et al. 2015; Maynard et al. 2016; Nansel et al. 2001). These studies, however, use very few questions to assess school violence behaviors. Hence, we recommend that more international comparative studies should be conducted with a special focus on school violence. Hopefully, these studies will be coordinated so that they use instruments and methods as similar as possible to allow effective comparisons and increase the possibilities of formulating theoretical contributions to our understanding of school violence. In this sense, the findings of this study provide insight into the complexities of international comparisons of school violence by way of using the same instrument of measurement. The study also offers an innovative

perspective on comparison by considering the interactions between sex, school level and cultural context.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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