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Cyberhate and cyberbullying: joint propensity and reciprocal amplification. Full panel: victims and perpetrators of hate speech

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# Cyberhate and cyberbullying: Joint propensity and reciprocal amplification

Anke Görzig, Sebastian Wachs and Michelle Wright

# What is cyberhate?



**Hate speech expressed on the internet** (incl. bullying, insults, discrimination):

- Xenophobia, and other forms of hatred based on intolerance (Council of Europe, 2003)
- Skin colour, supposed race, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation or political or religious beliefs - also refers to anti-Semitism and historical revisionism (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism)
- Online denigration, harassment, and advocacy of violence against specific social groups because of assigned or selected characteristics (i.e., sexual orientation, race, gender)(Hawdon et al., 2017; Wachs & Wright, 2018)
- Identity-based cyberbullying (Blaya, 2018)

Cyberbullying = intention to harm, ICT-related cyber aggression;  
Cyberbullying ≠ group related, single incident



# Prevalence



## Exposure

- **13%- 20% - 7 European countries (averages 2010/13), 11-16 yrs** (Livingstone et al., 2014)
  - *Seen websites where people publish hate messages that attack certain groups or individuals*
- **29%-58% - 5 European countries (range), 11-17 yrs** (EU Kids Online IV, 2019, unpublished)
  - *Seen hateful or degrading messages or comments online, against people or certain groups of people?*

## Victimisation

- **23.4%, Finland, 15-30 yrs** (Räsänen et al. 2016)
  - *Have personally been the target of hateful or degrading material online.*
- **3%-11% - 5 European countries (range), 11-17 yrs** (EU Kids Online IV, 2019, unpublished)
  - *Received hateful or degrading messages or comments online, against you or your community?*

## Perpetration

- **6.7%, Finland, 15-30 yrs** (Räsänen et al. 2016)
  - *Have you produced online material that other people interpreted as hateful or degrading?*
- **1%-8% - 5 European countries (range), 11-17 yrs** (EU Kids Online IV, 2019, unpublished)
  - *Sent hateful or degrading messages or comments online, against someone or a group of people?*

# Cyberhate and Risk Behaviours



- **Problem Behaviour Theory** -> general underlying propensity for displaying risky behaviours, risk behaviours co-occur (Donovan & Jessor, 1985; Jessor, 1991, 2013)
- **Confirmed across the online-offline boundary** (Görzig, 2016)
- **Type of risk behaviour is context dependent**
  - Adolescent limited anti-social behaviour (Moffitt, 1993)
  - Social learning (Bandura, 2002)
- **Victimisation and perpetration of similar risk types co-occur** (cyberbullying; Erdur-Baker, 2010; Görzig, 2011; cyberhate: Wachs & Wright, 2019)
- **Cyber bully/victims: other types of problem behaviours are increased** (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)

—→ **The *Cyberhate* victimisation – perpetration link will be amplified for those involved in *cyberbullying* perpetration**

# Coping with Cyber-victimisation



- **Effort to manage environmental stress and triggered emotions**  
(Lazarus, 2006)

## Adaptive coping

- **Technical coping:** blocking the sender, stopping to use the internet, deleting the message or saving evidence (Görzig & Machackova, 2016; Livingstone, et al., 2011; Šléglová & Cerna 2011)
- **Assertive coping:** ‘counter speech’, e.g., confronting the person, asking the person to stop (Camodeca & Goossens 2005; Sticca et al. 2015)

## Mal-adaptive coping

- **Avoidance:** passive avoidance, rumination, resignation (Hampel et al., 2009)
- **Retaliation:** aggression, doing something similar to the person (Hampel et al., 2009; Machackova et al. 2013)
- **Bully/victims** more likely to engage in mal-adaptive coping: feel guilty, try to get back at the other person, less likely to try to fix the problem (Görzig, 2011; Hasebrink, et al., 2011)

➔ **The Cyberhate victimisation – perpetration link will be mitigated for those involved in adaptive coping strategies**

# METHODS

# Participants/ Procedure



- 1,480 adolescents from seven German schools
- Age: 12 to 17 years;  $M=14.21$ ;  $SD= 1.22$
- Sex: 744 girls (53%)
- Migration background: 144 (10%) German is not main language spoken at home
- Cross-sectional online questionnaire in 2018
- Ethical approval by the educational authority and data protection officer



# Research Instruments: Cyberhate & Cyberbullying



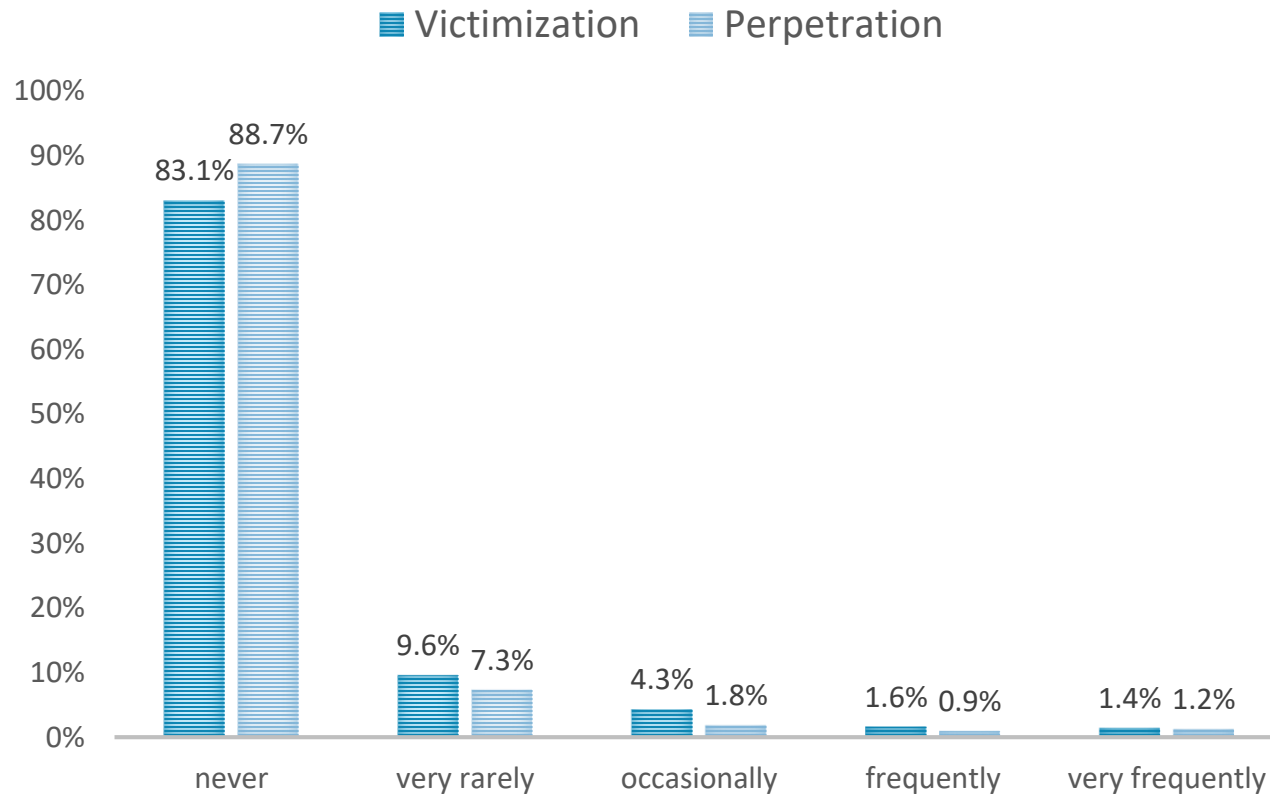
FEATURE	ITEMS	ANSWER OPTIONS	REFERENCES
Cyberhate	1	Never (0) – several times a week (4)	Hawdon, Oksanen, & Räsänen (2015)
<p><b><i>“How often did it happen in the past 12 months that you have [posted/been the target of] hateful or degrading writings or speech online, which inappropriately attacks certain groups of people or individuals based on their sex, religious affiliation, race, or sexual orientation?”</i></b></p>			
Cyberbullying	1 + definition	Never (0) – several times a week (4)	Olweus (2012)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionality; some repetitiveness; a power imbalance</li> <li>• Say mean and hurtful things or make fun, ignore or exclude, tell lies or spread false rumours</li> <li>• On mobile phone or over the internet</li> </ul> <p><b><i>“How many times have you cyberbullied others in the last twelve months?”</i></b></p>			

# Research Instruments: Coping

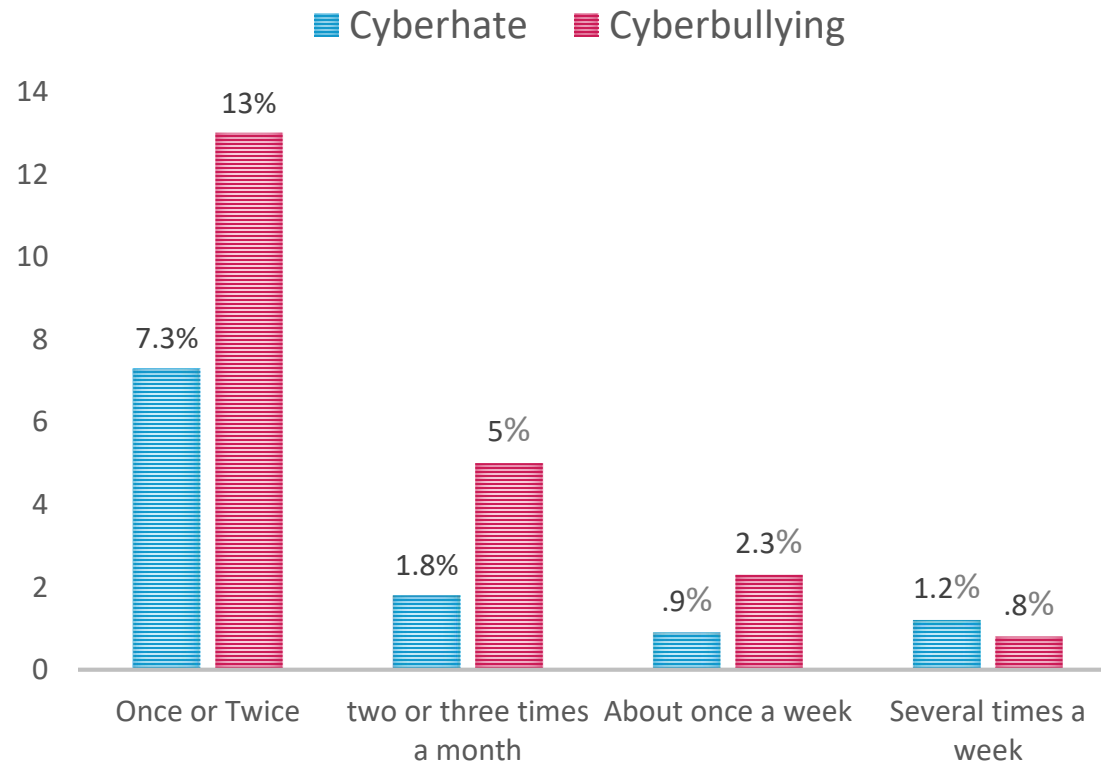


FEATURE	ITEMS	ANSWER OPTIONS	REFERENCES
<b><i>“A person has expressed hateful or degrading opinions online through posts, comments, text messages, videos, or pictures, which inappropriately attacked you because of your race, gender, ethnic group, sexual orientation, or religion via chats or social networks (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp).”</i></b>			
<b>Technical coping</b>	3 ( $\alpha = .83$ ) e.g., “...block that person so that he/she cannot contact me anymore”	definitely not(0) – definitely (2)	Sticca et al. (2015)
<b>Assertive coping</b>	4 ( $\alpha = .84$ ) e.g., “...let the person know that his/her behavior is not acceptable at all”	definitely not(0) – definitely (2)	Sticca et al. (2015)

# Frequency Cyberhate: Perpetration and victimization



# Frequency Perpetration: Cyberhate and Cyberbullying



(Never: Cyberhate: 88.7%; Cyberbullying: 78.9)

# Data Analyses RQ1



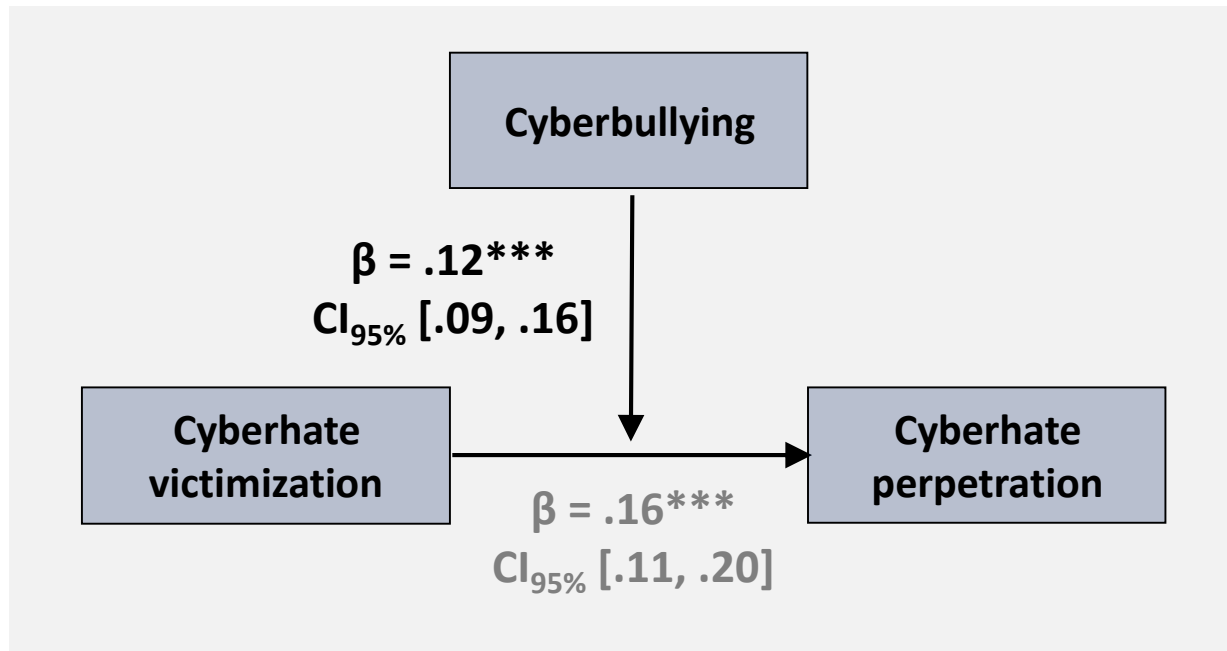
→ The Cyberhate victimisation – perpetration link will be amplified for those involved in cyberbullying perpetration

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	Moderator	OUTCOME
Cyberhate victimization	Cyberbullying perpetration	Cyberhate perpetration

- controlled by age, sex and SES, migration background, cyberhate and cyberbullying victimization

- Moderation analysis was conducted with PROCESS (Hayes, 2013)
- All continuous variables were z-standardized

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# Data Analyses RQ2



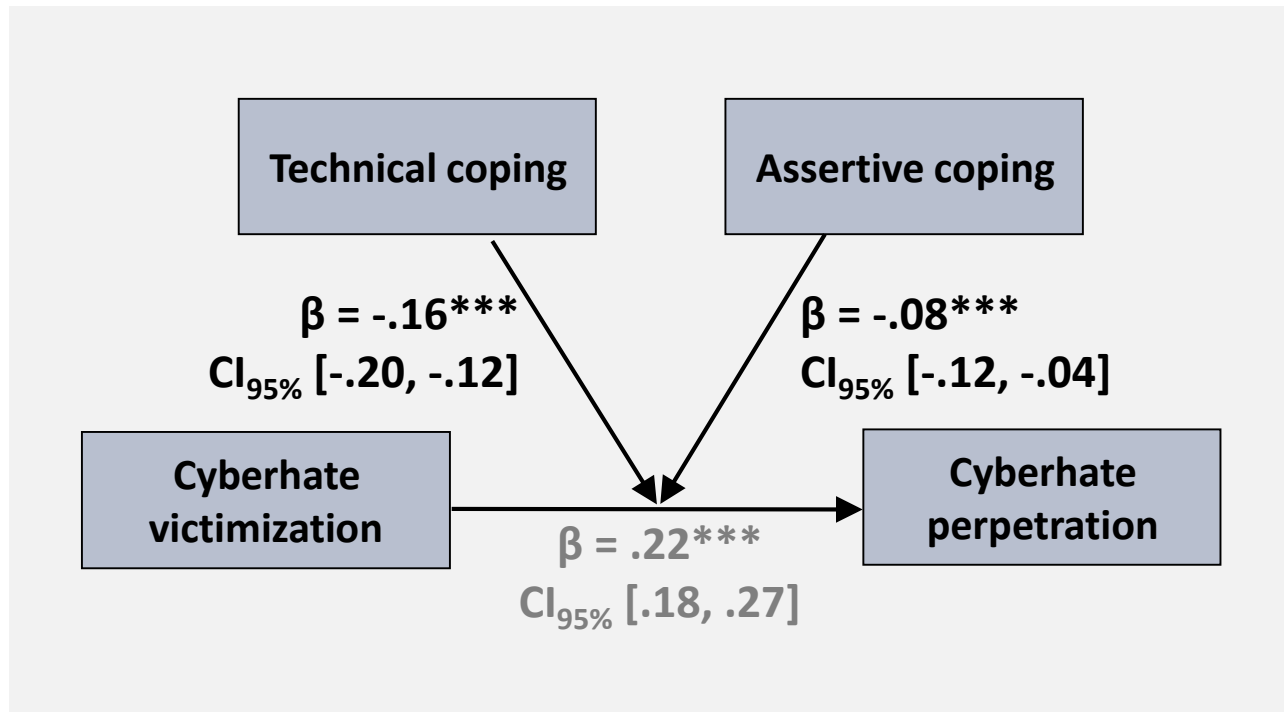
→ The Cyberhate victimisation – perpetration link will be mitigated for those involved in adaptive coping strategies

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	Moderator	OUTCOME
Cyberhate victimization	Coping strategies	Cyberhate perpetration

- controlled by age, sex and SES, migration background, cyberhate and cyberbullying victimization

- Moderation analysis was conducted with PROCESS (Hayes, 2013)
- All continuous variables were z-standardized

# Moderation effects of Coping





# DISCUSSION

# Implications



- **The victim-perpetrator link for cyberhate...**
  - ... is amplified amongst those engaging in other similar types of problem behaviours
  - ... can be mitigated via problem focused coping strategies
  
- **Prevention and intervention programs targeting cyberhate should...**
  - ... particularly target those who engage in other types of (related) problem behaviours
  - ... address other types of problem-behaviours and their underlying factors which may simultaneously address cyberhate involvement
  - ... consider educating young people in problem-focused coping strategies

# Limitations



- Single item scales...
  - ...addressing a defined range of target groups (sex, religious affiliation, race, or sexual orientation)
  - Hypothetical question
  - Social desirability in self-reports
  - Non-representative sample
- *Need for consensus in definition and measurement of cyberhate*





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**Thank you! 😊**

**Dr Anke Görzig**