Chapter 2
Gender Issues and Cyberbullying in Children and Adolescents: From Gender Differences to Gender Identity Measures

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2.1   Introduction

Slightly more than a decade ago, when the first psychological research with child and adolescent samples into cyberbullying was done, gender played a key role in analyzing cyberbullying prevalence. The term "gender," in addition to recognizing the influence of biological factors, includes cultural and experiential factors to explain aggressive behavior. Thus, gender not only implies the categorization of people into male or female groups but also refers to the gender-typing process in which they acquire those motives, values, and behaviors viewed as appropriate for males and females within a given culture (Diamond 2002). Regarding cyberbullying research, the principal aim was to know if this form of aggression is a gender-specific behavior or if, on the contrary, both genders are involved and whether they develop different behavior patterns in their involvement (Connell et al. 2014). To meet this objective, research has analyzed differences in boys' and girls' implication in it by considering that if such differences existed, they would be linked to learning that derives from gender socialization. Nevertheless, most studies have limited their analysis of gender to classifying participants in accordance with sexual dimorphism, and have not analyzed how acquired gender-related beliefs can be linked to cyberbullying. Therefore, from our point of view, it is necessary to review the way in which gender has been included in research and to consider the need to examine how the gender norms that operate in peer groups can contribute to cyberbullying being manifested. An examination of these trends may serve as a reference for gender research in cyberbullying and might help enhance our understanding of the way in which gender-typing processes are related to these negative cyberinteractions.

Based on this notion, this chapter reviews gender research on cyberbullying and presents data never published before in order to present new ways to advance in

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gender studies into this aggressive phenomenon. The objectives are none other than generating debate on the state of the art of research in this area and helping researchers to also identify new directions in international research. First, we present studies that examine gender differences in roles and forms within cyberbullying. To this end, we offer an up-to-date literature review. Second, we review the gender identity concept, understood as private experience of the gender roles and traits learned during the socialization process, and present a preliminary study on the influence of gender identity on cyberbullying. We have examined the way in which the gender standards adopted or violated in peer groups can protect from or trigger cyberbullying. Finally, as the youths who move away from the social expectations for their gender are more exposed to various forms of aggression, studies that examine the victimization suffered by sexual and gender minorities are reviewed and new qualitative data on their exposure to cyberbullying are offered. Throughout this chapter, we accompany theoretical presentations with not only a description of the studies done in different countries but also with new data that allow us to extend the gender perspective to study cyberbullying.

2.2 Gender Differences in Cyberbullying

Analyses into gender differences in cyberbullying took the results found in traditional bullying as a starting point. In general, research has reported that boys tend to get involved in direct forms of physical or verbal aggression to a greater extent than girls (Griezel et al. 2012; Pereira et al. 2004). Conversely, however, girls have been reported to use indirect aggression to a greater extent, where the victim is excluded from the peer group or his/her personal and social reputation is attacked (Björkqvist et al. 1994; Crick et al. 2002; Owens et al. 2004). These results have supported the idea that direct aggression is more prototypical of the male gender, while indirect aggression is more prototypical of the female gender. Several factors have been used to explain this division between more masculine or feminine forms of aggression, including biological reasons (e.g., physically, girls have less strength) and interpersonal reasons (e.g., the social structure of groups of girls as these groups are smaller and more intimate if compared with groups of boys, which would make indirect aggression a more effective strategy). Finally, there are gender socialization factors, for example, adults being less tolerant about girls getting involved in physical aggression, which would mean them having to adopt subtler and less visible forms (Kistner et al. 2010).

These explanations, along with results from many studies, have generated a considerable generalized consensus about girls using more indirect forms of aggression within traditional bullying (Kowalski et al. 2014), which makes them the center of attention when it comes to analyzing the prevalence of cyberbullying. This starting point is not at all surprising if we consider that cyberbullying has been described as a type of psychological and emotional abuse, carried out through gossip or diffusing information on the Internet where the aggressor attacks victims' privacy and inti-

macy but remains anonymous (Beran and Li 2008). Similar characteristics to traditional indirect bullying led preliminary research on cyberbullying to assume that girls were implied to the same extent, or even to a greater extent, than boys were. However, empirical evidence has not always been available to back this premise. In fact, far from finding a clear gender pattern in being involved as aggressors or victims, research has provided quite contradictory information.

Generally speaking, some researchers have encountered that boys act more as aggressors than girls, but girls are more victimized than boys (Walrave and Heirman 2011). Other studies have reported that boys act more as aggressors, but found no significant differences in victimization (Smith et al. 2012). Some other studies have indicated that girls act more as both aggressors and victims than boys (Mark and Ratliffe 2011), or that boys act more as aggressors and victims (Fanti et al. 2012). Numerous studies have found no gender differences in victims and aggressors (Griezel et al. 2012; Hinduja and Patchin 2008), while some research has suggested that gender differences depend on the analyzed forms of cyberbullying (Monks et al. 2012).

These mixed results could be put down to differences in the theories and methodologies used to characterize the studies conducted on cyberbullying. For instance, definitions of cyberbullying have varied from one study to another; different cyberbullying types have been examined, for example, by means of mobile phones (e.g., phone calls and text messages) or through social networks (e.g., Facebook and Twitter); different measurement instruments have been used, and distinct procedures have also been followed, when categorizing victims and aggressors. However, yet even in the studies that we conducted only a few years ago in Spain, which followed an identical measuring instrument, and the same cyberbullying definition and the same procedure to categorize subjects, mixed results were also obtained as one study showed that gender differences did not exist (Navarro et al. 2012), while another study indicated that girls were more victimized than boys (Navarro et al. 2013). Lack of consistency among studies has led some authors to conclude that research on gender differences in cyberbullying is a fruitless research area (Tokunaga 2010), and has downplayed the importance of the analysis of gender in cyberbullying.

2.2.1 Is Cyberbullying a Gender-Specific Behavior?

In order to check whether more recent studies on cyberbullying still provide mixed results for gender differences, we did a systematic literature review, using PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and Google Scholar, of the studies published while this chapter was being written. The criteria adopted to include studies in the review were as follows: (a) the search was not limited to specific countries or cultures, but had to include international representation, although only those articles published in English were reviewed; (b) year of publication: The table below indicates that the search was limited to the years 2013 and 2015 (including in-press articles) in order

to include only the most recent studies; (c) articles had to contain empirical studies, and no reviews on the subject were included; (d) for a study to be selected, it had to analyze gender differences in both aggressors and victims, and no articles that centered on only one of these roles were included; and (e) articles had to be published in peer reviewed journals. As the scope of our review is broad, we do not claim having been able to include a complete review of all existing topic-related publications.

Table 2.1 shows the studies we reviewed, along with the main results found for gender differences in cyberbullying. These studies were arranged by considering the similarity of the results obtained. As a whole, six different results categories appeared. There were more articles with similar results in the first category, after which the number of coincidences progressively lowered. The studies that found no gender differences in victimization and perpetration within cyberbullying are first presented. Those showing that boys acted more as aggressors and girls as victims are presented in the second place. Those studies indicating that boys are more involved as both victims and aggressors come third. Studies which revealed that boys act more as aggressors than girls are the fourth category, but they found no gender differences in victimization. In the fifth place appears the research which indicated that no gender differences appeared in perpetration, but stated that more girls were cyberbullying victims. Finally, there is a group of studies which reported that more girls acted as both aggressors and victims than boys.

As the systematic review indicates, the results are still mixed. However, far from not contributing to research on cyberbullying, these results may indicate that we have analyzed gender difference from an unsuitable viewpoint as we have looked to seek that certain gender trends found in research on traditional bullying are fulfilled. Trends may have become stereotyped. According to these stereotyped gender trends, cyberbullying has been seen as a more concealed psychological and emotional strategy, which entails greater planning and more premeditation, and it has been more stereotypically related with girls. On the contrary, boys would continue using direct forms of aggression, which are clearer, simpler, and more visible than those employed by girls. This stereotyped view has continued, even when some years ago international research denied that indirect aggression is a more prototypical conduct of girls and pointed out that such strategies are used by both genders and to the same extent (Archer 2004; Artz et al. 2008; Card et al. 2008). Indeed, some studies have even demonstrated that boys employ more indirect aggression than girls. Specifically, the transcultural study by Artz et al. (2013), conducted with 5789 adolescents from six countries including Canada and Spain, found that more boys (46.8%) than girls (31.7%) employed indirect aggression with peers. As the authors concluded, this result goes against generalized beliefs as indirect aggression was more of an issue among girls than it was for boys, and the same may be said of cyberbullying.

Yet, available data do not let us to state that cyberbullying is merely a girls' issue. Indeed, many studies have shown that boys stand out as aggressors. Likewise, a recent meta-analysis on the aggressor role by Barlett and Coyne (2014) concluded that males were more likely to be cyberbullies than females. However, this difference was moderated by age; indeed, females were more likely to report

Table 2.1 Cyberbullying and gender: Overview of studies (2013/2015) that analyzed gender differences in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization

Country	Study	Sample	Main results
Greece	Lazuras et al. (2013)	355 students aged 13–17 years	There were no gender differences in either experiencing or reporting cyberbullying
South Korea	Park et al. (2014)	1200 students aged 12–15 years	No gender differences were found in perpetration and victimization
Colombia	Mura and Diamantini (2014)	360 students aged 14–19 years	No gender differences were found in cyberbullying perpetration and victimization
Canada	Bonanno and Hymel (2013)	399 students in grades 8–10	No significant gender differences were found in cyberbullying victimization and perpetration
Switzerland	Sticca et al. (2013)	First assessment: 835 students in 6th grade. Second assessment: 820 students	No significant associations were found between gender and cyberbullying perpetration or victimization
USA	Kowalski and Limber (2013)	931 students in grades 6–12	No significant main gender effects were observed in perpetration and victimization
Spain	Navarro et al. (2015)	1058 students aged 10–12 years	No statistically significant differences were found between boys and girls in cyberbullying victimization and perpetration
South Korea	Shin and Ahn (2015)	1036 students aged 12–18 years	There was no gender effect on the classification of victims and bullies
Israel	Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh (2015)	507 students in grades 7–10. (242 typically achieving students, 149 LD students in general education classes, 116 LD comorbid in special education classes)	Girls were more likely to be cyberbullying victims than boys
			Boys were more likely to be cyberbullying perpetrators
			Girls in special education classes were at higher risk of being cyberbullying victims
USA	Navarro and Jasinski (2013)	1500 students aged 10–17 years	Girls were at higher risk of cyberbullying victimization than boys
			Boys engaged significantly more in cyberbullying perpetration
Sweden	Låftman et al. (2013)	22,544 students aged 15–18 years	Girls tended to be cyberbullying victims more often than boys, while boys were more often perpetrators

Table 2.1 (continued)

Country	Study	Sample	Main results
Germany	Festl and Quandt (2013)	408 students aged 12–19 years	Boys were more frequently perpetrators, whereas girls were more frequently victims
Israel	Tarablus et al. (in press)	458 junior high students aged 11–13 years	Girls were more likely to be cybervictims than boys and that boys were more likely to be cyberbullies than girls
Israel	Heiman et al. (2015)	480 students aged 12–16 years. (342 typical achieving students and 140 students with ADHD)	Significantly more girls were cybervictims than boys
			Boys reported more involvement as cyberperpetrators than girls
			No significant interactions were obtained among gender, groups (ADHD/Non ADHD) and the two cyberbullying involvement types
Multiregion: six European countries	Schultze-Krumbholz et al. (2015)	6260 students aged 11–23 years	More often girls were victims and more often boys were perpetrators
Germany	Wachs et al. (2015)	1928 students aged 11–18 years	Boys were more likely than girls to be cyberbullies and girls were more likely than boys to be cybervictims
USA	Pelfrey and Weber (2013)	3403 students in grades 6–12	Male students were more likely to be perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying than females
China	Wong et al. (2014)	1917 students aged 12–15 years	Boy participants reported having significantly more frequent cyberbullying perpetration and victimization than their female counterparts
South Korea	Yang et al. (2013)	1344 students in grade 4	Male students reported being more involved as perpetrators and victims than female students
China	Zhou et al. (2013)	1483 students in grades 10–12	Boys were more likely to report being involved in cyberbullying as perpetrators than girls
			Boys were also more likely to be cybervictims than girls
Taiwan	Chin Yang et al. (2014)	837 students in grades 5–12	Boys were more likely to be perpetrators and victims than girls
Israel	Lapidot-Lefter and Dolev-Cohen (2015)	465 students in grades 7–12	No gender differences were found for victimization
			Boys reported being perpetrators more than girls did

Table 2.1 (continued)

Country	Study	Sample	Main results
Mexico	Gámez-Guadix et al. (2014)	1491 students aged 12–18 years	Perpetration was significantly higher for males than for females, whereas no differences were found for victimization
Italy	Baroncelli and Ciucci (2014)	529 students in grades 6–8	Males obtained higher scores for cyberbullying perpetration
			No differences were found in cyberbullying victimization
Greece	Kokkinos et al. (2013)	300 students aged 10–12 years	Boys reported more frequent involvement in cyberbullying perpetration, while no significant gender differences were found in cybervictimization terms
Canada	Cappadocia et al. (2013)	1972 students in grades 9–12	Boys and girls reported similar rates of cyberperpetration
			Girls reported more involvement in cybervictimization than boys
Sweden	Beckman et al. (2013)	2989 students aged 13–15 years	No significant gender differences were found for cyberbullies.
			Girls were significantly more likely to be cybervictims than boys
USA	Connell et al. (2014)	3867 students in grades 5–8	Girls were more likely to report having engaged in cyberbullying perpetration than boys
			Girls reported higher levels of cybervictimization than boys

ADHD Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, *LD* is Learning Disabilities

cyberbullying in early adolescence, while males were more likely to be cyberbullies in later adolescence. Similarly, other studies have found that in middle childhood, cyberbullying is more of a girls' issue in both aggressor and victim roles (Connell et al. (2014). Thus, age could be a key factor when it comes to analyzing gender differences.

However, the previous systematic review presented in this chapter shows that recent studies conducted with different aged samples have found no gender differences. The examined results as a whole led us conclude that far from cyberbullying corresponding to the female dominion, it is an issue that concerns both genders and that both gender can sometimes be involved as aggressors or victims.

The results obtained by international researchers and the data provided herein do not allow us to conclude that a clear gender difference exists in cyberbullying behaviors. However, they allow us to draw some conclusions. First, contrary to the results found in traditional bullying, there are no clear differences between males and females in cyberbullying. The absence of differences may indicate that more females are actually victims of cyberbullying than traditional bullying (Kowalski et al. 2012). Second, past research has reported that more males apparently tend to exercise and suffer the form of cyberbullying that employs humiliating images or contains physical aggression than females. Males also tend to send more sexual or pornographic images, which is a form of cyberbullying to which females are more exposed (Cassidy et al. 2012). These new forms of sexual and gender harassment require more research efforts, which could be essential to understand the role that gender plays in cyberbullying. Third, researchers need to explore the role of gender in moderating the effects of different factors that may be related with cyberbullying victimization and perpetration (Wong et al. 2015). Finally, future research should also analyze differences in what behaviors are considered to be cyberbullying by each gender, as well as in the level of awareness about behaviors related to cyberbullying. These differences might influence their responses to cyberbullying measures (Akbaba et al. 2015).

2.2.2   What Do We Do Now with Gender?

The conclusion that cyberbullying is not a clearly gender-specific behavior must not lead us to believe that gender analyses are not useful and necessary. In fact, quite the opposite is true as these analyses are still a key dimension for understanding the cyberbullying phenomenon and, in particular, for comprehending which aspects linked to social pressures on gender learning can make boys and girls more vulnerable to cyberbullying, irrespective of the greater or lesser extent of their implication. In order to know more about the role that gender plays in cyberbullying, it is important that research goes beyond merely analyzing mean scores and measure how the internalization of gender-related beliefs and peer pressures toward gender norms are risk factors for involvement in cyberbullying.

From this perspective, research must be reinforced in methodological terms by including new measuring instruments of gender typification. Research also needs to be reinforced theoretically by adopting different gender development approaches that allow us to hypothesize about its relation with cyberbullying, and help to interpret the results obtained. Along these lines, some studies have already included gender theories in the analyses of their results. One example is the work of Navarro and Jasinski (2013), which adopted the cyberdystopian feminist perspective as a standpoint that girls are inherently more at cyberbullying risk because of their already disadvantaged position in society. However, as far as we are aware, no studies have examined the way in which beliefs, gender roles, or identities are risk or protection factors against cyberbullying. Studies that have adopted a qualitative methodology

by questioning youths about these matters are also scarce. For this reason, the following sections present new data as an attempt to illustrate the predictive value of gender in cyberbullying beyond analyzing gender differences.

2.3   Cyberbullying and Gender Identity

Gender identity has been analyzed as an indicator of children's and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment and well-being in peer groups (Carver et al. 2003), and cyberbullying may be associated with gender identity in different ways. Traditionally speaking, gender identity is defined as an individual feeling of belonging to one gender and not to the other (Kohlberg 1966). Subsequently, gender identity has been defined as the extent to which people see themselves as being masculine or feminine when compared to the cultural stereotypes for their own gender (Bem 1981; Spence 1993). In line with this definition, gender identity will vary from one person to another according to the degree of adherence to culturally marked standards that offer different personality traits and conduct repertoires in accordance with gender. This "private or personal" identification with patterns and systems of beliefs that are considered appropriate for one sex or another also has a public expression, gender roles, which communicate the degree of adhesion that someone has or some people have to social prescriptions (Bem 1981).

Self-identification with socially prescribed stereotypes and gender roles has been more recently considered to be only one of the factors involved in constructing gender identity (Egan and Perry 2001). These authors argued that gender identity must be conceptualized as a multidimensional variable for whose knowledge we must contemplate five components: (1) membership knowledge in a gender category (the traditional view of gender identity), (2) gender typicality, self-perceived similarity with other members of the same gender category, (3) gender contentedness, an individual's satisfaction with his/her own gender, (4) felt pressure for gender conformity, and (5) intergroup bias, the belief that one gender is superior to the other gender. After developing a self-report measure to evaluate the last four of the above components, the authors found that gender typicality and gender contentment were related with a favorable psychosocial adjustment in boys and girls (in terms of greater self-esteem and peer acceptance), while felt pressure and intergroup bias were sometimes found to be negatively related with good psychosocial adjustment. Despite a few differences, these findings have been replicated in other samples (Carver et al. 2003) and in distinct cultures (Yu and Xie 2010) to show that identity development includes various components that go beyond self-identification as male or female. These studies also underline the importance of gender identity components on different personal and social adjustment indices in peer groups.

We will now review the studies that link bullying, understood as an indicator of a negative psychosocial adjustment, with both types of gender identity approaches. First, some studies that analyze gender identity as self-perceived similarity to gender stereotypes are presented. Second, there are studies that use the multidimension-

al gender identity model of Egan and Perry (2001). In our view, Egan and Perry's proposal more accurately and completely captures the elements that constitute gender identity. However, since studies into bullying have examined its relationship with the internalization of what we call from now gender-typed personality traits, we believe that it is relevant to continue considering them as part of gender studies in bullying behaviors. This review allows us to offer a comparison between both perspectives in the analysis of gender identity and its relationship with bullying. After reviewing these studies, the study conducted about the influence of components of gender identity, on the one hand, and the internalization of gender-typed personality traits, on the other hand, on cyberbullying victimization and perpetration is presented.

2.3.1   Gender-Typed Personality Traits and Bullying Behaviors

Past research has proposed that differences in aggressive conduct can derive, to some extent, from learning instrumental (masculine) traits or expressive (feminine) traits. Such traits determine that men must be assertive, aggressive, brave, and independent, while women must be sensitive, emotional, friendly, and concerned about looking after relationships. Although everyone differs insofar as the personal integration they make of these masculine and feminine traits, it has been hypothesized that those people who construct their identity on masculine traits, like dominance, intransigence, or self-expansion, can behave aggressively more easily in order to exert control over others or to affirm these masculine traits (Phillips 2007). Conversely, constructing identity on female traits that emphasize self-sacrifice, concern for others, and even passiveness might be related with a less hostile interaction style, inhibited aggression, or using indirect forms of aggression (Underwood et al. 2001). Following this argument, aggression could be a way of demonstrating adaptation to gender schemes to comply with social expectations (Eagly et al. 2004).

Young and Sweeting (2004) were the first to analyze the relationship between internalization of gender traits and school bullying among secondary school students. They found that masculine traits and the perpetrator role were positively related. Nonetheless, they did not find any relationship between feminine traits and bullying in both the perpetrator and victim roles. Later, Gini and Pozzoli (2006) encountered the same relationship between masculine traits and the role of aggressor in a sample of primary school students. Crothers et al. (2005) analyzed the relationship between feminine traits and bullying led by girls, based on the premise that feminine traits could also be related stereotypically with the relational aggression associated with females. And so it was that they found that adolescents who described themselves as having more feminine traits were more aggressive relationally. Unlike previous studies, they did not find any type of relationship with masculine traits. However, it should be stated that their study sample was integrated only by females and, perhaps, the masculine traits internalization results would have differed if the sample had included males.

Some years ago in Spain, we analyzed the relationship between gender traits and implication as aggressors or victims in direct (physical and verbal aggression) and indirect (conducts of social exclusion) forms of bullying. The results revealed that irrespective of participants' genders, those students who reported feeling very well identified with masculine traits exercise more physical harassment, verbal abuse, and social exclusion-type conduct than students who stated they feel less identified with these traits. Conversely, those students who identified themselves more clearly with feminine traits reported no, or very little, involvement in all the forms of bullying analyzed (Navarro et al. 2011). More recent studies in our country have also found a positive relationship between instrumental traits and attitudes that favor bullying at school, and also between feminine traits and unfavorable attitudes toward this conduct (Carrera-Fernández et al. 2013).

Some of the reviewed studies have also analyzed the relationship between victimization and behaviors or interests not traditionally associated with one's own gender, as well as internalization of non-prototypical traits for own gender. Young and Sweeting (2004), for instance, specifically investigated the link between atypical gender behaviors and bullying. Their results indicated that a high score of atypical behaviors for their gender, plus a low score in masculine traits, was closely related with the victimization that boys suffered. Navarro et al. (2011) found that boys displaying high internalization of feminine traits were more likely to be victims of bullying in the three aggressive forms examined. Additionally, those girls who reported feeling more identified with masculine traits were more victims of verbal aggression. Victimization appeared to be the way in which peers punished identification with non-prototypical traits for their own gender.

These studies have been criticized because they adopted measures analyzing gender typification in specific domains and did not consider gender identity as the diverse and abstract information about how one feels about their attachment to one gender category or another. It has also been pointed out that researchers attribute a motivational meaning to the masculinity and femininity patterns which are scored within these measures. For instance, just as Egan and Perry (2001, p. 452) explained, "Bem (1981) suggested that gender schematic people are motivated to adopt behaviors consistent with one sex role and to shun behaviors associated with the other. However, it seems gratuitous to assume that sex-typed self-perceptions necessarily reflect felt pressure for sex role conformity rather than derive from some other source (e.g.) temperamental proclivities." For these reasons, internalization of gender-typed personality traits must be considered as a gender typification measure and would only display one specific gender identity aspect.

2.3.2 The Multidimensional Gender Identity Model and Bullying Behaviors

The multidimensional gender identity model (Egan and Perry 2001) understands that we must not only pay attention to specific domains such as gender-typed per-

sonality traits, but more integrative measures that cover personal judgments must also be generated, which we can all form about our gender (e.g., do I fit well with my gender category? Is my gender superior to the other?). The model's different dimensions are related with children's psychological adaptation and can also be linked to victimization processes. The first dimension is gender typicality (the extent to which people feel they are a typical member of their own gender category). According to this model, youths with low gender typicality tend to be more prone to anxiety, sadness, and can even be rejected by peers. For this reason, they can be perceived as being easy victims for aggressive peers and being more easily victimized by others. This hypothesis has been corroborated by several studies which found that those who display greater gender typicality, or those who express more gender conformity, are less victimized by colleagues (Carver et al. 2003; Drury et al. 2013; Roberts et al. 2013) and feel less loneliness than those who exhibit less gender typicality (Yu and Xie 2010).

It has also been hypothesized that the other gender identity components can be related with aggression and victimization conducts among peers (Carver et al. 2003). Gender contentedness can be related with victimization if we consider that the youths who state that they are not satisfied with their own gender (the feeling of not being at home in one's body) might be exposed to negative social reactions and may feel more pressure to adapt to gender norms from peers. Along this line of thought, felt pressure to gender conformity might also be related with adopting stereotypical conducts for one gender or another (antisocial trends for boys and subordination conducts for girls). Intergroup bias can imply that children find it difficult to interact with peers because biased perception and negative attitudes toward the other sex can mean fewer respectful and cooperative interactions with other peers. Very little research has been conducted into these relationships; so it is still difficult to conclude whether the relationships hypothesized between gender identity and bullying actually take place. Previous studies have found that peers describe gender-dysphoric girls as being more aggressive and disruptive than other girls. Yet, it is still not clear whether aggression is a reaction to discontentment with own gender or whether gender discontentment is a rationalization by aggressive girls: "if only I were a boy, it would be okay for me to act like this" (Carver et al. 2003, p. 106). The work by Drury et al. (2013) found an indirect relationship between felt pressure and victimization when determining that the negative relationship between gender typicality and victimization was more pronounced in contexts with more pressure to conforming to gender norms. More recently, Navarro et al. (2015a) tested how gender identity measures were related to victims, bullies, and bully-victims of school bullying. The results showed that perceiving self as being a typical member of the same-sex group is a protective factor for victimization, whereas felt pressure to conform to the cultural stereotypes about gender and lack of satisfaction with one's gender are risk factors for perpetration.

Although not all studies have reported the same results because of, among other aspects, differences in the methodologies used and cultural differences between the countries they were conducted in, their results have revealed the usefulness of analyzing different gender constructs despite gender differences when analyz-

ing the different ways boys and girls get involved in bullying. The relationship between the dimensions in the gender identity model of Egan and Perry (2001) and gender-typing process measures and cyberbullying is an issue which, as far as we are aware, has not yet been explored. For this reason, we now go on to present the preliminary results of a study that analyzed the association of cyberbullying with both constructs in an attempt to better understand the cyberbullying phenomenon as an indicator of psychosocial adaptation in its relationship with the gender variable.

2.3.3 The Role of Gender Identity Dimensions and Gender-Typed Personality Traits in Cyberbullying Victimization and Perpetration Among Spanish Children

Children's involvement in bullying behaviors is assumed to be associated with gender identity components, such as gender typicality, and also with sex-typing constructs, such as gender-typed personality traits. For example, high gender typicality is associated with less victimization and high levels of masculine traits are related to perpetration. Considering previous findings, it seems logical to explore whether these variables may function as protective or risk factors to engage in bullying behavior as victims or bullies, which would extend the analysis to cyberbullying, where studies for these relationships are still scarce. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relative contribution of gender identity components and gender-typed traits in predicting victimization and perpetration status in cyberbullying behaviors.

For this purpose, 445 schoolchildren in grades 5 and 6 at five primary education schools were asked to complete the Multidimensional Gender Identity Inventory (Egan and Perry 2001) and the Children's Personal Attributes Questionnaire (CAPQ; Hall and Halberstadt 1980). The Egan and Perry Inventory assesses multiple gender identity components, namely gender typicality, gender contentedness, felt pressure, and intergroup bias. CAPQ consists of separate masculine and feminine scales, and a third bipolar masculine–feminine traits scale. Schools were located in a city of central Spain with an approximate population of 60,000. Participants included 208 girls (M (age): 10.78, standard deviation (SD)=0.74) and 237 boys (M (age)=10.78, SD=0.68).

Relying on previous traditional bullying findings and considering that cyberbullying is not a completely different phenomenon from school bullying, it is assumed that results for this kind of bullying will be similar to those found in traditional forms. It was hypothesized that cybervictimization would be negatively related to gender typicality and masculinity traits, whereas perpetration would be positively related to masculine traits and negatively related to feminine traits. No predictions were made for the remaining gender identity components since it was considered that they are less explored in the review literature.

In order to examine the associations between independent variables (gender identity dimensions and gender-typed personality traits) and the dependent variable

Table 2.2 Logistic regression model predicting the associations among reports of cybervictimization, gender identity dimensions, and gender-typed personality traits

	B	SE	Wald	OR	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	–	–	–	–		
Grade	–	–	–	–		
Gender identity						
Gender typicality	−0.61	−0.28	4.65	0.54*	0.31	0.94
Gender contentedness	−0.94	0.28	10.91	0.39**	0.22	0.68
Felt pressure	–	–	–	–		
Intergroup bias	−0.44	0.21	4.40	0.63*	0.42	0.97
Gender-typed traits						
Masculine traits	−0.54	0.27	3.80	0.58*	0.33	1.00
Feminine traits	–	–	–	–		
Masculine/feminine traits	–	–	–	–		
Constant	5.35	1.15	21.38	211.96		
−2 LL	273.36					
Nagelkerke R^2	0.197					

Model $\chi^2=47.58$, df$=4$, $p<0.001$, $n=445$

− not in the final model, *B* coefficient, *SE* standard error, *OR* odds ratio, *CI* confidence interval, *LL* log likelihood

*$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$

(cyberbullying victimization and perpetration), logistic regression analyses were applied to the data. Table 2.2 presents the regression statistics for cybervictimization. Cyberbullying victimization was associated with gender typicality (OR$=0.54$), gender contentedness (OR$=0.39$), intergroup bias (OR$=0.63$), and masculine traits (OR$=0.58$). The overall data indicate that self-perceived similarity to other members of the same gender category, one's satisfaction with own gender, the belief that one's own gender is superior to the other, and self-description with masculine traits lowered the likelihood of cyberbullying victimization.

The data reveal that those children who feel more psychologically compatible with their own gender in terms of self-perceived gender typicality and gender contentedness suffer less cybervictimization. This result corroborates previous research that has indicated that good gender compatibility is beneficial for children's psychosocial adaptation (Carver et al. 2003; Egan and Perry 2001; Navarro et al. 2015a; Yu and Xie 2010), which, in our case, was measured in terms of less victimization among peers. The present study also backs studies which have indicated that children who report more typicality also report less victimization (Drury et al. 2013), which could also occur in online contexts. Thus, it can be stated that children who display an atypical gender conduct, that is, cross-sex-typed children, are more likely to feel rejected by their peers as a form of cyberaggression.

Similarly, the analyses have indicated that self-description regarding masculine traits is related to less victimization. Hence, masculine traits act as a protection factor against victimization, which might be related with greater gender typification,

just as the results on the effect of the gender typicality dimension have shown. The regression analysis did not indicate if participants' gender had any effect on victimization. So, we do not know if the effect of masculine traits as a protector factor is clearer among boys or girls. Future research must investigate this aspect more thoroughly as these traits are more prototypical of boys than of girls, and when girls adhere to them, they could display cross-gender behavior, which can be penalized by peers as victimization, as previous studies have indicated (Navarro et al. 2011). Nevertheless, this does not seem the case in this study. We could examine whether adhesion to prototypically masculine traits, such as "feels superior," "feelings not easily hurt," and "not easily influenced," can lead peers to not choose these children as targets of aggression. It would also be interesting to analyze if, irrespective of gender, these children may even be victimized, and whether they do not perceive online attacks as attempts of aggression due to their feelings of superiority of being tougher. In any case, we cannot talk in terms of casualty in one direction or another, and knowing the reason for these results must lead us to conduct longitudinal studies, as well as qualitative research, to learn the opinions of those who participate in cyberbullying about such matters.

Intergroup bias has also been found to be a protection factor in the face of victimization. This is a surprising finding if we consider that it is a gender identity dimension associated with unfavorable adaptation with difficulties in interactions with peers (Egan and Perry 2001). Although this dimension needs examining more thoroughly, one possible explanation for these results is the fact that showing same-sex favoritism can be seen as a sign of adapting to own gender. In this way, peers may view boys and girls with more intergroup prejudices as being better adapted to their gender groups as they respond to gender stereotypes, and can be less exposed to online victimization. Conversely, showing cross-sex favoritism can be seen as less suitable behavior within the gender typification process and may be penalized through victimization. Nonetheless, these explanations can help understand the lack of aggression by own gender but, as a part of intergroup prejudice, cross-sex discrimination can cause aggression by peers of the opposite sex. Nonetheless, the very nature of cyberbullying in which most forms of aggression are anonymous makes this issue a difficult one to explore.

Table 2.3 presents perpetration statistics. Cyberbullying perpetration was associated negatively with gender (OR = 0.49), gender contentedness (OR = 0.30), and feminine traits (OR = 0.28), but positively with masculine traits (OR = 9.96). The results indicate that the odds of cyberbullying perpetration were higher for males than for females. Moreover, one's satisfaction with own gender and self-description with feminine traits lowered the likelihood of cyberbullying perpetration, whereas children who were self-described with masculine traits were at higher risk of participating as perpetrators in cyberbullying.

These results indicate that more boys tend to play the aggressor role and, once again, show a link between adhesion to prototypically masculine traits and perpetration of online bullying conducts. This result coincides with that found for traditional bullying conducts (Gini and Pozzoli 2006; Younger and Sweeting 2004), and this could be important to understand why boys are sometimes more implicated in

Table 2.3 Logistic regression model predicting the associations among reports of cyberperpetration, gender identity dimensions, and gender-typed personality traits

	B	SE	Wald	OR	95% CI	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	−0.69	0.35	3.80	0.49*	0.24	1.00
Grade	−	−	−	−		
Gender identity						
Gender typicality	−	−	−	−		
Gender contentedness	−1.17	0.47	6.00	0.30**	0.12	0.79
Felt pressure	−	−	−	−		
Intergroup bias	−	−	−	−		
Gender-typed traits						
Masculine traits	2.29	0.63	13.18	9.96***	2.88	34.45
Feminine traits	−1.26	0.44	8.18	0.28**	0.11	0.67
Masculine/feminine traits	−	−	−	−		
Constant	−2.98	2.44	1.49	0.05		
−2 LL	91.35					
Nagelkerke R²	0.294					

Model χ^2=33.05, df=4, p<0.001, n=445
− not in the final model, *B* coefficient, *SE* standard error, *OR* odds ratio, *CI* confidence interval, *LL* log likelihood
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

cyberbullying perpetration than girls, given that the internalization of masculinity traits is more prototypical in males. Conversely, those who describe themselves in relation to feminine traits that are more linked to cooperative conducts and caring for interpersonal relations are seen as being less involved as aggressors in cyberbullying. This result also agrees with that found for school bullying (Navarro et al. 2011). A second protection factor emerged from the multidimensional gender identity model, which indicated that children with more gender contentedness display lesser aggression tendency within cyberbullying. Carver et al. (2003) found that those girls who are not content with their own gender are described by their peers as being more aggressive and troublesome than girls who do not display this dissatisfaction. Those children who are not content with their gender may possibly react aggressively, given their feeling of discontent since they have not adapted to what is socially expected of them, and possibly also due to the social rejection they may be suffering. However, from the data obtained, we cannot conclude that this relation is taking place, and future research needs to deal with this issue. At any rate, and as Carver et al. (2003) pointed out, these data reveal that at least in social interactions, those children who show greater compatibility with their gender better adapt since they are neither aggressors nor victims with cyberbullying.

Despite all these results being preliminary, they provide interesting information about the gender relation and cyberbullying and also suggest that gender variables operate similarly in real and virtual settings.

2.4 Cyberbullying and Sex and Gender Minorities

In recent decades, several studies on bullying have analyzed the victimization that youths belonging to sexual minorities and gender minorities have suffered (Collier et al. 2013). In line with these authors, the term "sexual minority" has been used in this chapter to denote those youths who may be attracted to people of the same sex; have had sexual relationships with people of their own sex; or who define themselves as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, or questioning. The term "gender minority" has been employed to refer to transgender individuals and gender nonconforming individuals who do not self-identify as transgenders but whose gender identity or expression does not conform to cultural norms for their birth sex.

Generally speaking, research has informed that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youths suffer more victimization than their heterosexual peers (Berlan et al. 2010; Mitchell et al. 2014; Russell et al. 2012). Among its consequences, it has been consistently found that this type of victimization is related with less sense of belonging to their schools, higher levels of depression, and higher suicidal proclivity (Collier et al. 2013). Most studies describe such bullying as being homophobic. However, exactly as we can see in the review by Rivers (2013), it is important to consider that not all victims identify themselves with homosexuals or transgenders, but some people are simply bullied because they are perceived as being different in some way. This fact is normally attributed to their sexual orientation when this difference may be due only to them showing atypical gender behavior that does not conform to gender roles.

The distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity is important if we consider that research has found differences in the risk of suffering victimization for each minority type, and that transgender youths and gender nonconforming youths tend to be more victimized if compared with lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths. For example, transgender students and gender atypical students are more physically harassed and received degrading insults like "faggot," given its perceived expression of gender or sexual orientation (Greytak et al. 2009). It has been recently found that these youths also suffer more sexual harassment in both real and virtual situations (Mitchell et al. 2014).

Several studies have also documented differences according to age and sex in the victimization of these minorities by demonstrating that boys are victimized more than girls, and victimization indices are higher in the first years of adolescence, which seems to be related with a drop in homophobic and discriminatory attitudes among students in grades 7–12 (Poteat et al. 2009). Yet, the study carried out by Russell et al. (2014) demonstrated that even though physical aggression shown against these minorities diminishes with age, indirect aggressions (e.g., stealing or damaging their belongings) remain more persistent among sexual and gender minorities, even when such aggressions diminish for the general population. These results make us think that the offline bullying suffered by these minorities could be transferred to online contexts where they would become more indirect and would,

therefore, become more persistent harassment due to the anonymity that the Internet offers and due to the difficulties of this means to control it. This argument is also supported in the study by Rivers and Noret (2010), who found a relation between online bullying and offline bullying suffered by these minorities. Their results indicate that boys received more insulting text messages and e-mails if they had been previously harassed for their physical appearance, perceived sexually orientation, or the clothes they wore, while girls suffer more online victimization if they had been harassed for getting good results at school or performing well in sports beforehand.

Although few studies that systematically study such online interactions have been done to date, what comes over clearly, as Rivers explained (2014, p. 28–29), is that "sexuality, sexual orientation, gender typicality and atypicality are aspects of young people's lives that constantly appear in developmental literature. The Internet provides an environment in which it is possible for young people to explore these most personal aspects of lives often anonymously. However, the Internet also provides forums where others can express their likes and dislikes, their prejudices and their suspicions [sic] about others without having the social cues and restrictions that regulate face-to-face interactions."

2.4.1 Student's Perceptions of Cyberbullying Directed to Sexual and Gender Minorities

There were two reasons for including this section in this chapter. First, because results in Sect. 2.2. indicate that those boys and girls who are gender typified (i.e., who show more interests, attitudes, or conducts that are stereotypically associated with own gender) suffer less online victimization. Second, but no less important, while forming the focal groups for another chapter of this book, some participants talked about the aggressions that those people considered different, either due to their sexual orientation or due to their conducts, which peers do not consider gender-adequate, suffer on the Internet. Although the participants did not use the terms employed in this chapter in their discussions, they actually referred to sexual and gender minorities. One of the male participants in the secondary education groups identified himself as being homosexual and talked about the harassment he had suffered for years, first in real contexts like school and later in virtual contexts like social networks. His testimony was taken as a highly valuable contribution to the discourse generated on cyberbullying, and it led us to include a series of questions on the cyberbullying that sex and gender minorities face in the other groups formed. The intention of these questions was to know what perception the participants have of cyberbullying prevalence among LGBT youths, the forms it takes, the motivations of those who undertake such aggression, and the confrontation strategies that can be adopted.

Table 2.4 includes all the different categories into which the participants' responses were grouped, along with fragments that exemplify them, as well as grade from which similar ideas were collected and the gender of the participants who

Table 2.4 Students' perceptions of cyberbullying in sexual and gender minorities

Categories	Subcategories	Examples	Grade	Gender
Forms of cyberbullying	Private messages sent to the victim (over the phone or on social networks)	"Just like they laugh at them at school and call them queers, weirdos, etc., they do the same on the Internet. They send them messages to insult them or blackmail them by threatening with what they'd tell their families if they don't do what they want. I've also seen comments on photos on Instagram."—a 14-year-old girl	Primary Secondary	Boys Girls
	Public messages in third-party accounts, posts in forums where others can include comments, taped conversations that are then uploaded on the Internet, fixed photos, etc	"I've seen in Twitter that they said someone was gay, and they've even included the email of this person so people can write."—a 12-year-old boy "People who also act as though they were gay speak with a boy who is gay, they record their conversations or copy messages to then send them to others and mess things up." —a 13-year-old boy	Primary Secondary	Boys Girls
Factors linked to cyberbullying	Directionality: offline harassment that becomes an online kind	"Sometimes someone starts insulting you on Facebook or on any other forum because someone you know has told them something because they don't know you directly. So it almost always starts with something at school, then they start sending you messages or post things on social networks. At least that's my case." —a 15-year-old boy	Primary Secondary	Boys Girls
	Mediation technology: facilitated through anonymity and greater tolerance on the Internet	"The Internet is great for picking on someone because you don't have to say who you are or you can use profiles. It's great for laughing at someone, especially if you want to laugh at a gay because it's much easier." —a 14-year-old boy	Secondary	Boys Girls
	Real or perceived sexual orientation	"It doesn't matter if someone is gay or not. If people think someone is, they say it so that others believe it. They can also do this to convince their friends that that person is weird so they don't mix with him or her." —a 14-year-old girl	Secondary	Boys Girls

Table 2.4 (continued)

Categories	Subcategories	Examples	Grade	Gender
Cyberbullies' motives	Discrimination: stereotypes and homophobic attitudes	"Those who pick on them think they are different from every-one else. Obviously they are homophobes, they don't like them because they think they are abnormal and they pick on them." —a 12-year-old girl	Primary Secondary	Boys Girls
	Aggressors have problems with their own sexual orientation	"Often when they pick on oth-ers they do it to hide something. People who are frightened of coming out of the closet or have doubts keep picking on those who have accepted it." —a 14-year-old girl	Secondary	Girls
	For fun	"People love gossip and the gay theme gives plenty of gossip. People have fun with it on social networks." —a 13-year-old boy	Primary	Boys
	Harming social reputation	"People use this subject to be nasty with people. It's a very delicate subject. It doesn't mat-ter if you're gay or not because if they say it about you, they make your life at school very difficult because everyone else will always smell a rat. Some-times they won't want to get on with you." —a 14-year-old girl "If think it's just as harmful whether you're gay or not. Perhaps it affects you more if you're not because you think: God, why do they have to say these things about me if they aren't true. But it's harmful anyway. It's just as harm-ful because the person who's insulting you doesn't really know if you're gay or not and he or she will carry on saying these things." —a 15-year-old girl	Secondary	Girls

shared these views. In general, many similarities were found in the discourse with participants, regardless of the grade they were in and their gender. In general, girls contributed more ideas and it was more a matter of concern for those who were in the first year of secondary education.

First, it is important to point out that the participants did not clearly differentiate between sexual minorities and gender minorities. They normally spoke about the people who aggressors believed were gays or lesbians. The term "transgender" or "transsexual" was not employed, but in most cases, there was talk about attacks or aggressions made on the Internet against those who were seen differently because of their real or perceived sexual orientation. Nonetheless, they expressed the idea that it did not matter if the victim was really homosexual as cyberbullying addresses anyone whose conduct is gender atypical (e.g., boys who only have girl friends, people whose body language suggests affectations, or those who do not participate in sports like soccer).

2.4.1.1 The Factors Linked to This Type of Cyberbullying

According to the discourse that took place, the participants seemed to coincide in that it was quite a normal issue, although more boys were victims of such aggression because, in their opinion, the behaviors classified as atypical are more noticeable among boys. They did not believe that aggressions began online, but that insults and aggressions had occurred in places like school. If this were the case, cyberbullying would, thus, be the continuation of school bullying. So, it is most interesting to observe that such discourses show no clear distinction between cyberbullying and school bullying as both forms of bullying are treated like a continuum. Nevertheless, the participants believed that the Internet facilitates such aggression because greater tolerance to such display is found on it, and also because it is much more difficult to identify harassers and to take measures against them.

2.4.1.2 Forms That This Type of Cyberbullying Takes

The participants explained that the Internet offers many ways to harm minorities, for example, through private messages to victims or public messages in third-party accounts or forums from where they are submitted to these aggressions. In such cases, cyberbullying includes insults about sexual orientation, like "faggot" or "dyke"; strongly sexually related nicknames like "pillow biter" and "neck blower"; threats to make them come out of the closet at home if they refuse to do what the aggressor wants; fixed photos showing them fondling or kissing other people; and videos showing how they are insulted and even physically harassed. In other words, harassment can even take a more direct nuance on the Internet when the aggressor(s) direct(s) aggressive interactions exclusively to the victim, or indirectly when messages are made public and other Internet users can participate in some way.

2.4.1.3   Cyberbullies' Motives

The participants believe that sexual orientation is a subject that provides plenty of gossip and that it might be used on social networks simply as a bit of fun, something that gives people a lot to talk about on Facebook, Twitter, etc., even though the people who participate do not consider what the person who is the center of all the comments may feel. Other students think that the Internet can be a very fruitful place to attack the reputation of other students, and sexual orientation is a very sensitive subject for many youths' identity. Envy and jealousy of another person's success in areas like studies or sports can be a reason for cyberbullies to damage the image of those with a better social reputation and one way to damage it is questioning their sexual orientation. Nevertheless, according to the participants, the main reason for these aggressions is the stereotypes and prejudices of harassed people being different. This result coincides with former research, which has indicated that "bothering someone who is different" is among the most widely argued reasons for getting involved in cyberbullying (Willton and Campbell 2011). Some youths' lack of tolerance of sexual diversity and gender is the reason for most aggressions and, in this case, cyberbullying is a way to punish or penalize not adapting to traditional sexual and gender roles. In some cases, girls who participate in groups of secondary education students point out that this kind of cyberbullying could also be the result of those with sexual orientation problems feeling frustration, so they attack those who live or behave in the way they would also like to live or behave.

   In general, cyberbullying these minorities is considered something that habitually occurs, is the continuation of harassment that previously occurred face-to-face, and can result from some form of prejudice and discrimination of those who do not conform to traditional gender norms, do not feel that their gender corresponds to their biological sex, or show sexual interest in people of their own sex. This type of bullying has, according to previous research, more serious consequences for those who suffer it than other forms of bullying not based on discrimination (Russell et al. 2012).

2.5   Conclusion

Both the literature review and the new data presented in this chapter allow us to state that the inclusion of gender variables in research on cyberbullying offers a more complete picture of the many factors that intervene in such aggressive dynamics. The findings reported in this chapter highlight the importance of moving beyond the analysis of gender differences to analyze how gender variables (e.g., gender identity) are associated with the youths involved in cyberbullying. The above findings suggest that being a typical member of the same-sex peer group is important for psychosocial adjustment in both boys and girls, at least in terms of suffering less victimization. In parallel, our findings indicate that, especially for boys, felt pressure for gender conformity may make them confront social expectations through

ways that damage their self-concepts (e.g., adopting an aggressive role). Regarding self-attribution of gender-typed personality traits, the results reveal that internalization of gender cues is associated with risk behaviors, such as cyberbullying perpetration. This implies that it is important for parents, educators, and other professionals to show them ways to establish a sense of compatibility with one's gender category, and to provide children with other forms to confront peer pressure, while offering spaces that are free of social expectations to explore cross-sex behaviors.

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