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*Emotional Intelligence and intervention in non-normative behaviour
and gender bullying*

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BEST PRACTICES REVIEW AROUND EUROPE

(SPAIN, TURKEY, AUSTRIA, ITALY)

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1. Background of the situation in Europe.

Bullying in schools is a pervasive and concerning issue that affects students worldwide, transcending national boundaries. It has garnered significant attention across several countries, including Italy, Austria, Spain, and Turkey, which are the countries on which the situation was studied, but we can extrapolate these results to Europe in general. Here are some key insights into this global problem:

- Prevalence of Bullying: across Europe, surveys and studies have consistently shown alarming percentages of students experiencing bullying. Whether it's physical, verbal, or cyberbullying, the problem affects a significant portion of the student population.
- Psychological and Societal Factors: the root causes of bullying are complex and include psychological and societal factors. Witnessing violence within families, absorbing toxic role models, and prejudice against certain social groups can predispose children to engage in bullying behaviours.
- Cyberbullying: with the proliferation of the internet, cyberbullying has emerged as a significant concern. The anonymity of online platforms makes it challenging to prevent and manage this form of bullying.
- LGBTQ+ Students: queer and LGBTQ+ students often face higher rates of bullying, with the discrimination extending to their academic lives. Inclusivity and understanding LGBTQ+ issues in schools are ongoing challenges.
- Geographical Patterns: contrary to common misconceptions, bullying is not confined to specific regions. It occurs across various socio-economic backgrounds, and its prevalence may differ within countries.
- Efforts to Combat Bullying: countries around Europe have taken comprehensive measures to combat bullying in schools. These efforts include policies, programs, teacher training, and legal provisions against bullying.
- Changing Attitudes: over the years, there has been a shift in how bullying is perceived. Historically, it was often overlooked, but today, there is a greater awareness of the negative consequences of bullying. Legislation and educational initiatives in the different countries of Europe reflect this change in perspective.
- Challenges Remain: while progress has been made, challenges in addressing bullying persist. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen preventive measures, improve support systems for victims, and promote a culture of respect, acceptance, and empathy in schools and society.

In summary, bullying in schools is a global issue with far-reaching psychological and sociological consequences. In general, the countries have recognized the need to address this problem and have taken steps to prevent and combat bullying, particularly among vulnerable groups like LGBTQ+ students. However, continued efforts are



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essential to create safe and inclusive environments for all students, regardless of their background or identity.

2. Actual situation in Europe.

Bullying in schools is a global concern, affecting students in all the countries. While each country has its unique experiences and approaches to tackling this issue, there are common themes and challenges. Following are exposed concrete situations in the countries studied:

In Austria, significant strides have been made in promoting LGBT+ rights and acceptance, with the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2019 being a notable milestone. Efforts to create inclusive school environments for LGBT+ students are evident through anti-bullying programs and initiatives. These initiatives, like Lambda and Rainbow Schools Austria, offer resources and training to raise awareness and combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Spain has enacted legal frameworks to address bullying comprehensively, including in educational settings. Spanish schools have embraced comprehensive anti-bullying policies that emphasise safe and inclusive environments, often with reporting mechanisms and prevention programs in place. Support systems, such as counselling services and peer networks, are provided to victims.

Despite these positive steps, both Austria and Spain, like other countries, grapple with the challenges of cyberbullying in the digital age. They are implementing programs to raise awareness about responsible online behaviour and digital safety.

In Italy, the Ministry of Education and Merit has long expressed its views on the prevention of bullying and in April 2015 issued the 'Guidelines for actions to prevent and combat bullying and cyberbullying'. Subsequently, the 'National Plan for the Prevention of Bullying and Cyberbullying at School 2016/2017' was promoted.

In Turkey, bullying is a prevalent issue, with high rates of victimisation among students, particularly at school or in their neighbourhoods. The situation is compounded by challenges faced by LGBT+ individuals in the education system. Discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes are deeply entrenched in Turkish schools, creating a hostile environment for LGBT+ students.

While each of these countries has its own set of challenges and initiatives to combat bullying, the overarching goal is to create safe and inclusive educational spaces for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Efforts continue to



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raise awareness, reinforce preventive measures, and provide support to those affected by bullying to foster respect, empathy, and inclusivity.

3. Politics and actions to prevent and combat the problematic nowadays.

In Europe, addressing and preventing bullying in schools is a shared concern, and various measures have been taken to combat this issue:

Austria, Italy, Spain, and Turkey all recognize the importance of tackling bullying within their educational systems. They have introduced policies and programs to prevent and respond to bullying, emphasising safe and inclusive learning environments for students.

In all these countries, schools receive support and guidance from educational institutions and organisations to develop effective anti-bullying measures. Many educational institutions have established anti-bullying policies and provide training to teachers and staff on identifying and addressing bullying behaviour.

Bullying prevention is commonly integrated into the curriculum or incorporated into educational activities. Schools often organise workshops and training sessions for both educators and students to raise awareness about the harmful effects of bullying and promote a positive school climate.

Additionally, these countries offer resources and support for students who experience bullying and their families. Reporting mechanisms are in place to encourage students to report incidents, and schools take prompt action to address bullying cases and provide support to victims.

Teacher training is a crucial component of the anti-bullying efforts in these nations. Educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively prevent and address bullying cases, creating a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

While there is a shared commitment to preventing bullying, the countries also address specific challenges. Italy, for instance, emphasises awareness campaigns and psychoeducation programs, while Spain places a strong focus on LGBTQ+ inclusivity and awareness in schools. Turkey faces high rates of bullying, including bullying of LGBTQ+ individuals, highlighting the need for more comprehensive intervention programs and support.

In conclusion, these countries, and Europe in general, are united in their commitment to combating bullying in schools, prioritising prevention, awareness, and support for victims while addressing specific challenges within their unique contexts.





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4. Conclusions.

Bullying is a phenomenon characterised by the research and application of power, and as thus it is particularly apt to be read through the lenses of a dynamic between dominant and dominated, especially in the relationship the bully has with their peers, «in the fear of losing the esteem or admiration of the group, of 'losing face' in front of one's companions and of seeing oneself relegated to the typically female category of the 'weak', the 'homos', the 'pussies', the 'faggots'».

It should not come as a surprise that these are insults typically directed to any male victim, regardless of their actual sexual and gender identity, just like it should not be surprising that peers find it more difficult to stand up for the victim and protect them when they are victim of homophobic bullying, fearing that they in turn will be labelled as homosexuals.

Significant progress has been made in the fight against bullying, in particular towards LGBTQ+ students. Countries have generally taken steps to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, schools continue to find themselves in a very difficult situation, caught between those who want to be open to new situations and realities, and those who still remain anchored in the "traditional".

Public awareness of LGBTQ+ issues has increased, leading to greater visibility and discussion of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, especially in schools. This visibility can pave the way for greater acceptance and understanding, although there may be challenges and areas where hard work is needed. Advocacy and support for LGBTQ+ rights continue to play a crucial role in shaping the future of inclusion.

Society is changing, and schools must also change in order to foster and nurture inclusion while maintaining their mission to educate and protect the citizens of the future. Acting on both fronts, fighting for social, political and cultural changes, and presenting projects to raise awareness in schools will prove to be the only true force for change.

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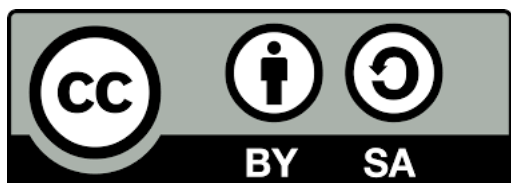


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