

Ethnicity, Gender, Bullying and Cyberbullying in English Secondary School Pupils¹⁾

Etnizität, Geschlecht, Bullying und Cyberbullying bei englischen Hauptschülern

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of gender and ethnicity on both bullying and cyberbullying in English secondary school pupils. A sample of 2,268 pupils aged 11 to 16 years from 14 schools, filled in anonymous questionnaires. Gender differences were found in both bullying and cyberbullying with boys bullying others more than girls, but no gender differences in being bullied. No consistent ethnicity differences were found. Some secondary school pupils discussed their opinions and views on these findings. Results are considered in relation to previous research and the nature of cyberbullying.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie untersuchte den Effekt von Geschlecht und Ethnizität auf Bullying und Cyberbullying bei Hauptschülern in England. Eine Stichprobe von 2268 Schülern im Alter von 11 bis 16 Jahren füllte anonymisierte Fragebögen aus. Geschlechtsunterschiede wurden beim Bullying und beim Cyberbullying gefunden, indem Buben beides häufiger als Mädchen auf andere ausüben. Es wurden keine Geschlechtsunterschiede in der Häufigkeit gefunden, Opfer von Bullying oder Cyberbullying zu sein. Es wurden auch keine durchgehenden Unterschiede bezüglich Ethnizität gefunden. Einige HauptschülerInnen gaben ihre Meinungen zu den Ergebnissen ab. Ergebnisse werden in Hinsicht auf frühere Studienergebnisse und der Natur des Cyberbullyings in Erwägung gezogen.

Bullying is often defined as an act of aggression that is intentionally carried out, repeatedly over time, by an individual or a group against another who cannot defend him/herself easily (Olweus, 1999). There have been many forms and styles of bullying; as well as traditional bullying, which includes physical, verbal and indi-

rect bullying, cyberbullying is also evident which can be carried out through mobile phones and the internet (Smith, 2012). There has been some discussion of the nature of cyberbullying, and of whether the standard definition of bullying is satisfactory for cyberbullying (Dooley, Pyżalski, & Cross, 2009). Some particular aspects of cyberbullying are that it is difficult to escape (often more prevalent out of school than in school, Smith et al., 2008); that the perpetrator or bully does not directly see the effect on the victim; and that often the victim does not know the identity of the perpetrator. In this article we examine gender and ethnic differences in bullying and cyberbullying, in a sample of English secondary school pupils.

Gender

There has been considerable research on gender differences in traditional bullying (Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano, & Slee, 1999; Olweus, 2010). Generally, although males engage in perpetrating more physical aggression and bullying, the difference is less pronounced for verbal bullying and is sometimes reversed for indirect bullying. Victim rates tend to be either somewhat similar for boys and girls, or with boys experiencing slightly higher rates.

As regards cyberbullying, the picture is less clear (Tokunaga, 2010; Slonje, Smith & Frisén, 2012). In some respects cyberbullying is more like traditional indirect bullying (not done face-to-face), and thus one might expect more female involvement. Some studies have found more females to be victims of cyberbullying, but many studies report no differences, and some that boys are more likely to be victims. Regarding doing the cyberbullying, some studies again report no gender differences; this in itself is interesting, given the usual preponderance of boys in traditional bullying. However some stu-