

School bullying in hungarian primary schools

O bullying em escolas básicas húngaras

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Abstract

The aim of this present study is to reveal the structure of attitude- and behavior patterns that occur in the course of school bullying, the occurrence rate of the bully, the victim, the intervener participant, the helper participant and the bystander behavior patterns among primary students, in particular view of age and gender differences. Methods: In the school practice, Questionnaire on School Bullying, as a test generative result of our research group, was used to examine the attitude and behavior patterns in connection with school bullying. Results: In case of the primary school students (11-14 year old students), from the given reactions on school bullying the most frequent behavior pattern- without reference to genders -was helper participant. From the components of helper participant, reconciling interposition seemed to be the most commonly used behavior pattern.

Key concepts: *school bullying, helper participant, intervener participant, bystander, victim.*

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é revelar a estrutura de padrões comportamentais e atitudinais no âmbito do bullying escolar, a taxa de ocorrência do agente do bullying, da vítima, do participante interveniente, do participante auxiliar, bem como os padrões comportamentais de quem assiste entre estudantes do ensino básico, tendo em conta variáveis de idade e género. Metodologia: Recorreu-se ao Questionário sobre Bullying Escolar, um teste gerador de resultados no nosso grupo de investigação e que foi usado para avaliar os padrões atitudinais e comportamentais relativos ao bullying escolar. Resultados: No caso dos estudantes do Ensino básico (11 a 14 anos de idade) o padrão de comportamento mais frequente foi o de participante auxiliar, sem referência a géneros. Partindo daqui o padrão comportamental mais comumente usado foi o de interposição reconciliadora.

Palavras-chave: *bullying escolar, participante auxiliar, participante interveniente, assistente, vítima*

Introduction

The prevalence rate of school bullying show large variation depending on what are the influencing factors by the researchers; which period the measurement covers (e.g: last month, the previous six months, any time in the school years); what is the frequency that can be criterion in connection with bullying (eg once / twice in the period, once a month, once a week or more often), which definition is used (eg indirect or direct types) (Monks et al., 2009).

The research results show (Smith et al., 1999), that the victims of bullying are in minority (approximately 5-20% of the children and the harassers (who injured the others) are usually even less (about 2-20%).

Some students are also a harasser and a victim (attacker/victim); their prevalence rate is in connection with school bullying, beyond the above mentioned uncertainty, it changes a lot according to the applied methodology and criteria (Wolke et al., 2000).

According to Figula's (2004) domestic test, in school situations the rate of victims is 26, 1%, the rate of harassers is 12,9%, the rate of aggressive/victims is 26,5%.

In childhood and adolescence, aggression is often described as a stable characteristic. Other researches show that bullying has a different process (Farrington, 1991; Goldstein, 1994; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998, Vaz, C. 2014)).

In fact, the increase and peak of bullying can be in the years of adolescence while during the high school years it shows a declining tendency. (Nansel et al., 2001; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001).

With age the incidence tendency of bullying moves from physical aggression toward indirect and covert aggression. There are more boys in the category of offenders, while among the victims there is balance between the genders. Physical maltreatment is typical of boys, covert and indirect harassment is typical of girls (Olweus, 1993; Smith et al., 1999).

According to the researchers of bullying, there is connection between family atmosphere and aggressive behavior. It is likely that those children who find aggressive behavior useful it is typical that conflict is often present in their family, they take part in bullying at home and in aggressive behavior, and they feel that aggression has a functional value to achieve their goals. Surely they learn these behaviors at home and it is likely that the learned things at home are practiced at school by them (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

The role of family in the development of bullying has been examined by several researches. Researchers have found strong links between the aggressive behavior of young people and the lack of family cohesion (Gorman-Smith et al., 1996), inadequate family control (Farrington, 1991), family bullying (Thornberry, 1994), belligerence (Loeber & Dishion, 1983) and poor problem-solving skills (Tolan et al., 1986).

Furthermore, the presence of family conflicts and parental problems also show close contact with aggression in childhood (Henggeler et al., 1998).

More researchers have revealed connection among parental educational style, family atmosphere and school bullying. For example, according to Olweus' Scandinavian Youth Research (1980, 1993) he concluded that the violent boys' families can be often characterized

by the lack of coziness, the use of physical bullying within the family and the inability to control extra-curricular activities.

The above findings in Bowers, Smith and Binney's research (1994) were supplemented by that the harassers' family members have high claim to power. About the families of the victims it turned out that the family is very cohesive and probably the mother is overprotective (Berdondini & Smith, 1996).

The researches examining the proactive victim's family background revealed that the harsh, negative parental behavior is quite common in the proactive victims' families; the parents are often unable to control their emotions. The proactive boy victims often have close relationship with their mother but their relationship is distant with their father. The proactive girl victims' mother is rather hostile than overprotective (Révész, 2007).

The aim of this present study is to reveal the structure of the aggressive attitude – and behavior patterns in school practice, the occurrence rate of the bully, the victim, the intervener participant, the helper participant and the bystander behavior patterns among primary school students, in particular view of age and gender differences.

Methodology

Participants

In the study 856 (410 girls and 446 boys) primary school students took part.

The Examination of School Bullying

The Questionnaire on School Bullying (Figula, Margitics, Pauwlik, 2019).

For purposes of identifying patterns of behaviour in school bullying, the School Bullying Questionnaire was used.

The 70 items of SBQ offers options of “almost never,” “sometimes,” “often,” “almost always,” and investigates the phenomena of school bullying and abuse in everyday life through five dimensions.

With the exception of “ally intervener” scale, all dimensions include further subscales. (Chart 1).

Scales and Subscales	Item	Cronbach-alfa
Victim Scale	33	0,847
Cognitive Subscale (Conscious recognition of abuse and processing it)	15	0,877
Affective Subscale (The emotional effect of abuse)	12	0,864
Somatic reaction (Somatic reaction to abuse / acting out)	3	0,758
Lack of Social Support Subscale (Lack of acceptance in class community)	3	0,814
Ally Intervener Scale	3	0,784
Rescuer Intervener Scale	8	0,753
Intervening to Pacify Subscale	3	0,748
Intervening to Ask for Help Subscale	2	0,778
Affective Subscale (Inner tension as a result of witnessing aggression)	3	0,749
Bystander Scale	9	0,768
Keeping Distance Subscale	6	0,758
Fear Subscale	3	0,743
Bully Scale	17	0,843
Physical Aggression Subscale	4	0,845
Verbal Aggression Subscale	5	0,849
Exclusion Subscale	5	0,754
Advantage From Attack Subscale	3	0,768

Chart 1. Scales and Subscales of the School Bullying Questionnaire

Results

The Structure of Behavior Patterns on School Bullying

Comparing the scales and subscales of Questionnaire on School Bullying with each other, we calculated the average of values to a given statement within the tested scales and subscales.

In school practice we examined the structural characteristics of attitude and behavior patterns in connection with school bullying according to age groups (11-12 year olds).

Within age groups we examined separately the structural characteristics of the behavior patterns of genders.

11-12 year old age group

Figure 1 shows the structure of behavior patterns in connection with school bullying in the 11-12 year old age group.

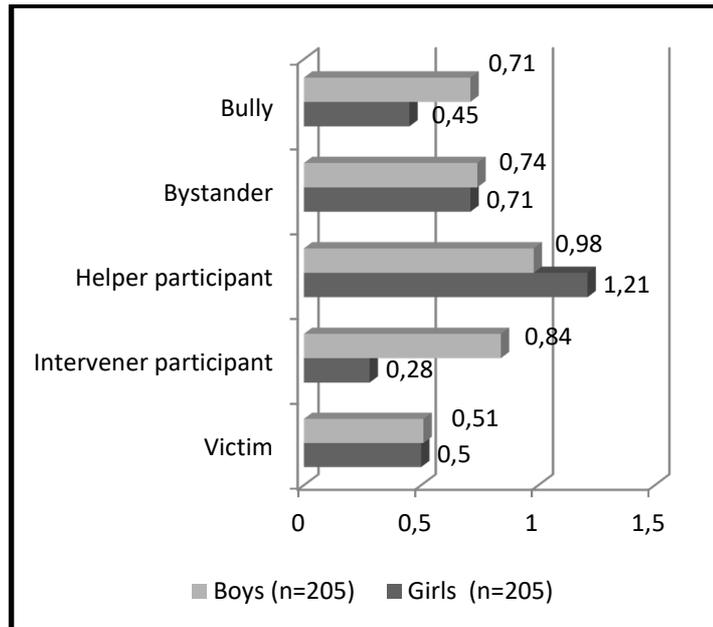


Figure 1. The structure of behavior patterns in connection with school bullying in the 11-12 year old age group

The figure shows that there are differences between the girls and the boys in the structure of behavior patterns in connection with school bullying. In this age group helper participant was typical of boys then intervener participant was the next. It was followed by bystander and bully behavior patterns. Victim behavior pattern was the least typical of boys.

In case of the girls, from the behavior patterns of school bullying helper participant was the most dominant and it was followed by bystander behavior pattern. Next time there were victim and bully behavior patterns. Intervener participant was the least typical of girls.

We also examined the components (subscales) of the behavior patterns (scales) in connection with school bullying in this age group.

Figure 2 shows the structure of the components of bully behavior pattern.

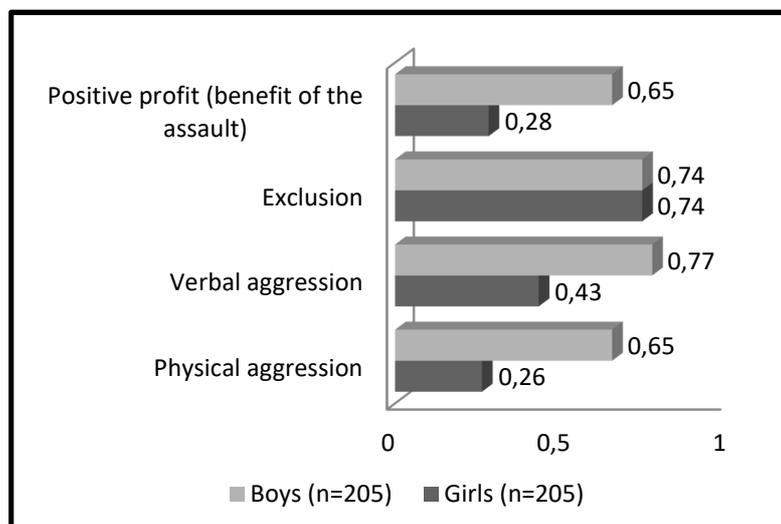


Figure 2. The structure of the components of bully behavior pattern in the 11-12 year old age group

In this age group there was a difference between the boys and the girls in the structure of bully behavior pattern. The aggressive behavior patterns of the boys were characterized by verbal aggression and willingness for the exclusion of others; it was followed by positive profit (benefit of the assault). Physical aggression was the least typical of them.

In case of the girls, the most dominant component of bully behavior pattern was exclusion, which was followed by verbal aggression. Positive profit (benefit of the assault) and physical aggression were not very typical of girls.

Figure 3 shows the structure of the components of victim behavior pattern.

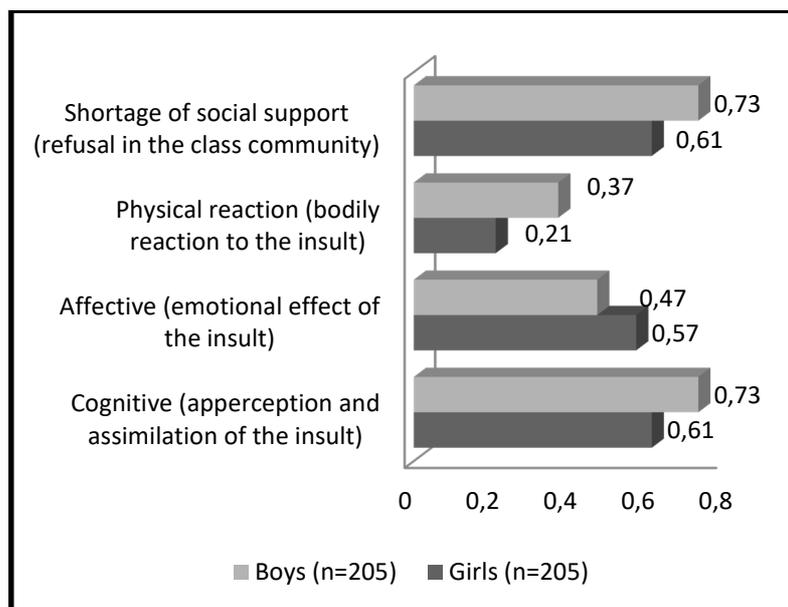


Figure 3. The structure of the components of victim behavior pattern in the 11-12 year old age group

In the structure of victim behavior pattern, we do not find significant gender differences. In case of both genders, social support (refusal in the class community) was the main component of becoming a victim, in the case of girls, it was followed by affective behavior pattern (emotional effect of the insult), and in case of the boys it was followed by cognitive behavior pattern (apperception and assimilation of the insult).

In the third place we found cognitive behavior pattern (apperception and assimilation of the insult) in case of the girls and affective behavior pattern (emotional effect of the insult) in case of the boys. Physical reaction (bodily reaction to the insult) was the least typical of both genders.

Figure 4 shows the structure of the components of helper participant behavior pattern.

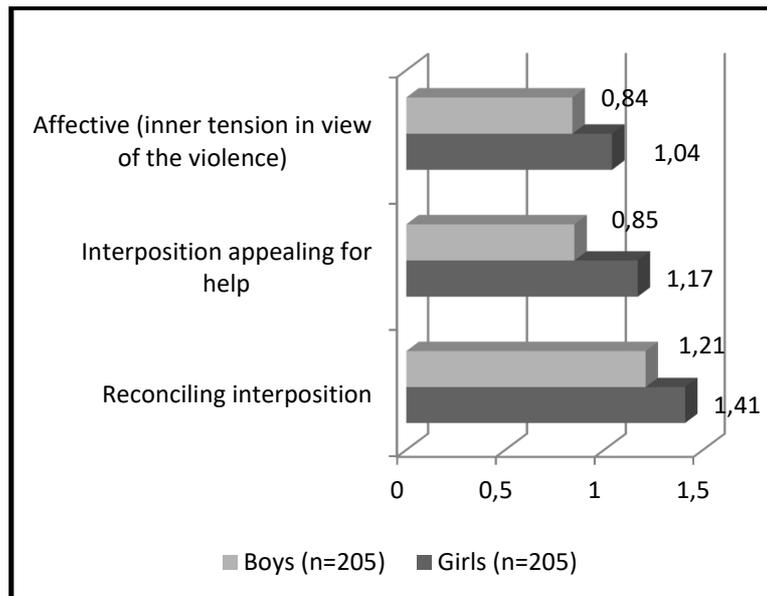


Figure 4. The structure of the components of helper participant behavior pattern in the 11-12 year old age group

In this age group helper participant behavior pattern showed similar structure in case of both genders. In the case of both genders, reconciling interposition was the most typical and it was followed by interposition appealing for help. In this age group, affective behavior pattern (inner tension in view of the violence) was the least typical.

Figure 5 shows the structure of the components of bystander behavior pattern.

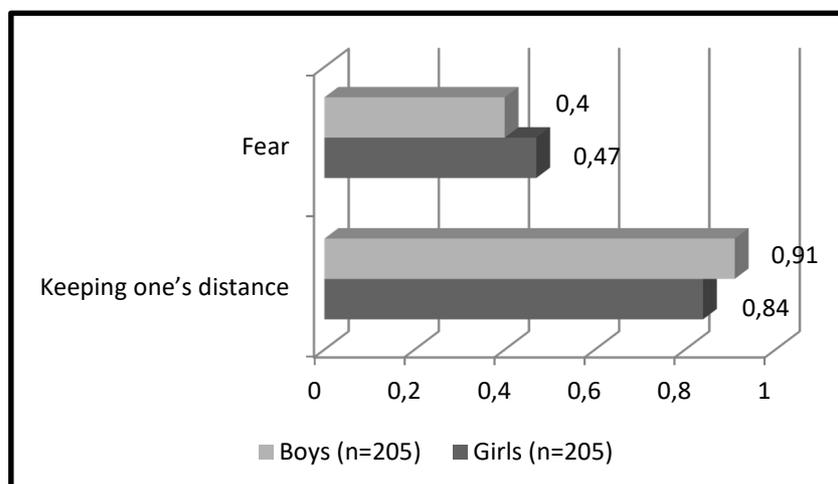


Figure 5. The structure of the components of bystander behavior pattern in the 11-12 year old age group

We did not find significant gender differences in the structure of bystander behavior pattern. In case of both genders, bystander behavior pattern was characterized by the effort of keeping one's distance, it was followed by fear.

13-14 year old age group

Figure 6 shows the structure of behavior patterns in connection with school bullying in the 13-14 year old age group.

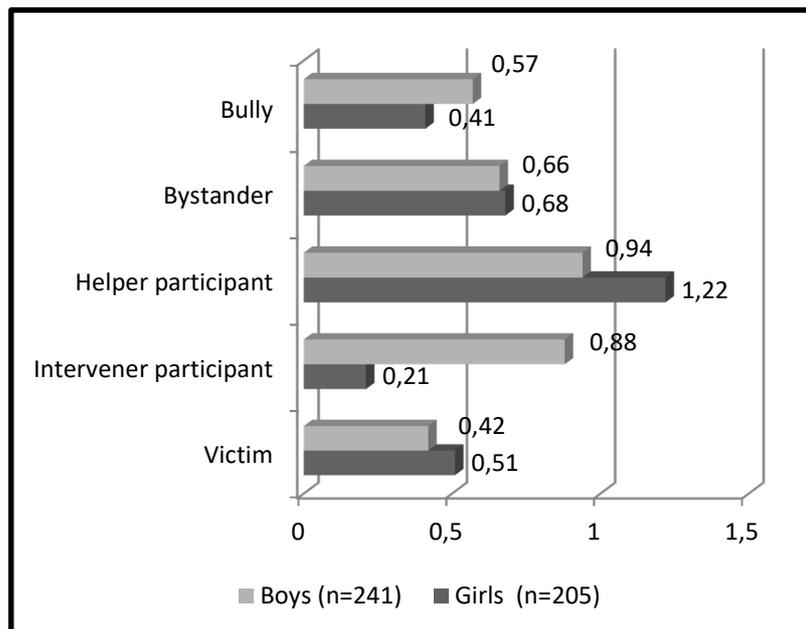


Figure 6. The structure of behavior patterns in connection with school bullying in the 13-14 year old age group.

The figure shows that in the 13-14 year old age group there was not significant change in the structure of the behavior patterns in connection with school bullying compared to the other age group.

In this age group, helper participant was also the most typical of boys and it was followed by intervener participant. Finally it was followed by bystander and bully behavior patterns. Victim behavior pattern was the least typical of boys.

In case of the girls, from the behavior patterns of school bullying helper participant was also the most dominant in this age group and it was followed by bystander behavior pattern. Next time there were victim and bully behavior patterns. Intervener participant was the least typical of girls.

We also examined the components (subscales) of the behavior patterns (scales) in connection with school bullying in this age group.

Figure 7 shows the structure of the components of bully behavior pattern.

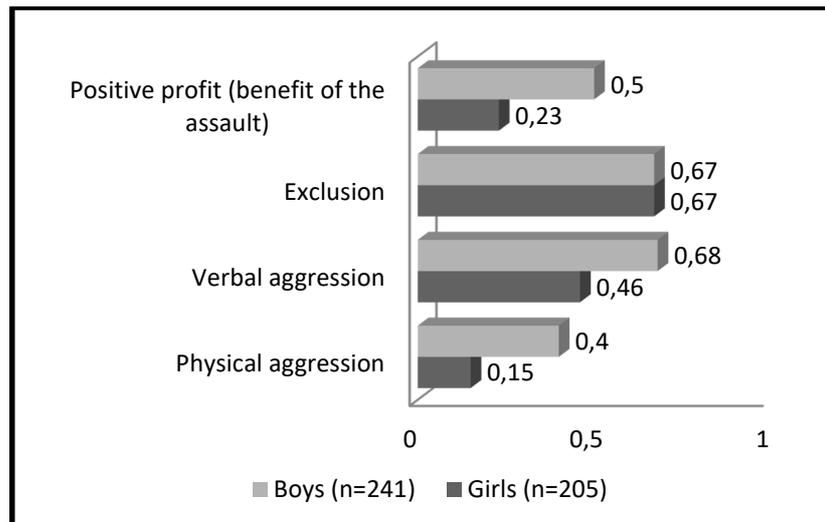


Figure 7. The structure of the components of bully behavior pattern at 13-14 year old age group

In the 13-14 year old age group there were not significant changes compared to the previous age group in the structure of bully behavior pattern.

In this age group similarly to the previous age group there was a difference between the boys and the girls in the structure of bully behavior pattern. The aggressive behavior patterns of the boys were characterized by verbal aggression and willingness for the exclusion of others; it was followed by positive profit (benefit of the assault). Physical aggression was the least typical of them. In case of the girls, the most dominant component of bully behavior pattern was exclusion, which was followed by verbal aggression. Positive profit (benefit of the assault) and physical aggression were not very typical of girls.

Figure 8 shows the structure of the components of victim behavior pattern.

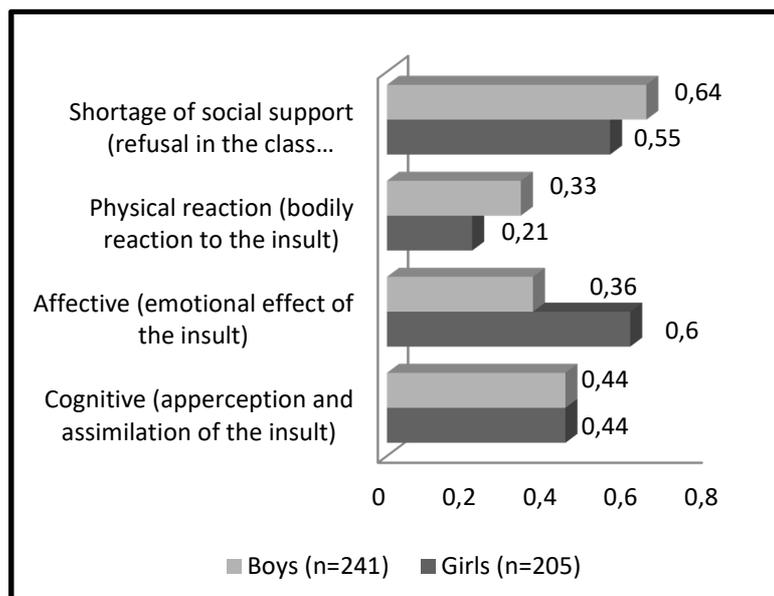


Figure 8. The structure of the components of victim behavior pattern in the 13-14 year old age group

In the 13-14 year old age group, we do not find significant changes in the structure of victim behavior pattern compared to the previous group. In case of both genders, social support (refusal in the class community) was also the main component of becoming a victim, in case of the girls, it was followed by affective behavior pattern (emotional effect of the insult), and in case of the boys it was followed by cognitive behavior pattern (apperception and assimilation of the insult). In the third place we found cognitive behavior pattern (apperception and assimilation of the insult) in case of the girls and affective behavior pattern (emotional effect of the insult) in case of the boys. Physical reaction (bodily reaction to the insult) was the least typical of both genders.

Figure 9 shows the structure of the components of helper participant behavior pattern.

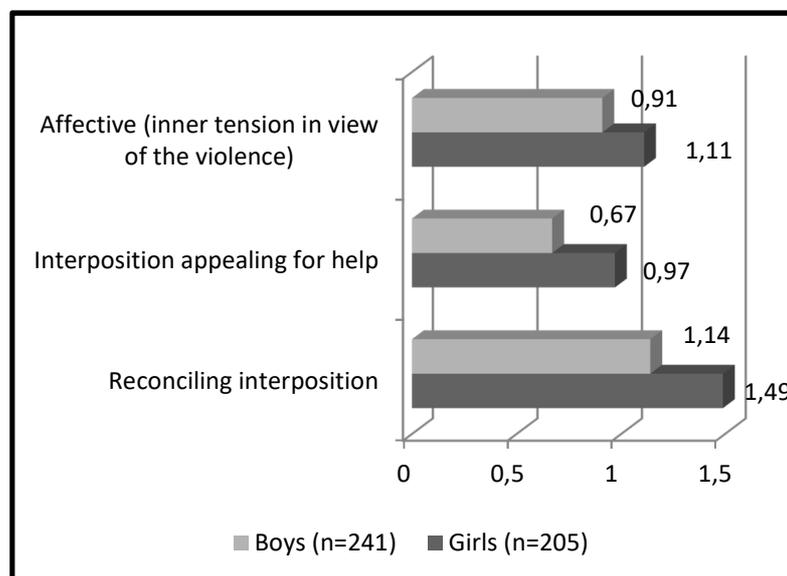


Figure 9. The structure of the components of helper participant behavior pattern in the 13-14 year old age group

In this age group helper participant behavior pattern also showed similar structure in case of both genders. From the components of helper participant in the 13-14 old age group – compared to the previous age group- reconciling interposition was also the most frequent behavior pattern. Contrary to the previous age group, it was followed by affective behavior pattern (inner tension in view of the violence) and finally helper participant came after it (in case of the previous age group, helper participant was the second most typical behavior pattern).

Figure 10 shows the structure of the components of bystander behavior pattern.

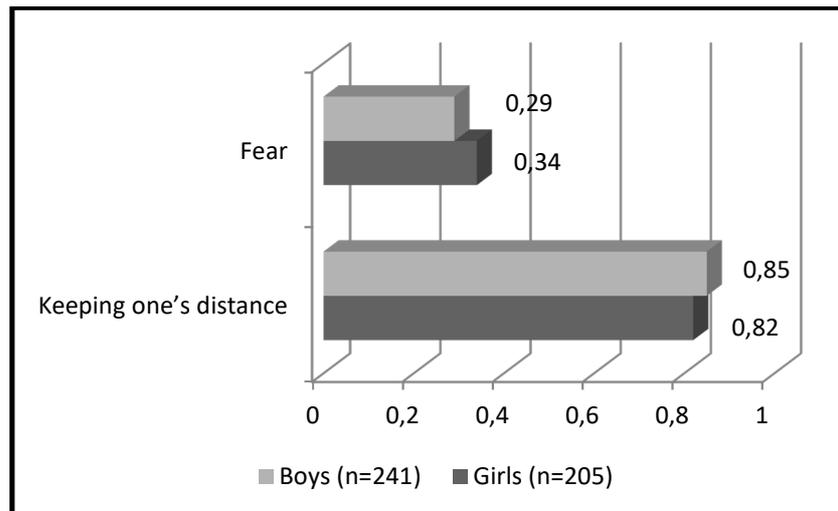


Figure 10. The structure of the components of bystander behavior pattern in the 13-14 year old age group

In this age group we did not find significant gender differences in the structure of bystander behavior pattern either. In case of both genders- similarly to the previous age group- bystander behavior pattern was characterized by the effort of keeping one's distance, it was followed by fear.

Analysis of Gender Differences

We also examined in reference to the scales and subscales of the Questionnaire on School Bullying – according to the individual age groups-whether there are significant differences between the genders.

Chart 2 shows the gender differences between the individual components of bully behavior pattern.

Subscale of Bully Scale	11-12 years	13-14- years
Physical aggression	0,002	0,000
Verbal aggression	0,000	0,000
Exclusion	0,468	0,917
Positive profit (benefit of the assault)	0,000	0,000

Chart. 2 The extent of gender differences in the individual subscales of Bully Scale ($p <$)

Examining the individual components of bully behavior pattern, we found that in all age groups physical aggression, verbal aggression and positive profit (benefit of the assault) were more significantly typical of boys. In case of exclusion, we did not find significant gender differences.

Chart 3 shows the gender differences between the individual components of victim behavior pattern.

Subscale of Victim Scale	11-12 years	13-14- years
Cognitive (apperception and assimilation of the insult)	0,274	0,941
Affective (emotional effect of the insult)	0,050	0,000
Physical reaction (bodily reaction to the insult)	0,005	0,019
Shortage of social support (refusal in the class community)	0,076	0,159

Chart 3. The extent of gender differences in the individual subscales of Victim Scale ($p <$)

Examining the components of victim behavior pattern, there was a different situation. In all age groups, we find significant differences in point of affective (emotional effect of the insult), the girls were more liable to it than the boys.

The boy students in primary school as victims were more liable to physical reaction (bodily reaction to the insult) than the girls. This kind of inclination also characterized the boys much more in high school but at this age the difference was not so significant.

Chart 4 shows the gender differences between the individual components of helper participant.

Subscale of Helper participant Scale	11-12 years	13-14- years
Reconciling interposition	0,011	0,000
Interposition appealing for help	0,000	0,000
Affective (inner tension in view of the violence)	0,004	0,004

Chart 4. The extent of gender differences in the individual subscales of Helper Participant Scale ($p <$)

Examining the individual components of helper participant we found that in all age groups affective reaction (inner tension in view of the violence) was significantly more typical of girls than boys. Primary school girls and girls at the age of 15-16 were also more liable to reconciling interposition and interposition appealing for help.

Examining the individual components of bystander behavior pattern, we found that fear in all age groups was more typical of girls than boys. Keeping one's distance was typical of boys in primary school; it was typical of girls in high school. In all age groups, gender differences were not significant neither in case of fear nor in case of keeping one's distance.

Discussion

The aim of this present study was to reveal the structure of the aggressive attitude – and behavior patterns in school practice, the occurrence rate of the bully, the victim, the intervener participant, the helper participant and the bystander behavior patterns among primary and high school students, in particular view of gender and age differences.

In case of the primary school students (11-14 year olds) from the reactions on school bullying the most frequent behavior pattern – without reference to genders - was helper participant.

Helper participant primarily meant reconciling interposition, which was followed by interposition appealing for help in the age group of 11-12 year old students and it became the least preferred behavior pattern in the age group of 13-14 year old students. While affective (inner tension in view of the violence) was the weakest component of helper participant in the age group of 11-12 year old students, it was a more dominant tendency than interposition appealing for help from parents in the age group of 13-14 year old students.

Examining helper participant behavior pattern, we found that effort for helper participant was significantly more typical of girls than boys in all age groups. Within helper participant behavior pattern, affective reaction (inner tension in view of the violence) was significantly more typical of girls than boys. Primary school girls were also more liable to reconciling interposition and interposition appealing for help than the boys at the same age.

Examining intervener participant behavior pattern, we find that intervener participant was significantly more typical of boys than girls in all age groups. In case of the girls, this behavior pattern was the least used reaction in all age groups.

We also find significant differences between the boys and the girls in point of the second most dominant behavior pattern of school bullying. In case of the girls of all age groups, it was bystander behavior pattern, from the components of which keeping one's distance was more determining than fear (However, fear was more typical of girls than boys in all age groups).

We found bystander behavior pattern less typical of boys, in case of the primary school students it was the third most dominant behavior pattern, from the components of which keeping one's distance was also the most dominant in the case of boys.

In case of the primary school boys, intervener participant was the second most dominant behavior pattern,

From the components of helper participant- interposition appealing for help from adults was the least typical of boys (this tendency from the age of 13 without reference to genders was the least preferred component of helper participant behavior pattern.

Bully behavior pattern on school bullying was not typical of either of the groups. We demonstrated that bully behavior pattern was significantly more typical of boys than girls in all age groups. In case of the boys of all age groups, physical aggression, verbal aggression and positive profit (benefit of the assault) were significantly more typical. In case of exclusion, we did not find important differences between the genders.

From the reactions on school bullying, victim behavior pattern was the least typical of the sample. At the age of 11-12, both the girls and the boys became victims of school bullying

approximately at the same level. From the age of 13-14, we found this behavior pattern more typical of girls, which was not significant in the case of either of the age groups.

Examining the individual components of victim behavior pattern, the situation was different. In case of affective reaction (emotional effect of the insult) we find significant differences in all age groups, the girls seem to be more liable to it than the boys.

The primary school boys seemed to be more liable to physical reaction (bodily reaction to the insult) than the girls.

Conclusion

School bullying is a problem for many youth. It is important that schools address bullying through both prevention and intervention efforts.

Our research focuses on the question that among upper school primary school students and high school students what kind of background factors may stand in the background of aggressive attitude and behavior patterns of school bullying (bully, victim, bystander, intervener participant and helper participant). During our research, we charted those background factors, which help to understand the process of the development of bully, victim, participant and bystander behavior patterns, as well as they allow the development of the options of efficient mental hygiene.

In the future, our goal is to develop a cyber bullying questionnaire and to explore the family socializational background factors of cyberbullying. Furthermore we would like to examine the temperament and character traits and some of the personality traits -e.g. basic emotions, ways of expression negative emotions (such as, anger and frustration), dysfunctional attitudes, and ways of coping underlying cyber bullying.

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