PhD Dissertation Summary

Tímea Egri

Aggression in the school.
Bullying among pupils with disabilities.

Supervisor: Gerevich József Ph.D., Psychiatrist, honorary associate professor

Budapest, 2016
The various forms of insults and peer-group insults in the schools, which are often reported in the press, draw the attention of many people over the phenomenon of the bullying in the school. As a consequence, this topic became more and more relevant on the field of the scientific researches too, both in domestic and world-wide context. As the technology advanced, more and more video recordings and photos depicting acts of school-related violence became publicly available also in Hungary.

Thanks to all these, in the last twenty years the number of researches dealing with aggressiveness, including aggressiveness in the schools increased both in Hungary and abroad. This progress has also been fostered by the elaboration of the measuring methods. This is particularly important because, thus, while unfolding the characteristics, correlations, of the insults in the schools, the pedagogues, the special educators, the developer pedagogues, experts supporting pedagogical work can get a comprehensive view over level of the prevalence of the aggressiveness and on the pupils’ attitudes towards the insults.

The issue of the insults within the peer-groups received significant attention in the last twenty years primarily in international researches. The same is true for the phenomena of bullying, within the aggressiveness in the school, which has been examined both in the case of pupils in primary and secondary schools. On the other hand, there are very few researches known both in Hungary abroad which would discover the aggressive behaviour among pupils with disabilities.

Discovering aggression and handling it in a holistic approach is necessary for the elaboration of complex short and-long term aggression-handling programmes which take into account the biological, psychological, social and cultural aspects which also correspond to the specific aspects of the pupils’ various disabilities. The aim of these programmes is to prevent but at least to reduce the prevalence of insults within the peer groups in beyond the pupils learning in majority educational institutions also for the pupils with disabilities.

Due to the neglecting of the researches focusing on aggression targeting pupils with disabilities the proper questionnaires, measuring methods have hardly been adapted for the Hungarian aspects. This would be necessary in identifying the school-related problems and in discovering and handling the cases of substance consumption which indicate future risks. The prevention and the pedagogical task in the school within the field of special education can not be carried out either without knowing and using the psycho-metrical methods with proper validity indicators.
We would like to broaden the range of the domestic researches of aggression with our own research, and we would also like to draw the attention of the pedagogues, special educators, developer pedagogues, educators and experts supporting pedagogical work over the seriousness of the issue, over its complexity and the importance of the efficient identification of the problem. We would like to reach this aim recognizing and identifying the background aspects of the aggression in the schools.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Several fields of science made attempts to create de definition of the aggressiveness as a form of behaviour. This concept can be examined from psychological, psychiatrally, biological, ethological, legal, sociological and pedagogical perspective, but there isn’t a single, universally and internationally accepted definition. Several feel the lack of this (Nolting, 1997; Shah, 1999).

The scientific bibliography uses the English term bullying to describe temporally extended, repeatedly occurring aggressiveness in the context of the. It is basically the act when one or more pupils insult and harasses long-lasting and repeatedly one or more other pupils with intentions to harm. The insult takes place among unequal power relations, with emphasis on the repetitive aspect (Olweus, 1999). The concept of aggressiveness has also broadened as a result of the advancing of the info-communicational technology. According to Hárdi (2010) the apace technological and IT advancing has multiplied the forms of manifestation of the aggressiveness and made it in many cases impersonal.

Even if the examination of the phenomenon of bullying and harassment intensified in the last decade, we have significantly less knowledge about the phenomena of insult against pupils with disabilities (Morrison, Furlong, et. Smith, 1994; Whitney, Nabuzoka, and Smith, 1992). Hartley et al. (2014) investigated in their paper the victim roles of the pupils with special educational needs who learn in integrated system in America. According to the paper, among the pupils with disabilities there is a higher proportion of individuals who don’t feel safe among their schoolmates. The more frequent the bullying is, the higher is the level of stress the pupil is exposed to. The examination of the typology of the insults drew the attention over the fact, that the prevalence of verbal and contact bullying didn’t show significant difference when checked between groups of pupils with or without disabilities, but in the case of pupils with disabilities, the threats and the physical insults are much more common than among their fellow pupils without disabilities.
The higher rate of intimidation and the more common manifestation of aggressiveness among pupils presenting emotional and behavioural disorders was proved by an empirical investigation in 2012 (Rose, Espelage, 2012). Useche et al. (2014) carried out a research in which they could prove relying on descriptive research results, that both the reactive and the proactive aggression is more common among pupils presenting emotional and behavioural disorders than among the members of the control group.

The insufficient amount of research results in the case of the population with disabilities was mentioned by several authors during the 1990s (Morrison, Furlong, et. Smith, 1994; Whitney, Nabuzoka, és Smith, 1992), however the number of researches in this topic is still low compared to its importance. The most serious problems have been detected among the pupils in the 7th grade, more serious, than in the case of the pupils from the 5th and 6th grades and among the older pupils in the 9th grade. There wasn’t found any significant gender related difference between the majority and special educational systems.

3. THE METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The description of the sample: The control group members (N=944) were pupils from the 9th form attending secondary schools. Among them there were pupils attending theoretical secondary or and vocational secondary education and industrial learners. Among the pupils with disabilities, the pupils in the 9th grade (N=503) the following disabilities were represented from the classical fields of special education: sensory disability (visually and hearing impaired), handicapped pupils, pupils presenting intellectual ability disorders, mentally challenged pupils, learning challenged pupils and pupils with behavioural disorders-these were the categories of pupils which became parts of the sample. The pupils with special educational needs all possessed written certificates about their status, issued by the territorial special authorities and commissions of experts. This was also a precondition of getting into the sample in their case.

Applied measuring tools: The set of questionnaires was elaborated in the beginning of the year 2009 by the members of the Addictology Research Institute. As for the chosen measuring tools it was an important aspect to select only validated measuring methods, which are internationally applied and acknowledged. We also edited a version of the set of questionnaires with easily understandable texts, for the mentally challenged pupils and for the ones in the case of whom the testbatteria complemented with pictograms was a more proper
tool due to their difficulties in understanding texts. The members of the set of questionnaires: Rosenber Self-Evaluation Scale, Temperament and Character Questionnaire Junior version Looking for Newness Sub-scale, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Scale, Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire Physical Aggression Subscale, Revised Olweus Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire, Abilities and Difficulties Questionnaire, European Adolescent Assessment Dialogue (EuroADAD), Aggression and Victimisation Scale, Positive Behaviour Scale, Fighting Parental Management Scale.

4. THE SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

4.1. Answering the research question and the hypotheses

The most extensive assumption of the research was that is presumable, that the type of disability and the gender influences forms of manifestation of the bullying, and the isolated and in interactions appearing results of these present a particular pattern in the various groups. Thus a profile corresponding to the type of disability related to the bullying and the insults can be drawn based on these.

Earlier empirical data (Norwich & Kelly, 2004) suggested that among the pupils who are challenged in learning the occurrence of bullying and becoming its victims is higher than in the case of the other groups of disabilities. In the case of these we expect measurable negative differences. The physical insults occur more often, than in the other groups of disabilities.

The frequency of the bullying occurrence was measured by the Olweus Questionnaire. The average score of the boys challenged in learning was 3.45 which was the highest value in group of special education. Among the girls the frequency of the bullying was higher only in the case of the pupils who were hearing impaired and who presented behavioural disorders. Despite this it can claimed that the phenomenon of bullying among them is not rare either. The same Olweus Bullying/Victimization Questionnaire, but its average scores indicating victimization confirmed only partially the parts of our assumption, which were focuses on becoming victims. The boys showed the second lowest values behind the mentally challenged pupils, so in the case of all the other groups of special education the victimization is more
common than in the current sub-sample. In the case of the girls a similar tendency could be observed, even if among them the mentally challenged girls and the ones with behavioural disorders presented lower values. So the rate of becoming a victim is higher in the groups with pupils who are handicapped or mentally challenged.

The negative difference presumed in the hypothesis can be observed through the average score of showing positive behaviour. In the case of all the sub-samples of special education, the lowest values were presented by the learning challenged boys (18,9000) and girls (24,7556) too. In the other groups the values were in the case of both genders over 28 and 37 average scores. If we take into account the results of the control group too, than the industrial learners, are the ones who present less positive behaviour towards the other than even the learning challenged pupils. As for the numeric values this means more than 15 average scores in the case of the boys and 20,6725 in the case of the girls.

This directly corresponds to the level of participation in the positive behaviour, as the boys’ average score of 17 and the girls’ score of 23 present the lowest value in the group of special education, compared to the average score among the boys (27) and girls (30). This was also the group in which we measured the least favourable values in terms of how much the parents support the idea of solving conflicts through violence. Even if we received more favourable results in the case of the girls, the boys’ average score of 2,7333 was the lowest value in the entire sample.

So it can be claimed, that the boys challenged in learning receive the least supportive parental support with incentive to assertive conflict handling. The rate of the aggressiveness is also raised by the fact that this population of boys has the highest average score in terms of concentration disorder, even exceeding the values of the boys and girls presenting behavioural disorders. We can see a high, 8.2 value also in the case of the girls, which is only with 0.7. average score higher than the girls’ values with behavioural disorders. After these values it might be not surprising, that during the examination of impulsivity the highest scores impulsivity have been noticed among the learning challenged boys. We measured the rate of the physical harassment based on the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire’s Physical Aggression Subscale. This, in case of the examined group, showed high values both for the girls and boys, however not the highest ones, because the girls and boys presenting behavioural disorders are in front of them. We claim our hypothesis to be partially confirmed.

As for the pupils living with sensory disabilities the specialized literature is contradictory. There can be noticed a big difference between the earlier research results, some of which
draw attention on the high rate of aggressiveness noticed among the vision and hearing impaired pupils, while other researches did not find any difference between the non-disabled pupils and sensory disabled pupils in terms of the victimization and harassment in school. According to Sullivan (2006) the hearing impaired pupils are twice as much likely to be terrorized, than their healthy fellows, especially in the case of the boys. It can be assumed in the case of both boys and girls that the likelihood of victimization is bigger due to the lack of information originating from their sensory disabilities.

Research findings proof, that the results of the sensory impaired pupils show similarities. The rate of victimization, examined with Olweus Bullying/ Victimization Questionnaire in the case of girls is precisely identical, with a score of 2.4. This value marks the highest average score among all the groups with disabled pupils. Even if the values of 3.4 and 3.5 may seem to be high in the case of the boys, but we can see similar scores in the case of the handicapped pupils too, and also in the case of the pupils with behavioural disorders, where the average score of 4.0135 marks the rate level of victimization.

So our hypothesis can be partly confirmed. The rate of aggressiveness which is measurable with the Buss-Perry Questionnaire supports this, as the aggressiveness levels of the hearing and visually impaired pupils stays below the average scores of the pupils with learning challenges and of the ones presenting behavioural disorders. This is not the case among the girls, as in their case the higher rates of physical aggressiveness is characteristic only for the girls with behavioural disorders. As a consequence, we claim our hypotheses to be only partially confirmed.

The handicapped pupils are presumably less popular than their fellow pupils with other forms of disabilities, as their „visible disabilities” marginalize them within the school. It can be expected that in their case the physical aggressiveness would dominate, especially in the case of the boys.

We measured the popularity of the group focusing on the SDQ Questionnaire’s Peer-Group relationship problems results, and thus we can claim, that the average score of the handicapped boys (3.00) and girls (2.69) doesn’t suggest to a marginalized situation of the pupils, the problems with the peer-groups are more common in the case of the two sub-groups made up of pupils with sensory disabilities. We could capture the level of the physical
aggressiveness with the help of the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire’s Physical Aggression Subscale. In the case of boys, with an average score of 20.9552 we could mark a high rate level of aggressiveness, however the pupils with learning challenges and the pupils with behavioural disorders are even more aggressive, than the handicapped pupils. In the case of the girls, as for the level of physical aggression, by other words the aggressiveness presented the lowest rate of occurrence, as this aggressive behaviour is in their case the lowest, which is also indicated by their average score of 15.4, This, compared to the results of the control group, we can come to a relief, as even the least problematic and least aggressive sub-sample, the sub-sample of the pupils in theoretical schools presents a higher frequency in terms of beating each other, harassing physically, which is confirmed by the average score of 17. So our hypothesis has been partially confirmed.

*The mentally challenged pupils show significant disadvantages in terms of autonomy and socialization (Lányiné & Marton, 1991). The more common occurrence of the aggressiveness can be assumed due to the weaker cognitive abilities and social competences, but their prosocial behaviour is presumably higher compared to the pupils of other groups of disabilities.*

The physical aggressiveness is the least prevalent among the mentally challenged pupils, while in the case of the girls only the handicapped girls present lower values. The above mentioned measuring method examines the forms of aggressiveness which reach the physical harassment, but according to the results of the Aggression and Victimization Scale only the pupils with learning challenges and behavioural disorders are more aggressive than the mentally challenged pupils, while the girls present the most commonly occurring aggressive behaviour according to their self-reports.

The hypothesis focusing on the prosocial behaviour was confirmed, as the highest score could be measured among the mentally challenged boys, with the value of 6.58. The average score of the girls is 8.56, which is the highest among the examined groups of special education. In the case of the boys, the handicapped pupils present somewhat lower values, 0.12 is the measurable difference between the two groups.

*As for the pupils presenting behavioural disorder, there is a psychical deficit in the development of the neurological, emotional and personal development, there is caused by the as a result of the biological-psychological and social harms. This can lead to emotional,
behaviour and performance disorders and difficulties in integration, adaptation. Among them the rate of occurrence of the ADHD and impulsivity is presumably very high. Offensive behaviour and physical aggression is characteristic for both genders.

The scores of the Hyperkinetic Disorder Questionnaire reflecting the concentration disorder suggest that the pupils presenting behavioural disorders present the highest scores in the case of both genders, however the learning challenged pupils’ average scores are in front of the boys. The SDQ Questionnaire’s Hyperactivity subscale presents the same pattern in the case of both genders. The learning challenged boys’ average score is higher than the score of the boys with behavioural disorders. The same is valid for the Junior Temperament and Character Questionnaire’s subscale which measures impulsivity, as the learning challenged pupil’s average score of 4.03 is higher than the score of the boys presenting behavioural disorder, whose average score is 3.9. The girls present the highest values in the group of the special education. These data can make us think further, from the perspective of the special education and educational diagnostics, as the development and the re-considering of the differential-diagnostics and the development-diagnostics could be necessary from this perspective in the case of the two groups showing similar patterns and levels of severity. The common professional thinking about this diagnostical aspect proves to be necessary in the future. The further part of the hypothesis was proved by the results of the Olweus Questionnaire, which clearly indicate, that both the boys and the girls, the current group presents the highest scores, so the aggressive behaviour and the phenomenon of bullying is among them the most common. This hypothesis got confirmed.

5. SUMMARY, OUTLOOK, POSSIBILITIES OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION

One of the most relevant new element in this current research is the discovery of the psychopathological preconditions in the case of the manifestations of aggressive behaviour and the determination of its ties to aggressiveness on a sample of pupils with and without disabilities.

The aggression and the bullying are regularly investigated in the majority institutions, but not in the target group of special education. We can not rely on domestic data, and there are few research precedents on international scale as well. Thus we consider our research to have as its aim the discovery and unfolding, as its main purpose was the examination of an
issue which is unfolded in Hungary. Our investigation was primarily carried out in institutions offering special education among pupils with special educational necessities. Our results can be interpreted in this context, but we should raise the question, what characteristics would an investigation show in terms of bullying among integrated circumstance. In the future it will be necessary to carry out such researches too. One of the main purposes of the special education is to help the disabled persons to become active members the society, by the means of the integration. This is why it is important to have a view on that, whether in domestic context the disability profiles in our sample match the profiles, necessities and problems of the disabled pupils learning in integrated environment.

I think, based on both this current empirical investigation and on the special literature that it is necessary elaborate aggression handling programmes which are based on holistic approach, which extend over the whole educational system and which correspond to the problem-profiles of both the typically developed pupils and the disabled students presenting non-typical development. Our purpose is to implement the above mentioned programmes, and to continue the research and to extend it over other groups of disabilities, such as the pupils with speaking difficulties and pupils showing autism-spectrum disorder.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES IN THE THESIS


7. **PUBLICATIONS OF THE AUTHOR CONNECTION WITH THE TOPIC**

**Conference publications and conference presentations**

BÁNSZKY NOÉMI, EGRI TÍMEA, SALLAI MELINDA, MATUSZKA BALÁZS, MARJAI KAMILLA, GEREVICH JÓZSEF (2012): Iskolai agresszió és szerhasználat. XXI. Országos Tudományos Nagygyűlés Kivonatkötete p. 119-120


EGRITÍMEABÁCSKAIERIKAMATUSZKABALÁSZGEREVICHJÓZSEF(2013):ABullying
jelenségének vizsgálata intellektuális fogyatékossággal élő fiatalok részére kidolgozott
könnyen érthető kérdőívcsomag segítségével.MPTdigitálisabsztraktkötet. Elérhető:
_kotet_v3.pdf,p.23.

EGRITÍMEABÁCSKAIERIKAMATUSZKABALÁSZGEREVICHJÓZSEF(2012):Szerhasználata,viktimizációésiskolaiagresszió
fogyatékosésnemfogyatékostanulókkörében.XXI. OrszágosTudományosNagygyűlés
Kivonatkötete p.121-122.

EGRITÍMEABÁCSKAIERIKAMATUSZKABALÁSZGEREVICHJÓZSEF(2013):Szerhasználattal összefüggő
személyiségvonások fogyatékos tanulók körében. MagyarPszichológiaiTársaságXXII.OrszágosTudományosNagygyűlés.

EGRI-TIMEA-GEREVICHJÓZSEF:Effectofschoolaggressiononschoolperformance,
Attention—Discipline”7thInternationalScientificConference,UniversityofNoviSad
HungarianLanguageTeacherTrainingFaculty,NemzetköziTudományosKonferencia,SzerbiáMagyarTannyelvűTanítóképzőKar,p.50.

FARKASLAJOS,EGRITIMEA,GEREVICHJÓZSEF(2009):Indirektveszélyeztetettségiadatok

GÁDOROSJÚLIA,HALÁSZJÓZSEF,EGRITIMEA,KOVÁCSÁGNES,VIDAPÉTER,VIDOMUSZRÉKA(2013):Externalizációs tünetek jellemzése

GEREVICHJÓZSEF,EGRITIMEA,BÁCSKAIERIKAMATUSZKABALÁSZ,MARJAIKAMILLA
(2013):Szerhasználattal összefüggő személyiségvonások feltérképezése könnyen érthető
kéröövcsomag segítségével intellektuális fogyatékos hangot élő tanulók körében. Magyar
PszichológiaiTársaságXXII.OrszágosTudományosNagygyűlés.Kapcsolataink világa
kivonatkötet. p.203.

MARJAIKAMILLA,EGRITIMEA,MATUSZKABALÁSZ,GEREVICHJÓZSEF(2013):Psichoaaktiv
szerhasználati sajátosságok autizmusul élő asszélyek körében. MagyarPszichológiai

MATUSZKABALÁSZ,BÁCSKAIERIKAEGRITIMEA,GEREVICHJÓZSEF(2010):Azagresszió,az


SALLAI MELINDA, BÁNSZKY NOÉMI, EGRI TÍMEA, MATUSZKA BALÁZS, MARJAI KAMILLA, GEREVICH JÓZSEF (2012): Fogyatékos serdülők érzelmi- és viselkedési problémáinak vizsgálata az iskolai zaklatás fényében. XXI. Országos Tudományos Nagygyűlés Kivonatkötete p. 120-121.

Studies published in journals


Books, bookchapters


Other
