Bullying in Croatian Schools with Regard to Gender, Age and Acceptance/Rejection in School

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The goal of this research was to examine differences in the manifestation of school bullying behaviours between pupils of different sex, age and other characteristics. We used The School Bullying Questionnaire - USN 2003 (Buljan Flander, Karlovic, Stimac, 2003) which was constructed by changing and adapting the Bully/Victim Questionnaire made by Dan Olweus. This USN-2003 questionnaire was given to 4904 pupils in fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades in 25 elementary schools in the Republic of Croatia. The results show that: school boys manifest significantly more bullying behaviours than girls; the oldest pupils in seventh and eighth grades (13 and 14-year-olds) bully younger pupils; rejected pupils show more bullying behaviours than accepted ones. The interactional influence of gender and acceptance/rejection in school was emphasized. We find that acceptance/rejection in school has significantly increased bullying behaviours exercised by boys than by girls. These results were obtained on a big national sample of Croatian pupils. Therefore, we have considered the practical implications of these results.

Key words: bullying, bullies, Croatian schools, aggressive behaviours, acceptance/rejection in school