

The Influence of Gender and Sports on the Expression of Bullying Experienced by Teenagers Between 12–15 Years Old and their Bullying Peers

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Abstract

Bullying is one of teenager's behavior features, becoming a part of widespread aggressive behavior in Lithuania. Research data confirm the fact that bullying level in Lithuania even 70 times exceeds the level regarded as an epidemic in Western Europe (Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2006). Such levels of abuse both in teenager and adult environment are intolerable.

This article analyzes bullying forms and range by 12–15 year old teenager group referring to gender and involvement in sports activities. The research was conducted in 2007 and 2008 in a number of Lithuanian high schools, involving 400 students, part of them engaged in sports activities, another part without any sports background. Students, who have at least two training sessions per week in sports schools or clubs, and participate in sports competitions and events for more than one year, are regarded as involved in sports activities. A questionnaire was developed according to *Questionnaire for Student Bullying*, issued in York City, Great Britain. Obtained data was processed by non-parametric statistics.

Research data indicate that bullying levels among 12–15 year old teenagers are similar referring to gender. Bullying levels are lower for both boys and girls involved in sports, but the range of bullying methods is similar. Sports activities make no influence on teenager's deviation from standard behavior, but gender could be regarded as a factor. Overall range of bullying forms used by teenagers of the same gender involved in sports is more extensive than for teenagers without sports background.

Keywords: bullying, bullying methods, bullying levels.

Introduction

Except evident cruelty acts there are other displays of bad behavior: nicknaming, bullying, physical compulsion or racket in school in a modern society (Prakapas, 2001). Bullying is learned actions

directed to other persons cause provide him physical or psychological pain. This behaviour when one or some persons grapple, humble, offend others is noted among children and adults (Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2006).

The scale of bullying is growing in schools and, as empirical research (Andreou, 2001; Prakapas, 2001; Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2006; Christian, Kashiwagi, 2007 and others) shows there are children, who are constantly attacked by the peers. Bullying has reached such a scale that it can be started to talk about bullying culture. For example, what is evidently not acceptable in Sweden, has become a communication norm in Lithuania. In Sweden it would be more difficult to find a child, who has suffered bullying and in Lithuania effort to is needed find a child, who has not suffered from bullying. Thus in Lithuania bullying a person has become a norm not only among childrens but also in society, though there was not such a problem. Data confirm that bullying dissemination 70 times exceeds epidemy threshold in Lithuania (Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2006).

Research object: expression of bullying experienced by 12–15 year old teenagers.

Aim of the research: to disclose the influence of gender and sports on the frequency of bullying experienced by 12–15 year old teenagers and their bullying by the peers.

Theoretical justification of the research

There are just some research carried out in Lithuania aimed to disclose frequency of bullying among children and teenagers. One of the main studies is international students' health and living reseach carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 1998 WHO carried out research data of which show that from 28 countries, which participated in the research, Lithuanian students suffered bullying most frequently. In research on 2003 bullying frequency was carried out in Panevėžys city and district, Vilnius and Alytus city schools. Research results showed that bullying from the coevals was suffered by about 70% of students. Even 60% of children, who participated

in the research, stated that sometimes they jeered at their coevals (Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2004). It is stated that a child can directly learn bullying him self and to behave aggressively. Having suffered bullying he starts to value himself low and in order to reconstruct self-value does the same, jeers at sicker one than he is (Valeckienė, 2005).

Foreign authors also show that bullying is growing in schools and as empirical research show (Andreou, 2001; Christian, Kashiwagi, 2007 and other) there are children, who are constantly attacked by their coevals in school. Except evidently cruel acts, there are other displays of bad behaviour: nicknaming, bullying, physical compulsion or racket in school (Prakapas, 2001; Miller, 2007). American scientists (O'Hanlon, 2006; Wilson, 2006; Cyberbullying, 2007; Bullying by the numbers, 2007) say that bullying is suffered by one from three students in forms 6–10. In 2006 American science department announced that every day 60000 students avoid going to school because they are afraid to become bullying victims. In North Ireland almost one forth of respondents (23,2%) stated that they did not suffer bullying, more than three quarters of respondents (76,8%) stated that there was some bullying (McGuckin, Lewis, 2006).

In Australia more than 90% of respondents stated that they were not afraid of bullying by the peers. Almost one from five students never tried to help those who were jeered at (Rigby, Johnson, 2006). In Germany constant bullying is suffered by about 8% of children and 22% initiated bullying (Wolke, Woods, Standford, Schults, 2001; from Targamadzė, Valeckienė, 2007). In Holland, according to M. F. Van der Wal, C. A. M. De Wit, R. A. Hirasings (2003), research data for boys and girls show that bullying often causes depression and suicide thoughts.

Researchers (Chapell and other, 2006; Root, 2006; Bullying by the numbers, 2007, etc.) show that bullying is a risk feature for mental health and behaviour problems. Boys identified as faultfinders (jeerers) in forms 6–9 make criminal offenses till they are 24 years old. 40 % of them have 3 or more arrests until 30 years old (Bullying by the numbers, 2007). It was also determined that relation between students bullying and such school problems as academic records using classes, etc. exists. Bullying problems in school also negatively influence further life of victims and faultfinders (Dake and other, 2003). Researchers indicate that children – victims often become adults – victims and let jeering from them in work place (Aluedse, 2006; Fritz, 2006). Adults – jeerers bring bullying to their family by making violence (Bullying by the numbers, 2007). It was found out that there is more bullying in primary than secondary

school and in secondary school than in higher school and this indicates reduction of bullying with age, but some people still stay jeerers or victims and remain them all their life (Chapell et. al., 2006).

Research has shown that the frequency and forms of bullying depend on gender. For example, it was found out that in New England school girls suffered physical and oral bullying more often than boys. It was set that boys bully boys and girls but girls bully only girls (San Antonio, 2007). It was also emphasized in research that roles is bullying differ by gender: boys more often tend to be faultfinders, faultfinding strengtheners or assistants, also jeerers – victims and girls – defenders or pushers away (Valeckienė, 2005; Glew, et al. 2005).

Nevertheless there is a lack of research in scientific literature on the link between sports and bullying, for example what influence sports has on the expression of aggressiveness, bullying prevention and etc. These problematic questions have been raised:

- 1) Do gender and sports have influence on bullying frequency by teenagers?
- 2) Do gender and sports have influence on teenagers' bullying at coevals frequency?

Research methodology

A questionnaire developed according to Great Britain York city *Questionnaire for Student Bullying* (http://www.state.de.us/attgen/main_page/teachers/bullquesti.htm) which consisted of 32 closed type questions was administered.

Research methods: analysis of scientific literature and questionnaire. SPSS was used for data processing. Compared group samples were chosen followin to statistical research regulations by W. C. VanVoorhis and L. B. Morgan (2001). For relation between variables analysis non-parametric statistical associatione analysis χ^2 method was used. For associative analysis χ^2 collective variables, which have many coinciding values were used; relation strengths was evaluated by Gamma coefficient (Паниотто, Максименко 2003). Difference is statistically reliable when error is more than 5% ($p < 0,05$). Gender and sports are named as independent variables in research.

Empirical research basis: in interview, carried out in the years 2007 and 2008, participated 400 12–15 year old not doing sports teenagers randomly selected from general profile Lithuanian secondary schools (34,7%) and doing sports teenagers randomly selected from sports or general profile schools (65,3%). Persons doing sports were those, who do sports at least two times per week in sport schools or clubs, have been doing it no less than one year and

participate in competitions. By gender girls made up 53,4% and boys 46,6% of the sample.

Research results

Summarizing data on bullying experienced by teenagers, it can be stated that two thirds of respondents suffered bullying of some intensiveness. This is confirmed by many other authors (Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2004; Valeckienė, 2005; O’Hanlon, 2006; Wilson, 2006; McGuckin, Lewis, 2006) who provide research data that bullying is widespread, and its scale is large. Frequency of bullying in terms of gender is similar, but sport lowers bullying for sports doing girls and boys. This can be explained attitudes to sports doing teenagers is better and they are more confident in themselves than their peers, who do not do sports (Tilindienė, 2000; Tilindienė, Miškinis, 2003).

J. A. Dake, J. H. Price, S. K. Telljohann (2003) have determined a significant relation between bullying and self evaluation, which is often influenced by a child’s social status, psychological and social welfare. Finding that sports doing teenagers value themselves is based on their success and records, thus aiming to achieve recognition and be respected by peer bullying will be reduced.

More than one third of respondents (40%) stated that they did not suffer bullying, half (49,9%) suffered it rarely, 6,7% often and 4,2% very often. Analyzing research data it was noticed that the frequency of bullying in terms of gender does not differ, but differs for doing sports (less) and not doing sports (bigger) teenag groups ($\chi^2 = 21,847(3); p = 0,000$) (see Fig. 1). This difference was noticed between making sports and not doing sports girls ($\chi^2 = 8,880(3); p = 0,031$), and doing making sports and not doing sports boys ($\chi^2 = 13,412(3); p = 0,004$) groups.

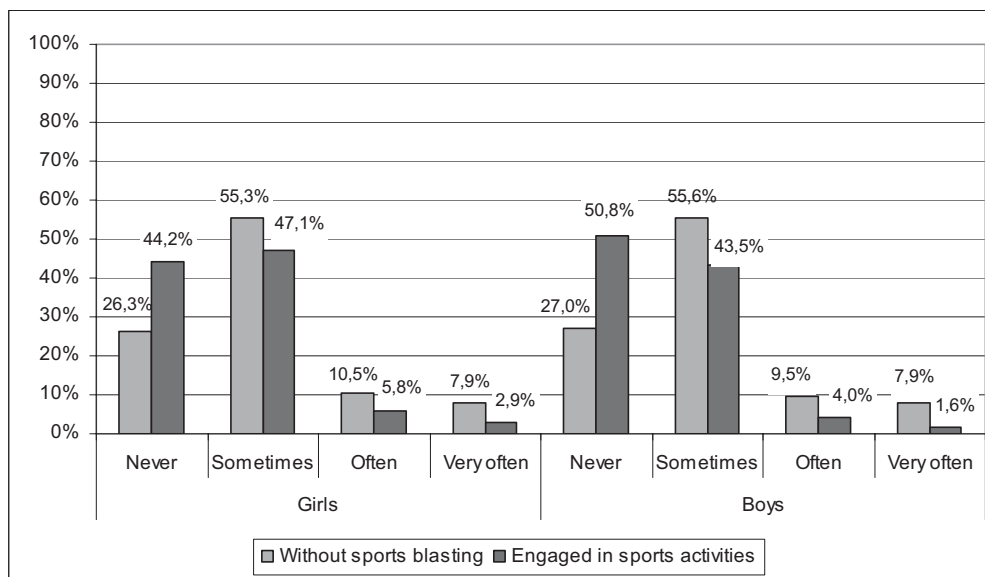


Fig. 1. Frequency of bullying experienced by 12–15 year old teenagers

Analyzing bullying forms experienced by girls it was noticed that sports doing girls suffered more nicknaming cases than not doing sports girls (see Fig. 2). Frequency of other bullying forms between doing and not doing sports girls is very similar. Analyzing the expression of bullying forms in boys group it was noticed that sports doing boys had more nicknaming and gossips cases. Frequency of other bullying forms between doing and not doing sports boys is very si-

milar. Doing sports and not doing sports teenagers gave other forms of bullying for example bullying on the Internet. Every eighth girl (13,1%) and every fourteenth boy (6,9%) said that suffered other bullying forms not included in the questionnaire provided. Other scientists also state that bullying has new forms. It was identified that from 1500 eight class persons 42% suffered bullying on the Internet but they did not inform their parents (Wolfsberg, 2006).

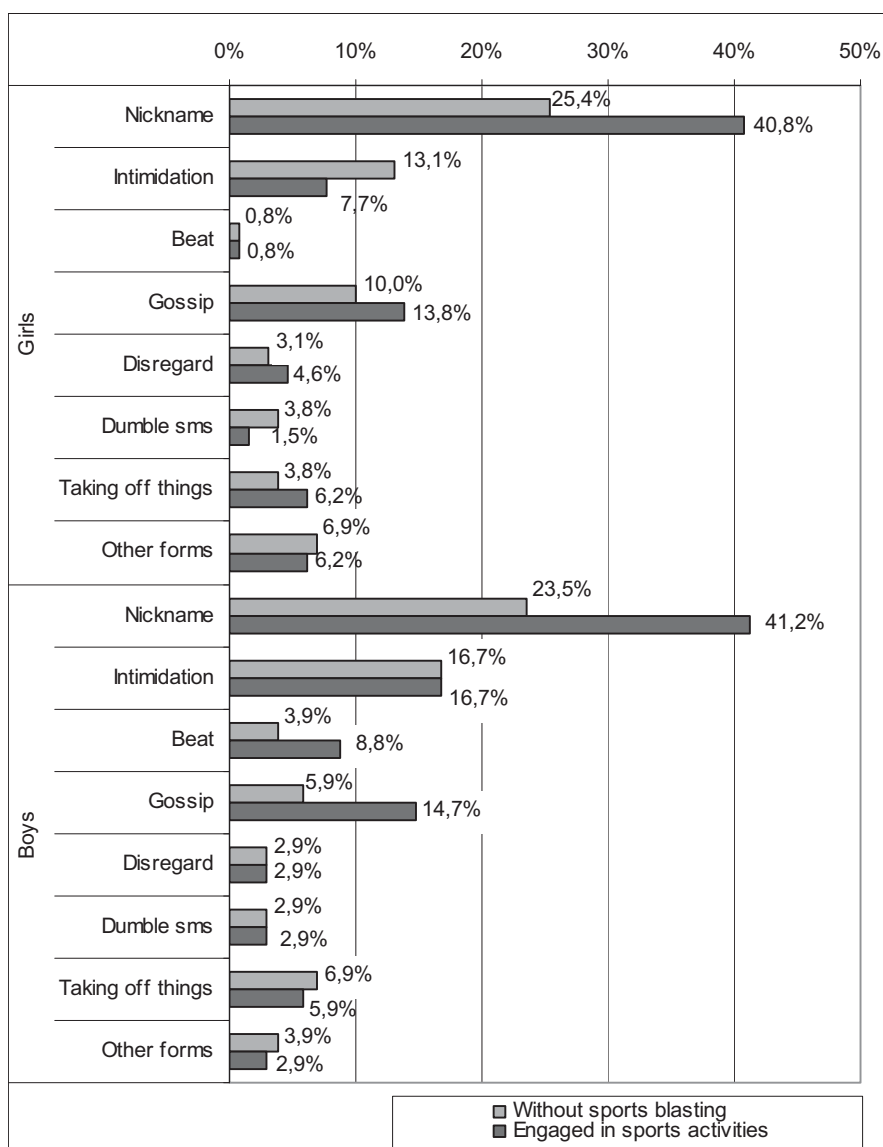


Fig. 2. Bullying forms experienced by 12–15 year old teenagers

Analyzing frequency of teenag bullying by the peers, it was identified that frequency of girls bullying others is lower and differs from boys bullying frequency ($x^2 = 17,271(3); p = 0,001$). Half of interviewed girls (51,6%) stated that they did not bully, more than two thirds stated that bullied rarely (41,4%), 5,6% often and 1,4% very often. One third of interviewed boys (37,1%) stated that they did not bully others, almost half stated that they did that rarely (44,1%), one tenth stated (11,8%), that they bullied often and less than one tenth very often (7,0%). Frequency of doing sports girls is lower than of doing sports boys ($x^2 = 8,766(3); p = 0,033$) and frequency of bullying others between not doing sports boys and girls did not differ. Detailed data on gender and sports influence on bullying others is provided in Figure 3.

No connection between bullying and bullying at was identified. This does not correspond to bullied other research results where it was found out that that children start bullying others (Andreou, 2001; Dake, Price, Telljohann, 2003; Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2006; Hazler, Carney, Granger, 2006; Yoneyama, Rigby, 2006; Miller, 2007). Because we lacked data we could not answer a question whether there is a connection between doing sports bullied teenagers and their bullying others. But data of this research show influence experienced bullying (sports) and teenagers bullying (gender) of sports and gender on bullying.

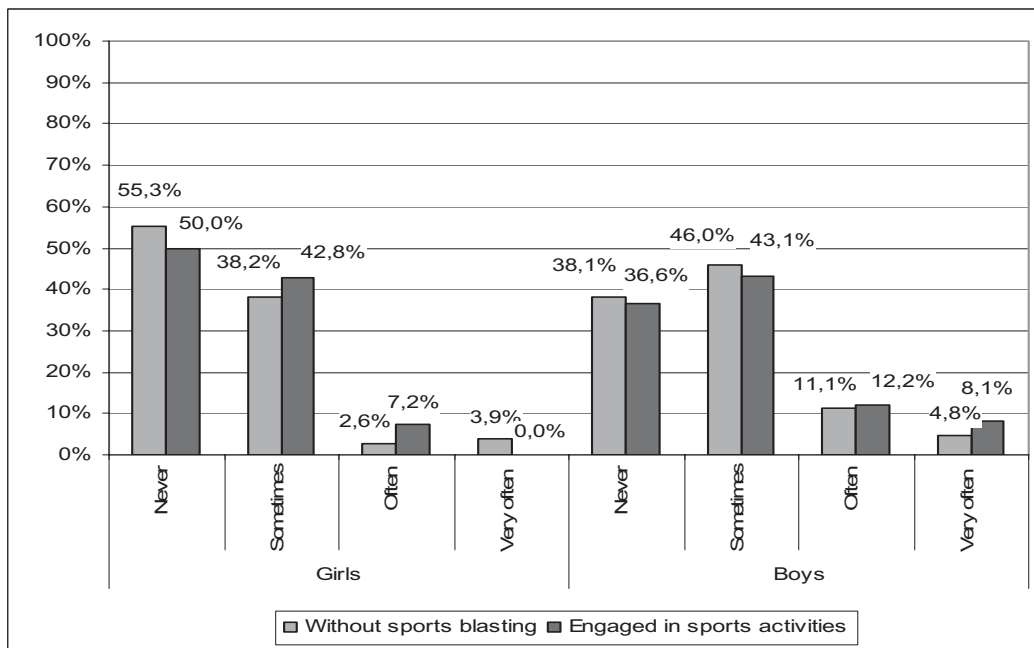


Fig. 3. Frequency of bullying by other teenagers, 12–15 years old

Analyzing the expression of bullying forms it was noticed that doing sports and not doing sports girls chose similar bullying forms (see Fig. 4).

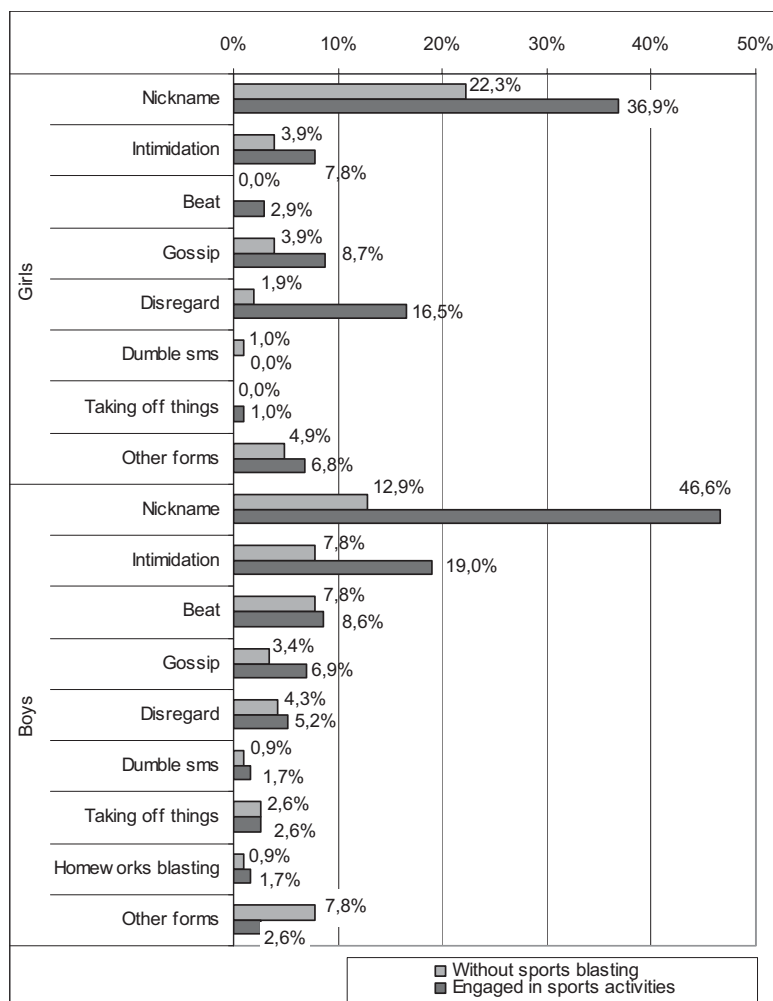


Fig. 4. Bullying forms used by 12–15 year old teenagers

But doing sports girls can use a wider spectrum of bullying (nicknaming, frightening, fighting etc.). Among doing sports girls forms of bullying included fighting and taking off things cases. Analogical expression of bullying others was also noticed in the group of boys. Doing sports and not Doing sports boys chose the same bullying forms. But doing sports boys use a wider spectrum of bullying (nicknaming, frightening, fighting, etc.). Results by other scientists also revealed gender difference in aggressive behaviour. It was identified that boys were more aggressive and of faultfinding behaviour than girls (DeRosier, 2004; San Antonio, Salzfass, 2007). V. Ivanauskienė's (2005) research data let formulating a presumption that girls are more tolerant in their opinion about outcast students and do not support negative behaviour in class (38,1% of boys and 9,1% of girls). Thus summarizing data of various research we can state that a bullying form is chosen according to age, gender and social status.

Conclusions

1. Frequency of bullying suffered by 12–15 year old teenagers in terms of gender is similar, but differs in terms of sports activities. Doing sports girls and boys stated that rarely ssis showed gender, but not sports feature influencing bullying frequency.
2. Girls' behaviour is more rarely aggressive. Research data showed that teenagers doing sports used a wider spectrum of bullying forms than not doing sports teenagers of the same gender. No connection was identifies between being bullied and bullying others.

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Lyties ir sportavimo veiksmų įtaka 12–15 metų paauglių patiriamų patyčių ir jų pačių tyčiojimosi iš bendraamžių raiškai

Santrauka

Patyčios – paauglių elgesio išraiška, Lietuvoje perauganti į agresyvaus elgesio kultūrą. Tyrimų duomenys patvirtina, kad patyčių paplitimas Lietuvoje 70 kartų viršija epidemijos slenkstį lyginant su kitomis Europos šalimis (Povilaitis, Valiukevičiūtė, 2006). Akivaizdu, kad Lietuvoje žmogų žeminantis elgesys yra tapęs norma ne tik vaikams.

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojama 12–15 m. paauglių patyčių dažnumas, formos, jų sąsaja su lyties bei sportavimo veiksniais. Apklausoje, kuri buvo atliekama 2007 ir 2008 m., dalyvavo 400 įvairių Lietuvos mokyklų sportuojantys ir nesportuojantys 12–15 m. paaugliai. Sportuojančiais paaugliais laikomi tie, kurie mažiausiai du kartus per savaitę lanko ar lankė sportinius užsiėmimus sporto mokyklose ar klubuose, sportuoja ar sportavo nemažiau kaip vienerius metus ir dalyvauja ar dalyvavo varžybose.

Tiriamiesiems buvo pateikta anketa, parengta remiantis Didžiosios Britanijos Jorko miesto *Patyčių klausimynu moksleiviams*, o gauti duomenys interpretuoti naudojant neparimetrinę statistiką.

Nustatyta, kad 12–15 m. paauglių patiriamų patyčių dažnumas lyties aspektu yra vienodas, tačiau sportavimo veiksnys sumažina patyčių dažnumą tiek tarp sportuojančių merginų, tiek tarp sportuojančių vaikinų, bet ne patiriamų patyčių formų spektrą. Nagrinėjant tyčiojimosi iš kitų bendraamžių raišką nepastebėta sportavimo veiksnio įtakos paauglių dešimčiai elgesiui, tačiau tyrimo duomenys rodo lyties veiksnio įtaką ir leidžia teigti, kad sportuojantys paaugliai naudoja platesnį patyčių formų spektrą nei nesportuojantys tos pačios lyties paaugliai.

Prasminiai žodžiai: patyčios, patyčių formos, patyčių intensyvumas.