

Students' Perception of Mobbing in Schools in Latgale Region

Mg. educ. Aira Gribonika – Upeniece¹, Dr. paed. doc. Sandra Zariņa²

¹ Daugavpils University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Daugavpils, Latvia. Email: arice@inbox.lv

² Daugavpils University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Daugavpils, Latvia. Email: sandra.zarina@du.lv

KEYWORDS

educational environment, Latgale schools, mobbing, students

ABSTRACT

Mobbing is a pressing problem that has a significant impact on students' emotional well-being and the educational environment. The aim of this study was to find out and analyse students' perceptions of the prevalence of mobbing in schools in the Latgale region. In order to obtain data, a quantitative research method was used - a questionnaire survey, in which 100 students from different cities of Latgale participated. The results of the survey show that almost a third of pupils have experienced mobbing, indicating the widespread nature of the problem and its negative consequences. Mobbing in schools is not only harmful to students' emotional and psychological health, but also has serious consequences for the educational environment as a whole, such as impairing academic performance, fostering alienation and disrupting group dynamics. The study focused on the characteristics of mobbing, its prevalence and students' subjective views on the problem. The findings underline the urgent need for effective mechanisms to prevent and recognise mobbing, which would help educational institutions to create a safe and supportive environment for pupils. This includes both educating teachers and parents on the signs of mobbing and working with students in a targeted way to build respectful relationships and a positive learning environment.

1. Introduction

1.1. The problem of mobbing and its impact on the educational environment in Latvia

Emotional violence, including mobbing as a form of emotional abuse, is widespread. It is systematic, repeated and prolonged against a single learner and causes psychological distress [21]. One in three learners is bullied at school every month worldwide [28]. Research on bullying in Latvia shows frightening statistics: in 2018, Latvia was the clear leader in terms of bullying and violence between students among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union (EU) countries [20]. When studying the manifestations of mobbing in Latvia, it can be concluded that most of the mobbing in Latvian schools is emotional mobbing, manifested in social exclusion, humiliation and gossip [18]. Research conducted in Latvia confirms that mobbing is a serious problem in Latvian educational institutions - at least 68% of heads of Latvian educational institutions admit that mobbing is regularly observed [2]. It is not only students who face mobbing in educational institutions, but also teachers themselves and the head of the educational institution [9].

1.2. The manifestations of mobbing and its impact on students' emotional well-being

Mobbing is repeated psychological terror, violence, threats, intimidation, based on the behaviour of a group towards one person, whether in the family, at school, at work, among neighbours or online. Mobbing is caused by many personal problems, and is also fuelled by tensions in interpersonal relationships: danger, competition, envy, revenge, frustration, antipathy, fear [13]. The term mobbing is often used synonymously with words such as emotional abuse, psychological terror, bullying, taunting, hooliganism. Several researchers agree that mobbing is repeated, sustained, non-physical violence against an individual. Mobbing is much more subtle and difficult to spot. It involves emotional and psychological manipulation [17]. Mobbing is a struggle for power and status within the collective. It is gained at the expense of other pupils, using anything as a reason - better grades, different musical tastes and interests, financial status, physical limitations, etc. The perpetrators of mobbing have more status and power among their peers than their victims. By humiliating a peer, the pupil gains prominence in the classroom, possibly creating fear among other classmates, thus gaining power that is not gained in a positive and democratic way. Mobbing poses particular risks for

vulnerable students, such as students with disabilities, refugees or students affected by migration, students who are marginalised, students belonging to a minority group, or simply students who are different from their peer group [16].

1.3. Mobbing factors and impact on the educational environment in Latgale region

Social and economic conditions influence the prevalence of mobbing in schools in the Latgale region. The quality may differ from other regions of Latvia. Latgale is a region of Latvia with cultural and social specificities. It is very different from other regions in the country, as it is experiencing a faster population decline and higher unemployment than other Latvian regions. Latgale is the region of Latvia with the highest unemployment rate and the lowest wages [31]. In August 2024, 11142 unemployed people or 10.5% were registered in Latgale. The decline in the number of pupils is most acute in primary schools, especially in Latgale, where the number of primary schools has fallen by 12% in three years. The number of pupils in primary education reflects the general demographic situation in the country and the region - it is one of the lowest at all levels of education among the regions [11]. A study on mobbing in schools in the Latgale region may be useful as it will help to understand the problem related to the well-being of pupils. It can be used by schools, teachers, parents, social workers who can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of mobbing, which would help to develop appropriate support measures as well as more effective solutions to improve the school environment in schools in the Latgale region. The study on mobbing in Latgale schools is important because mobbing negatively affects students' emotional state, well-being in the school environment and impairs their growth and personal development, and is an obstacle to high academic achievement. Mobbing is often associated with low academic achievement. Research shows that in schools where mobbing is prevalent, the quality of teaching suffers. Victims may experience emotional distress, which has a negative impact on their ability to concentrate on their studies and achieve good results. The more often a pupil is mobbed, the worse his/her academic performance [19]. Mobbing at school affects the quality of education and scientific research confirms this. Students find it difficult to concentrate, miss lessons, and avoid school activities, leading to drop-outs [28]. Also, bullies who engage in mobbing often have problems with academic performance, as they may feel less motivated to learn and significantly disrupt the learning process for themselves and others [21]. In order to promote a safe environment, educational institutions need to develop a system that regularly identifies incidents of physical and emotional abuse, assesses and plans necessary actions to reduce such incidents [7]. The risk is higher if mobbing is prolonged and the victim lacks adequate social support. Studies have shown that students who are repeatedly victimised by mobbing have a dislike of the school environment [23]. Mobbing signals that there is a crisis in the organisational culture. It can be caused by many factors - values, structural, psychological, communication, etc [33]. That's why school support staff play an important role in dealing with mobbing situations. There is a lack of support staff in schools in Latvia and Latgale, whose daily job is to provide professional advice to students and teachers. In the Latvian education system, the problem is the lack of teachers and their professionalism, as teachers are often retrained for another subject [12]. Often a teacher who is not competent in this field becomes a social pedagogue because he or she lacks the necessary knowledge to deal with mobbing problems. In addition, the remuneration is not motivating. This is also due to the fact that schools offer low rates and the work of a social pedagogue can be carried out by an existing teacher who has completed a professional development course.

Aim of the scientific article: to find out and analyse students' opinion on the prevalence of mobbing in schools in Latgale region.

1.4. Theoretical aspects of mobbing and roles of participants in the mobbing process among schoolchildren

Konrad Lorenz was the first to study animal behaviour not only as a biological instinct, but also as a social problem that can affect group dynamics. These studies were also important for understanding

how similar forms of aggression can manifest themselves in human societies, as mobbing often occurs in this way - aggression is directed against weaker or different individuals in a group. He Konrad Lorenz studied animal behaviour and aggression, which helps to explain mobbing among schoolchildren. He believed that aggression is a natural way for animals to establish hierarchy and survive. Similarly, in human groups, aggression, such as mobbing, is used to gain power and control others [15].

The first scientific interpretation of mobbing was given and focused on as a form of psychological violence and defined as a serious problem in organisations by the German-born Swedish psychologist, Professor H. Leiman, in the 1960s. He studied mobbing in schools, where he noticed hostile behaviour by students [14]. Leymann described mobbing as a prolonged, psychological terror or emotional assault at school, carried out with the aim of ostracising or isolating an individual from the collective. Leiman described mobbing as hostile and unethical communication systematically directed by one or many persons against another person. In his view, mobbing is a severe psychological assault that can be particularly damaging and can undermine an individual's ability to function effectively in a school environment.

Olweus (1993) was a Norwegian psychologist and professor at the University of Bergen, who in the 1970s started the first extensive research on mobbing in schools. He explained mobbing as a situation in which one or more individuals are subjected to systematic negative actions and attitudes by their peers over a long period of time. Olweus carried out extensive research on the causes, consequences and ways to prevent bullying. He created a mobbing prevention programme that is still widely used in Scandinavia, the USA and Europe. For more than 10 years, the OECD PISA study found that countries with national-level anti-bullying programmes had, on average, a lower prevalence of bullying than countries without such programmes. The study mentions a number of elements that should be addressed in the design of anti-bullying programmes: creating a safe and positive environment in schools and classrooms; systematic data collection on violence and bullying in schools; educating teachers and educators about violence, bullying and classroom management; supporting victims of bullying; and others [34].

Mobbing can be described as a process of humiliation. It can be divided into four main types [1].

Physical mobbing - All actions that involve the use of force against one person. It is the physical squeezing of a person.

Verbal mobbing - Verbal humiliation, ridicule. Words spoken to ridicule and insult someone. It can also happen with gestures.

Social mobbing - Abusive damage to a person's status and reputation. It is spreading rumors, ignoring and ostracizing.

Virtual mobbing - Using email, social networks to spread messages, images that hurt the victim [19].

Mobbing involves the following actors: the bully, the victim and the bystander. Each of them plays an important role in the development and prevention of mobbing [30]. The actors involved in the mobbing process are illustrated in the diagram below.

Bully – a person who performs mobbing in a person-to-person or virtual environment.

Victim – a person against whom mobbing is directed in a face-to-face or virtual environment.

Bystanders – a person who witnesses situations of mobbing in person or virtual environment.

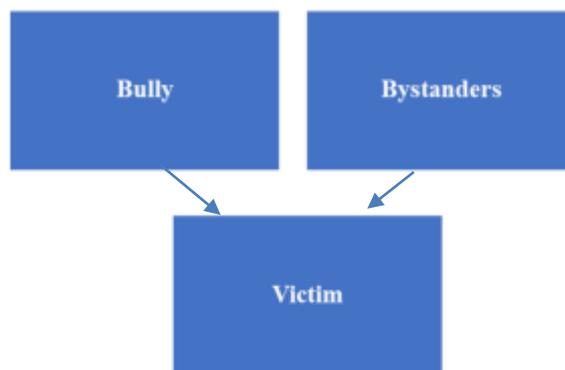


Figure 1. Roles of the actors in the mobbing process (diagram by the author)

1.5. The effects of mobbing on pupils' emotional and physical health

The consequences of mobbing are the basis for many psychological and somatic illnesses [10]. Adults who admit to having been violent towards their peers at school are much more likely to show depression or signs of it than those who have not been violent [25]. During their teenage years, they may drop out of school, use alcohol. These individuals also use aggression against their own children, which leads to these children becoming perpetrators of violence, continuing the cycle of mobbing [3]. Individuals who have played any role in mobbing can face far-reaching consequences in later life. Studies have shown that bullied students remain at higher risk of depression, agoraphobia (fear of leaving the house, going into shops, fear of crowds and crowded places) and other anxiety and panic disorders in adulthood [34]. Students who are victims of mobbing have more negative thoughts and feelings about themselves than children who have not experienced mobbing. Victims of bullying blame themselves, which leads to guilt and low self-esteem. Feelings of 'something is wrong with me' and 'nobody needs me' can have consequences in the future. These pupils become self-absorbed, spend time alone and this can affect the development of their communication (communication difficulties) skills with other people. They often feel fear of another humiliation. This, of course, has a negative impact on concentration and can lead to lower academic performance [27]. It is because of mobbing that pupils may start to miss lessons and not attend school. Headaches or other pains caused by stress and nervous tension (physical symptoms) may occur. Facing mobbing shapes perceptions of the world around us and of human relationships. Students may feel distrust towards people around them, which can lead to problems in future when building relationships with peers [4]. Data from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries show that the proportion of students who are frequent victims of mobbing is 7% higher in schools with a poor classroom climate than in schools with a positive classroom climate [28].

1.6. The role of the educational environment in preventing mobbing

Mobbing at school has become a widespread social problem. According to a study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Latvia ranked first in the European Union for the prevalence of mobbing in school in 2018 [20]. The National Service for Quality in Education has turned its attention to this problem and, in collaboration with Edurio, has organised a study on quality monitoring for inclusive education. More than a third, or 37%, of pupils say they have been subjected to emotional and physical violence or mobbing in person in the last six months. Moreover, students experience different types of abuse not only from classmates and other students, but also from teachers and even parents. Overall, one in three pupils suffers mobbing in person and one in four in the digital environment [7]. Peer-on-peer violence is a struggle for power and status in the classroom. In the classroom or at school, a peculiar system is set up - roles are divided into victim, perpetrator and bystander. The bystanders are not always pupils, but can also be adults. Teachers have a duty to pay attention to the physical safety and health of the pupils in their charge and act as role models. Pupils feel very strongly about the teacher's response to mobbing situations. In the absence of intervention,

perpetrators are encouraged in their actions and victims are discouraged from seeking help. One of the best ways to limit mobbing is to improve the overall environment of the educational establishment, where mobbing is not tolerated and bystanders are motivated to get involved, preventing the situation from escalating or covering up for the victims. Teachers can therefore prevent mobbing situations through their behaviour, but also (indirectly) contribute to them. Bullying in schools is a serious challenge and effective prevention requires a coordinated approach from teachers, parents and school support staff. Early recognition of mobbing: Teachers need to be able to identify mobbing situations early by actively communicating with pupils. A coordinated approach that creates a supportive and safe school environment is important. This includes early recognition of mobbing, teachers' attitudes, positive role models and cooperation. Early recognition of mobbing: teachers should be able to identify mobbing situations early by actively communicating with students.

Teachers' attitudes: Teachers should take a clear and firm stance against mobbing, ensuring that all pupils feel safe.

Positive example: Teachers, support staff should create a supportive environment, showing good relationships with colleagues, pupils and parents.

Cooperation. Parents should be involved in the life of the school and work with teachers, support staff to solve problems together.

This approach promotes a supportive and safe school environment where children can learn and develop without mobbing [4]. Teachers not only need to be able to recognise mobbing, but to create an atmosphere where mobbing does not occur. Research shows that a supportive and caring school environment is associated with less mobbing and a lower willingness of students to seek help [21]. In schools where students perceive greater fairness, feel a sense of belonging, and work in a more disciplined, structured and collaborative environment, students are less likely to engage in risky and violent behaviour [20]. Society needs to change. The school environment is not only shaped by the teacher, but also by the student, the parents, the school principal, and the fight against a negative environment must be a joint effort [5]. A positive school environment reduces mobbing. Mobbing is more likely to occur in schools with poor discipline and where teachers treat students unfairly [28].

1.7. Effective solutions to combat mobbing in the Latvian education system

In recent years, the state, local authorities and non-governmental organisations have implemented various activities and measures to reduce mobbing in the educational environment. Guidelines to reduce mobbing in primary and secondary education have been developed to help improve the situation. These guidelines were developed as a result of cooperation between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Welfare. These institutions, in cooperation with other institutions and organisations, are currently implementing important activities in the field of violence reduction in educational environments [29]. In the 2024/2025 school year, a Kiva-Bullying Prevention Programme is already operational in 176 Latvian schools, helping to reduce bullying and create a safer environment for pupils. Several schools in Latgale have also joined the programme. This significant increase from 61 to 176 schools is a clear indication of the growing interest and need for effective solutions to combat bullying [8].

2. Methods

The study used a quantitative data collection method - a questionnaire survey involving 100 students from different cities in Latgale (Preili, Rezekne, Daugavpils, Krāslava, Ludza, Līvāni, Zilupe). The survey consisted of 19 questions and took up to 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. A Likert scale was used for several questions. The questionnaires were prepared electronically and posters were produced with an OR code which respondents could scan to answer the questions. The questionnaires were sent to Latgale libraries, sports administrations, Latgale youth centres for distribution, and several Latgale regional administrations were sent

information about the survey. The questionnaires were also posted on social networks.

The majority of the participants came from the Latgale cities of Daugavpils and Rezekne, as well as from Aglona, Balvi, Krāslava, Ludza, Livani, Preili and Zilupe. 62% of women and 38% of men took part in the survey.

3. Results and Discussion

The majority of the participants came from the Latgale cities of Daugavpils and Rezekne, as well as from Aglona, Balvi, Krāslava, Ludza, Livani, Preili and Zilupe. 62% of women and 38% of men took part in the survey.

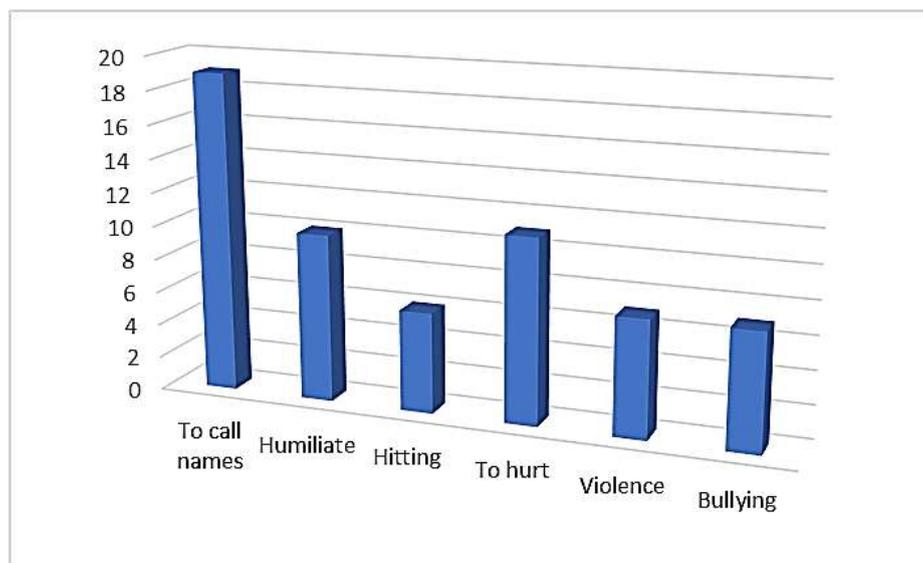


Figure 2. Words with which students associate mobbing at school

The results show that students perceive bullying mainly as emotional, not physical, violence. The words most often associated with mobbing are "To call names" (19 times), "To hurt" (11 times) and "Humiliate" (10 times), "Hitting" (6 times), Bullying (7 times), Violence (7 times), which, however, are more indicative of emotional mobbing. This shows that mobbing at school often takes the form of verbal aggression. 27.3% of the respondents had experienced mobbing at school in the last 12 months, but 21.2% had difficulty answering this question, while 51% said they had not experienced mobbing at school. According to the survey, almost one third of the 27% of pupils have experienced bullying at school, which is enough to draw attention to the problem. Many pupils may not be aware that they have experienced mobbing, as they may not have a clear understanding of what mobbing is and what it entails. Neklusē is a social initiative set up in Latvia to reduce bullying in schools and elsewhere in society. Its main aim is to promote open and safe communication about emotional abuse, offering solutions for schools, students and parents. In the Neklusē 2021/2022 study, 46% of pupils had experienced and more than half 54% had not experienced mobbing at school [18]. According to the 2022/2023 school year survey data from the Latvian student habit study, 19% of teenagers reported experiencing bullying at school, with nearly equal proportions of boys and girls. The proportion of bullying victims among 15-year-olds is lower than in younger age groups [26]. Research indicates that the number of bullying victims decreases as students grow older. This suggests that 15-year-old boys and girls encounter bullying less frequently than younger students. This trend could be attributed to various factors, such as maturation, improved conflict-resolution skills or changes in the social environment, where older students often have more stable peer relationships. Survey data show that 56.3% of students have not personally experienced bullying at school, indicating a positive school environment for more than half of the students. However, 18.4% reported being directly victimized, while 24.1% observed bullying incidents involving others. Students rarely admitted to being perpetrators of bullying. Similarly, in the "Neklusē" 2021/2022 study, only 4% of surveyed students

admitted to harming others. This implies that the remaining 96% have at some point been involved in situations where their actions could have hurt others. Students often do not perceive themselves as bullies, even when such behavior occurs [18]. 13.7% indicated that they have seen someone being harmed every day. 18.9% reported seeing it several times, and an equal 18.9% once a week. Only 9.5% answered that they have seen it once a month. Meanwhile, 23.2% have never seen it. In general, it can be concluded that students notice bullying situations relatively often, as only a small percentage responded that they see it rarely, and only a smaller portion of students have not noticed it.

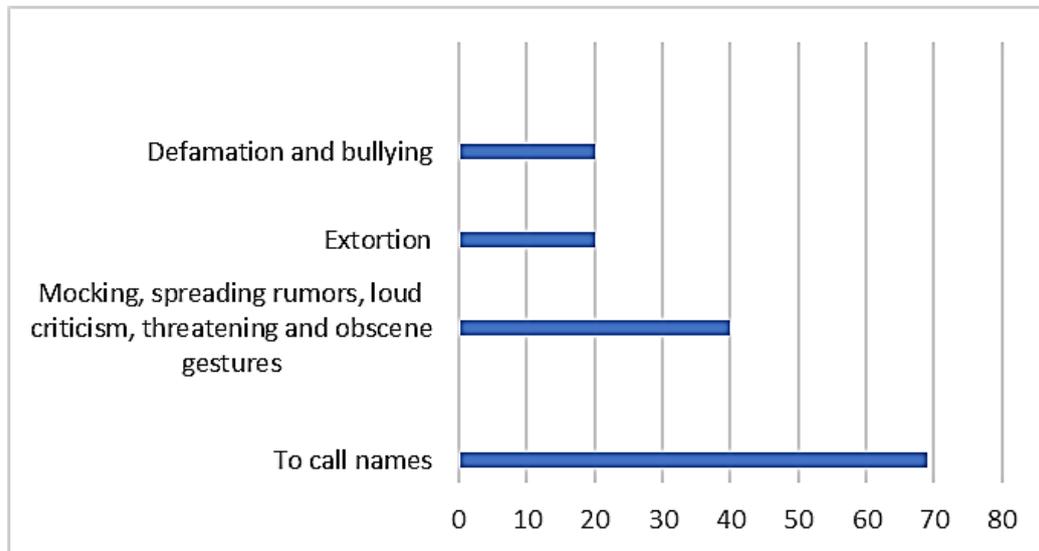


Figure 3. Shows the types of mobbing manifestations observed by students

The survey data indicates that students primarily observe emotional mobbing, with the most common form being name calling. More than 69% of students confirmed name calling, while over 40% mentioned other forms such as mocking, spreading rumors, loud criticism, and using threatening gestures. Comparatively, more overtly aggressive forms of mobbing, such as extortion, defamation and bullying were less commonly observed, with only up to 20% of students reporting it.

40% of the 100 surveyed students primarily experienced name-calling, which is a similar finding to a previous study where students also reported name-calling as the main negative experience. 30% of students experienced being ignored and excluded, mocking of their appearance and speech, as well as loud criticism. Meanwhile, up to 30% of the surveyed students indicated they had experienced teasing, ridicule, and the spreading of rumors. Only slightly more than and less than 20% of students reported threatening and obscene gestures, as well as cyberbullying. This confirms that students report observing more cyberbullying, but they relate it less directly to themselves. The results of the Latvian Students' Health Behavior Study for the 2022/2023 school year indicate that 8.8% of adolescents have experienced cyberbullying [26]. While this is not a very high figure, it is comparatively higher in Latgale. Students also reported observing threatening and obscene gestures less directed at themselves than at other students. One of the responses mentioned experiencing mockery due to skin color. International studies reveal that physical appearance is the most common reason for bullying, while race, ethnicity, or skin color is the second most common reason [28]. It was also mentioned that teachers sometimes use their authority to undermine a student's self-esteem by giving low grades.

Calling names is one of the most prominent forms of mobbing in schools in the Latgale region. In smaller schools or communities, where people may be more closely connected, there tends to be a greater inclination to talk about others, which can easily turn into calling names. This can create pressure on students and contribute to the spread of negative attitudes. The Latgale region may have specific social norms or behavioral patterns that support calling names as a way of expressing frustration or dissatisfaction with others.

The majority of students say they would sometimes support the person being harmed, and it is very concerning when bystanders of mobbing situations do not want to intervene [22]. The 2021/2022 study conducted by the "Neklusē" initiative also shows that 44% of students do nothing to help the victim [18]. Students often do not want to get involved in preventing mobbing for various reasons. These reasons are related to fear, social pressure, a lack of knowledge about ways to help, and emotional distancing. Fear of negative consequences is often a key factor [10]. Many students fear that by defending the victim, they themselves will become the next targets of mobbing. These fears are particularly strong when the bully is popular or seen as influential in the group. There may also be a lack of support from the school, and students understand that it is not worth getting involved, as well as uncertainty about how they can help [4]. The majority of students in all OECD countries expressed a negative attitude towards mobbing and a positive attitude towards defending victims. On average, in all OECD countries, 90% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they like it when someone stands up for other students who are being bullied, 88% of students agreed or strongly agreed that it is good to help students who cannot defend themselves, 87% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they feel bad seeing other students being bullied, and 81% of students reported that it bothers them when no one defends the bullied students [20]. Overall, it can be concluded that although students mostly do not support perpetrators, they lack the courage to support the victims of mobbing.

5% of students have experienced mobbing from school leadership. Only 20% and slightly more have experienced mobbing from teachers, while 30% and more have experienced mobbing from friends. In the "Neklusē" 2021/2022 study, only 4% indicated that teachers had harmed them [18]. Comparing these studies, it can be concluded that, proportionally, more students face mobbing from teachers in schools in Latgale.

Over 50% of students indicated that they would talk to their parents if they experienced mobbing. Meanwhile, 40% of students said they would speak with their friends. 20% or more of students would talk to their class teacher. Only less than 20% of students would speak with their classmates, teachers, school psychologist, or social educator. More than 50% stated that they definitely would not talk to school leadership. Over 40% of students definitely would not talk to the school psychologist, social educator, teachers, classmates, or class teacher. Students' actions in mobbing situations are closely linked to their personal trust and beliefs about available support. This means that students choose with whom to share their problems based on how much they trust a particular person or institution.

Comparing the "Neklusē" organization's study with this one, it can be concluded that in Latgale, students trust support staff less, and it appears that proportionally fewer students in Latgale spoke with teachers when they were subjected to mobbing. However, there is a high level of trust in parents and friends. In Latgale, the family is often seen as the main source of support and security, rooted in the region's strong family values and traditional lifestyle. Parents are viewed as trustworthy and authoritative figures. There may also be fewer available professionals, such as school psychologists or social educators, in Latgale, which could influence students' trust in these resources. Additionally, friendships in Latgale can be very significant, as people in smaller communities often form closer and more lasting relationships. In smaller communities, such as in Latgale, friendships and peer relationships often play a more important role, which influences students' responses to problems like mobbing.

67% or fewer students responded that there is a classmate with whom they do not wish to speak or be friends with for at least half a year. In the "Neklusē" 2021/2022 study, 48% of students indicated that they ignore a classmate [18]. In Latgale schools, it is important to foster positive relationships, communication, and collaboration. It is a team effort, involving social engagement and communication. Students need to strengthen their social and emotional competencies.

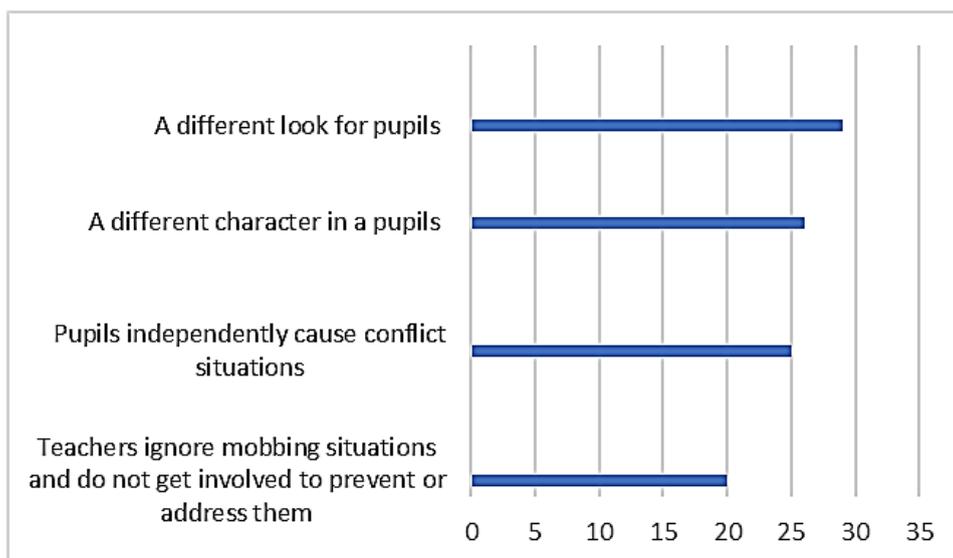


Figure 4. Students' answers to the question "Why do mobbing situations occur in the classroom and at school?"

There are good schools, but there are also schools where the extra-curricular arrangements are not good enough. Pupils spend their free time in different ways, depending on the school's capacity and internal rules. Often, conflicts break out between children during school breaks, and pupils even find special places in schools that are less supervised, so they can then explain their relationships. A quality environment and better supervision during breaks can significantly reduce the risk of violence and mobbing [6].

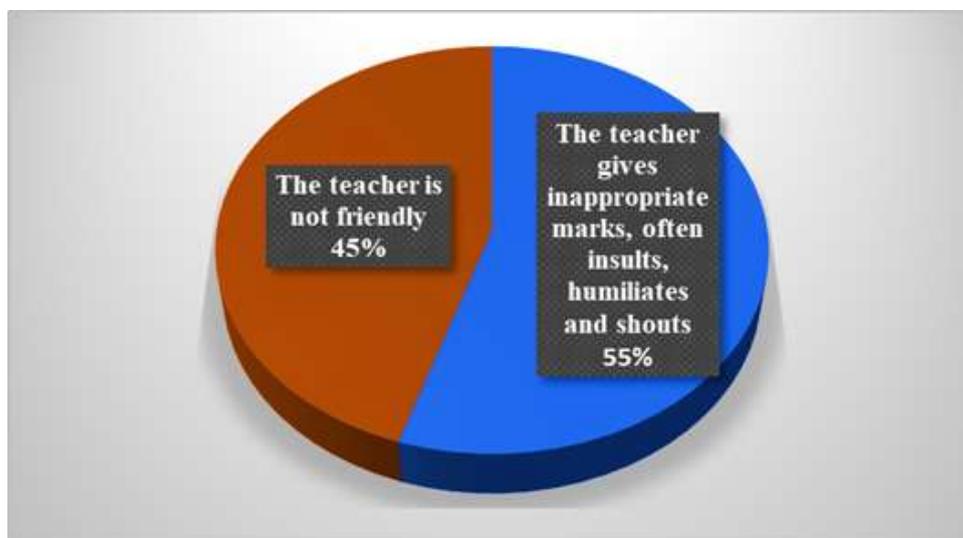


Figure 5. Students' responses to the question "Why do you think there might be mobbing of teachers by students?"

One student pointed out: "The teacher creeps into personal life and makes comments to the pupil in front of others". Almost a quarter of the students indicated that the teacher is not friendly, so there can be mobbing against teachers. In the study, almost half of the pupils indicated that mobbing against teachers can occur because the teacher gives inappropriate grades, frequently insults, humiliates and shouts. However, the Ombudsman's 2015 study on the prevalence of violence against pupils in Latvia showed that 72% of teachers themselves reported shouting at pupils as a form of mobbing. Specifically, 72% of teachers who participated in the survey said that shouting at pupils was one of the forms of mobbing that they themselves recognized as present. This shows that teachers are aware that such behavior is unacceptable, and that it is common enough in educational settings against pupils [27].

55% of students said they had the opportunity to learn and talk more about mobbing at school, but almost a third would like to know more about it. "In the Neklusē 2021-2022 study, 23% of teachers surveyed had not spoken to pupils about bullying in the last year, while 43% only talk about it when they have experienced bullying [18]. This shows that there is a need for a wider range of solutions in the education system to prevent both emotional and physical violence before the effects are irreversible [6].

Almost 45% of students said that friendly relationships in class and at school help build school values that everyone knows and respects. Many schools in Latvia have agreed on their values, and Latgale schools have too, but it is important not only to write them down, but also to put them into practice in the learning process. Not only knowledge and skills, but also values shape people and the kind of society we are becoming. That is why values formation is also an essential part of education. In the improved content and approach to general education, values are not the task of one teacher - the class teacher. They permeate the whole curriculum: values are embedded in the broader aims and outcomes of education in all areas of learning, and are also expressed in teaching approaches and relationships with pupils, in the internal culture of the school and in the wider community. "Values are what help us to understand what is most important, what is central, what gives meaning to learning, what motivates us to make the effort to become better," said Zane Ozoliņa, Head of Curriculum Implementation at Skola 2030 [32]. The results of the pupil survey show that posters on the walls of lobbies do not matter and a third of respondents say it is important to have a plan of action in case of mobbing. Rules of procedure do matter, but schools in Latgale should develop these rules together with pupils, so that pupils have a much better understanding, and so that pupils themselves can come up with joint solutions and improvements.

4. Conclusions

The problem of mobbing in Latgale schools is significant and widespread:

The analysis of scientific literature and existing research on mobbing in schools has shown that mobbing is a significant problem not only in the Latgale region, but also on a wider scale in Latvia. Research points to different forms of mobbing (verbal, physical, social) and how these problems affect students' emotional and psychological health. The prevalence of mobbing in Latgale schools is similar to other schools in Latvia, but in some localities the problem is even more pronounced, which could be linked to socio-economic conditions. The survey data reveal that 56.3% of pupils have not personally experienced mobbing, indicating a positive experience for more than half of the pupils. However, 18.4% of pupils reported personal experience of mobbing and 24.1% observed mobbing of others, which shows the importance of the problem and its prevalence.

The consequences of mobbing and the need for early intervention:

Mobbing can have serious psychological and physical consequences, such as depression, anxiety and sleep disturbances, as well as negatively affecting students' learning outcomes and contributing to social isolation. Early intervention is essential to prevent long-term consequences. Parents, teachers and friends play an important role in supporting pupils. Effective support helps pupils to recover from trauma. The study highlights the need for a support system to mitigate the effects of mobbing.

Observing mobbing but not getting involved:

The survey results show that many students notice mobbing situations, but most choose not to get involved to prevent it. This indicates students' inertia and feelings of fear in the face of such conflicts.

Trust in parents and friends rather than school:

Students trust their parents and friends more than school staff when they are confronted with mobbing. This may indicate a lack of trust in teachers and support staff, which in turn reduces students' chances of receiving help from the school.

The role of schools and teachers:

Survey data show that students often experience negative attitudes from teachers (such as inappropriate grading, shouting or humiliation), which could contribute to mobbing and create a negative environment.

Differences as a cause of mobbing:

Students mentioned that mobbing at school often occurs because of differences in appearance or personality. This points to the need to create an inclusive school environment where diversity is accepted.

Defining and embedding school values:

The majority of pupils in the survey mentioned that school values matter and therefore need to be shared and embedded in the learning process and at school (School, 2030, 2019).

References:

- [1]. Andersone, I., Ausekle, G., Beināre, D. (2005). Skolas loma darbā ar mobingu. Rīga: Izglītības un jaunatnes sporta departaments.
- [2]. Butlere-Bērziņa, M., Voronenko, L. (2016). Mobinga novēršanas programma (agresijas līmeņa mazināšanai klašu kolektīvos). Rīga: Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds.
- [3]. Duffy, M., Sperry, L. (2012). Mobbing: Causes, consequences, and solutions. NY: Oxford University Press.
- [4]. Džimba. (2015). Drošības soļu programma. Iegūts no <https://dzimba.lv>.
- [5]. Gaigala, D. (2022). Kā risināsim mobinga problēmas pret skolotāju izglītības iestādē? Iegūts no <https://epale.ec.europa.eu>.
- [6]. Izglītības kvalitātes valsts dienests. (2024). Izstrādāti risinājumi emocionālās un fiziskās vardarbības mazināšanai izglītības vidē. Iegūts no <https://www.ikvd.gov.lv>.
- [7]. Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. (2020). Vienoti pret mobingu – mazinās skolās esošo emocionālo un fizisko vardarbību. Iegūts no <https://www.izm.gov.lv>.
- [8]. Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija. (2023). Latvijas skolās darbu uzsāk KiVa bulinga novēršanas programma. Iegūts no <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/latvijas-skolas-darbu-uzsak-kiva-bulinga-noversanas-programma>.
- [9]. Jēgere, S. (2019). Izglītības iestādes sagatavotība mobinga gadījumu risināšanā starp skolēniem. 13. Starptautiskā zinātniskā konference "Sabiedrība. Integrācija. Izglītība". Rēzekne: Rēzeknes Tehnoloģiju akadēmija, 156–170. Iegūts no <https://journals.rta.lv>.
- [10]. Kaša, L., Safanova, V. (2014). Sociālā pedagoga profesionālās lomas, strādājot ar mobinga izpausmēm skolā. Rīga: Jumi Mk.
- [11]. Latgales plānošanas reģions. (2021). Latgales plānošanas reģiona publiskais pārskats par 2021. gadu. Iegūts no https://lpr.gov.lv/wp-content/uploads/2007/parskats/1_PP_LPR_2021.pdf
- [12]. LSM (2023). Pedagogu trūkums, neprofesionalitāte un nepietiekams atbalsts darbā - Latvijas izglītības sistēmas klupšanas akmeņi. Iegūts no <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/dzive--stils/vecaki-un-berni/04.07.2023-pedagogu-trukums-neprofesionalitate-un-nepietiekams-atbalsts-darba-latvijas-izglitibas-sistemas-klupsanas-akmeni.a515362/>
- [13]. Leonavičius, V. (2004). Mobingas. VLE. Iegūts no <https://www.vle.lt>.
- [14]. Leymann, H. (1996). The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5(2), 165–184. Iegūts no <https://doi.org>.
- [15]. Lorenz, K. (1966). On aggression. Harcourt, Brace & World.
- [16]. Menesini, E., & Salmivalli, C. (2017). Bullying in schools: The state of knowledge and effective interventions. *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22(sup1), 240–253. Iegūts no <https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740>.
- [17]. Namie, G., Namie, R. (2009). US Workplace bullying: Some basic considerations and consultation interventions. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 61(3), 202. Iegūts no <https://doi.org>.
- [18]. Neklusē. (2022). Pētījums par mobingu 2021./2022. m.g. Iegūts no <https://nekluse.lv>.
- [19]. O'Mūra, M., Mintons, S. Dž. (2010). Kā novērst vardarbību skolās. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.

- [20]. OECD. (2019). What School Life Means for Students' Lives. PISA 2018 Results (Volume III). Iegūts no <https://doi.org>.
- [21]. Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- [22]. Olweus, Dan & Limber, Susan. (2010). Bullying in School: Evaluation and Dissemination of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. *The American journal of orthopsychiatry*. 80. 124-34. 10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01015.x.
- [23]. Rigby, K. (2003). Consequences of bullying in schools. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 48(9), 583–590. Iegūts no <https://doi.org>.
- [24]. Skola 2030. (2019). Vērtības – būtiska mūsdienu sabiedrības un arī izglītības daļa. Iegūts no <https://www.skola2030.lv>.
- [25]. Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs (2022). Pašnāvības riska pazīmes. Iegūts no <https://www.spkc.gov.lv/lv/pasnavibas-risks>.
- [26]. Slimību profilakses un kontroles centrs. (2024). Latvijas skolēnu veselības paradumu pētījums 2022./2023. mācību gada aptaujas rezultāti un tendences. Iegūts no <https://www.spkc.gov.lv/lv/media/21564/download?attachment>
- [27]. Tiesībsargs. (2015). Vardarbība pret bērniem. Iegūts no <https://www.tiesibsargs.lv>.
- [28]. UNESCO. (2019). *Behind the Numbers: Ending School Violence and Bullying*. Paris: UNESCO. Iegūts no <https://unesdoc.unesco.org>.
- [29]. Veselības ministrija. (2023). Kā pasargāt bērnu no ņirgāšanās. Ieteikumi visu vecāku bērnu vecākiem. Iegūts no <https://www.esparveselibu.lv>.
- [30]. Veselības ministrija. (2023). Vadlīnijas ņirgāšanās mazināšanai pamatskolas un vidusskolas izglītības iestādēs. Iegūts no <https://www.esparveselibu.lv>.
- [31]. Valsts nodarbinātības aģentūra. (2024). Reģistrētais bezdarba līmenis valstī. Iegūts no <https://www.nva.gov.lv>.
- [32]. Skola 2030. (2019). Vērtības – būtiska mūsdienu sabiedrības un arī izglītības daļa. Iegūts no <https://www.skola2030.lv>.
- [33]. Vveinhardt, J. (2011). The model of the causes of mobbing: individual, organisation, social environment. *Profesinēs studijos: teorija ir praktika*, 8, 325–331. Iegūts no <https://www.researchgate.net>.
- [34]. Ūdris, R. (2024). Mobings. Iegūts no <https://enciklopedija.lv>.