

Prevalence of bullying and harassment in youth sport: The case of different types of sport and participant role

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Studies on participation of various social groups in sports reveal not only positive but also negative impact of this activity on the person's health, well-being and future. A particularly serious social problem in sport is the aggressive behaviour of all participants, which can also manifest itself as bullying and cause a number of negative consequences. The aim of the research is to identify the prevalence of bullying and harassment in organized sport in the case of individual, combat, team sports and participant roles. **Methodology.** A supplemented version of *Bullying and harassment in sport questionnaire* (BHISQ) was used to conduct the survey. The survey involved 1440 participants of organized sport. **Findings:** Almost one third of research participants in the team sports identified themselves as victims, which is significantly more than the sum of the results of two remaining groups. Comparing the percentages of victims' and bystanders' confessions, it has been found that bullying in individual sports can be significantly more active; i.e., the number of athletes who have seen bullying is significantly higher than the number of athletes who have named themselves as victims. The highest manifestation of bullying unfolds in team sports, where most – almost one fifth – of respondents attributed the role of the bully against their team member(s) to themselves, while the percentages of bullies against opponents in combat and team sports are similar. In combat and team sports, unlike in the individual sports, the roles of bullies against opponents, unfolding in bullying actions, are more frequently expressed.

Keywords: Bullying; Harassment; Organized sport; Athletes; Lithuania.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, scholars became increasingly interested in the “*dark side of sport*”, looking for answers which phenomena have a negative effect on the well-being of the younger generation (Newman et al., 2016; Bean et al., 2014). Along with distinguished problems related to athlete trauma, doping use, depression, fraud, such serious social problem as negative interpersonal relationships among sports activity participants, manifesting themselves as bullying and harassment, is singled out as well (Stirling et al., 2011; Fisher and Dzikus, 2017). Despite the approach of sports practitioners and the public that bullying in sport should be a taboo (Nery et al., 2020), over the last decade, this phenomenon in sport was increasingly analysed by researchers of various countries (Steinfeldt et al., 2012; Shannon, 2013; Evans et al., 2016; Kerr et al., 2016; Vveinhardt et al., 2017; Nery et al., 2019; Vveinhardt and Fominiene, 2019).

Analysing bullying and harassment in sport, as in other contexts too, even along with the remaining search for a fundamental conception, it is agreed that this is a specific type of relational aggressive behaviour causing harm to a person or a group of individuals, which is associated with power asymmetry (Bachand, 2017). Besides, designating this phenomenon as negative interpersonal behaviour, it is stated that it can take different forms: direct (like name calling and hitting) and indirect (like social exclusion) and manifest itself differently. Although researchers distinguish different numbers of types of traditional bullying and harassment (Salmon et al., 2018), it is stated in the sport context that most often they manifest themselves as physical, verbal, and social actions (Bachand, 2017).

However, assessment of this phenomenon and comparison of obtained data with other data pose numerous challenges. Rejecting the individual country's cultural context, usually this result from a lack of appropriate and reliable measurement methods. Conducted research applies different measurement approaches, while many of the scales used are developed for investigation of behaviour inherent in the specific school environment (Mendez-Baldwin et al., 2017). This becomes the reason for different prevalence numbers, which in the context of sport can range between 8% and 40% (Vveinhardt and Fominiene, 2019). However, the said reasons are not the only ones determining such prevalence in individual studies. Although they are not fully clear, it is maintained that another reason is different roles of persons involved in bullying and harassment episodes (Pouwels et al., 2018).

The participants of this negative behaviour come in different roles. Analysing school bullying, two main roles were distinguished: the victim role and the bully role, where the victim role is understood as the person who is bullied “*sometimes, once or several times a week over a time period of at least three months*” and the bully role is attributed to the person “*who bullies peers sometimes, once or several times a week on a repeated and systematic basis for at least three months*” (Schäfer et al., 2005, p. 3). However, it is noted that often individuals can match both described roles. In this case, there appears a role called the bully/victim role. Besides, realizing that bullying and harassment are a group process, surrounding people can also play roles when witnessing bullying and harassment of another person. In this case, another important participant role of bullying and harassment is distinguished – the role of the bystander, which is often subdivided into different types in research (Pouwels et al., 2018). However, studies conducted in the sport context are often based on traditionally designated roles such as the roles of victims, bullies and bystanders (Mishna et al., 2019). Besides, research should not ignore the fact that various participant roles often overlap or people do not attribute them to themselves in self reports (Huising and Veenstra, 2012).

These roles may also significantly differ when comparing persons involved in the episodes of this negative behaviour by gender. Although gender differences are not observed consistently, anyway, there are persons

claiming that “...girls are more likely to be defenders, outsiders, and victims and boys are more likely to be bullies, assistants, and reinforcers” (Schrooten et al., 2018, p.875).

It should be maintained that prevalence of bullying and harassment may also be influenced by the sports branch, because both belonging of sports branch to a particular group and the structure of sport may influence the aggression exhibited by athletes (Schneider and Eitzen, 2018; Ali et al., 2013), one of the expressions of which is bullying and harassment (Nery et al., 2020).

However, despite these obscurities, the results of published studies state that this is a common, serious, and particularly negative phenomenon in youth sport, which adversely affects health and psychosocial development of athletes, and its consequences are not only short-lived but can be felt throughout life (Shannon, 2013). This clearly points to the necessity of effective problem-solving tools. This requires appropriate and reliable measurement of bullying and harassment, which, according to (Cornell and Bandyopadhyay, 2010), is not only important for revealing and comparing prevalence in an individual cultural context but also even more important for identifying targets for intervention. Only such evidence-based results combined with the individual efforts of individual coaches, sports psychologists, and sports organizations will enable to form a more comprehensive approach and effectively address this problem.

The aim of the research is to identify the prevalence of bullying and harassment in organized sport in the case of individual, combat, team sports and participant roles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

The volume of the research sample was formed using random sampling, which gives every member of the population an equal probability of being included. The survey involved 1440 participants of Lithuanian organized sport (aged from 16 to 29), participating in 31 sports. Sports types were divided into three groups: individual (18 sports types; i.e., 23.8 per cent of the respondents in the total sample), combat (5 sports types; i.e., 4.1 per cent) and team (8 sports branches types; i.e., 72.1 per cent), which corresponds to the overall percentage distribution of athletes in Lithuania. Team sports groups are the most numerous in Lithuania, while combat sports distinguish themselves by the lowest number of athletes (Lithuanian Sport Statics, 2018); as the population size itself is unequal, it is natural that groups by sports differ in the number of respondents in the research sample. Analogous situation exists in organized sports with regard to men and women: there are significantly more men than women in all age groups. In 2017, there were 77 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women in Lithuania organized sport (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents' distribution by sports types and gender.

Sports types	Males		Females		Total	
	Frequencies	Per cent	Frequencies	Per cent	Frequencies	Per cent
Individual sports	134	39.1	209	60.9	343	23.8
Combat sports	39	66.1	20	33.9	59	4.1
Team sports	828	79.8	210	20.2	1038	72.1
In total:	1001	69.5	439	30.5	1440	100

Table 2. Structure of Bullying and harassment in sport questionnaire (BHISQ).

Parts	Scales		Subscales	N of items			
I. Anti-social behaviour and aggression in sport	ASBAS	1.1. Antisocial behaviour in sport	ABS	1.1.1. Antisocial teammate	AT	4	1
				1.1.2. Antisocial opponent	AO	8	1
		1.2. Aggression and anger in competition	AAC	1.2.1. Anger	AN	6	2
				1.2.2. Aggressiveness	AG	6	2
		1.3. Types of aggression during trainings and competitions	TATC	1.3.1. Physical aggression	PA	7	3*
				1.3.2. Verbal aggression	VA	8	3*
1.3.3. Indirect aggression	IA			8	3*		
II. Bullying and harassment actions in sport	BHAIS	2.1. Athletes, initiating and experiencing bullying	AIEB	2.1.1. Bully role	BR	9	4
				2.1.2. Victim role	VR	4	4
	2.2. Communication obstacles in teammates interrelationship	COTI	2.2.1. Communication	CO	10	5	
			2.2.2. Isolation	IS	6	5	
	2.3. Formation of negative approach and the pattern of sport tasks	FNAT	2.3.1. Reputation	RE	17	5*	
			2.3.2. Tasks	TA	9	5*	
			2.4.1. Health	HE	6	5*	
	2.4. Teammates' feelings and consequences	TFC	2.4.2. Damage	DA	5	5*	
			2.4.3. Frustration	FR	6	*	
			3.1.1. Experience at school	ES	5	8	
III. Previous bullying and harassment experiences and memories	PBHEM	3.1. Bullying and harassment experience	BHE	3.1.2. Experience in the previous team/group	ET	5	8*
				3.2.1. School memories	SM	5	8
		3.2. Bullying and harassment memories	BHM	3.2.2. Memories from a previous team/group	TM	5	8*
				4.1.1. Seeing the situation, fact statement	FS	4	6
IV. Lack of bullying and harassment control	LBHCO	4.1. Affirmation, intervention and prevention of bullying and harassment	IPBH	4.1.2. Bullying intervention	BI	8	6
				4.1.3. Bullying prevention	BP	4	6
				5.1.1. Victim	VI	2	7
V. Bullying and harassment participants	BAHPA	5.1. Victim, bystander and bully among insiders and against opponents	VIBB	5.1.2. Bystander	BY	2	7
				5.1.3. Bully	BU	2	7
				6.1.1. Less close persons and/or strangers who can help	LP	9	8*
VI. Trustworthy persons and	TPAHB	6.1. Trustworthy persons from the victim's standpoint	TPVS				

Notes: 1. 12 items (I part) – „Prosocial and Antisocial Behaviour in Sport Scale“(PABSS) (Kavussanu and Boardley, 2009). 2. 12 items (I part) – „Competitive Aggressiveness and Anger Scale“(CAAS) (Maxwell and Moores, 2007). 3. 23 items (I part) – „Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory“ (BDHI) (Buss and Durkee, 1957). 4. 13 items (II part) – „Illinois Bully Scale“ (IBS) (Espelage and Holt, 2001). 5. 53 items (II part) – Shortened version of „Mobbing as discrimination in employee relations aiming to improve the organisational climate“(MDOC-110) (Vveinhardt, 2012), i.e. „Mobbing and Single Cases of Harassment in Employees' Relations“ (MSCH-47) (Vveinhardt and Streimikiene 2015), „Bullying and harassment in junior/youth team sport“ (Vveinhardt et al., 2017). 6. 16 items (IV part) – BHISQ integrated subscale „Seeing the situation, fact statement“ (also identifying the role of observer), was formed by the authors on the basis of an analysis of the scientific literature: Salmivalli et al. (1996), Salmivalli and Voeten (2004), Williams and Guerra (2007), Williams et al. (2018), Song and Oh (2017), Brinkman and Manning (2016), Saarento and Salmivalli (2015), Forsberg et al. (2014), Gini et al. (2008), and BHISQ integrated subscales „Bullying intervention“ and „Bullying prevention“ also formed by the authors on the basis of an analysis of the scientific literature: Olweus (1994), Björkqvist and Österman (1995), Nadel et al. (1996), Österman et al. (1997), O'Connell et al. (1999), Chan (2002), Vaillancourt et al.(2003), Orpinas and Horne (2006), Chan and Rauenbusch (2004) and others. 7. 6 items (V part) – double-check questions, i.e. control questions. 8. 46 items, i.e. 20 items (III part) and 26 items (VI part) – „Bullying and Single Cases of Harassment in Higher Education Institutions“ (B-SCH-St) (Vveinhardt et al.,2020) and „Bullying and Single Cases of Harassment in Professional Sport Teams“ (B-SCH-Sp) (Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė, 2017). * Combined and adapted items.

Table 3. Psychometric characteristics of Bullying and harassment in sport questionnaire (BHISQ), N = 1440.

Parts	Scales	Subscales	N of items	Explained dispersion%	Cronbach alpha	Spearman Brown	Factor loading (L)			Total item correlation (r/itt)		
							mean	min	max	mean	min	max
I. Anti-social behaviour and aggression in sport	ABS	AT	4	64.38	.82	-	0.80	0.78	0.85	.64	.45	.84
		AO	8	54.22	.88	.84	0.74	0.66	0.79	.53	.34	.81
	AAC	AN	6	53.88	.83	.82	0.73	0.67	0.79	.53	.31	.79
		AG	6	56.91	.85	.83	0.75	0.68	0.79	.56	.39	.79
	TATC	PA	7	55.01	.86	.83	0.73	0.50	0.83	.53	.27	.81
		VA	8	49.03	.85	.80	0.70	0.59	0.78	.48	.18	.77
II. Bullying and harassment actions in sport	AIEB	IA	8	52.69	.87	.85	0.72	0.60	0.80	.51	.31	.76
		BR	9	52.46	.89	.77	0.72	0.58	0.80	.51	.29	.79
	COTI	VR	4	77.03	.90	-	0.88	0.83	0.92	.77	.57	.92
		CO	10	52.50	.90	.79	0.72	0.53	0.82	.51	.28	.79
	FNAT	IS	6	64.83	.89	.89	0.80	0.75	0.84	.64	.47	.84
		RE	17	49.53	.94	.88	0.70	0.56	0.81	.49	.27	.78
	TFC	TA	9	53.43	.89	.79	0.72	0.54	0.85	.52	.21	.80
		HE	6	62.83	.88	.83	0.78	0.55	0.88	.61	.32	.84
		DA	5	78.56	.93	.92	0.88	0.77	0.92	.78	.55	.93
	III. Previous bullying and harassment	BHE	FR	6	60.76	.87	.84	0.78	0.71	0.86	.60	.40
ES			5	48.73	.75	.73	0.69	0.55	0.81	.47	.25	.77
BHM		ET	5	51.77	.76	.73	0.71	0.48	0.81	.49	.21	.79
		SM	5	69.07	.89	.88	0.83	0.75	0.86	.68	.42	.87
		TM	5	71.56	.90	.88	0.85	0.79	0.88	.71	.50	.89

Parts	Scales	Subscales	N of items	Explained dispersion%	Cronbach alpha	Spearman Brown	Factor loading (L)			Total item correlation (r/itt)		
							mean	min	max	mean	min	max
experiences and memories												
IV. Lack of bullying and harassment control	IPBH	FS	4	74.33	.88	-	0.86	0.80	0.89	.74	.55	.89
		BI	8	69.45	.94	.92	0.83	0.80	0.85	.69	.57	.85
		BP	4	77.95	.91	-	0.88	0.86	0.91	.78	.64	.90
V. Bullying and harassment participants	VIBB	VI	2	64.17	-	-	0.80	0.80	0.80	.58	.28	.86
		BY	2	79.07	-	-	0.89	0.89	0.89	.74	.58	.84
		BU	2	73.13	-	-	0.86	0.86	0.86	.68	.46	.87
VI. Trustworthy persons and actions that have helped to endure bullying	TPVS	LP	9	72.56	.95	.92	0.85	0.76	0.89	.72	.51	.89
		PI	6	64.94	.89	.88	0.80	0.68	0.86	.64	.45	.86
		IC	4	78.08	.91	-	0.88	0.85	0.92	.78	.65	.92
	AHEB	ED	7	80.47	.96	.95	0.90	0.82	0.92	.80	.66	.92

Notes:

Questionnaire scales acronyms: ABS – Antisocial behaviour in sport, AAC – Aggression and anger in competition, TATC – Types of aggression during trainings and competitions, AIEB – Athletes, initiating and experiencing bullying, COTI – Communication obstacles in teammates interrelationship, FNAT – Formation of negative approach and the pattern of sport tasks, TFC – Teammates’ feelings and consequences, BHE – Bullying and harassment experience, BHM – Bullying and harassment memories, IPBH – Affirmation, intervention and prevention of bullying and harassment, VIBB – Victim, bystander and bully his/her own and against opponents, TPVS – Trustworthy persons from the victim’s standpoint, AHEB – Actions that have helped to endure bullying.

Questionnaire subscales acronyms: AT – Antisocial teammate, AO – Antisocial opponent, AN – Anger, AG – Aggressiveness, PA – Physical aggression, VA – Verbal aggression, IA – Indirect aggression, BR – Bully role, VR – Victim role, CO – Communication, IS – Isolation, RE – Reputation, TA – Tasks, HE – Health, DA – Damage, FR – Frustration, ES – Experience at school, ET – Experience in the previous team/group, SM – School memories, TM – Memories from a previous team/group, FS – Seeing the situation, fact statement, BI – Bullying intervention, BP – Bullying prevention, VI – Victim, BY – Bystander, BU – Bully, LP – Less close persons and/or strangers who can help, PI – Persons in the immediate environment, IC – Informing and conversations, ED – Preventive education and self-development.

Table 4. Secondary factoring results of the Bullying and harassment in sport questionnaire (BHISQ) scales and subscales, N = 1440.

Parts	Scales	Subscales	Principal components (1 factor model) F1	Alpha factoring F1	
I. Anti-social behaviour and aggression in sport	Antisocial behaviour in sport (ABS)				
		Antisocial teammate (AT)	0.88	0.75	
		Antisocial opponent (AO)	0.88	0.75	
		Clarified dispersion	77.87%	55.64%	
	Aggression and anger in competition (AAC)				
		Anger (AN)	0.87	0.70	
		Aggressiveness (AG)	0.87	0.70	
		Clarified dispersion	74.82%	49.55%	
	Types of aggression during trainings and competitions (TATC)				
		Indirect aggression (IA)	0.89	0.86	
		Verbal aggression (VA)	0.87	0.80	
		Physical aggression (PA)	0.85	0.74	
		Clarified dispersion	76.08%	64.43%	
	II. Bullying and harassment actions in sport	Athletes, initiating and experiencing bullying (AIEB)			
				Victim role, N = 1420	Victim role, N = 1434
			Bully role, N = 1440	Bully role, N = 1434	
		Victim role (VR)	0.90	0.78	
		Bully role (BR)	0.90	0.78	
		Clarified dispersion	80.66%	61.23%	
Communication obstacles in teammates interrelationship (COTI)					
		Isolation (IS)	0.91	0.82	
		Communication (CO)	0.91	0.82	
		Clarified dispersion	83.57%	67.06%	
Formation of negative approach and the pattern of sport tasks (FNAT)					
		Reputation (RE)	0.91	0.82	
		Tasks (TA)	0.91	0.82	
		Clarified dispersion	83.69%	67.29%	
Teammates' feelings and consequences (TFC)					
	Health (HE)	0.92	0.92		
	Damage (DA)	0.91	0.88		
	Frustration (FR)	0.83	0.69		
	Clarified dispersion	79.38%	70.34%		

Parts	Scales	Subscales	Principal components (1 factor model) F1	Alpha factoring F1
III. Previous bullying and harassment experiences and memories	Bullying and harassment experience (BHE)			
		Experience in the previous team/group (ET)	0.94	0.88
		Experience at school (ES)	0.94	0.88
		Clarified dispersion	88.39%	76.72%
	Bullying and harassment memories (BHM)			
		Memories from a previous team/group (TM)	0.95	0.89
		School memories (SM)	0.95	0.89
	Clarified dispersion	89.99%	79.91%	
IV. Lack of bullying and harassment control	Affirmation, intervention and prevention of bullying and harassment (IPBH)			
		Bullying intervention (BI)	0.91	0.90
		Bullying prevention (BP)	0.88	0.82
		Seeing the situation, fact statement (FS)	0.83	0.69
	Clarified dispersion	76.19%	65.26%	
V. Bullying and harassment participants	Victim, bystander and bully his/her own and against opponents (VIBB)			
		Bystander (BY)	0.83	0.75
		Victim (VI)	0.83	0.74
		Bully (BU)	0.78	0.62
		Clarified dispersion	66.29%	49.94%
VI. Trustworthy persons and actions that have helped to endure bullying	Trustworthy persons from the victim's standpoint (TPVS)			
		Persons in the immediate environment (PI)	0.93	0.86
		Less close persons and/or strangers who can help (LP)	0.93	0.86
		Clarified dispersion	86.88%	73.68%
	Actions that have helped to endure bullying (AHEB)			
		Informing and conversations (IC)	0.94	0.87
		Preventive education and self-development (ED)	0.94	0.87
	Clarified dispersion	88.25%	76.42%	

Table 5. Roles of bullying and harassment participants in their own and opponents' teams/groups with regard to sports, N = 1440.

Bullying and harassment participants	Individual sports, N = 343		Combat sports, N = 59		Team sports, N = 1038		Chi-square test results	
	Frequencies	Per cent	Frequencies	Per cent	Frequencies	Per cent	χ^2	p
Victim in one's own team/group	45	13.1	7	11.9	321	30.9	48.901	.0001**
Victim in opponents' teams/groups	28	8.2	10	16.9	163	15.7	12.662	.002**
Bystander in one's own team/group	68	19.8	9	15.3	354	34.1	31.382	.0001**
Bystander in opponents' teams/groups	70	20.4	8	13.6	328	31.6	22.457	.0001**
Bully in one's own team/group	21	6.1	5	8.5	189	18.2	31.666	.0001**
Bully against opponents	26	7.6	7	11.9	120	11.6	4.401	.111
In total:	258	75.2	46	78	1475	142		
Victim among insiders and against opponents	57	16.6	13	22.0	390	37.6	54.849	.0001**
Bystander among insiders and among opponents	88	25.7	10	16.9	445	42.9	43.214	.0001**
Bully against insiders and against opponents	34	9.9	8	13.6	230	22.2	26.373	.0001**

Note: * Level of statistical significance $\alpha = .05$; ** level of statistical significance $\alpha = .01$.

Table 6. Roles of bullying participants in their own and/or opponents' teams/groups with regard to gender, N=1440.

Bullying and harassment participants	Males, N = 1001	Females, N = 439	Chi-square test results	
			χ^2	p
Victim in one's own team/group	31.5	13.2	52.995	.0001**
Victim in opponents' teams/groups	15.2	11.2	4.113	.043*
Bystander in one's own team/group	34.1	20.5	26.774	.0001**
Bystander in opponents' teams/groups	31.0	21.9	12.486	.0004**
Bully in one's own team/group	19.1	5.5	44.530	.0001**
Bully against opponents	12.0	7.5	6.424	.011*
Victim among insiders and against opponents	37.9	18.5	52.891	.0001**
Bystander among insiders and among opponents	42.3	27.3	28.932	.0001**
Bully against insiders and against opponents	23.3	8.9	41.262	.0001**

Note: * level of statistical significance $\alpha = .05$; ** level of statistical significance $\alpha = .01$.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents by sports types, gender and participant roles in their own and opponents' teams/groups.

Bullying and harassment participants	Individual sports				Chi-square test results		Combat sports				Chi-square test results		Team sports group				Chi-square test results	
	Males		Females		χ^2	P	Males		Females		χ^2	p	Males		Females		χ^2	p
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent			N	Per cent	N	Per cent			N	Per cent	N	Per cent		
Victim in one's own team/group	22	16.4	23	11.0	2.099	.147	4	10.3	3	15.0	0.284	.594	289	34.9	32	15.2	30.327	.0001**
Victim in opponents' teams/groups	14	10.4	14	6.7	1.531	.216	5	12.8	5	25.0	1.393	.238	133	16.1	30	14.3	0.400	.527
Bystander in one's own team/group	27	20.1	41	19.6	0.015	.904	8	20.5	1	5.0	2.461	.117	306	37.0	48	22.9	14.818	.0001**
Bystander in opponents' teams/groups	29	21.6	41	19.6	0.206	.650	6	15.4	2	10.0	0.327	.567	275	33.2	53	25.2	4.929	.026*
Bully in one's own team/group	16	11.9	5	2.4	12.951	.0003**	5	12.8	0	0.0	2.802	.094	170	20.5	19	9.0	14.834	.0001**
Bully against opponents	18	13.4	8	3.8	10.753	.001**	6	15.4	1	5.0	1.363	.243	96	11.6	24	11.4	0.004	.947
Victim among insiders and against opponents	27	20.1	30	14.4	1.979	.159	7	17.9	6	30.0	1.118	.290	345	41.7	45	21.4	29.251	.0001**
Bystander among insiders and among opponents	36	26.9	52	24.9	0.169	.681	8	20.5	2	10.0	1.038	.308	379	45.8	66	31.4	14.073	.0002**
Bully against insiders and against opponents	23	17.2	11	5.3	12.950	.682	7	17.9	1	5.0	1.891	.169	203	24.5	27	12.9	13.203	.0003**

Note: * Level of statistical significance $\alpha = .05$; ** level of statistical significance $\alpha = .00$.

Measures

The survey was conducted using *Bullying and harassment in sport questionnaire* (BHISQ). The questionnaire was supplemented in 2018, after conducting the exploratory study $N = 382$ (Vveinhardt et al., 2019). Table 2 presents the structure of the extended questionnaire, which shows that this version of the questionnaire consists of 6 parts, 13 scales, 30 subscales and 187 statements (previously: 4 parts, 10 scales, 23 subscales and 155 statements). The questionnaire was supplemented with parts five and six.

In parts 1 and 2 of the questionnaire, the following adapted scales are integrated: 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 *Prosocial and Antisocial Behaviour in Sport Scale* (PABSS) (Kavussanu and Boardley, 2009), 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 *Competitive Aggressiveness and Anger Scale* (CAAS) (Maxwell and Moores, 2007), 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 *Illinois Bully Scale* (IBS) (Espelage and Holt, 2001). The part of the questionnaire revealing bullying and harassment phenomena is adapted according to Vveinhardt's questionnaire *Mobbing as discrimination in employee relations aiming to improve the organisational climate* (MDOC-110) (Vveinhardt, 2012) [29] and the shortened version of MDOC *Mobbing and Single Cases of Harassment in Employees' Relations* (MSCH-47) (Vveinhardt and Streimikiene, 2015), etc. The scales of the said authors were adapted to the cultural and organized sport context of Lithuania after receiving the authors' consent by e-mail. The questionnaire is prepared in the Lithuanian language; therefore, additional tests should be carried out to use it in other languages. According to Sahaf (2019) "*In the questionnaire there should always be some double-check questions to check the consistency of responses and control questions to compare answers with information from the other sources*" (p. 298), thus in VIBB scale control questions were included (Table 2).

The psychometric properties of the extended version of the questionnaire in the case of the larger sample ($N = 1440$), compared with the exploratory study sample ($N = 382$), did not change or changed very insignificantly (Table 2). The highest percentage of explained dispersion in the analysed subscales is 80.47; the lowest, 48.73 (in the exploratory study, the highest recorded percentage was 82.96; the lowest, 43.28). The explained factor dispersion must be not less than the permitted minimum 10 per cent limit, because less than 10 per cent indicates the presence of statements decreasing dispersion in the subscale. Based on the performed analysis of subscales, it can be seen that the explained factor dispersion meets the said condition. On the subscales analysed, the highest value for Cronbach's alpha coefficient is .96; the lowest value, .75 (in the exploratory study, the highest value was .93; and the lowest, .75). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient shows the interconnectedness of questionnaire statements; i.e., the closer the coefficient value is to 1, the stronger the internal consistency of the subscales of the questionnaire. The lowest allowed limit of the coefficient varies; for example, according to (Nunnally, 1978; DeVellis, 1991) and other authors, the minimum acceptable value is .65, while according to (Hair et al., 2010), values below .60 are acceptable when the scale/subscale consists of several statements. There are also other reservations in the calculation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, but in the case of this study, the coefficient values meet all conditions.

The Spearman-Brown coefficient is calculated using the method of dividing the scale into two equivalent halves. The statements are divided into two parts and the internal consistency of the statements in each part is calculated, and then, the internal consistency between those two parts is calculated. Thus, the Spearman-Brown coefficient shows the scale's internal consistency, internal compatibility, reliability, but is calculated using the method other than Cronbach's alpha. The Spearman-Brown coefficient (like Cronbach's alpha coefficient) is not subject to the effect of the number of statements. It should also be noted that this coefficient is not calculated when the subscale consists of less than 4 statements (Vveinhardt, 2012). For this study, 8 subscales consist of 4 and less than 4 statements. On the subscales analysed, the lowest minimum factor loading value was .48; while the highest, .89 (in the exploratory study, the minimum recorded factor loading value was .44; while the highest, .84). If the minimum factor loading (L) value is below .3, then the

inappropriate statement is found on the sub-scale. Thus, for the present study, all subscales meet this condition. The total item correlation (r/itt) results indicate that the mean of the subscales of this questionnaire fluctuates from .47 (the lowest value) to .80 (the highest value) (in the case of the exploratory study, the lowest mean is .41, the highest mean is .83). When the mean of the minimal item correlation (r/itt) is less than .2, the inappropriate statement on the subscale being tested is found (Vveinhardt, 2012). Thus, r/itt is not less than .2, which confirms that there are no inappropriate statements on the subscales (Table 3).

Table 3 presents the results of the prime and secondary factorization, calculated using the *Principal components* and *Alpha factoring* methods. Factoring is required when the scope of questionnaire is very large. The sub-scales making up the scale must be similar in their content and logic; therefore, during prime factorization, a set of criteria is calculated, while during secondary factorization, these criteria are combined into scales. The closer the factor loading is to 1, the more the separate statement corresponds to the distinguished factor. As it can be seen from the results given below, factor loadings are high. The lowest recorded factor loading is .62; the highest, .95 (in the exploratory study, the lowest was .32; the highest, .93). Thus, in the case of this study, the lowest factor loading is significantly higher, compared with the results of the exploratory study (Table 4).

Procedure

The study was carried out in 2019. To conduct the study, the permission of the Ethics Supervision Committee of Research in Social Sciences of Lithuanian Sports University was received (No. SMTEK-3). Researchers committed to follow the principles of confidentiality and anonymity, ensuring privacy of research participants, without breaching their rights. The survey was conducted by distributing paper questionnaires and the electronic link to the online questionnaire upon prior agreement of the top managers and coaches of sports schools and sports clubs.

Data analysis

Statistical analysis of the research data was carried out using SPSS (Statistical Package of the Social Science) version 24.0. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used.

RESULTS

In the individual sports ($N = 343$), three quarters of respondents attribute themselves to one of three roles, while one quarter of respondents do not attribute themselves to any of the roles. In the combat sports ($N=59$), nearly four fifths of respondents identify themselves as victims, bystanders or bullies, while almost one-fifth do not identify themselves in these roles. In the team sports ($N = 1038$), two out of three respondents attribute one or several roles to themselves; therefore, the total sum of frequencies is greater than the sample in the team sports.

The comparison of research results by sports types revealed several trends. Almost one third of research participants in the team sports identified themselves as victims. Similar trends in team sport are also evidenced by the percentages of persons who identified themselves as bystanders of bullying and harassment. It is also significant that in the individual sports, the second highest indicator of persons who have seen bullying and harassment among opponents was identified, which may indicate distinctive trends of negative behaviour. However, the highest manifestation of bullying and harassment unfolds in team sports, where most – almost a fifth – of respondents attributed the role of the bully against their team member(s) to themselves. Meanwhile, the percentages of bullies against opponents in combat and team sport are similar.

The indicators of bullying and harassment participant roles (except for the bully against opponents) are statistically significantly different when compared by different sports types (Table 5).

Analysing roles of participants in the context of the bullying process in their own teams/groups and among opponents with regard to gender, it was found that the roles of victims, bystanders or bullies both in one's own team/group and the opponent's teams/groups were more inherent to men than women (Table 6). Nearly one-fifth of men, which is almost three times more than women, attributed the role of the bully to themselves both bullying their team/group members and opponents. Men more often became victims too: they fell victim twice more often in their team than to their opponents. Meanwhile, for example, in the women's group, the difference between women who fell victim to opponents and to their own team/group members is insignificant.

In individual sports, bullies in their teams and in opponents' teams are more often men than women, while victims and bystanders do not distinguish themselves; in the combat sports, men and women do not distinguish themselves by their roles in the bullying process; in the team sports, more men than women are found in the roles of victims, bystanders or bullies in their own team, while in opponents' teams, there are more male bystanders than female bystanders, when the distribution of male and female victims and bullies is very similar (Table 7).

DISCUSSION

In sport, like in any other context, bullying and harassment can be seen as a group process that is both implicitly and explicitly supported by surrounding people and in which athletes have different participant roles. To this end, this study primarily analysed to which participant role young people involved in organized sport attribute themselves. Since organized sport can be played with a team or as an individual, three major sports branch groups – individual sports, combat sports and team sports – were distinguished. Performing the analysis, we also took into account the fact that dividing participants of bullying and harassment episodes into specific roles, it was most appropriate to examine the extent to which youth behaviours matched these roles. This is important because persons involved in the episodes of bullying and harassment may exhibit behaviour that is relatively compatible with one or more participant roles (Huitsing and Veenstra, 2012).

The analysis performed in this study has demonstrated that the specificity of bullying and harassment may depend on the group of sports branches. Although other studies do not distinguish the influence of sports branch on the likelihood of bullying and harassment among athletes (Evans et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2019), this study has revealed that comparing all three sports groups, the highest percentage of athletes who identified themselves as potential victims of bullying and harassment in their team was from team sports. This is significantly more than the results of the other two groups – individual and combat sports – added together. A higher percentage of representatives of team sports, compared with other sports groups, attributed the roles of the bully and bystander to themselves, which also reflects the overall level of violence in these sports branches. It is likely that in the context of sport, the latter mainly comes from athletes peers – teammates or opponents (Vertommen et al., 2016).

Although it is often stated in the scientific literature that team sports are more effective than other sports branches in developing social skills and provide an opportunity for young people to learn to work well with others and effectively contribute to a group (Vella et al., 2017; Sabiston et al., 2016), the distinguished social component of team sports can influence the obtained results of the conducted research (Sabiston et al., 2019). First, in team sport, competition is particularly fierce not only between individual teams but also within the team, between teammates, because each athlete's behaviour in sport can be also determined by the

number of competitors participating in the collective system (Garcia et al., 2013). In this case, aggressive behaviour that can undoubtedly manifest itself as bullying and harassment not only becomes the desired behaviour for success but also serves as a means helping to prove the athlete's capability against other team members or allows him to compete for available resources in the team (Passos et al., 2016). Second, athletes practicing a team sport where physical contact is allowed (e.g., football, hockey, rugby) would be most at risk to experience physical violence (Hamilton et al., 2013), and it is often difficult to draw a boundary between sanctioned and unsanctioned violent behaviour (Sacks et al., 2003).

It is noteworthy that along with the team sport group, in the combat sports group, unlike in the individual sports group, the roles of bullies against opponents in the form of bullying and harassment actions are also more often expressed. Athletes who claimed having seen bullying and harassment least belong to the representatives of this sports group too. This can be related to the specificity of the sports branch, which is defined as mainly aiming at the opponent as a target; i.e., players try to win the fight by harsh touching, hitting, throwing or even strangling their opponent (Hortiguera et al., 2017). Such specificity not always allows to accurately identify the growth of sanctioned aggressive behaviour into unsanctioned. The growth of aggressive behaviour in combat sports has been found in other studies too (Endresen and Olweus, 2005). Such results can also be explained by the fact that historically combat sports branches are more commonly chosen by working class representatives who adhere to the strict violent norms of masculinity (Channon and Matthews, 2015).

The study has also revealed that in individual sports, the number of athletes who have seen bullying and harassment is significantly higher than of those who identified themselves as victims. Thus, it is likely that not all existing victims have attributed this role to themselves. In part, this may be due to personality traits of persons who have opted for individual sport. That is, in the sports activity, individual sport athletes most commonly tend to rely on themselves (Nixdorf et al., 2016), have high self-esteem (Ali et al., 2013) and lower extraversion, and, compared with team sports participants, demonstrate lower scores in conscientiousness (Mollazadeh et al., 2016).

The fact that the study has not found significant differences in the case of the role of the bully against opponents may indicate prevalence of the existing strategy of impact on opponents, inherent in all sports branches. This means that opponents' bullying may be considered as a certain "*norm*". However, it has been found that persistent support of coaches, teammates and spectators with regard to the use of such strategy can often grow into another person's mutilation (Schneider and Eitzen, 2018). Anyway, this strategy is least pronounced in individual sports. This can be related to the fact that individual sports often provide less social opportunity for athletes (Sabiston et al., 2019) and to the lowest level of aggression found in studies, compared with other sports groups (Ali et al., 2013). Still, there are studies revealing contradictory results; i.e., showing that the level of aggression of male athletes in individual sports is higher when compared with athletes of team sports (Satyanarayana et al., 1983). These differences can be probably explained by the fact that due to their specificity, individual sports have less acts of physical aggression and are more dominated by psychological aggression (Guilbert, 2006) that may be more difficult to envisage.

Because the results of some studies show that male players always behave more aggressively than female regardless of sport type (Coulomb-Cabagno and Rasclé, 2006), while other studies (Serkan, 2014) demonstrate that females are more likely to be bullied, in this study, we analysed not only links between the participant role and individual sports groups but also the influence of athletes' gender on the specificity of bullying and harassment.

Based on the results of such analysis, considering that the number of males and females who have attributed themselves to one or more of these roles is uneven, men get involved and/or are involved in the bullying and harassment process more actively. On the other hand, although differences between males and females who have been victimized by opponents are statistically reliable, the number of victims of both genders shows similar trends. This possibly reveals certain existing traditions where violence used against opponents can be perceived instrumentally as a natural part of the “game”. Other authors also observe the tendency showing that the conception of aggressive behaviour in sport is problematic (Sacks et al., 2003), but in spite of this, aggression, especially unsanctioned, must be treated as an undesirable phenomenon that can manifest itself in all sports branches and levels (Fields et al., 2010).

However, the analysis of data demonstrating athlete distribution by sports groups and by gender and the participant role analysis have revealed the trend that came to prominence only in team sports branches, showing higher numbers of victims, bystanders and bullies among males than among females. Meanwhile, prevalence of males and females taking on various roles in individual and combat sport groups is very similar. These results can be related to the popularity of team sport in the analysed cultural environment, which according to Messner (2002), enables training of athletes who consider themselves more popular than other sports representatives in their social settings and therefore tend to behave more aggressively.

CONCLUSIONS

After testing and comparing methodological psychometric quality properties of the questionnaire parts, scales and subscales, it was found that the instrument complied with the reliability and validity requirements for questionnaires. Testing of the methodological and psychometric properties of the questionnaire confirmed the reliability of the instrument; thus, it can be reasonably stated that the questionnaire is suitable for measuring the planned set of attributes – bullying and harassment in organized sport.

Prevalence of bullying and harassment is characteristic to all sports types, only the levels of bullying and harassment differ. This evidences the existence of a complex problem in organized sport, which has to be dealt immediately, and relevance of elaborating on athletes’ roles, seeking to reduce the level of violence and aggression. Aggression is perceived in the society as a “*masculine*” trait, and as a result, men are not only more likely to assume the role of the bully, but more often become bystanders and victims of bullying and harassment in interpersonal relationships. Elimination of bullying and harassment is determined by the professional environment of sports organizations and mutually respectful interaction between personalities, but the research review shows the extent of bullying and harassment prevalence, the unprofessional interaction, and disrespectful behaviour in organised sport, caused by applied psychological and physical crackdown actions determining the emergence of adverse consequences ruining athletes’ health, career and personal life. Sports organizations as service providers need to define the boundaries of professional communication with athletes, provide education to sports organizers and become comprehensively involved in bullying and harassment intolerance processes to create an appropriate safe sports environment for all participants in organized sport.

The findings of the research supplement the context of research on bullying and harassment, broaden the knowledge available on this problem, and enable interested researchers to justify the complexity of the problem in various sports branches by highlighting the roles of bullying and harassment participants. It has been found that the frequency of bullying and harassment is related to the sports branch and that the highest frequency occurring in team sports branches can be explained by group dynamics.

Limitations of the study

This article presents the part of research results that reveals only prevalence of bullying and harassment in Lithuanian organized sports in the case of three branch groups (individual, combat and team groups), detailing the roles of the victim, bystander and bully in cases of one's own team/group and opponents.

Directions for further research

In the future, after preparing the English version of the *Bullying and harassment in sport questionnaire (BHISQ)*, it is planned to conduct surveys in English-speaking countries that are culturally close to Lithuania.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

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