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## Bullying and Harassment of Trainee Teachers

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### Abstract

The present study describes the prevalence of trainee teachers being victims to bullying and distinguishes between different types of bullying within a cross-sectional design. Moreover it shows interrelations between bullying and outcomes (intention to leave, job satisfaction, general health state, burnout, cognitive stress symptoms and satisfaction with life). The data was collected by means of the Negative Acts Questionnaire R (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers 2009), which contains work-related bullying, personal bullying and physically-intimidating bullying. The outcomes are measured by means of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ, Nübling et al., 2012). 342 German women and men (female = 81,9%. male = 18,1%; age: M = 28, SD = 4) in their second phase of the teacher-training participated online. First results show that 37,4% have experienced at least one negative weekly. The most common type of bullying is the work-related type (median: 14) followed by personal bullying (median: 9). The prevalence rates are higher among men (35,5%) than among women (16,8%). Correlations between bullying and worse outcomes on all variables were found. In summary the results are alarming and point out that there should be a greater focus on this topic, especially on prevention and intervention.

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### 1. Theoretical Background

During the last decades bullying and harassment at the job have increasingly been taken into account in science works (f. e. Zapf, 2004; Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009, Leymann, 2009). Bullying is defined as the feeling of a person (or a group of people) to be the aim of a series of negative acts, performed with relatively high frequency (f.

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e. weekly) and over a period of time (>6 month) (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009). Bullying on teachers was found with a prevalence rate of 16% (Jäger, 2016). Moreover, the working situations for teachers and their state of health also met with a high degree of public and individual interest, as being discussed as a reason for early retirement and absenteeism (Weber, Weltle & Lederer, 2003). At the same time it is quite surprising that there are hardly any published studies on bullying and the working situations of trainee teachers.

In Germany educational students have to complete a first examination after university education (4-5 years). The first examination is followed by a period of practical training in schools accompanied by educational seminars (1,5 years) and a second examination. A few studies pointed out that the trainee teachers' state of health is worse than the teachers' (Christ, van Dick & Wagner, 2004; Schubarth, Speck & Seidel, 2006; Drüge, Schleider & Rosati, 2014). International research has shown that stress, depression and anxiety are also reported by trainee teachers (Chaplain, 2008; Mundia, 2010). Richter et al. (2011) stressed the importance of informational and emotional support provided by mentors, which is associated with an increase in the trainee teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and a decline in their emotional exhaustion.

Maguire (2001) examined bullying of trainee Teachers and found a prevalence rate of 18%. Chyra and Czerkowski (2011) found in their poll research that impersonal allusions, criticism of the work performed, lowering of professional competences and self-esteem, overburdening with tasks and taking back the previously ordered work were the most common acts of bullying in novice teachers. In order to develop and to implement appropriate support as prevention and intervention, it is inevitable to describe characteristics and manifestations of bullying of trainee teachers and to show interrelations with resulting strains. It is the aim of this research paper to conduct a grass-roots survey on trainee teachers in Germany when being victims of bullying and to examine interrelations with outcomes.

## 2. Aims of the Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct a grass-roots survey on bullying and harassment of trainee teachers in Germany. In detail, the aims of the study are :

- (1) to describe the prevalence of bullying and harassment,
- (2) to analyse different types of bullying (work-related, person-related, physically-intimidating),
- (3) to compare men and women,
- (4) to examine interrelations with outcomes.

## 3. Methods

The data was gathered through an online-questionnaire. The German version of the Negative Acts Questionnaire R (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers 2009), which contains 22 items with three underlying factors: work-related bullying, personal bullying and physically-intimidating bullying was used to measure bullying and harassment. Seven Scales (intention to leave, job satisfaction, general health state, burnout, cognitive stress, satisfaction with life) of the German version of the Copenhagen Social Questionnaire (COPSOQ: Kristensen et al., 2005, German version: Nübling et al., 2005) including socio demographic data (e.g. gender, age, type of school, marital status) were used to measure outcomes.

For sample recruitment all the 19 state seminars for didactics and teacher education in Baden-Württemberg were asked to pass on a letter including the link to this study, 15 participated. The sample consists of 342 German women and men (female = 81,9%. male = 18,1%; age: M = 28, SD = 4) in their second phase of the teacher-training.

Sumscores were formed for the NAQ R (e.g. prevalence rate, the types of bullying) according to Einarsen et al. (2009) and the COPSOQ (e.g. intention to leave, job satisfaction, general health state, and burnout) according to Nübling et al. (2005). The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and non-parametric techniques with SPSS 22 depending on the data volume. Correlations were used to analyze links between bullying and the outcomes.

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