



The effects and consequences of bullying on students' mental wellbeing

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The purpose of this research-based thesis was to research bullying in higher education in Finland and how bullying experiences affect the mental wellbeing of students. The thesis was done in collaboration with Nyyti Ry's project "Puhutaan Kiusamisesta!" which translates to "let's talk about bullying". The "Puhutaan Kiusamisesta!" project is a two-year project that aims to reduce and prevent bullying in higher education. The purpose of the project is to increase awareness of bullying occurring in higher education and finding ways and strategies to reduce and prevent it. The goal was that bullying would be better recognized in student communities and therefore intervened in.

The thesis was a qualitative research and the data of the thesis was collected through a survey about bullying and bullying experiences in higher education studies. The survey was sent to various universities and universities of applied sciences to gather wide-ranging data and information. The survey was also advertised in social media. Content analysis was used as a method to analyse the results of the survey. The survey included open-ended questions about bullying experiences, where respondents were able to express themselves in their own words, as well as Likert scale questions. The results of the survey indicated that bullying is more common among women than men and more common in universities of applied sciences than universities. According to the survey, the most common consequences of bullying on mental wellbeing are anxiety, extra stress, depression and isolation. Respondents with bullying experiences had also experienced a negative change in their social life and their ability to study. Respondents felt like higher education should have more open discussion and information about bullying and how to deal with it.

Keywords: Student wellbeing, Mental health, Mental wellbeing, Bullying, Studying, Higher education

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1 Introduction

Higher education bullying is a concept that is not often recognized in our society. There is a perception that since everyone is an adult, bullying doesn't occur. Unfortunately, that is not correct and students studying in a higher education experience bullying as well. Bullying can leave scars and affect a student's life long after their studies are over, which is why the topic of bullying is current and important. Bullying affects a student's life thoroughly, including studies, social relationships, self-esteem and their future (Karvinen & Koponen 2015, 1-2).

Bullying is a significant factor in a student's poor wellbeing, which is why this topic is worthy of research. Bullying is an important phenomenon which requires to be recognized in order to prevent it. It needs to be taken seriously among higher education staff members and the seriousness of it should not be underestimated. The recognition of bullying should be increased since many staff members lack the knowledge and skills of how to confront bullying and what their role in the challenge is. Bullying is a group phenomenon that affects the whole study community, including the victim, the bully, staff and bystanders (Cowie & Jennifer 2008, 1-2).

Bullying is defined as physical, verbal or emotional aggression by one or more people towards others. It's an act that affects the whole school community, including the victim, the bully and bystanders. Bullying is an act done by one or more people with the expectation of causing the victim or victims harm, fear or threaten them with words or actions. Bullying can be for example, physical violence, manipulation, discrimination or name calling (Healey 2011, 1-4).

Bullying can also occur from staff towards students. An article by Helsingin Sanomat revealed a story about a lecturer at Aalto University who had perpetrated bullying students. According to the article, the lecturer had favored some students, humiliated others and spoken to them in inappropriate ways for years. The lecturer had also picked on students and spoken to them in a derogatory way. Social media also played a part, as students had been criticized and spoken about in an inappropriate tone through a public Facebook-update. The article was current and indicates that bullying can also occur from staff towards students- The issue was taken seriously and considered as an important topic to deal with at the university (Rantavaara 2019).

The goal of my thesis is to raise awareness and research what kind of consequences bullying can have on a student's mental wellbeing. This thesis includes a review of the current knowledge on higher education bullying, including statistics. In addition, this thesis includes an analysis of the survey results and what new information it provided to the previous studies of higher education bullying. The thesis also includes the definition of bullying and its dimensions and how bullying has changed throughout the years, for example, the increase of cyberbullying.

2 Aims and objectives

The aim of my thesis is to focus on higher education bullying and research the topic using previous research and literature materials as well as a survey. The aim is to research how bullying can change a student's life and what kind of consequences bullying can have on a student mentally. I chose this topic because it's quite new and unknown, which makes it worthy of research. It's an important topic that touches a lot of people and a phenomenon that is not often recognized but exists.

My thesis is done in cooperation with Nyyti Ry's Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!- project. My thesis includes background information on the topic and what has been previously researched as well as the outcome of the earlier studies. I will research how bullying can affect students' mental health and their overall wellbeing and how bullying occurs at this level of education

The idea for this thesis arose during my second work practice at Nyyti Ry. I completed my work practice at Nyyti Ry in their anti-bullying project "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!". I learned a lot during my work practice and gained knowledge especially about higher education bullying, which is why I decided to return to this topic and research it more thoroughly. The anti-bullying project was educational and interesting which is why I found that my thesis would be the perfect opportunity to go back to working in this project and develop my own knowledge as well.

Bullying is a broad topic, but with my thesis I decided to narrow down to higher education bullying and the consequences of it. I chose higher education bullying because it's the main focus of Nyyti Ry's project. The target group of Nyyti Ry's work is students and the focus of the Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!- project are higher education students in Finland. Higher education bullying is a subject that isn't talked about too often and therefore people don't have enough knowledge about it. Bullying has been researched before and it's a topic that has been discussed in the society a lot, but since it's a growing phenomenon that affects many lives now and in the future, more research can be done. The belief often is that bullying in universities doesn't occur because people are adults, but the truth is that it does and that's why it is important to research the topic and raise awareness in order to prevent it in the future and find strategies to deal with the phenomenon.

2.1 Working life partner

My working life partner is Nyyti Ry, which is an organization that supports and promotes mental health and study ability of students. My thesis is completed in cooperation with one of Nyyti Ry's projects "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!" which is a two-year project from 2017 to 2019, that aims to reduce and prevent bullying in higher education. I will talk more about the results of the Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!- project's research results in the theoretical framework section of the thesis. The goal of the project is to change the attitudes, atmospheres and the way action is taken in higher education communities. Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!- project has six partners which are Otus, National Union of University Students in Finland, SAMOK Ry, Student Union of the University of Helsinki, Student Union of the University of Jyväskylä and the Student Union of Humak University of Applied Sciences. Together they cooperate to reach the goals of the project (Nyyti Ry, Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta! 2017).

The project is funded by the social and health ministry and they use the profits of Veikkaus to fund the work. The purpose and goal of the project is to increase awareness of the bullying happening in universities and finding ways and strategies to reduce and prevent it. The aim is that bullying would be better recognized in student communities and therefore intervened. Nyyti Ry's work is funded by the profits of Veikkaus. Nyyti Ry provides versatile information and programs for students to help them with

their studies and mental wellbeing. In addition, Nyyti Ry also provides materials, training and networks. Nyyti Ry strives to reduce the negative stigma and prejudice of mental health problems. The purpose of Nyyti Ry's actions is to reassure the wellbeing factors in studies and working life for now and the future (Nyyti Ry 2017).

Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta! is one of Nyyti Ry's many projects. In addition to the projects Nyyti Ry provides versatile ways of promoting mental and overall wellbeing of students. They have volunteers who participate in workshops, projects, Nyyti's social media and their blog. Volunteers can share stories, write blogposts on Nyyti's website and take part in projects and that way take part in preventive mental health work. Volunteers are also able to participate as peer supervisors and share their everyday student lives. Nyyti also offers different kinds of peer support groups that are set to help students with a variety of topics. They also provide a weekly chat where people can talk anonymously with a professional and have open discussions with other participants. The chat topics vary from studying, relationships and wellbeing to any topics about life and everyday struggles. The chats are meant to be open and relaxed (Nyyti Ry 2017).

Nyyti Ry also does work in cooperation with the Finnish Association for Mental Health and their Sekasin-chat where people are guided by professionals with issues related to mental health. Anyone can log in to the Sekasin-chat and talk anonymously about any issue. The purpose is to provide low threshold mental health services for young people. In addition, Nyyti Ry has created a course about life skills called "elämäntaito", which translates directly to "lifeskills"; it is intended for students, young people and young adults. The course includes information and guidance on how to take care of your mental wellbeing and improve your life skills in different parts. The purpose of the course is to support and help the participants find practical ways in which they can improve and support their individual wellbeing and self-knowledge. The course helps the participants find and strengthen their inner resources and helps them find ways of coping with everyday life situations (Nyyti Ry, nd).

3 Definition of bullying

This part of my thesis will consist of defining bullying in general, but I will also explain cyberbullying and bullying in higher education. I will explain how cyberbullying can occur and how it has changed the way people bully others. I will talk about what kind of acts are considered bullying and what kind of dimensions the use of social media and internet has brought to student societies nowadays. I will talk about previous research of higher education bullying and how my working life partner Nytyi Ry's project "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!" has researched the topic. I will discuss how bullying can affect studies and the mental wellbeing of students.

Bullying is physical, verbal or emotional aggression by one or more people towards others. Bullying is an act that affects the whole school community, including the bully themselves, not just the victim. Bullying is an act done by one or more people with the expectation of causing the victim or victims harm, fear or threaten them with words or actions. Bullying is more than physical violence; it can also be emotional or verbal, for example manipulation, discrimination or excluding someone. Verbal bullying can be, for example, name calling or teasing. Bullying can also be direct or indirect. Indirect bullying can be spreading rumors, purposely excluding someone from a group or sending inappropriate messages, whereas direct bullying is considered more physical, such as hitting or pushing. Bullying occurring in schools creates an unsafe environment for the whole community and has negative impacts on students' health. Bullying can have different kinds of negative impacts on students, such as lowered academic skills, social isolation and lower amount of social relationships, anxiety and depression. In severe cases, bullying can also result to failure in school and lead to alcohol and substance abuse (Healey 2011, 1-4).

Bullying is a continuous act, not a single occurrence. As previously mentioned, bullying has a lot of dimensions to it and social media has brought a whole new extent to bullying. The threshold to bully becomes a whole lot lower with the use of social media, since people can comment anonymously. People are more likely to bully through social media because sending a message is fast and you don't process what you are about to say. It's easier to say mean things and bully someone through social media, than to say it directly to someone's face, which creates a growing issue in the bullying phenomenon. Discussions about social issues, politics and opinions are discussed in social media

daily, and sometimes when opinions differ, it creates a platform for bullying. In social media, people are bullied because of their opinions and this can lead to name-calling and personal violations. Bullying occurring in social media makes it easier for the bully to stay anonymous and not get caught, which makes it more likely to continue and the bully might not understand the consequences of their actions. It can also lead to more serious consequences, such as identity theft. Identity theft means that another person's profile is taken for someone else to control; the bully sabotages the victim's profile, for example by spreading rumors or sharing false information about the victim. The posts that are updated in the fake profile can affect the victim's mental health and overall wellbeing very seriously. Identity theft can have serious consequences and even affect someone's working life or their future in many ways (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 10-17).

3.1. Cyberbullying

The use of internet and social media has opened a new platform for bullying. Cyberbullying can be for example, spreading rumours, releasing inappropriate pictures of someone, sending obtrusive or hurtful messages or name calling. Cyberbullying is easier because social media gives the bully the opportunity to bully anonymously. The threshold for bullying becomes a lot lower when a person can do it without using their own identity. The problem with cyberbullying is the fact that information spreads fast and whilst pictures and messages posted in social media can be deleted, they don't disappear from the internet completely. Bullying on the internet can also be done around the clock, meaning that the victim can experience bullying outside school hours (Karvinen & Koponen 2015, 7-9).

A student can experience cyberbullying in many forms. A student can be a victim of hurtful messages or harassment throughout social media, text messages, e-mail or other channels of communication in the internet. Another severe form of cyberbullying is when the bully manages to access the victim's personal information and accounts and therefore can affect the victim's personal relationships and school success. In these cases, the bully is also able to send messages or publish material in the victim's

name and affect the victim's life negatively. Cyberbullying can also be exposing personal information, photos or conversations of the victim. Discrimination can also happen throughout the internet. People can be left out of group chats and therefore miss interacting with others and participating in events, which increases the feeling of loneliness and can expose an individual to mental health problems (Karvinen & Koponen 2015, 7-9).

Flaming is also a type of cyberbullying. Flaming is an aggressive toned conversation between two or more individuals that often leads to insulting a specific individual in the conversation. Flaming mostly occurs in public online platforms, where other people can view the conversation, such as group chats or discussion forums. Flaming is not typically a private conversation between two people. The fact that others can see the insults thrown at the victim often makes the victim feel even worse and humiliated. When flaming occurs, the victim can also feel fear of who might participate in the conversation next. When one person starts to attack the victim in a public setting, there is a chance that it stirs up others and adds the number of bullies. Flaming can make the victim feel shame and affect their self-esteem. It can feel like a verbal attack to the victim and cause trauma (Kowalski, Limber & Agatston 2012, 62).

The forms of cyberbullying can vary, but the purpose is the same. The act of bullying causes the victim harm and can result to lifelong trauma. Cyberbullying is easier because with the press of a button, the bully can create the victim harm by for example, discriminating from a group or create a certain kind of negative reputation. Cyberbullying can be more versatile than traditional bullying and it can happen outside school, but the effects of it to a student's mental wellbeing can be just as brutal and lasting. Cyberbullying lowers the threshold for bullying and broadens the ways to bully someone (Karvinen & Koponen 2015, 7-9).

3.2 Bullying in higher education

The research of bullying has previously been linked to the study of children and youth and the research of bullying amongst adults has mainly focused on workplace bullying. Hence, there has remained a gap of knowledge on the research of higher education bullying. The first-time higher education bullying was studied in Finland was in 2008 in a nationwide health research of university students. The bullying between adults has often been belittled and not recognized, until it results in serious consequences, such as mental health issues. Bullying in universities can be more challenging to recognize and interfere in, however this does not mean that it doesn't occur. The bullying occurring in universities can appear in many forms, such as direct or indirect, verbal or physical (Karvinen & Koponen 2015, 1-3).

A student often begins their studies in higher education with the hopes of gaining academic knowledge on the field of study they have chosen for themselves. Majority of students want to invest in their studies and hope to receive high-quality education. High-quality education includes receiving appropriate feedback and equality towards everyone. When the requirements of a high-quality education are not met and a student experiences repeated unjust and inappropriate treatment, we can talk about bullying. Bullying breaks the expectation and hope of receiving high-quality education and might interfere in the student's ability to study and attend school. (Lappalainen, Meriläinen, Puhakka & Sinkkonen 2011, 2-3).

A survey completed in May 2010 in a Finnish university indicated that 5% of university students had experienced bullying. The survey consisted of two parts with questions about bullying experiences and the background of the respondent such as gender, age, field of study and campus and the stage of study (Bachelor's or master's degree). The survey also included questions about whether the respondent had ever been a part of bullying someone themselves or if they had witnessed someone being bullied. According to the survey, the kind of bullying the respondents had experienced had been indirect public bullying or direct verbal bullying. In majority of situations, the bully had been another student, but in some occasions, a teacher. The survey indicated that the bullying had often been connected to studying situations or other social situations. The study indicates that bullying does, in fact, occur in universities from students as well as teachers (Lappalainen, Meriläinen, Puhakka & Sinkkonen 2011, 1, 5-6).

In 2012, another study about bullying in higher education was researched in a student barometer. The research completed in 2012 showed that over 5% of the respondents had experienced occasional bullying and that bullying experiences had increased amongst women. The results of the same research also showed that approximately 20% of students in higher education had been bullied for years prior to their studies in a university. According to the barometer, approximately 1% of higher education students had experienced bullying, discrimination and harassment repeatedly and approximately 10% had experienced it occasionally, which adds to almost 27 000 students. According to the study, bullying has a connection to several mental wellbeing factors, such as the feeling of loneliness, depression and the ability to trust others. (Opiskelijabarometri 2012). It has been studied that an individual who has been bullied in the past is more likely to be bullied in the future. The health research of university students in 2012 shows that 47% of students bullied in universities had experienced bullying in previous studies, such as grammar school or high school (Pörhölä 2011).

According to the health research of higher education students in 2016, the percentage of students experiencing occasional bullying had increased to 7,5%. Approximately 5% of the respondents had told to be the bully themselves. In addition, approximately 6% of the respondents had experienced bullying from a member of the school staff. The research also shows that women in universities of applied sciences had experienced more bullying (10,2%) than women in universities (7,9%). 76% of students bullied in universities tell that they had experienced bullying for years. 40% of these students had previously been bullied at least once a week and 36% occasionally, but only 2% of these students had been a bully themselves. 56% of students who had acted as bullies towards other students told that they had bullied before, at least occasionally. 11% of these students had bullied others for several years (Pörhölä 2011).

Over 20% of higher education students have experienced bullying prior to their studies. Students who have experienced bullying before their higher education studies can create negative and fearful expectations about studies in a university. In the beginning of higher education studies, new students often experience different kinds of events and welcoming parties, such as freshmen parties. In freshmen parties, tutors normally plan activities and tasks for freshmen that can sometimes be humiliating and cause anxiety, especially for a student with bullying experiences. Previous bullying experiences and the consequences of it can cause a student to avoid these kinds of events, in the fear of being humiliated mocked. Avoiding events because of anxiety and fear

reduces the amount of social relationships and interaction with the student community. Student events are an efficient way to network with other students, make friends and feel like a part of the student community. The responsibility of a good team spirit belongs to everyone. It's up to the entire student community, including students and staff to create a safe and welcoming environment for new students (Kivioja 2016).

3.3 Working life partner's research

Nyyti Ry's project; "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!" has a study about higher education bullying. According to the study, majority of students in higher education are doing well, but the study supports the other researches by indicating that bullying does occur. Nyyti Ry cooperated with Otus to research the bullying experiences in higher education and the research shows that bullying has focused on women studying in STEM-programs (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Approximately 8% of women and 4% of men studying in STEM-programs had experienced bullying during their studies at a university of applied sciences. The study also indicated that age and location can affect the amount of bullying experiences. According to the study, 24-27-year-old students in universities of applied sciences experience most bullying. Also, students in other provinces had experienced slightly more bullying than students in the metropolitan area. These results don't automatically claim that a certain age or life situation results in bullying experiences, but it's clear that there is some sort of connection with bullying experiences and certain study programs and genders. Statistics show a significant connection with STEM-programs and bullying experiences, but it's still yet to be researched why women in these programs experience more bullying than other student groups (Nurmikari & Saari 2017).

Bullying experiences have shown to have a connection with suspension of studies. 29% of students who had experienced bullying had considered suspending their studies, while only 14% of students who hadn't dealt with bullying considered the same. For bullied students, the reasons behind considering suspending studies wasn't connected with their motivation of studying, but more likely to the consequences from the bullying experiences. Students who had experienced bullying can be unsatisfied with the support they have or have not received from their university, which can directly affect

their studies. For example, students with bullying experiences have shown to experience weakness in their own studying goals. Being a victim of bullying can result to mental wellbeing problems and therefore affect studying negatively. In a safe and accepting studying environment, studying flows better and the possibility of a student suspending their studies reduces. The statistics show that bullying has a connection with student welfare and increases the possibility of suspending studies (Nurmikari & Saari 2017).

Based on previous research, a student who has been bullied in the past is more likely to be bullied in the future. Nyyti Ry's "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!" project researched if bullying experiences would affect a student's future and the results show that students who had experienced bullying considered their future employment as seriously as others but the way they believed in themselves and their future varied. Students who experienced bullying didn't look towards their future as positively as others. Students who had experienced bullying in their higher education studies or prior to that tend to fall into a way of thinking that it's their fault and may lose the belief in themselves. Bullying experiences have also shown to have a connection with depressive feelings and thoughts as well as overall feeling and belief of life (Nurmikari & Saari 2017).

It's important that higher education communities invest in protecting and helping students with bullying experiences. The key method to deal with bullying is prevention. 38% of students with bullying experiences feel like they belong to their study community, whilst 60% of students without bullying experiences felt the same. The feeling of belonging to a community and knowing where and from who to seek support from when needed is important in higher education. Investing in prevention of bullying can significantly lower the number of students with bullying experiences. Preventing bullying in study communities lowers the possibility of suspending studies, increases the belief in one's future and creates a safe studying environment for students and teachers (Nurmikari & Saari 2017).

4 Effects of bullying on mental wellbeing

Bullying leaves scars on a victim, but it also affects the bully itself. In worst cases, bullying can affect the rest of someone's life. Bullying can affect change in behaviour and self-esteem, and it can result to different kinds of mental health issues. Bullying can cause the victim to have severe mistrust towards friends, family members and partner. It can also cause problems in future work environments when the past bullying trauma haunts the victim and causes them to have mistrust and doubt towards their self, colleagues or a boss. Bullying is a group phenomenon that affects not only the victim, but the bully itself and people who observe, hear and possibly help or aim to prevent the bullying (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 18-19). Bullying experiences can come in the way of our physical, social and psychological wellbeing. There are a variety of factors that can weaken our wellbeing and studies have shown that heavy drinking, negative life changes, chronic stress, physical illnesses, isolation, inequality, lack of trust and unemployment are an example of a few. These are all factors that could be a consequence of bullying experiences. In an environment that is perceived to be safe, a person experiences more positive feelings than negative ones, which increases the possibility of a person feeling happy and well. Living in unsafe conditions undermines wellbeing and impairs mental health (Ojanen 2009, 27-28, 206).

Everyone has a mental health. It's a part of a human's general health and in 2013 the World Health Organization defined it as "a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 8). Mental health creates a foundation for our overall wellbeing and it's an important part of our health. Mental health is a combination of psychological, physical and social factors that determine if our mental health is positive or negative. Our mental health is positive when we possess a healthy self-esteem, mechanisms to cope, ability to affect our own lives and the ability to maintain social relationships (Heikkinen-Peltonen, Innamaa & Virta 2014, 10-11). Our mental health affects the way we think, behave, and interact with others and how we form relationships. Mental health plays a strong part on how we cope with issues that shake the mind and our life. Just like physical diseases, we can experience illness with our mental health too (Cowie & Myers 2016, 76-77).

4.1 Depression

Bullying can cause the victim lifelong trauma and result to several issues with mental wellbeing. Bullying has shown to have a connection with depression, anxiety and the feeling of loneliness. Depression is a common and easily recurring mental disease which causes the difficulty to feel joy and being in a constant state of low mood. Other key symptoms of depression can be sleeping problems, insomnia and fatigue. A person with depression often finds it hard to concentrate, which affects the ability to study. Getting through everyday responsibilities is also often difficult. Depression causes a person to feel more irritated, tired or joyless. Depression is not a temporary feeling of sadness since mood changes are normal for everyone, but it's rather a prolonged depressive feeling of sadness. The time how long a person suffers from depression can vary from months to years per individual and the state of the depression can vary from mild to psychotic. A person with depression may also suffer from other issues, such as anxiety, personality disorder or substance abuse. Moderate and severe depression is normally treated with psychotherapy and medication (Heiskanen, Tuulari & Huttunen 2011, 8-13).

There is no specific reason why people get depression. The reasons can be biological, social or psychological. Something that has happened in a person's life, for example, a traumatic experience can cause a person to get depression. Some life situations may cause a person to get depression, such as losing a job or an important person, another disease, financial troubles or childhood trauma. Biological and psychological factors can be hormonal changes, hereditary or an unstable emotional life. The lack of social relationships, social support or constantly dealing with stress can also lead a person to get depression. The quality of social relationships affects a person's mental health deeply and the lack of safe and trustworthy relationships in one's life can cause the mind to falter. A depressed person who has experienced loss and failure is prone to take these experiences harder than others. A depressed person may punish themselves for their own mistakes and feel like a failure for the littlest things in life. The lack of self-compassion and past experiences that overshadow one's life lowers self-esteem and affects everyday life (Heiskanen, Tuulari & Huttunen 2011, 8-13).

Being bullied has shown to increase the likelihood of becoming depressed. When bullying isn't recognized and a student falls ill, the chances are that the depression gets

more severe and may result into something irreversible. Studies have shown that suicide is the third most common cause of death for young people (McCauley 2015). Bullying in universities has shown to have a connection with depression and other psychological issues, such as low self-esteem and concentration problems. Having a low self-esteem and not being able to concentrate mirrors a student's success in school tasks. Bullying and depression can cause a student to have severe trust issues that affect one's life long after university studies. Bullying that leads to depression can also cause a student to live in the constant fear of being bullied again and lose the excitement and belief of their future (Pörhölä 2010).

4.2 Stress

Stress is something that everyone experiences from time to time. There are a variety of stress factors that affect people differently. Stress factors affect the way we cope, and they may differ depending on life and social situations. A stress factor is individual; for one it might be a deadline when as for another it might be financial trouble. Lifestyle changes, such as graduation, starting a new job, moving or changes in a relationship, for example marriage or a divorce, are examples of common stress factors. In some situations, stress can be good and pursue a person to be efficient, but continuous and exertional stress can lead to problems with mental wellbeing (Tew 2011, 90-93).

Stress is an automatic reaction for a situation where a person experiences a threat. The purpose of stress is to prepare our mind and body to be alert of the threat, which activates adrenaline and makes our heart pound faster, breath to speed up and increase blood pressure. When our body is alert, it's prepared to flee or fight the threat. Our body also activates cortisol, which is a stress hormone. When the threat is gone, the stress hormone leaves our system, our breath and blood pressure stabilize, and our muscles relax. This reaction is short durational stress, which is normal and can better our performance. When a stressful situation becomes more permanent, that's when stress becomes a problem. When our body lives in a constant state of alert and our brains keeps activating stress hormones, our body doesn't get the chance to rest. Continuous stress can result to a variety of physical and mental health issues (Manka 2015).

Stress can affect our physical health by affecting our metabolism, heart and blood flow, which can result to severe illnesses, such as adult diabetes and heart illnesses. Our physical and mental health are a whole, meaning that when we live in a constant state of stress and burden our mind with it, the consequences often are physical too. According to a Finnish research, people who are mentally burdened are more likely to get cardiovascular diseases and metabolic syndrome. The lack of social interactions and relationships, worry and anger have also shown to have a connection with heart diseases. The research showed that stress had a connection with adult diabetes for people who were already prone to get it, but it didn't show that it would come strictly from stress for people with no risk of adult diabetes. Stress can also cause sleeping problems, which is connected to obesity and adult diabetes. Prolonged stress can trigger a physiological stress reaction or lead to a chronic infection process that has a connection with the risk of getting cancer. Stress can also cause a person to fall into unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as smoking or excess use of alcohol, which can increase the risk of cancer as well as other illnesses, such as depression and anxiety (Manka 2015).

Being exposed to stress for a longer time has a connection with learning and studying. Normal and healthy stress can at its best, improve and motivate studying skills and performance, but prolonged stress can weaken it. Prolonged stress affects the way we learn and how our memory works. Our memory is an important function in maintaining our psychological activity. A human has two types of memories; short-term memory (also known as working memory) and long-term memory. Short-term memory is short and quick, while long-term memory includes life events and experiences, tasks and skills. A person dealing with issues or challenges, for example bullying, can show symptoms of sleeping problems, changes in mood, hormonal activity and blood pressure. These are symptoms that a person might not recognize themselves, but the consequences such as anxiety and the feeling of fear, awakens a person. At this point, the symptoms have already affected the functioning of the memory, which affects the ability to learn and memorize and can make studying more challenging (Heikkinen-Peltonen, Innamaa & Virta 2014, 17-19).

4.3 Anxiety

Anxiety can be a consequence of bullying experiences. It's our system's way of avoiding dangerous situations and motivating to solve everyday challenges. When we talk about anxiety, we often use words such as, stress, worry, tension and nervousness, which can be forms of anxiety. Anxiety can vary from mild to severe panic attacks and it can last from a couple of minutes to years. It can occur as physical, psychological or behavioural symptoms. Anxiety can be emotional, such as unrealistic and continuous fear, irritability, anger and nervousness. It can also be thoughts, such as memory problems, the difficulty to make decisions and worrying about the past or future. Behavioural symptoms can be avoiding people or situations, excess use of intoxicants and social anxiety. Physical symptoms can be palpitations, stomach-ache, sleeping problems, headache, sweating and restlessness. Anxiety is different from normal when it affects normal life and relationships and lasts for a longer time. In these cases, anxiety can turn in to a disorder (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 44-56).

Anxiety disorders are more common among women than men. According to a study about the psychological health of young adults within the age of 20-34, anxiety had appeared in their lives at some point and 12,6% had experienced an anxiety disorder. An anxiety disorder can be a generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 44-45).

A generalized anxiety disorder is a form of comprehensive anxiety that can be caused about a variety of things, such as financial status, health, family, work or school when in reality there is nothing to worry about. Generalized anxiety disorder is hard to control. It's a state of being constantly worried about something that could go wrong or your own abilities to control them. In severe cases, the anxiety can control the person's life completely. It's a disorder that affects the ability to concentrate in studies, work and everyday life activities. A person with a generalized anxiety disorder has the tendency to solve problems by worrying. A person with this anxiety disorder also has the tendency to fear the future, worry about it and expect the worst (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 45-46).

A panic disorder is when a person experiences a short and intense moment of extreme anxiety, also known as panic attacks. Panic attacks often occur suddenly and unannounced and fill a person with fear and uncertainty. Symptoms of a panic attack can be sweating, rapid breathing and heartbeat, dizziness, chest pain and the feeling of losing control of yourself. The reasons what might trigger a panic attack vary and can be individual due to a traumatic experience or fear. For someone, public speaking can trigger a panic attack, while for another it could be crossing a bridge or using public transportation. Intoxicants, such as drugs can also trigger a panic attack. A person with a panic disorder can also avoid exercising because of the physical aspects of it that resemble the feeling of a panic attack. Having a panic attack doesn't automatically result into a panic disorder. A panic disorder is when a person experiences panic attacks repeatedly and has a fear of upcoming attacks and them possibly increasing (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 46-47).

Phobias are a form of anxiety and often limits a person's life. The phobia is permanent and unnecessary, and it can focus on a place, situation, thing or a live being. The state of fear causes anxiety and shame and makes the person's life more challenging because the object of the fear is avoided completely. Avoiding social situations is a common phobia, that 1% of Finnish population suffer from. Common beings that are a target of phobia are spiders, mice, snakes and insects. The fear of heights (vertigo) and the fear of small spaces (claustrophobia) are also common. Other common things that can be a target of phobia can be blood, driving a car, needles, flying on an airplane or thunder. A phobia is often so severe that it makes the person suffering it avoid places and situations where they might face the target and the phobia takes control of their life (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 47-48).

Post-traumatic stress disorder, also known as PTSD, is an anxiety disorder that begins after a traumatic experience, such as death, injury or the threat of it. Also, war, accidents, terrorist attacks, shootings and assault can result into PTSD. Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods and tsunamis are also traumatic experiences that can cause PTSD. A person with PTSD has symptoms of reliving the traumatic experience, for example, throughout dreams or memories. Some places and people might also trigger the memory of the experience again. The constant anxiousness caused by the disorder leads to nervousness, insomnia and outburst of anger. It's normal to experience stress and anxiety after a traumatic experience, but once the stress reaction lasts longer

than a month, we can name it as PTSD (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 48).

Anxiety disorders can be treated with self-help, psychotherapy and medication. Self-help can be for example, relaxation exercises or meditation, web therapy or a self-help guide for anxiety. Some people also find help for anxiety throughout arts, music and exercise. Psychotherapy can be cognitive behavioural therapy, where the client and therapist work together to find out ways to deal with the anxiety through developing new paradigms. Or it can be exposing the client to the subject of the fear, step by step. The goal is that the client gets more used to the subject of the fear and realizes that there's no need to avoid it. Early recognition and prevention are important when dealing with anxiety disorders (Kitchener, Jorm, Kelly, Lassander & Karila-Hietala 2015, 50-51).

4.4 Loneliness and social relationships

Social relationships and interaction are an important part of a human's wellbeing. The low quantity or poor quality of social relationships affects mental and physical health, as well as increases the mortality risk. Scientific evidence has proved that social relationships benefit overall health, as social relationships improve interaction skills and provide emotional support. Social relationships also affect our behaviour, and a negative change in social relationships can result into a change in behaviour. The change of behaviour can be, for example, anxiousness, fear, anger or social isolation (Umberson & Montez 2010).

Bullying can cause harm to social relationships and long-term loneliness. Bullying causes the victim to feel shame and may result in silence about one's experiences. The victim feels that no one would understand how they feel or believe what they have experienced, and they may blame themselves for the bullying. This can result in a feeling of loneliness and isolation from social contact. The type of bullying that a victim experiences can be discrimination from a group or community. Discrimination has a strong connection with the feeling of loneliness and weaker social relationships. The victim can still have friends and a social network, but the people included in that

network may not know about the bullying or are not able to help (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 34-35).

The feeling of loneliness doesn't always occur during bullying but can follow the victim long after the bullying experiences. The victim can feel the traumatic experiences so deeply that they feel that no one can help or understand them, which results into a continuous circle of loneliness and isolation. Opening to someone about one's experiences with bullying may seem useless and trust issues caused by the bullying comes in the way. Bullying experiences often lead to low self-esteem and belief in yourself. During studies or in working life, the ability to believe in yourself and your qualification is important. The lack of belief and healthy self-esteem affects a student's ability to study, complete internships and socialize with other students. A victim of bullying may also lose the willingness to try. Trying to get through deadlines, interact with others and participate in student events can be unlikely (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 18-20).

Social relationships often suffer from bullying. As previously mentioned, mistrust and doubt towards others are common for a person with bullying experiences. A victim of bullying may feel mistrust towards the future and fear that bad things will happen in the future as well. Bullying experiences can cause the victim to lose belief in the good nature of people and be extremely careful with every new acquaintance they make. Friendships and partnerships may suffer from bullying, when the victim constantly fears that they will be hurt or left, even if there would be no reason to. The trauma of the bullying experiences often takes over the mind and causes the victim to believe that the same thing will happen again. Trust is a foundation for any relationship and mistrust and doubt are a burden for a relationship and can cause it to crumble. Being suspicious, controlling and not trusting anyone affects personal and professional relationships and it has a negative impact on mental health. The constant doubt, fear and mistrust is not only heavy for the one's receiving it, but for the one feeling it. Bullying experiences can turn a person who used to be outgoing and open into a withdrawn and anxious one. It can shake the foundation of trust in relationships and affect different parts of a victim's life. Unresolved feelings caused from bullying experiences can also lead to feelings of anger and anger management issues (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 21-24).

4.5 What can be done

To intervene in bullying can be difficult. People might not know exactly what to do or how to address the situation. The victim can be overwhelmed with shame and fear, which prevents them from telling someone about the bullying. A victim of bullying may also blame themselves for the situation and therefore feel that there is no point in asking for help. Intervention in bullying always requires courage. Sharing the experiences with a friend, teacher or a professional is a promising start. It's also important to know that intervening is not always about getting involved in the bullying situation or addressing the bully. Intervening can also be approaching the victim of the bullying and asking them if they're okay or if they wish to talk (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 135).

When it comes to bullying in higher education, it's important that higher education organizations invest in preventing and recognizing bullying. It's important that staff members are trained and informed about bullying and how to recognize it and intervene. Staff members should place focus on supporting students in their studies and recognizing when something is distracting them from it. Bullying should be discussed more openly in higher education communities, for example during lectures. Student unions also have an important role when it comes to preventing and recognizing bullying in higher education; student unions have the chance to raise awareness and create strategies to deal with bullying. University health services need to be aware of how bullying affects the mental wellbeing of students, and how it touches not only the victim, but the whole student community. In addition to the victim, bullying can affect the mental wellbeing of other students and staff members (Cowie & Myers 2016, 207-208).

To prevent bullying in higher education levels, placing effort in inclusion and celebrating diversity are some key factors that are essential for student unions and study communities to take into account. Investing in inclusion and making sure that students feel like they belong can prevent the feeling of loneliness and increase the amount of social relationships, which supports studying. Peer support has also shown to be an effective way to deal with bullying; student unions and fellow students can offer peer support and allow students with bullying experiences to express themselves, which again, increases inclusion and decreases the feeling of loneliness. It's important that universities and universities of applied sciences have clear policies about bullying and that

action is taken when necessary. Universities that don't already have strategies to deal with bullying need to start creating ones and consider effective solutions that create a safe environment and a learning community for everyone. Higher education should have an equal community where difference is valued, not discriminated (Cowie & Myers 2016, 209-210).

Prevention is a key factor in dealing with bullying, but it's also important that students already dealing with the consequences and effects of bullying are taken into consideration. Students should be aware of the help provided by student healthcare services. Student healthcare services should be aware how bullying affects an individual's well-being and also how previous bullying experiences can have long-term consequences that follow a student into their higher education studies. Dealing with bullying must also focus on the ones already affected by it. Providing support, offering professional help and increasing understanding among students and teachers can go a long way. Lowering the threshold for discussion about bullying and placing emphasis on improving interaction skills can not only help to prevent bullying, but also help the ones affected (Pörhölä 2011, 2-3).

As bullying can also occur at work practice placements, strategies used for workplace bullying could also be effective in dealing with bullying among students. An effective way to deal with bullying is to research how much it occurs, what kind of bullying it is and how it has affected the ones involved. Once workplaces are aware about the type of bullying occurring, it's easier to create effective strategies to prevent it. Student unions or work practice placements where bullying has occurred could organize anti-bullying projects or events, in order to raise awareness and inform about bullying. Projects and events may help others to understand the seriousness of bullying and encourage students to talk about it and feel more confident to intervene in possible bullying situations. An essential part of reducing bullying experiences are that everyone in the student community is on the same page and works together to create a positive studying atmosphere (Vartia, Olin, Kalavainen, Joki & Pahkin 2016, 5-8).

5 Methodology

In this chapter I will introduce the methodology of my thesis, including my research questions, the type of research my thesis is and what my data collection method is and how I will analyze the results of my data.

5.1 Research questions

The objective of my thesis was to research what kind of effects higher education bullying can have on a student's mental health and how it affects one's wellbeing in general. My research questions in my thesis that I sought answers for were the following:

- What kind of consequences and effects does bullying have on students' mental wellbeing?
- How common is higher education bullying?
- What are the most common consequences of bullying?
- How can bullying affect a student's social relationships and their academic performance?

5.2 Qualitative research

In my thesis, I use the qualitative research method. A qualitative research is about human sciences where the aim is to understand and find the purpose for a phenomenon. It can include opinions, thoughts and experiences. In a qualitative research, the researcher prepares the questions in advance and the respondents are often able to answer the questions freely. It's about understanding a social phenomenon and it can be used independently or together with a quantitative research method. The results of such research are analyzed, explained and argued without using quantitative terms. The observations and findings of the research need to be explainable. One characteristic of a qualitative research is that the scientific knowledge is presented in a way

that specifically applies to the researched phenomenon and it's believed that the results can be useful on a larger scale (Alasuutari nd, 2-13). The material of a qualitative research is reviewed as a whole. Qualitative research can also be compared to cultural research, because of its human science nature. It differs from quantitative research because statistical argumentation is not either possible or necessary. This type of research also focuses particularly on understanding and explaining one phenomenon (Alasuutari 1995, 38-39). The main differences between qualitative and quantitative research is that the quantitative data collection methods are more structured and statistical than in qualitative research. The data of a quantitative research is measured and expressed by using numbers and the sample sizes are larger than in a qualitative research. Quantitative research focuses on numeric variables, for example, seeking answers for "how many", "how much" and "how often" (Vilka 20017, 13-15).

There are a variety of topics that qualitative research best suits. Qualitative research is effective for an unknown topic with minimal previous information. Research about behavior or life experiences and its reasons and consequences are done using qualitative research. Qualitative research is often completed about a sensitive topic that requires empathy and understanding, where a standardized interview is unsuitable as a method. For these reasons, qualitative research is suitable for studies completed in the social work field (Padgett 2008, 15-17). As a researcher studies a phenomenon of individuals, groups, organizations or societies, we can talk about qualitative research. The role of the researcher is extremely important, as the researcher oversees how the research is carried out, which can affect the results of the research. When analyzing the results in a qualitative research, most of the analysis is done by words (Shaw & Holland 2014, 7-8).

Qualitative research is the method in my thesis because bullying experiences and the consequences of them are a sensitive topic that requires empathy and understanding. Higher education bullying is a topic that is not often discussed, and it's considered a new research phenomenon. Higher education bullying has occurred in the past, but discussion and research has only risen in the past few years. Qualitative research is an effective method to address social problems, which is why the method works for my thesis topic, as bullying is a common problem among people, which makes it a social problem. (Bloor 2016, 25). The research focuses on a group of individuals, more specifically, higher education students and the role of the researcher is very important. It was important that while planning the way this research would be carried out, that

I kept my research questions in mind and produced a research that would help me find answers to them. The analysis of the survey was done mainly by words, which is a key factor of a qualitative research. A research about bullying experiences is a sensitive topic and when planning, it was important to keep in mind the sensitivity of the research and the survey and the analysis of the results (Shaw & Holland 2014, 7-8, 27). I kept in mind the sensitivity of the research topic by emphasizing anonymity in the survey and phrasing the questions in an appropriate manner. When analyzing the results, I remained respectful to the respondents' answers and analyzed the answers in a way that no one could be identified from them.

5.3 Data

My thesis was completed as a qualitative research-based thesis using a survey as the data collection method. The purpose of a survey is to produce statistics and information about the respondents and therefore give more information on the researched topic. The aim in survey methodology is to find out reliable information and minimize any errors in the data. In the survey, the respondents were asked questions about possible bullying experiences and findings in their school. A survey was the right methodology for my thesis because the purpose was to receive information about experiences, opinions and perceptions of the respondents (Fowler 2014, 8-9). The survey was sent to other universities and universities of applied sciences, my working life partner's cooperation partners, as well as advertised through social media. The entire survey can be found from Appendix 1.

Scheuren defines a survey as a method that is "used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals" (Scheuren 2004). A survey can be used for many different kinds of purposes and it can be carried out in many ways, such as online, in person, by mail or by phone. The sample size of a survey may differ, and the size often affects the quality of the survey. There is no specific rule on how many samples is required for a good survey because it depends on the topic of the survey, the professionals and the resources that are available to conduct the survey. Using a survey in a research is an effective way to provide scientific knowledge and it's a method used by a variety of professionals, such as psychologists, economists, health professionals, scientists and sociologists. The way questions are formed in a

survey depends on what the aims and objectives of the survey are; if the survey focuses more on opinions and attitudes or if it focuses more on behaviour, thoughts and experiences. The questions can be open-ended or closed and when conducting a survey, it's important to take into account that the way a question is asked can affect the results (Scheuren 2004, 9-12).

The objectives of a survey research are often to collect opinions, thoughts and feelings. When creating a survey, it's important for the researcher to create a realistic time frame for the creation of the survey, the data collection and analysing the results. A researcher needs to think about a proper data collection strategy, that suits the topic of the survey and the people who the researcher wishes to answer it. When creating a research survey, a researcher needs to consider how big they wish the sample to be and how many results they're seeking for and therefore create an effective strategy for it. The data collection strategy can affect the quality and reliability of the data, which is why it's important to plan a strategy that suits the survey (Punch 2003, 40-43).

I chose a survey as my method because it was the most effective way for me to reach higher education students about my topic. Bullying experiences are a sensitive topic and therefore by using, for example, an interview, the possibility of receiving information of the topic could have been much lower. The survey was anonymous, which lowered the threshold for people to share their experiences, opinions and thoughts. I wanted to receive answers from students all around Finland and from different study fields, which was more feasible throughout a survey than any other data collection method. My working life partner was planning to create a survey for their anti-bullying project "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!" and it was the perfect opportunity for me to jump in and participate in the process. With my working life partner, we discussed what kind of a survey we want to create, what were mine and their goals and what kinds of questions was I seeking answers for. We also discussed how the questions of the survey should be presented and that resulted in creating a versatile survey with open questions and yes/no questions. The survey also included Likert scale questions where respondents were able to answer from a scale of 1 to 5 if they agreed on the claim or not. We wanted the survey to be versatile, because mine and Nytyri's goals were somewhat different, so the survey needed to include questions that would benefit us both. The survey included open-ended questions because it gave respondents the

chance to answer in their own words. The open-ended questions were about the consequences and effects of bullying on the ability to study, mental wellbeing and the feelings of student communities. These are things that can be very individual and can't be marginalized to specific answers, so it was important that respondents had the chance to explain and express in their own words.

The benefits of using a survey as a data collection method were that the results gave precise and accurate results of the topic. Doing a survey was low on cost and fairly easy to create. By using a survey, I was able to create specific questions about higher education bullying and therefore receive precise and honest answers. An online survey was easy for respondents to use, because they could answer the survey anywhere and it didn't require them to travel to a specific place in order to answer it. Analysing the results was also easier through an online survey, because I could go through the answers at any time.

The survey was created in co-operation with my working life partner, Nyyti Ry and their anti-bullying project "Puhutaan Kiusaamisesta!" and it was created in SurveyPal. The survey was open for respondents for nearly a month, from 26.8.2019 to 27.9.2019 and it was in Finnish. The survey was about bullying experiences in higher education communities and consisted of five parts, from which parts 1-4 were used for my thesis. The survey required approximately 15-20 minutes time to answer. The survey included open questions, where respondents were able to answer the question in their own words. The results of the survey were used for my thesis, as well as for Nyyti Ry's work. The answers of the survey were anonymous, and they were managed so that no respondents were identified from the results. The purpose of the survey was to collect current data about higher education bullying and the effects of it to students' mental wellbeing. The aim of the survey was to raise awareness and gather information about bullying experiences and observations on higher educational level. In order to prevent and intervene bullying in university communities, it needs to be recognized and acknowledged.

The first section of the survey included basic questions about the respondents, such as age, gender, year of birth and mother tongue. It also included basic questions about studying situation, field of study, municipality of studies and the starting year of studies.

The second section of the survey was about bullying experiences. The beginning of the second section included a short definition of bullying, in order to remind respondents about what kind of actions are considered bullying, so that the results of the survey would be accurate. The second section included questions about if the respondents had experienced bullying and if yes, where and what type of bullying it was. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the types of bullying, which were indirect manipulative, study related, direct verbal, physical, gender related, sexual or cyberbullying. There was a question about if respondents had bullied someone themselves. The section also included an open-ended question about how the respondents would describe the bullying in their own words and how long the bullying lasted or if it had ended at all. The second section continued with questions about if the respondents sought help and if yes, from who. If the answer was no, there was a question about who they would possibly ask for help in a case of bullying. The second section also included a question about previous bullying experiences, prior to higher education studies and what the respondents would wish student communities would take more into account when preventing and intervening in bullying.

The third section of the survey included Likert scale questions that consisted about the atmosphere of higher education communities, personal experience of higher education bullying, bullying experience practices in the respondent's school and atmosphere in student association activities.

The fourth section of the survey consisted about open-ended questions about the consequences of higher education bullying experiences. First, the respondents could explain in their own words how the bullying affected their ability to study. The section followed with a question about how the bullying experiences affected the mood, health and wellbeing and how it affected the experience of student communities. In the last question of the section, respondents were able to tell what kind of help and support they need or would need when dealing with bullying.

The survey was shared with the following organizations throughout Nytyi Ry: SYL, SAMOK, YTHS, OAJ, Suomen Yliopistot, Suomen Ammattikorkeakoulut, Kiusatut-project, Tampere Settlementti, Yeesi ry and Allianssi. I advertised the survey in my own social media channels, such as Instagram, Whatsapp and Facebook. In Instagram, I advertised the survey in my own account and in Whatsapp I shared it with friends and groups I was a part of. In Facebook, I shared the survey in my own account and in a few groups, where I hoped to reach many people. I created a short information text

about the survey in Finnish that I included every time I advertised the survey somewhere, for example Whatsapp, Facebook or Instagram. The text can be found from Appendix 2. In addition, the survey was also shared at Laurea University of Applied Science's student union Laureamko's facebook page.

5.4 Content Analysis

The analysis method I used for my survey was content analysis. Content analysis is a type of analysis used in qualitative research. Content analysis is used to analyze material that is in a text form and the aim is to form a general description of the phenomenon that is researched. This analysis method requires analyzing using words, instead of numbers. The similarities and differences of the results are explained and described by words (Leinonen 2018). Content analysis is used when analyzing verbal, written or communicational messages. In the 19th century, content analysis began when it was used to analyze magazine and newspaper articles and advertisements. It has grown since then and today it is used in a variety of studies, such as journalism, psychology, sociology and general health studies (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, 2-3).

In some cases, content analysis can also be used in quantitative research, if it includes open-ended questions that require content analysis. It's generally defined as a procedure for systematically and objectively analyzing documents and it's used to describe the phenomena that is researched. Content analysis can be used to create concepts or concept maps, models or categories that illustrate the studied phenomenon. Content analysis can be done either inductively or deductively and knowing which one to use depends on the purpose of the study. In an inductive analysis, the analysis proceeds with the terms of the data, when in a deductive analysis, an analysis framework is created based on previous knowledge to search for similar content from the data. Both analysis methods include challenges. It might be difficult for the researcher to describe the results in depth and often the content analysis shows incompleteness. There might also be too many concepts, which makes it difficult for the researcher to group them and it results to having too many concepts connected in to one phenomenon. I used the inductive approach and proceeded the analysis with the terms of the results of the survey (Kyngäs, Elo, Pölkki, Kääriäinen & Kanste 2011, 1-2).

According to Krippendorff, there are a few questions that every content analysis should include. The analysis should answer which data is analyzed, how the data is defined, from what population the data is drawn from, what are the boundaries of the analysis, what is the relevant context and what is measured. In my thesis, the data that is analyzed are the results of the survey. The population from which the data is drawn from are the 68 respondents of the survey and what is measured is the consequences and effects of bullying on students' mental wellbeing. The boundaries of the analysis are that the topic sticks to higher education bullying (Krippendorff 2019, 39-40).

Content analysis is a research technique that increases the understanding of a particular phenomenon, provides new information and practical actions. It's used to produce replicable and reliable conclusions by interpreting and analyzing material in a text form. Content analysis can be used, for example, to analyze interviews, documents and surveys. In my thesis, I used a survey as a way to collect data and the aim was to collect current information about higher education bullying experiences (Krippendorff 2019, 24-25).

An effective way to analyze the consequences and effects of bullying experiences is by the use of words rather than numbers. It's a phenomenon that requires explanation, argue and sensitivity, which is why content analysis was the right way to analyze the survey results (Padgett 2008, 15-17). I used content analysis by going through the material I received from the survey and aimed to form a general description from the results of the survey. I searched for similarities and differences and searched for common factors. The survey included open-ended questions where respondents were able to write in their own words, which was an effective way to use content analysis as a method. I completed the content analysis inductively which means that I proceeded the analysis with the terms of the data. I didn't change any answers and I wasn't searching for similarities or differences with previous research on the topic, but instead I focused my analysis on only the results of the survey. I analyzed the results by going through the answers of the survey one by one and thought about possible reasons for certain answers.

As I created a Word document of all the open-ended answers, it resulted to 16 pages of text with the Helvetica font, size 11 and line and paragraph spacing of 1,15. This included the feedback of respondents. I began analyzing the survey by first going through the whole survey and after that I began to sort out the answers and search for answers for my research questions. I created a Word document of the open-ended

answers, read through them carefully and tried to find similarities and differences in the answers. I organized the order of the answers so that similar answers would be together, so it would be easier to visualize.

6 Review of results

In this chapter I will go through the results of the survey and analyze them. The results are divided in to five parts according to the survey. The first part is about the background of the respondents and in the second part I will talk about the bullying experiences of the respondents. The third part will focus on the Likert scale questions that the survey included, and the fourth part is about the consequences and effects of bullying based on the results of the survey. The last part of this chapter includes feedback from the respondents.

6.1 First part of the survey

The survey link was opened by 249 people, from which 68 answered. The results of the survey have been translated from Finnish to English. The results also include citations of the respondents that have also been translated from Finnish to English.

84, 80% were women, 15,20% men and 1,47% other. 31,82% were university students and 66,67% were students from a university of applied sciences. A smaller portion of the respondents studied at an open university, completed a master's program at a university of applied sciences or were students of a university master's program. A majority of the respondents (89,4%) were full-time students and the rest were part-time or had taken a break from studying or were not studying at all at the moment (Figure 1). Based on the answers of the survey, it's clear that bullying does occur at higher education and that bullying is more common among women than men and more common in universities of applied sciences than universities. Taking a break from studying or quitting studies all together could have a connection with bullying experiences. Also, bullying experiences and full-time students link together, since students spending

the majority of their time on campus can be more likely exposed to bullying than part-time students.

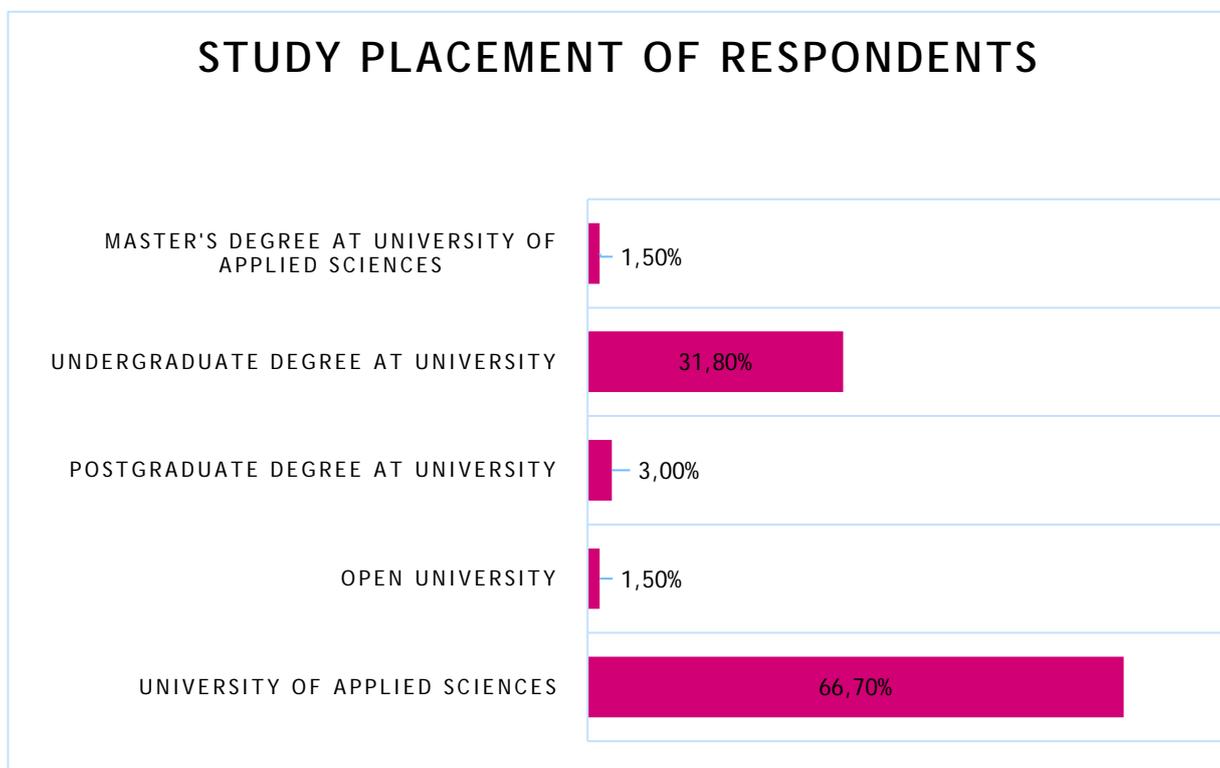


Figure 1: Study placement of respondents

6.2 Second part of the survey

31,8% of respondents had not experienced bullying or observed others being bullied, while 22,7% hadn't been bullied themselves, but had observed bullying directed towards others. 33,3% had experienced bullying during studies and 10,6% during a work practice placement. 13,6% had been bullied in connection with student activities, such as student parties and events, and 13,6% had experienced bullying online or throughout social media. A smaller portion had experienced bullying during free time, or they didn't know or were not sure (Figure 2).

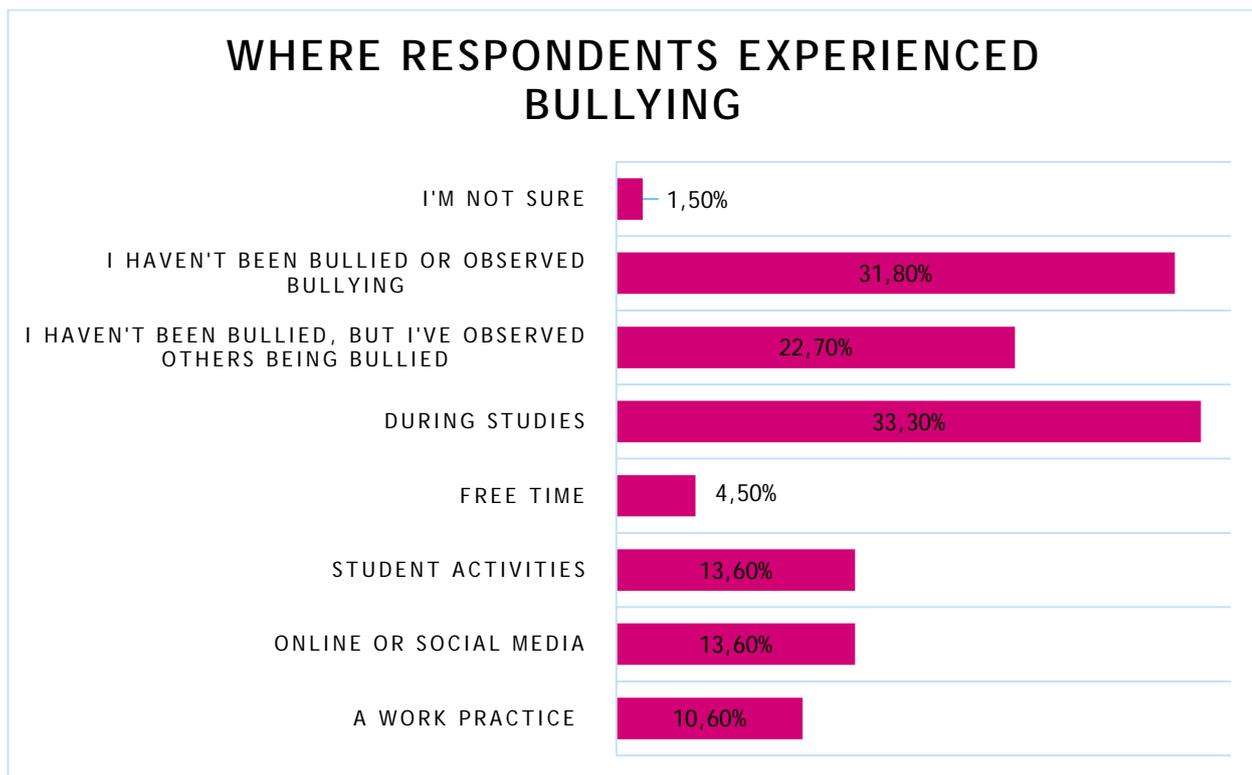


Figure 2: Where respondents experienced bullying

Most of the respondents with bullying experiences had experienced bullying from another student or students, but there were also respondents who had experienced bullying from university staff members. From these results we can assume that bullying occurs mostly between students, but inappropriate behavior from staff towards students exists as well. Students bullying other students could be for example, because of jealousy or competition that student have with each other. Staff members might bully students without even knowing it themselves.

The kind of bullying the respondents of the survey had experienced was mainly indirect and manipulative bullying (91,7%), direct verbal bullying (36,1%) and study-related bullying (69,4%). A smaller percentage had also experienced physical bullying (2,8%) and sexual and gender-related bullying (11,1%). The indirect bullying had been isolating from a group, understating opinions, giving mean looks, talking bad behind one's back, neglecting ideas and indirect name calling. Spreading false information about someone was also mentioned multiple times by the respondents. The types of cyberbullying included mean messages, understating one's abilities and discriminating from a group. Cyberbullying had mostly occurred on WhatsApp and Facebook. Respondents had also experienced cyberbullying through Snapchat, Instagram and e-mail. Study-

related bullying included bad mouthing one's study motivation and study skills and commenting negatively on someone's study progress. Other students had also created additional pressure towards another student. Study-related bullying had also occurred on online platforms. Some respondents had also experienced negative and inappropriate comments about studies from a lecturer. Bullying caused by lecturers had resulted in some students dropping out of courses due to fear of being humiliated and lowered self-esteem. As previously mentioned, 10,6% of the respondents had experienced bullying during a work practice placement. The bullying at a work practice placement included underestimating one's abilities, discriminating from the work community, unequal behavior and taking advantage of one's trainee status by for example, giving all the hard work that no one wants to do, to the trainee. Unequal behavior also included setting different rules and rights for a trainee and other employees.

The survey included a question about whether the bullying had stopped. 34,3% of the respondents answered yes, 11,4% answered no and 54,3% were not sure. The high percentage of respondents who were not sure if the bullying has stopped can be for various reasons. The bullying could have occurred irregularly and therefore the victim of the bullying couldn't be completely sure if it would happen again. It could also be that the victim of the bullying didn't tell anyone about their experiences, or no one intervened in it and they are therefore living in a state of fear and expect the bullying perhaps to continue. Bullying can also sometimes be difficult to define, which makes it hard to be sure if it has ended or not. The duration of the bullying differed among respondents, some had experienced bullying for a couple of months and some for years. When a student has dealt with bullying for years, it can be difficult to know if it has stopped or even believe that it will. Being a victim of bullying for years creates severe trauma and a victim can lose hope of it ever ending, which connects to the high percentage of respondents being unsure about whether the bullying had stopped.

A majority of respondents with bullying experiences had sought for help and support from a friend, family member or a fellow student. A smaller percentage of respondents turned to a member of staff for help, such as a tutor, student healthcare services, school psychologist and school pastor. Still, 31,3% of respondents didn't seek for help. Some reasons why students hadn't sought for help was because of the feeling that nothing could be done to the situation, previous trauma and the fear of getting a stigma. Some respondents answered that they didn't recognize the situation as bullying

until later and felt like it was too late because the situation was already over. Sometimes a person can deal with a bullying experience on their own and no help from others is required. In a case where a person realizes the bullying after it's already over and if they don't feel like they need to go back to that time and ask for help, it's not always necessary. On the other hand, it's important to take into account the consequences that bullying can have on a person, long after the actual bullying is over. And in some cases, the person might not even realize themselves what kind of damage the bullying has caused.

Many respondents answered that no one intervened in the bullying they experienced. A victim of bullying can feel weak, which is important that if bullying is observed, it's intervened in. Unfortunately, as the results of the survey portray, a lot of times no one intervenes. Intervening can be difficult when you don't know what exactly you're supposed to do or how to address the situation. A lack of knowledge on ways to intervene in bullying causes people not to do it. A fear of getting bullied too can also stop someone from intervening. Turning your head the other way and having a "it's none of my business" mindset also creates a barrier for intervening in bullying. It can be difficult for bystanders to take action and find the courage to approach the situation. It can also be challenging for a bystander to recognize a situation as bullying and they might be unsure of the situation, which leads them to leave it. Fortunately, some respondents had received peer support from friends and advice and intervention from fellow students.

6.3 Third part of the survey

A Likert scale question in the survey was about conflicts and disagreements and their intervention during classes or lectures. The claim was that "If conflicts or disagreements occur during teaching situations, they are addressed". The respondents could agree or disagree with the claim by choosing a number from 1-5, 1 being totally disagreeing and 5 being completely agreeing. All 68 respondents answered the question. As can be seen from the chart below, 41,20% answered 3, meaning that they didn't completely agree, nor did they disagree with the claim (Figure 3). The reasons why respondents were in the middle could be because maybe sometimes intervention oc-

curs and sometimes it doesn't. Respondents may have not paid attention when conflicts occur during teaching and therefore, not be sure if it was intervened in. People can also interpret conflicts and intervention differently, as one might see an act as an intervention, someone might not. 26,5% in total had answered 1 and 2, meaning that they disagreed on the claim. This indicates that there are teaching situations with conflicts and disagreements, that are swept under the rug. On the other hand, a total of 32,4% had answered 4 and 5, meaning that they agreed with the claim. It was positive to see that some respondents felt like conflicts and disagreements are taken seriously during teaching situations (Figure 3).

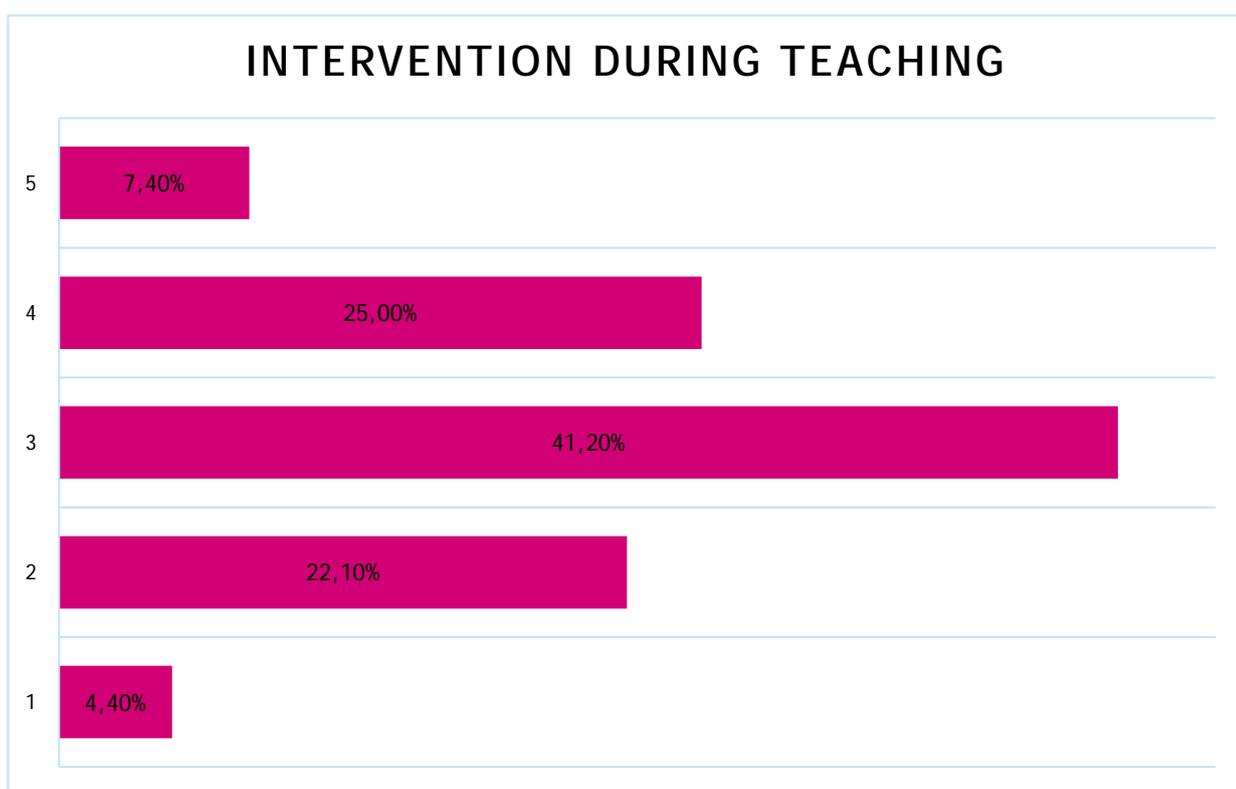


Figure 3: Intervention during teaching

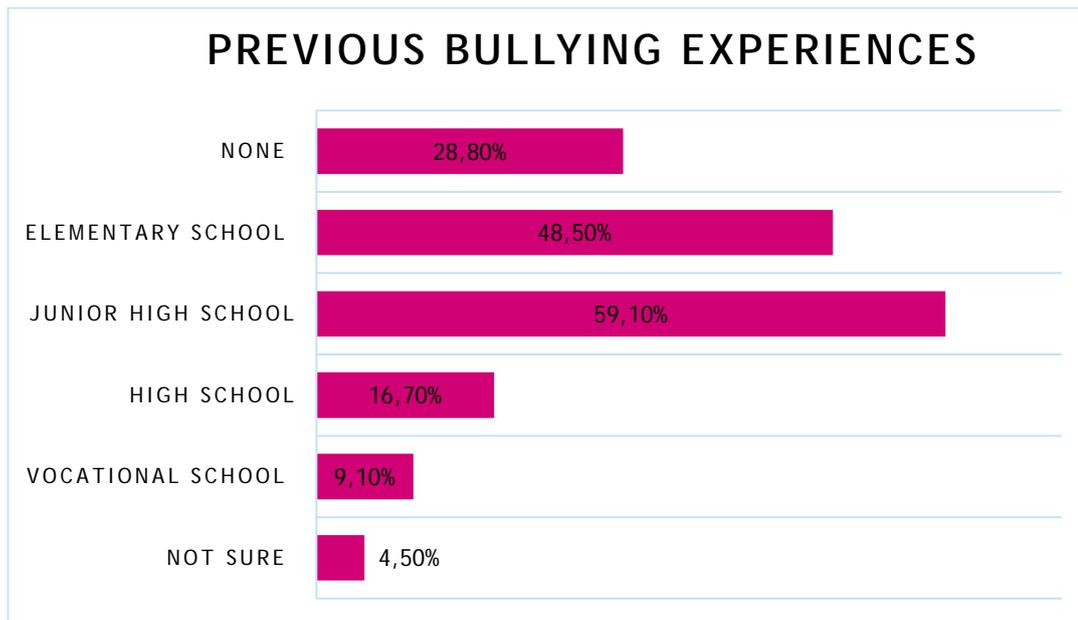


Figure 4: Previous bullying experiences of respondents

These results indicate that students have experienced bullying prior to their higher education studies. Most in junior high and in elementary school and a smaller portion in in high school and vocational school. 28,8% didn't have previous bullying experiences and 4,5% were not sure (Figure 4). The results show that a majority of the respondents with bullying experiences during higher education studies have experienced bullying, which support Pörhölä's statement from 2011 about bullying having a tendency to continue (Pörhölä 2011). A large percentage of the respondents had experienced bullying during primary school, which can be connected to the young age. A smaller percentage of respondents were not sure if they had experienced bullying before. Bullying can sometimes be difficult to recognize, and some victims of bullying may realize it after the bullying has already ended. It can also be difficult to be aware of your own behavior and if you have been a bully or not. 10, 6% of the respondents were not sure if they had bullied another student. 84, 8% hadn't bullied others and 3% had. The 3% of respondents who had bullied others had bullied one or more students and the rest were not sure. The reason why nearly half of these respondents were not sure who the target of their bullying was, could relate to the previous question where some respondents were not sure if they had bullied or not. It could be unclear to these respondents whether their actions would be considered as bullying and who they were targeted at.

Respondents were able to answer a question about what they wish student communities would take into account and invest in when it comes to preventing and intervening in bullying. Most of the respondents wish there would be more open discussion and information about the bullying phenomenon and that there would more information about who to contact in a case of bullying. Many also wish for better investing in the equality and wellbeing of student communities. 59,1% thought that the theme of bullying should be a part of tutoring training and 66,7% thought that feedback surveys should include questions about bullying and inappropriate behavior. Some respondents thought that studies should include teaching about emotional and interaction skills. 36,4% thought that staff should intervene more in bullying situations and conflicts during lectures. The results indicate that there is a variety of options that students wish would be considered in order to prevent bullying. A respondent of the survey had also wished that teachers would be more aware of their behavior as they can bully without knowing it. The results indicate that students wish more attention would be paid on the bullying occurring from staff members, because rarely no one intervenes in it.

A Likert scale question in the survey had a claim that higher education schools should have more information available about bullying. The question was answered by all 68 respondents. The results indicate clearly that respondents wish their school would have more information about higher education bullying (Figure 5). Most of the respondents agreed with the claim and 25% had completely agreed. Some had answered 3, which could possibly be that they wish for a little bit more information, they're not sure or they felt neutral about the claim. A very small portion answered 2 and no one answered 1. The results indicate that most of the respondents have a need to know more about higher education bullying, possibly about the definition of bullying, who to ask for help and how to intervene (Figure 5).

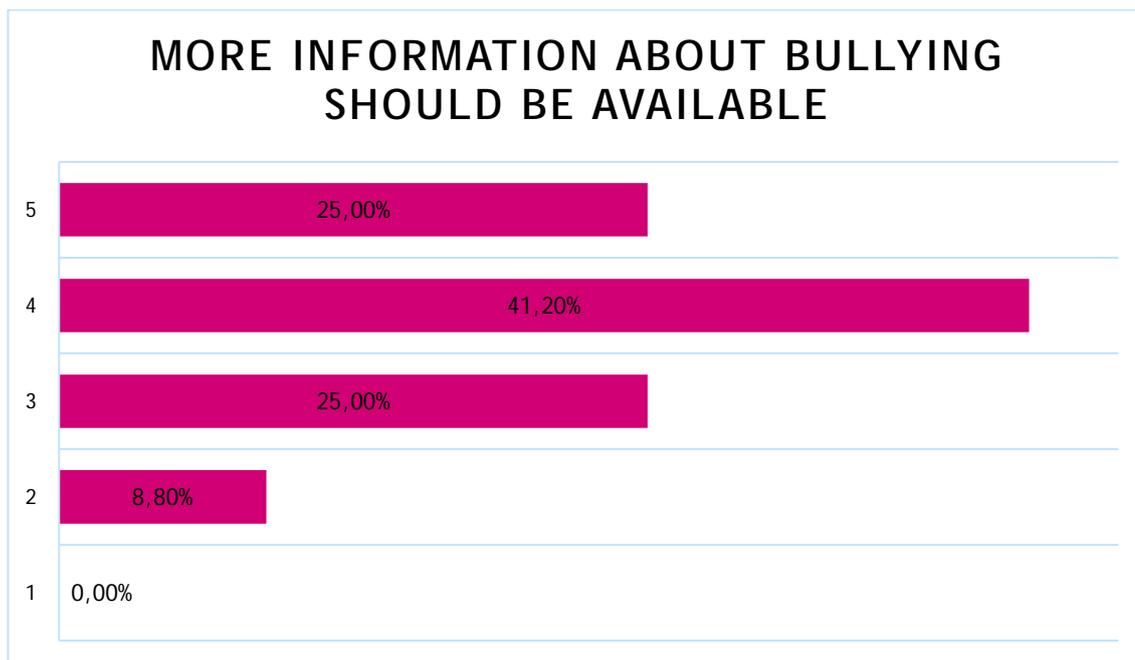


Figure 5: More information about bullying should be available

Another Likert scale question in the survey was that there should be more discussion about higher education bullying. The results of the question support the results of the previous Likert scale question and indicate that respondents wish for more open discussion about higher education bullying. These two questions go hand in hand and support each other, indicating that there isn't enough information available or discussion about higher education bullying, which could relate to the assumption why many think higher education bullying doesn't exist (Figure 6).

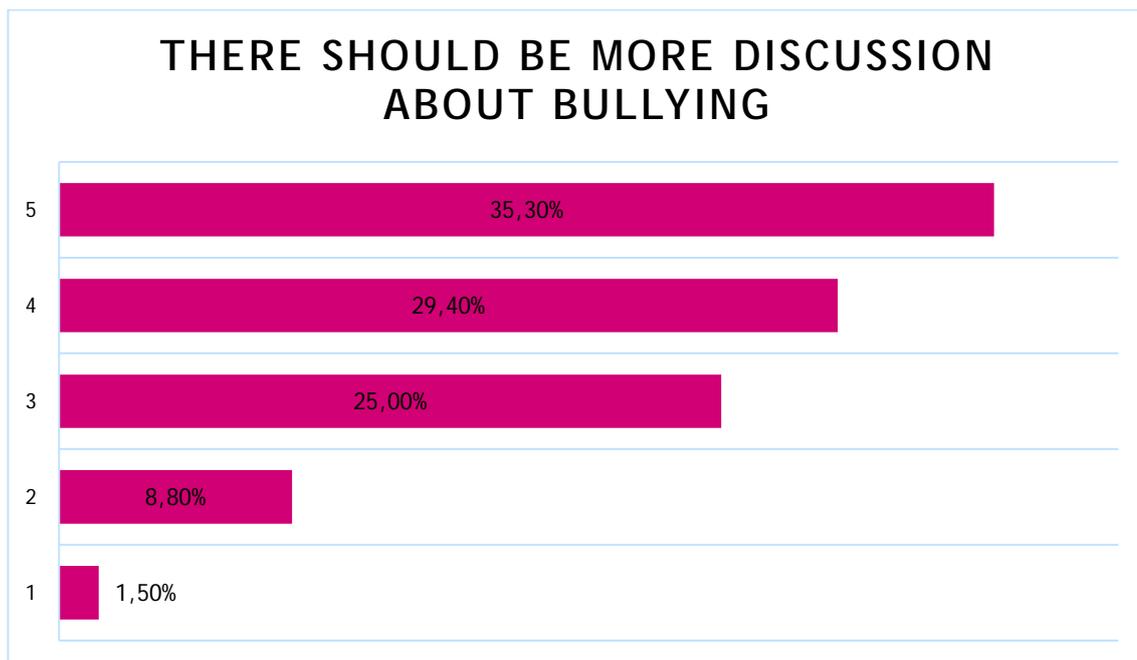


Figure 6: There should be more discussion about bullying

6.4 Fourth part of the survey

Respondents were asked about the consequences of bullying on their studying and wellbeing and respondents were able to express themselves in their own words. Bullying experiences affected the ability to study by causing fatigue, feeling of loneliness, loss of motivation and poor self-esteem about studies. Bullying caused anxiety about attending lectures and resulted into skipping lectures. Bullying also resulted in some questioning their study field, since studying had been so uncomfortable due to bullying. Bullying had also caused the suspension of studies and sick leave. Studying was hard and the bullying made it even harder and caused anxiety about starting new courses and the thought about going to school felt unbearable. Concentrating and keeping up with deadlines became more challenging and easy tasks required a lot. Respondents who had experienced bullying at a work practice placement told that going to work felt oppressive and unpleasant. Respondents who experienced bullying from a teacher experienced fear and anxiety about attending a certain teacher's classes. On the other hand, some respondents felt that bullying hadn't affected their study

abilities or that it motivated them to graduate sooner. Below there are some citations of the respondents.

"I don't feel comfortable at school at all and I've started to doubt if the study field is right for me because the studying has been so uncomfortable"

"I don't feel like I belong to university and entering the building already causes anxiousness"

"I have been close to suspending my studies for a few times. It's pretty hard to study when you don't want to go certain teachers' classes and feel anxious about going to work practice because of bullying"

"I always fear the start of a new course. I'm afraid of being bullied and the idea of sharing my opinions get me anxious easily"

"It's hard to concentrate and keep my thoughts together and tasks that would normally be easy to do require a lot of more mental resources"

"It felt awful, it felt like I was air to others or the target of some teachers. I didn't have the energy to go to school anymore and I got depression"

"Mainly, watching bullying happen as a bystander causes anxiety"

The respondents of the survey had the chance to tell how bullying had affected their mental wellbeing and health. The most common effects and consequences of bullying according to the survey were anxiety, extra stress and depression. Bullying affected life in general negatively, not just studies. It affected sleep, appetite and social relationships. Social relationships suffered and decreased, which increased the feeling of loneliness and dejection. The threshold to attend student events increased, which affected social life negatively and caused the victim of bullying to feel isolated. Bullying experiences caused feelings of irritation, anger, sadness and tiredness. The lack of energy affected all parts of life, such as studies, spare time and personal relationships in a negative way. Continuous stress turned into physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomach problems. The results show that the effects and consequences of bullying can vary from mental to physical symptoms and affect all aspects of life. The effects of bullying also don't necessarily occur in the exact moment bullying occurs but can

follow a person for a long time after the actual bullying. The results indicate that bullying had long-term effects on many students' lives and how they feel about studying. A small percentage of respondents replied that the bullying hadn't affected their mental wellbeing or health in any way. The reasons why some people don't feel affected by bullying can vary. The personality and attitude of the person can affect how they deal with the bullying. The fact if anyone intervened in the bullying or if the victim sought for help and support can also make a difference. The type of bullying and how long it lasts can also impact a person's wellbeing. Overall, the results of the open questions indicate that bullying affects a student's life negatively by causing extra stress, feeling of loneliness, anxiety, depression, fear of attending classes and attending student events and fatigue. In some cases, the fatigue had resulted into suspension of studies, sick leave and mental breakdowns. Below there are some citations of the respondents.

"Bullying made me very anxious and caused me to partially lose my appetite and I started sleeping poorly. I was feeling down and often I had to hold back crying"

"Feeling down, extra stress and my motivation decreased"

"Dejection, stomach problems caused by continuous stress and anxiety, constant fatigue and loss of energy"

"Negatively, it affected all aspects of life. I felt depressed and anxious. Going to school felt heavy and sometimes even impossible"

"Depression, anxiety and fear of social situations"

"It passivated me, I haven't participated in events or social gatherings as much as I used to in the beginning of my studies"

"Negatively. It took me a long time to find my self-worth"

The survey continued with a question about how bullying had affected their experience in student communities. The assumption is that this question was only answered by those with bullying experiences. Respondents felt that they no longer wanted to participate in student community activities and that there was a lot of hierarchy, which resulted into bullying. Students formed smaller groups, where other student were not

welcome to join, causing some students to feel discriminated. Students who were not a part of any group were left out and felt like they had no one to talk to. Some felt that an equal school community didn't exist in their school at all. Bullying had left some respondents to feel like they no longer belonged to their student community or that there was no one to ask for help or support. Bullying experiences had made it difficult to integrate and form groups, which reduced the amount of social contacts and relationships at school.

Respondents were able to express their thoughts about what kind of support they wish they had received when they experienced bullying. Many wished that a staff member or an outsider had intervened in the bullying. Peer support and placing emphasis on forming groups at the beginning of studies. By investing in the way new students form groups, bullying could possibly be prevented by making sure everyone feels like they have a place in their student community. More open discussion about bullying; what behavior is considered as bullying, how it proceeds, what kind of consequences it can have and what can be done. Respondents also wished that bullying would result in consequences and the ones who bully would be taken into account for their actions. The threshold for intervening in bullying should be lower. Respondents had also mentioned that students should be aware of the possibility of experiencing bullying at a work practice placement and receive information about who to contact if it occurs. Most of the respondents with bullying experiences wish they had someone to talk to and that there would be more information about who to turn to when in need. They wished for advice on how to deal with bullying, when the bully is a teacher.

6.5 Feedback

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked for feedback of the survey, which was voluntary. 18 people gave feedback and most of them mentioned that the survey was well done, of an important topic and it was pleasant to answer it. Two respondents said that the survey was too long. One respondent mentioned that as it is a sensitive topic, respondents might have been afraid to answer truthfully, in the fear of being recognized from one's answer. Mainly, the feedback was positive. Below are some direct quotations of the respondents.

“A versatile and important survey, it was nice to answer it”

“It would be good if it was mandatory for every student to answer this survey”

“A survey about an important, but somewhat difficult to define topic”

7 Conclusion and discussion

During my thesis process, it was important to make sure I worked in an ethical and reliable way. As I was planning the survey, together with my working life partner, we made sure the survey would remain respectful and discreet towards everyone’s privacy and their experiences. It was important to keep in mind the sensitivity of the topic by making sure that the survey answers were anonymous and that the questions of the survey were phrased in an appropriate way. The questions for the survey were planned in a way that no respondent could be individualized from it and respondents were notified that results of the survey would be used in my thesis. When analysing the results of the survey, I didn’t modify anyone’s answers and remained true to what respondents had answered. I utilized the directions and rules from the Guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012) during my thesis process and made sure I proceeded my thesis in an ethical way. I made sure I analysed the results of the survey in an ethical way, respecting and protecting the respondent’s privacy (Responsible conduct of research 2012, 6-7).

When writing my thesis and doing research, I remained honest to my writing and accurate when looking for sources. I ensured my sources were reliable and that my references were marked correctly and didn’t plagiarize anyone’s work. I worked well together with my working life partner and made sure that we were on the same page during the process and that everything was moving along as it should. I received positive feedback of my thesis. I communicated with my working life partner, presented questions when necessary and informed if anything changed from what we had originally planned. I remained respectful to my working life partner’s work and rules and took their wishes into account. This way I ensured that my thesis process was moving along in an ethical and reliable way (Responsible conduct of research 2012. 6-7).

The survey link was opened by 249 people, from which 68 answered. The amount of answers can lower the fact that the survey was quite long and about a sensitive topic. It's also important to take into account that the survey was most likely answered by those with bullying experiences, as the topic most likely attracts those who have experienced bullying and want to share their experiences and thoughts. When I began marketing the survey, I wished to receive at least 100 replies and it was a bit disappointing to not reach it. The original plan was that in addition to Finnish, the survey would also be published in English and Swedish. Due to reasons beyond my control, the survey was only published in Finnish. It was a bit disappointing and raised my concerns about the results of the survey, especially when there was nothing I could have done about the situation. Nonetheless, I felt hopeful about the survey and used a lot of effort in advertising it. Having the survey in other languages could have possibly increased the number of replies and it was unfortunate that Swedish or English-speaking students were not able to answer the survey. The reliability of the survey also decreased, as the number of replies was such a small sample. For further development, a survey about higher education bullying experiences could be done in other languages as well.

Luckily, when I began going through the results of the survey and analyzed them, I realized that the answers I had received contained a lot of valuable information and I was able to learn a lot about higher education bullying, which meant that my aim for this thesis was reached. 68 respondents had written their experiences, thoughts and opinions about higher education bullying and I realized that despite my previous concerns, it was enough. Analyzing the results of the survey was interesting and extremely educational. It was also very eye-opening, and I felt thankful that I got the chance to work with Nyyti Ry's anti-bullying project and complete my thesis around this topic. Of course, more replies would've been welcome, but I was also satisfied with the amount received, especially when I knew how much work I had put into advertising the survey.

The survey gave valuable information about higher education bullying and the results had some similarities with previous research done of the topic. A survey completed in May 2010 in a Finnish university indicated that 5% of university students had experienced bullying. The study didn't state which university the survey was completed in (Lappalainen, Meriläinen, Puhakka, Sinkkonen 2011, 1-5). Another study completed by the student barometer in 2012 indicates that also 5% of students experience bullying

and that it's more common among women than men, which supports the results of my thesis survey (Opiskelijabarometri 2012). According to a health research of university students from 2016, the percentage of students experiencing occasional bullying was 7,5% and bullying had been more common in universities of applied sciences than in universities, which also supports the results of my thesis survey (Pörhölä 2011). The thesis survey indicated that respondents with bullying experiences had also been a victim of bullying prior to their higher education studies. Another research stated that over 20% of higher education students had experienced bullying prior to their higher education studies, which supports the results of the thesis survey (Kivioja 2016).

A research about asking for help for bullying experiences completed by the University of Oulu indicated three main reasons why students don't seek for help. Their survey was answered by 510 students, from which 412 were undergraduate students and 98 were graduate students. From these respondents, 82% had not experienced bullying in the university, but from the rest of the respondents who had, 19 students considered the bullying situation to be acute or unresolved. From all the reported bullying situations, 75% was mental violence, 33% sexual harassment and 6% physical violence or the threat of it. The main reasons were that the student was afraid that asking for help would cause them trouble, they thought they wouldn't be taken seriously or that they didn't know who would help them to solve the situation. These main reasons have a connection and are similar to the ones that the respondents of my thesis survey answered (University of Oulu 2018).

The results of the survey also indicated that higher education students experienced cyberbullying, which causes the bullying phenomenon to expand since bullying can occur outside school hours and around the clock. Cyberbullying is a brutal form of bullying that can affect the victim's life just as severely as other forms of bullying. The effects and consequences of bullying can be very versatile, and it affects every individual differently. The consequences of bullying can follow the victim long after their studies and affect for example, their belief in themselves, social skills, work performance, trust towards others and personal relationships. Continuous stress, anxiety and lack of sleep caused by bullying experiences can also lead to physical illnesses (Kaski & Nevalainen 2017, 18-19).

The results of my thesis survey had a lot of similarities with previous research, but it's important to keep in mind that the sample size of the thesis survey was quite small, and the results that indicate that bullying is more common in universities of applied sciences than universities could be because the survey reached more university of applied sciences students and if more university students answered the survey, the results could differ. A research completed by my working life partner, Nyyti Ry and Otsa stated that students studying in STEM-programs (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) experience most bullying, which was a difference compared to my survey results. The results of their research also indicated that 24-27-year-old students experienced most bullying (Nurmikari, Saari 2017). The results of my thesis survey didn't indicate that bullying would focus on a certain study program because the respondents' study programs were very versatile. The respondents of my thesis survey were mainly 21-29 years old, which would support Nyyti Ry's and Otsa's research because of the similar age group.

During my thesis process, I learned new valuable information about higher education bullying and the consequences of it to mental wellbeing. I learned how to work independently and co-operate with a working life partner and how to find solutions when setbacks occur. Doing a research was new to me and the features of a qualitative research became more familiar throughout the thesis process. I learned how to create a survey and what were some important aspects that need to be taken into account when creating one, for example, emphasizing anonymity when dealing with a sensitive topic. Overall, the entire thesis process was an excellent academic and personal learning experience.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey



KYSELY KIUSAAMISKOKEMUKSISTA KORKEAKOULUSSA

Valitettavasti myös korkeakoulussa voi esiintyä kiusaamista.

Kiusaaminen on ryhmäilmiö. Se ei kosketa ainoastaan kiusaamisen kohdetta, vaan myös kiusaajaa, sivusta seuraajia sekä laajemmin koko opiskelijayhteisöä ja henkilökuntaa.

Me Nyyti ry:ssä toivomme, että jokainen opiskelija saa opiskella ja osallistua opiskelijatoimintaan turvallisessa ympäristössä - ilman pelkoa kiusaamisesta. Turvallisissa opiskelijayhteisöissä uskalletaan puuttua, jos huomataan epäasiallista käyttäytymistä tai kiusaamista. Haluamme myös varmistaa, että kiusaamista korkeakouluissa kokeneet saavat riittävää sekä oikea-aikaista tukea ja palveluita.

Jotta kiusaamista opiskeluyhteisöissä voidaan ennaltaehkäistä ja siihen voidaan puuttua mahdollisimman hyvin, täytyy kiusaaminen opiskelijayhteisöissä tunnistaa ja tunnustaa. Tähän tarvitsemme sinun apuasi!

Kyselymme kiusaamiskokemuksista korkeakouluyhteisöissä koostuu viidestä osiosta. Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie noin 15-20 minuuttia. Kyselyn tuloksia käytetään Nyyti ry:n kehittämis- ja vaikuttamistyön tukena. Lisäksi kyselyn osioiden 1-4 tuloksia käytetään Heidi Peltolan opinnäytetyön aineistona.

Kyselyn vastaukset ovat anonyymejä ja niitä käsitellään niin, että kukaan vastaajista ei ole yksilöitävissä kyselyn tuloksista.

Kysely on avoinna 26.8- 27.9.2019.

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I. TAUSTATIEDOT

Kyselyn ensimmäisessä osiossa pyydämme sinua vastaamaan taustakysymyksiin.

1. SUKUPUOLI

Nainen

Mies

Muu

En halua kertoa

2. SYNTYMÄVUOSI

Valitse vaihto-
ehto... 2008 2007 2006 2005 2004 2003 2002 2001 2000 1999 1998 1997 1996 1995 1
994 1993 1992 1991 1990 1989 1988 1987 1986 1985 1984 1983 1982 1981 1980 1979
1978 1977 1976 1975 1974 1973 1972 1971 1970 1969 1968 1967 1966 1965 1964 196
3 1962 1961 1960 1959 1958 1957 1956 1955 1954 1953 1952 1951 1950 1949 1948 1
947 1946 1945 1944 1943 1942 1941 1940 1939 1938 1937 1936 1935 1934 1933 1932
1931 1930 1929 1928 1927

3. OPISKELEN

Perustutkintoa yliopistossa

Jatkotutkintoa yliopistossa

Avoimessa yliopistossa

Ammattikorkeakoulututkintoon johtavassa koulutuksessa (AMK)

Ylempään ammattikorkeakoulututkintoon johtavassa koulutuksessa (YAMK)

Avoimessa ammattikorkeakoulussa

Olen vaihto-opiskelija yliopistossa

Olen vaihto-opiskelija ammattikorkeakoulussa

4. OPISKELEN TÄLLÄ HETKELLÄ

Täysipäiväisesti

Osa-aikaisesti

En opiskele tällä hetkellä.

Opintoni ovat tauolla.

5. OPINTOJENI ALOITUSVUOSI

6. OPISKELUALANI

7. OPISKELUPAIKKAKUNTANI

8. ÄIDINKIELENI

Suomi

Ruotsi

Englanti

Muu

II. KIUSAAMISKOKEMUKSET

Seuraavassa osiossa kysymme kysymyksiä kiusaamiskokemuksistasi sekä korkeakoulussa että aikaisemmilla opiskeluasteilla.

Vastatessasi kysymyksiin, pyydämme sinua pitämään mielessä tämän kiusaamisen määritelmän:

Kiusaaminen on sitä, kun jotain henkilöä toistuvasti loukataan ja vahingoitetaan ja/tai hänelle aiheutetaan tahallaan ja toistuvasti pahaa mieltä.

Vahingoittaminen ja loukkaaminen voi olla luonteeltaan fyysistä, sanallista tai sosiaalista. Kiusatun on vaikea puolustautua. Kiusaamista ei ole ystävällinen tai leikillinen kiusoittelu. Kiusaamista ei ole myöskään se, kun kaksi suurin piirtein tasaväkiä henkilöä riitelevät tai ovat huonoissa väleissä tai eri mieltä keskenään.

9. OLETKO TULLUT KIUSATUKSI KORKEAKOULU- OPINTOJESI AIKANA? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA). JOS VASTAAT KYSYMYKSEEN EN, VOIT SIIRTYÄ SUORAAN KYSYMYKSEEN 19.

En, enkä ole havainnut muihin opiskelijoihin kohdistuvaa kiusaamista

En, mutta olen havainnut muihin opiskelijoihin kohdistuvaa kiusaamista

Kyllä, opintojen yhteydessä

Kyllä, harjoittelun yhteydessä

Kyllä, opiskelijatoiminnan yhteydessä

Kyllä verkossa ja/tai sosiaalisessa mediassa

Kyllä, vapaa-ajalla

En osaa sanoa

10. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, KUKA OLI KIUSAAJA? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA.)

Yksi tai useampi opiskelija

Yksi tai useampi korkeakoulun henkilökunnan jäsen

Yksi tai useampi harjoittelupaikan työntekijä

11. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, MILLAISTA KIUSAAMINEN ON OLLUT? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA.)

Epäsuora manipulatiivinen kiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: ryhmän ulkopuolelle sulkeminen, yhteisten asioiden ulkopuolelle sulkeminen, uskottavuuden kyseenalaistaminen, valheiden levittäminen henkilökohtaisista asioista, pilkkaaminen selän takana, juoruilu selän takana, mielenterveyden kyseenalaistaminen takanapäin, ystävä- ja kavereiden vahingoittaminen)

Opiskeluun liittyvä kiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: mielipiteiden vähättely, ymmärtämisen toistuva kyseenalaistaminen, maailmankuvan vähättely, mielipiteiden toistuva kyseenalaistaminen, toistuva keskeyttäminen ryhmätilanteissa)

Suora sanallinen kiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: uskonnollisten ajatusten ja tunteiden loukkaaminen, sanallinen uhkailu, huutaminen, pilkkaaminen, haukkuminen, mielenterveyden kyseenalaistaminen)

Fyysinen kiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: töniminen, lyöminen, uhkaava käyttäytyminen, liikkumisen rajoittaminen, ilkeät katseet)

Sukupuoleen liittyvä kiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: sukupuolta loukkaavien huomautusten esittäminen, vähättely ja mitätöinti sukupuoleen liittyen, sukupuoleen perustuva syrjintä)

Seksuaalinen kiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: seksuaalisen suuntautuneisuuden loukkaaminen/pilkkaaminen, rivojen vitsien ja alatyylisten ilmaisujen käyttäminen, seksuaalisuutta loukkaavien huomautusten tekeminen, tunkeileva lähentely, painostaminen seksuaalisen suuntautumisen kertomiseen)

Nettikiusaaminen (Esimerkiksi: loukkaavien kuvien levittäminen, ilkeiden viestien lähettäminen, ilkeä kommentointi sosiaalisessa mediassa)

12. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, MITEN KUVAILISIT OMIN SANOIN KOKEMAASI KIUSAAMISTA?

13. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, MISSÄ KIUSAAMINEN TAPAHTUI? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA)

Luennon yhteydessä

Seminaarin yhteydessä

Ryhmätöiden yhteydessä

Ennen tai jälkeen luentoa/seminaaria/opiskelutilannetta

Opintojen ohjauksen yhteydessä

Opiskelijaravintolassa

Korkeakouluni kirjastossa

Korkeakouluni tietokonehuoneessa

Opiskelijajärjestön tiloissa

Opiskelijatoiminnan yhteydessä vapaa-ajalla

Opiskelijabileissa

Opiskelijoiden liikuntapalveluiden yhteydessä

Verkossa tai sosiaalisessa mediassa

Harjoittelupaikalla

Jossain muualla, missä?

14. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, VERKOSSA JA/TAI SOSIAALISESSA MEDIASSA, MISSÄ KIUUSAAMINEN TAPAHTUI? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA)

Opiskeluihin liittyvällä verkkoalustalla

WhatsApp

Facebook

Twitter

Jodel

Sähköpostin välityksellä

Instagram

Snapchat

Youtube

TikTok

Tinder

Grindr

Jossain muualla, missä?

15. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, ONKO KIUSAAMINEN PÄÄTTYNYT?

Kyllä

Ei

En osaa sanoa

16. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, KUINKA PITKÄÄN KIUSAAMINEN ON JATKUNUT TAI KUINKA PITKÄÄN SITÄ KESTI?

17. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, KE- NELTÄ HAIT APUA KIUSAAMISTILANTEESSA? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA.)

Muilta opiskelijoilta

Opetushenkilökunnan jäseneltä

Opinto-ohjaajalta

Opintopsykologilta

Tutorilta

Oppilaitospastorilta

Rehtorilta

Opiskelijakunnalta/ylioppilaskunnalta

Opiskelijakunnan/ylioppilaskunnan häirintäyhdyshenkilöltä

Opiskeluterveydenhuollon henkilökunnalta

Ystävältä

Perheenjäseneltä

Ilmoitin asiasta korkeakouluni häirintälomakkeella

Joku muu taho, mikä?

En hakenut apua, miksi?

**18. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. KYLLÄ, ONKO KU-
KAAN PUUTTUNUT KOKEMAASI KIUSAAMISEEN? KUKA JA
MITEN?**

**19. OLETKO TULLUT KIUSATUKSI ENNEN KORKEAKOULU-
OPINTOJA? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA)**

En

Kyllä, lukiossa

Kyllä, ammattikoulussa

Kyllä, yläasteella

Kyllä, ala-asteella

En osaa sanoa

20. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 9. EN, KENELTÄ HAKISIT APUA KIUSAAMISTILANTEESSA? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA.)

Koulukuraattorilta

Opettajalta

Opinto-ohjaajalta

Opiskeluterveydenhuollon henkilökunnalta

Oppilaitospastorilta

Oppilaitosdiakonilta

Tutorilta

Opiskelijakunnalta tai ylioppilaskunnalta

Ystävältä

Perheenjäseneltä

Muilta opiskelijoilta

Ilmoittaisin asiasta korkeakouluni häirintälomakkeella

En osaa sanoa

Joku muu taho, mikä?

21. OLETKO KIUSANNUT MUITA KORKEAKOULUOPINTO-JESI AIKANA? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA.)

En

Kyllä, opintojen yhteydessä

Kyllä, harjoittelun yhteydessä

Kyllä, opiskelijatoiminnan yhteydessä

Kyllä, verkossa ja/tai sosiaalisessa mediassa

En osaa sanoa

22. JOS VASTASIT KYSYMYKSEEN 21. KYLLÄ, KETÄ KIUSA-SIT? (VOIT VALITA USEAMPIA VAIHTOEHTOJA.)

Yhtä tai useampaa opiskelijaa

Yhtä tai useampaa korkeakoulun henkilökunnan jäsentä

Yhtä tai useampaa harjoittelupaikan työntekijää

En osaa sanoa

23. MIHIN TOIVOISIT, ETTÄ OPISKELUYHTEISÖSSÄSI ERI-TYISESTI PANOSTETTAISIIN KORKEAKOULUKIUSAAMISEN ENNALTAEHKÄISYSSÄ JA PUUTTUMISESSA?

Kiusaamisilmiöstä tulisi olla enemmän tietoa ja avointa keskustelua

Tiedon siitä, keneen olla yhteydessä kiusaamistilanteissa tulisi olla helpommin saatavilla

Panostamalla opiskeluyhteisön yhdenvertaisuustyöhön

Panostamalla opiskeluyhteisön hyvinvointityöhön

Sisällyttämällä opintoihin tunnetaitojen opetusta

Sisällyttämällä vuorovaikutustaitojen opetusta opintoihin

Asiasta tulisi kysyä opinto-ohjauksen yhteydessä

Opetushenkilökunnan tulisi puuttua herkemmin ristiriitoihin ja kiusaamiseen opetuksen yhteydessä

Palautekyselyissä tulisi kysyä kiusaamisesta ja epäasiallisesta käyttäytymisestä

Teeman tulisi olla esillä tutoreiden koulutuksessa

Jokin muu, mikä/mitkä?

III. VÄITTÄMÄT

Tässä osiossa on erilaisia väittämiä, jotka käsittelevät korkeakouluyhteisösi ilma-
piiriä, kokemuksiasi korkeakoulussa esiintyvistä kiusaamisesta, opiskeluyhteisö-
jen käytäntöjä kiusaamistilanteissa sekä kiusaamista opiskelijajärjestötoimin-
nassa.

Väittämiin vastataan numerolla asteikolla 1–5, jossa 1 tarkoittaa täysin eri mieltä, 2 jokseenkin eri mieltä, 3 ei samaa eikä eri mieltä, 4 jokseenkin samaa mieltä ja 5 täysin samaa mieltä.

24 A. KORKEAKOULUYHTEISÖNI ILMAPIIRI

Täysin eri mieltä- Täysin samaa mieltä

1

2

3

4

5

Koen, että opiskelijat kohtelevat toisiaan pääsääntöisesti yhdenvertaisesti ja arvostavasti*

Koen, että henkilökunnan jäsenet kohtelevat minua ja muita opiskelijoita pääsääntöisesti yhdenvertaisesti ja arvostavasti*

Koen olevani osa korkeakoulu yhteisöäni*

Opetustilanteissa uskallan useimmiten kertoa mielipiteeni*

Koen, että opetustilanteissa on mahdollista keskustella erilaisista mielipiteistä ja näkemyksistä turvallisesti*

Jos opetustilanteiden yhteydessä syntyy ristiriitoja ja erimielisyyksiä, niihin puututaan*

Koen korkeakouluni ilmapiirin turvallisiksi*

Olen nähnyt kiusaamista korkeakoulussani*

Korkeakoulussani esiintyy syrjintää, häirintää tai rasismia*

24 B. KOKEMUKSENI KORKEAKOULUKIUSAAMISESTA

Täysin eri mieltä-Täysin samaa mieltä

1

2

3

4

5

Koen, että korkeakoulukiusaaminen on iso ongelma korkeakoulussani*

Korkeakoulukiusaamisesta pitäisi olla tarjolla enemmän informaatiota korkeakoulussani*

Korkeakoulukiusaamisesta pitäisi puhua enemmän korkeakoulussani*

Koen kiusaamistilanteisiin puuttumisen helpoksi*

Olen puuttunut kiusaamiseen korkeakoulussani*

Minulla on matala kynnyks kerton näkemästäni kiusaamisesta*

Minulla on matala kynnyks kerton kokemastani kiusaamisesta*

24 C. KIUSAAMISTILANTEIDEN KÄYTÄNNÖT KORKEAKOULUSSANI

Täysin eri mieltä-Täysin samaa mieltä

1

2

3

4

5

Tiedän, miten menetellä kiusaamistilanteissa korkeakoulussani*

Tiedän, mistä löytyy tietoa siitä, miten menetellä kiusaamistilanteissa*

Olen kuullut opiskelijakunnan/ ylioppilaskunnan häirintäyhdyshenkilöistä*

Olen tyytyväinen korkeakouluni käytäntöihin ja menettelytapoihin kiusaamistilanteissa*

Kaipaisin lisää tietoa siitä, kuinka toimia, jos näen kiusaamista*

Kaipaisin lisää tietoa siitä, kuinka toimia, jos minua kiusataan*

24 D. ILMAPIIRI OPISKELIJAJÄRJESTÖTOIMINNASSA

Kysymykset liittyvät opiskelijajärjestötoimintaan. Vastaa perustuen kokemuksiisi sinulle lähimpänä olevan järjestön (ylioppilaskunta, opiskelijakunta, ainejärjestö, koulutuslasi järjestö tms..) toiminnasta. Kerro kohdassa 24 e, mihin järjestöön viittaat.

Täysin eri mieltä-Täysin samaa mieltä

1

2

3

4

5

Koen, että opiskelijat kohtelevat toisiaan pääsääntöisesti yhdenvertaisesti ja arvostavasti opiskelijajärjestöni toiminnassa*

Koen, että opiskelijajärjestössäni kohdellaan minua ja muita opiskelijoita pääsääntöisesti yhdenvertaisesti ja arvostavasti*

Koen olevani osa jotakin opiskeluun liittyvää ryhmää*

Koen, että halutessani voin ja uskallan osallistua opiskelijajärjestöni toimintaan*

Koen, että opiskelijajärjestössäni on mahdollista keskustella erilaisista mielipiteistä ja näkemyksistä turvallisesti*

Jos opiskelijajärjestöni toiminnan yhteydessä syntyy ristiriitoja ja erimielisyyksiä, niihin puututaan*

Koen yleisesti opiskelijatoiminnan ilmapiirin turvallisiksi*

Olen nähnyt kiusaamista osana opiskelijajärjestöni toimintaa*

Osana opiskelijajärjestöjen toimintaa esiintyy syrjintää, häirintää tai rasismia*

24 E. VASTASIT EDELLISESSÄ KYSYMYKSESSÄ VÄITTÄMIIN OPIKELIJAJÄRJESTÖTOIMINNASTA. MIHIN JÄRJESTÖÖN VIITTASIT? SINUN EI TARVITSE NIMETÄ JÄRJESTÖÄ NIMELTÄ, VAAN KERRO ONKO KYSEESSÄ ESIMERKIKSI YLIOPIILASKUNTA, AINEJÄRJESTÖ, OPIKELIJAKUNTA, KOULUTUSALASI JÄRJESTÖ TAI MUU VASTAAVA. VOIT MYÖS YLEISESTI KERTOA KOKEMUKSISTASI OPIKELIJATOIMINNASTA.

IV. KORKEAKOULUKIUSAAMISEN SEURAUKSET

Vastaa seuraaviin kysymyksiin, jos olet kokenut kiusaamista korkeakouluopintojesi aikana.

Kysymysten tarkoituksena on selvittää kiusaamisen vaikutuksia sekä selvittää minkälaista tukea kaipaat/olisit kaivannut.

**25. KERRO OMIN SANOIN, MILLÄ TAVALLA ARVIOIT KIU-
SAAMISEN VAIKUTTANEEN OPIKELUKYKYYSI?**

**26. MILLÄ TAVOIN ARVIOIT, ETTÄ KIU-
SAAMINEN ON VAIKUTTANUT MIELIALAASI,
TERVEYTEESI JA JAKSAMISEESI?**

27. KERRO OMIN SANOIN, MILLÄ TAVOIN KIUSAAMINEN ON VAIKUTTANUT KOKEMUKSEESI OPISELUYHTEISÖSTÄ?

28. MINKÄLAISTA TUKEA JA APUA KAIPAAT/ OLISIT KAIVANNUT KOETTUASI KIUSAAMISTA?

KIITOS, ETTÄ VASTASIT KYSELYYMMME.

Oletko kohdannut kiusaamista?

Tukea jaksamiseen:

Tukea jaksamiseen voit hakea mm. opiskeluterveydenhuollon palvelujen kautta. Jos olet jatkotutkinto-opiskelija, tarkista oikeutesi työterveydenhuollon palveluihin tai ole yhteydessä paikalliseen terveyskeskukseesi.

Voit akuutissa tuen tarpeessa olla tarvittaessa yhteydessä myös Suomen Mielenterveysseuran valtakunnalliseen kriisipuhelimeen. Kriisipuhelin päivystää numerossa 09 2525 0111 ja tarjoaa keskusteluapua lähes vuorokauden ympäri:

<https://mieli.fi/fi/tukea-ja-a...>

Kiusaaminen on tärkeä saada loppumaan:

- Puhu ystävän/luotettavan henkilön kanssa ja pyydä tarvittaessa apua tiedonhakuun tukipalveluista
- Voit tarkistaa, onko korkeakoulullasi ohjeistuksia tai toimintaohjeita kiusaamis- ja/tai häirintätilanteita varten. Seuraa ohjeita.
- Voit myös puhua luotettavan korkeakoulusi henkilökunnan jäsenen kanssa ja kysyä neuvoa, miten menetellä (mm. opinto-ohjaaja, opetushenkilökunnan jäsen, opintopsykologi, kuraattorilta, oppilaitospastori)

- Opiskelijakunnilla ja ylioppilaskunnilla on häirintäyhdyshenkilöitä, joihin voi olla yhteydessä

Kolmannen sektorin järjestöjä:

Kiusaamisasioiden tuki- ja neuvontakeskus Valopilkku

www.valopilkkuja.fi/

Kiusatut -kiusaamisasioiden tuki- ja neuvontapiste (Setlementti Tampere)

www.kiusatut.fi

Kriisiapua ja jälkihoitoa yli 15-vuotiaille pirkanmaalaisille, joilla on kiusaamiskokemuksia sekä heidän läheisilleen. Yhteyttä voivat ottaa myös työntekijät ja vapaaehtoiset, jotka työssään kohtaavat kiusaamiskysymyksiä.



Appendix 2: Information of the survey used in social media

Hei sinä korkeakouluopiskelija!

Tässä olisi linkki kyselyyn kiusaamiskokemuksista korkeakouluyhteisöissä, joka on osa minun opinnäytetyötäni. Kysely koostuu viidestä osiosta ja vastaaminen vie noin 15 minuuttia. Kyselyn vastaukset ovat anonymoituja ja niitä käsitellään niin, että kukaan vastaajista ei ole yksilöitävissä kyselyn tuloksista.

Arvostaisin jos käyttäisit pienen hetken kyselyn vastaamiseen. Mitä enemmän vastauksia, sitä laadukkaampi tutkimus!

https://my.surveypal.com/app/form?_d=0&_sid=871061765&_k=ufYLXGeL7uH1P86TnInZs2CuB9uHo5DU-ypez3RCs9kZG3uyTkWEKwrFQ8myoLfx&fbclid=IwAR1FVzi-WA47IH_3JYwV39-j75ZJvRm42bJ6hUUSkwVPuRDK3xim1Yi3e-M