



Boys' Perspectives of Peer Bullying in Ghanaian Secondary Schools

George Abakah

University of Edinburgh (Ireland)

georgeabakah@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study reports preliminary findings from a doctoral project investigating boys' perspectives of peer bullying in Ghanaian secondary schools. [A total of 30 students, 8 educational workers (including teachers) and 6 other adults (including parents) participate in the main study]. Student participants represented all the various year groups in one chosen secondary school. In this poster I will focus on my discussion with the young people.

This is a qualitative study underpinned by interpretive philosophical thought. An exploratory case study was conducted in one secondary school in Ghana. A variety of data gathering techniques were used to enable a deep and rich account of the boys' experiences to emerge. These included a two-stage mapping exercise (developed specifically for student participants); semi-structured interviews; participant observation and document reviews.

In this poster, the themes from the interviews and mapping activities concerning the student informants' experiences, understanding and perspectives of peer-bullying in their school will be discussed. The discussion will be in the context of wider issues relating to the understanding and experiences of childhood in the Ghanaian context.

The theoretical basis for the investigation is general literature on bullying and appropriate sociological theories such as symbolic interactionism, deviance, labelling and literature on childhood.

The preliminary study highlights that bullying is not an inherent trait but socially constructed through a social interaction and hence can only be corrected in real terms by focusing on such interactions.