Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Strengths and Difficulties among Sixth Grade Students: Comparing Student and Teacher Ratings in Finland and Estonia

*Minna Kyttälä[a], Hanna-Maija Sinkkonen[a] & Kristi Kõiv[b]

[a]University of Turku

[b]University of Tartu

*Corresponding author. Minna Kyttälä, Department of Education, Special education, Assistentinkatu 5, 20014 University of Turku, Finland; Tel: +358 50 37 47 610. Email: minna.kyttala@utu.fi

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Abstract

This study explores the level of congruency between students' ratings of their own emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties, and their teachers' ratings of these factors, when compared amongst two neighboring countries, Estonia and Finland. Secondly, it investigates the level of agreement between sixth grade students' ratings and their teachers' ratings of their emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties, within each country. Both the students' version (aimed at 11–17-year-olds) and teachers' versions of the Estonian and Finnish Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) were used in the study to measure these issues. No gender differences were found between the students' overall SDQ scores. However, girls experienced a greater number of emotional problems than boys did. In general, Estonian teachers reported more externalized problems among their students compared to Finnish teachers. Finnish teachers, however, reported more emotional problems among their students. The findings suggest that, in both countries, estimations by teachers and students regarding existing emotional and behavioral difficulties are mismatched. These findings extend the findings of earlier research and provide indications for future teacher training.

Keywords: Primary school, Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, SDQ, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, well-being

Introduction

Students' well-being is a prerequisite for good learning results and academic success (Walker, Ramsey, & Gresham, 2004). However, behavioral and emotional difficulties, bullying and other types of antisocial behavior seem to have increased in recent years, causing concern among educational professionals and parents (e.g., Cooper & Cefai, 2013; Miller, 2003). Cefai, Cooper and Camilleri (2009) estimate that 10–20% of school-aged children suffer from social, emotional and/or behavioral problems. The estimation of this prevalence depends of the informant, since previous studies have shown that, for example, teachers and students assess students' difficulties differently (e.g., Ojala, 2017; Youngstrom, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 2000). In the present study, we measured both sixth grade students' ratings and teachers' ratings of students' social, emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties. These ratings were compared both between participating countries (Estonia vs. Finland) and between informant groups (students vs. teachers).

The SEBD in a School Environment

Social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties (SEBD) are often classified by their origin as internal (e.g., truancy, anxiety, depression) or external (e.g., behavior problems, delinquency, oppositional behaviors, attention problems) difficulties. Then, the external and internal difficulties can be divided into two branches (Cooper, 2006). The first part of the external difficulties refers to those that result from an individual's environment (e.g., family), while the second stem from biological origins, such as attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The first part of the classification of internal difficulties includes those difficulties that do not disturb others, but which are harmful to the individual him or herself. These are seen as the result of environmental factors more than the individual's biological circumstances. The second part of the internal difficulties is related to stressful social

circumstances or traumatic life situations. Internal difficulties can manifest themselves as feelings of insecurity, sleeplessness, psychomotor restlessness and poor concentration.

Children's social, emotional and behavioral difficulties can be challenging in a school setting, as these symptoms are often related to both educational engagement and achievement (e.g., Botha & Kourkoutas, 2016; Forlin, & Cooper, 2013). SEBD problems are most visible when they appear as disruptive behaviors in the school environment. Externalized SEBD problems include disruptive behaviors such as defiance, aggression and hyperactivity, which are examples of difficulty controlling one's behavior (Gardner & Shaw, 2008). They are directed outwardly and often considered undesirable and undercontrolled, because they include disruptive, impulse control and conduct disorders (Gresham & Kern, 2004; Krueger, 1999; Sanders, Merell, & Cobb, 1999). The media is often prone to exaggerating reports on these kinds of school events. Students´ off-task and disruptive behaviors are among the daily stressors experienced by school teachers (Nash, Schlösser & Scarr, 2016), and some studies have revealed that the prevalence of externalized symptoms are increasing among children (Visser et al., 2014).

Internalized forms of SEBD that have symptoms of depression and anxiety may manifest themselves in severely withdrawn behaviors (Cooper, 2006), and they are examples of excessively inhibiting behavior directed inwardly at the person; thus, they considered to be overcontrolled (Goldberg, Krueger, Andrews, & Hobbs, 2009; Gresham & Kern, 2004, Sanders et al., 1999). Depression, unhappiness and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears are further related to school problems (Kirk, Gallagher, & Coleman, 2015. Internalizing disorders include negative affectivity and are harmful for social relations, participation and learning. Internalized forms of SEBD are related to low self-efficacy and impaired problem solving and coping skills (Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001).

Estimations of the prevalence of behavioral disorders among children vary. As many as one in five children are at risk for, or currently manifest, mental, emotional or behavioral problems (World Health Organization, 2004). Cefai et al. (2009) have estimated that 10–20% of school-aged children suffer from social, emotional and/or behavioral problems. They found that boys have markedly more behavioral and conduct problems, while girls experience difficulties that are more emotional in nature. The most frequent problem behavior was hyperactivity. In Finland, Kantomaa, Tammelin, Demakakos, Ebeling and Taanila (2010) found that the proportion of Finnish teenaged girls with emotional and behavioral problems was statistically significantly higher compared to boys. While behavioral problems were found among 16.0% of boys in the sample, the corresponding figure among girls was 26.1%. Differences were also found in emotional problems (girls: 19.5%, boys: 11.2%). Even though girls seem to experience more social problems compared to boys (girls: 4.3%, boys: 2.9%), the difference was not statistically significant. According to Kantomaa et al. (2010), only behavioral problems were related to adverse academic outcomes.

Reliable information on the prevalence of emotional and behavioral problems among a representative sample of adolescents aged 10–17 years in the school-based population of Estonia (N = 1,467) is available (Edovald, 2011); it reveals that 6.2% of students scored in the abnormal band for total difficulties behavior, with 9.9% of them having conduct problems, 8.3% hyperactivity, 5.9% peer problems and 5.2% emotional problems. Furthermore, some 8.8% of youths scored the lowest on the prosocial behavior scale. In another study (Kõiv, 2011), 10.7% of 11–16-year-olds from the Estonian sample were classified as ‘abnormal’, according to the self-reported Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) total difficulties score. Värnik, Sisask and Värnik (2011) reported data on Estonian 14–15-year-old schoolchildren, revealing that 3% of boys and 7% of girls rated themselves in the SDQ’s abnormal range for the impact supplement. Soo, Ainsaar and

Kalmus's (2012) study enabled differentiation by age in a sample of Estonian schoolchildren using the self-report version of the SDQ; their findings show that 11–13-year-olds had significantly higher total scores than the 14–16-year-olds.

Because problem behaviors often cause obstacles to academic success, prosocial behaviors are valued in educational environments. Prosocial behaviors are described as voluntary actions targeted at benefitting other people. These include helping, consoling and sharing (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). Thus, the promotion of prosocial behavior can be seen as both a positive outcome *per se* and as an important tool for decreasing adolescents' antisocial behaviors (Caprara et al., 2014). According to several studies (e.g., Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2006; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000), prosocial children have better peer relations, perform better in school and are not at great risk of exhibiting externalizing behavior problems, compared to their less prosocial peers.

SEBD and Teacher–Student Interactions

Teachers play a significant role in supporting students' well-being (Kidger, Araya, Donovan, & Gunnell, 2012) and achievement at school (Harðardottir, Julıusdottir, & Guðmundsson, 2015). Teacher–student interaction is one of the factors related to children's behavioural and emotional difficulties (e.g., Poulou, 2014). According to *PISA* (Programme for International Student Assessment, a study by the OECD) *2015* results, caring teachers who master classroom and management methods are able to establish supportive and rewarding connections with their students, even in difficult contexts (PISA in Focus, 2017). One important aspect of the teacher–student dynamic is the expectations the teacher has created for his or her students (Hafen, Ruzek, Gregory, Allen, & Mikami, 2015). A teacher's beliefs are consistently associated with relationships in his or her classroom (Hamre, Pianta,

Downer, & Mashburn, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to be able to create a multifaceted picture of students' characteristics and abilities and to possess the skills to create a positive class climate. According to Pianta, La Paro and Hamre (2008), students feel closer to teachers who are aware of their students' needs, do not rigidly follow their teaching plans and who effectively respond to their students' social and academic problems. Thus, it is important that both the teachers and students have a joint understanding of students' strengths and difficulties.

One problem in the school context is that teachers' abilities to recognize different kinds of social, emotional and behavioral difficulties vary. As a result, some students' difficulties remain invisible at school. Students experience difficulties, but no one recognizes them. Some research findings (e.g., Youngstrom et al., 2000) report that teachers observed fewer internalized and externalized problems than their students did. In particular, internalized emotional problems are hard to identify (Ojala, 2017). Thus, teachers are not always able to see their students' needs, or they might interpret the causes and outcomes of some behaviors inaccurately. Teachers may see some students' attention-seeking behaviors, personalities or family problems as a cause of trouble and misbehavior. From the students' perspective, rebelling against the school and the values it represents can manifest itself as negative attitudes and inappropriate behavior (Cefai & Cooper 2010). Furthermore, students may accuse a school or teacher of unfair treatment, unfair rules and regulations or uninteresting teaching (Riley, 2004).

Unfortunately, teachers' interactions with children exhibiting emotional and behavioral problems are often discipline-focused. Therefore, students with emotional and behavioral disorders meet with fewer interactions involving praise for their social or academic behavior at school (Sutherland, 2000). Disruptive and aggressive children, in particular, tend to consider their relationships with their teachers to be less close (Madill,

Gest, & Rodkin, 2014), and the findings of a study by Skalická, Stenseng and Wichström (2015) suggest that externalized behaviors are a strong predictor of a conflicted student–teacher relationship. It is therefore possible that teachers see students with externalized behaviors as challenging and less cooperative.

To avoid negative consequences, SEBD among students should be identified as early as possible (Forlin & Cooper, 2013). Both teachers and students would benefit from reliable screening methods and cross-informant agreement concerning the obstacles to school performance (e.g., Ruchkin, Kosopov, Vermeiren, & Schab-Stone, 2012).

Current Study

The aims of this study are twofold. First, we aimed to investigate how congruent students' own ratings of their emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties, and their teachers' ratings of the students' strengths and difficulties are in two neighboring countries, Estonia and Finland (examining differences between two countries). Second, we aim to determine how congruent sixth grade students' own ratings are with their teachers' ratings of students' emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties in both participating countries (examining differences between raters).

Firstly, it has been observed that there are national differences in how children experience their own well-being. Children seem to be psychologically healthier in southwest and northwest Europe, compared to those in Eastern Europe, and especially those in southeast Europe (Lippman, & Wilcox, 2014). Finland and Estonia are neighboring countries located in northeast Europe. Thus, based solely on their location, similar results should be expected. However, even though these countries are geographically close, they have their differences. Finland is a Nordic country (together with Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Norway) of 338 400 km² and a population of 5.5 million. Its per capita GDP was 45,204 USD in 2017.

Estonia is a country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe (together with Latvia and Lithuania) of 45,200 km2 and a population of 1.3 million. Its per capita GDP in 2017 was 31,635 USD. While Finland is above the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average of 43,800 USD per capita, Estonia is one of the poorest European OECD member states.

According to the World Values Survey (WVS-6), both countries represent secular-rational values that are characterized by an emphasis on collective decision-making and global orientation and less respect for authority (Inglehart, et al. , 2014). However, while Finland represents protestant Europe with high scores in self-expression values, Estonia is an ex-communist country with high scores in survival values. Self-expression values reflect tolerance, equity, and quality of life, while survival values emphasize economic and physical security and represent low levels of tolerance and trust. In raising children, self-expression values emphasize teaching tolerance and respect for others and sustaining imagination, while survival values favor teaching children to work hard (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). We expected that these differences in values would produce between-country differences in both the teachers' and students' ratings so that externalizing problems (e.g., those related to collective discipline) would be more emphasized in Estonia, and internalizing problems (e.g., those related to personal happiness and quality of life) would be emphasized in Finland.

Both Estonia and Finland have above-average PISA results, but their progress during the last 10 to 15 years has been different. Simultaneously, while the performance level of Finnish students has decreased in both mathematics and reading, and Finland has lost its top position among the OECD countries in these same subjects, the performance level of Estonian students has increased. In the latest PISA report, Estonia performed slightly better than Finland in mathematics, while Finland performed slightly better than Estonia in reading (OECD, 2016).

The latest PISA results (OECD, 2016) show that, compared to Estonia, Finnish students' life satisfaction and sense of belonging at school are greater, while, compared to Finland, the level of schoolwork-related anxiety is higher in Estonia. However, the impact of social background on educational outcomes has increased in Finland from 2006 to 2015. In the same timeframe, the opposite has happened in Estonia. Between 2006 and 2015, the performance gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students has increased in Finland. The share of students who perform well, despite coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, known as 'resilient students', decreased in Finland between 2006 and 2015, while in Estonia the share has been increasing slightly. In short, it seems that, simultaneously, social equity has been strengthened in Estonia, while social inequity has grown stronger in Finland. Despite this, reported levels of school wellbeing seem to be somewhat better in Finland.

In both Finland and Estonia, education is provided from the beginning to the end of compulsory schooling, with no transition made between primary and lower secondary education. A common general education is provided for all pupils (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017). In both nations' school systems, grades 1–9 are compulsory for all students. After that, a three-year period at a general secondary education school or at a secondary vocational school is available for most students. Both participating school systems have gone through major changes during the last 10 years. At the level of official documents concerning inclusive education (strategies, legislation), Finland seems to be a couple of years ahead, compared to Estonia. In both countries, the structure of class teacher education (i.e., studies providing qualifications to teach grades 1 to 6) higher education: 300 ECTS) is quite similar (e.g., Sarv, 2014; Uusiautti & Määttä, 2013).

Secondly, previous results from both Estonia (Sarv & Roos, 2010) and Finland (Ojala, 2017) show that the students and their teachers experience students' emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties differently. Similar differences were expected in the current study.

Teachers have particular difficulties observing students' emotional problems (Ojala, 2017). To ensure a positive teacher–student interaction, and to be able to support students, teachers should be aware of their students' needs. This includes being aware of their social, emotional and behavioral strengths and difficulties. Children who have a positive relationship with their teachers are more learning motivated (Baker, 2006) and perform better academically (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). Conversely, children who have a negative relationship with their teachers are more school avoidant (Birch & Ladd, 1997), exhibit poorer behavior (Hamre & Pianta, 2001) and have a lower academic performance (DiLalla, Marcus, & Wright-Phillips, 2004; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004).

In the present study, we seek to answer the following questions:

(1) How congruent are students' self-ratings and the teachers' ratings of their students between the two countries, Estonia and Finland?

Based on previously observed differences in values

(2) How congruent are sixth grade students' SDQ self-reports and their teachers' ratings of their students in Estonia and Finland?

Method

Sample

Altogether, 304 11–12-year-old primary school students from Finland (N = 152; girls = 59; boys = 93) and Estonia (N = 152; girls = 82; boys = 70) participated in this study. Finnish students represented eight different schools and the Estonian students were drawn from four different schools. The recruitment criteria for participating schools were that they represented typical public schools (in terms of race/ethnicity and socio-economic status) in both countries. The participating schools were randomly selected from a list of schools from certain school districts and were contacted by the researchers. All the schools that were

contacted participated voluntarily. In Estonia and Finland, a large majority of the children in basic education attend public schools, and in both, the students eat lunch without needing to pay (EDUFI, 2019; Lees, 2016; OECD 2016b). All of the participating schools were urban schools. No specific sampling procedure was used to select participating children. All children (including children with Individualized Education Programs/disability status) of the appropriate age who received parental permission were included in the study. More schools were recruited until the aim (~150 students in each country) was achieved. It was purely coincidental that the exact number was 152 in both countries. Eleven Finnish teachers and nine Estonian teachers assessed their students' social, emotional and behavioral difficulties. All necessary research permissions from the cities, teachers and children's parents/legal guardians were gathered.

Measures

SDQ. The Finnish and Estonian revised versions of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997) were used to measure the social, emotional and behavioral difficulties of primary school students. Both the student (for 11–17-year-olds) and teacher versions were used in the study. Both questionnaires include 25 statements on five different scales (five statements from each scale): emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and the prosocial scale. For each statement, the students and teachers responded using a three-point scale: "Not True", "Somewhat True", or "Certainly True." The students' and teachers' versions are almost identical, with the exception that the wording is slightly different (the students assess themselves, while the teachers assess their students). In line with the standard SDQ procedure, "Somewhat True" was always scored as "1", but the scoring of "Not True" and "Certainly True" varied with the item ("0" or "2" depending on whether the item was reversed or not). Consequently, in the final scoring, all

items were scored so that “0” indicates no problems, and “2” indicates problems. The maximum score for each subscale was 10, and the maximum total difficulty score was 50. The Cronbach’s alpha for the students’ scale was .76 in Estonia and .80 in Finland. The Cronbach’s alpha for the teachers’ scale was .78 in Estonia and .87 in Finland.

Background information was collected via a questionnaire including individual and home variables (e.g., gender, mother tongue, family size and structure). Information about the teachers’ qualifications, the size of the school and the size of the class was collected from the teachers.

Analysis Strategy

First, descriptive statistics for student background factors in both countries were calculated. Second, to investigate the congruence between Estonia and Finland, group differences between the two countries’ sixth grade students’ samples (student and teacher ratings) and differences between genders within both countries were inspected by a series of one-way ANOVAs. Third, to control for the possible effects of differences in socio-economic background between countries, three-way ANOVAs were calculated using the country, mother’s education, and father’s education as independent variables. Fourth, the congruence between the student and teacher ratings within both countries was inspected by calculating correlations between student and teacher ratings. After that, the congruence between the ratings was further investigated by calculating repeated measures ANOVAs, to analyze whether the means for different SDQ scales differed by rater (student vs. teacher). The students’ and teachers’ ratings of the same SDQ scales applied to the same students represent two measures of the same dependent variables under two different conditions (student, teacher).

Finally, we continued by dividing the students into three groups of equal size: (1) fewer problems, 2) average and 3) more problems, based on their own total rating in the four

SDQ scales that apply to problems (cut-off points in Estonia: 1 (<7; N = 49), 2 (≥7; N = 52), 3 (≥11; N = 51); cut-off points in Finland: 1 (<6; N = 38), 2 (≥6; N = 50), 3 (≥10; N = 43) and into three groups based on their teachers' ratings (cut-off points in Estonia: 1 (<23; N = 46), 2 (≥23; N = 46), 3 (≥26; N = 50); cut-off points in Finland: 1 (<18; N = 40), 2 (≥18; N = 46), 3 (≥24; N = 45). We then constructed separate crosstabs among these groupings separately for both countries. This further elucidated how consistently or inconsistently the students' problems were rated by students themselves and their teachers. Only those students that had a total difficulty score as their own and their teacher's ratings were included in the final crosstab analysis. Consequently, the groups in the analysis were not equal in size.

Results

Congruence between Estonia and Finland

Descriptive statistics for student background factors in both countries are presented in Table 1. Group differences between the countries' sixth grade students' samples and differences between genders within both countries were inspected by a series of one-way ANOVAs (Table 2). Finnish sixth graders rated themselves as significantly more prosocial than their Estonian counterparts. There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect ($F(5,241) = 1.86$, $p = .103$, $\eta p^2 = .04$). There were no statistically significant differences between the teachers' ratings in Estonia and Finland, and no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect either ($F(5,237) = 0.56$, $p = .728$, $\eta p^2 = .01$). In both Finland and Estonia, girls rated themselves as significantly more prosocial than boys. A similar trend was apparent in the teachers' ratings. There was no

significant difference between the participating countries in total difficulty score (combined scores for emotional, hyperactivity, conduct and peer problems) based on the students' ratings. There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect either ($F(5,228) = 0.93$, $p = .463$, $\eta p^2 = .02$). However, Estonian teachers rated the total difficulty scores significantly higher than their Finnish counterparts ($\eta p^2 = .13$). There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect ($F(5,264) = 0.70$, $p = .623$, $\eta p^2 = .02$)

Table 1 about here

The Estonian students were rated as significantly more hyperactive than the Finnish students, based on their own ratings and those of their teachers. There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect on student ratings ($F(5,237) = 0.32$, $p = .899$, $\eta p^2 = .01$) or teacher ratings ($F(5,237) = 0.68$, $p = .641$, $\eta p^2 = .01$). There were no gender differences between the students' ratings in Estonia or Finland. In Estonia, there were no gender differences in the teachers' ratings either. However, in Finland, the teachers rated the boys as significantly more hyperactive than the girls. The effect size was .22.

Table 2 about here

There were significantly more reported emotional problems in Finland than in Estonia, according to both the students' and the teachers' ratings. There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect on either student ratings ($F(5,240) = 0.15$, $p = .979$, $\eta p^2 = .00$) or on teacher ratings ($F(5,236) = 1.80$, $p = .112$, $\eta p^2 =$

.04). Both in Finland and in Estonia, the girls reported significantly more emotional problems than the boys did; however, there were no gender differences in the teachers' ratings. Conduct problems were significantly more frequent in Estonia, according to the teachers' ratings, but there was no significant difference between the countries based on the students' ratings. There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect on either student ratings ($F(5,238) = 1.27$, $p = .279$, $\eta p^2 = .03$) or on teacher ratings ($F(5,237) = 1.02$, $p = .406$, $\eta p^2 = .02$). In Finland, the boys rated themselves as having significantly more conduct problems than the girls. There were no gender differences in either the students' ratings or the teachers' ratings in Estonia. Both students and teachers reported significantly more peer problems in Estonia than in Finland. There was no country*mother's education*father's education interaction effect on either student ratings ($F(5,238) = 0.22$, $p = .955$, $\eta p^2 = .01$) or on teacher ratings ($F(5,237) = 1.63$, $p = .153$, $\eta p^2 = .03$). There were no gender differences either.

Congruence between Students and Teachers

The congruence between the students' and the teachers' ratings was first inspected by correlations. The correlations between the students' ratings and the teachers' ratings varied from .25–.54 in Estonia and .31–.44 in Finland, depending on the sub-scale (Table 3). Even though all the correlations were statistically significant, they were only small to moderate.

Table 3 about here

We continued investigating the congruence between the students' and the teachers' ratings by inspecting whether the means for different SDQ scales differed by rater (student

vs. teacher). The results of the repeated measures ANOVAs showed that, in Estonia, the teachers noted significantly more problems than the students did ($F(1,151) = 10.11$, $p = .002$, $\eta p = {}^{2}.06$), and in Finland the teachers noted significantly fewer problems than the students did ($F(1,130) = 20.72$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .14$). Both in Estonia ($F(1,150) = 42.04$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .22$) and in Finland ($F(1,137) = 34.03$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .20$), students noted significantly more emotional problems than their teachers did. In Estonia, there was a significant rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,150) = 6.78$, $p = .010$, $\eta p^2 = .04$). In Estonia, the students' and teachers' ratings concerning conduct problems did not differ ($F(1,150) = .28$, $p = .599$, $\eta p^2 = .00$), and there was no rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,150) = 1.89$, $p = .171$, $\eta p^2 = .01$). However, in Finland, students noted significantly more conduct problems than their teachers ($F(1,138) = 34.72$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .20$), and there was no rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,138) = .035$, $p = .853$, $\eta p^2 = .00$).

In Estonia, the teachers reported significantly more hyperactive problems than the students ($F(1,150) = 43.14$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .22$), and there was no rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,150) = 3.61$, $p = .059$, $\eta p^2 = .02$). In Finland, there was no significant difference concerning the students' and teachers' ratings for hyperactivity ($F(1,135) = .02$, $p = .888$, $\eta p^2 = .00$), but there was a significant rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,135) = 35.15$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .21$). Even though girls and boys rated themselves as equally hyperactive, there was a significant difference in the teachers' ratings, with boys being rated much more hyperactive and girls much less hyperactive by the teachers than they rated themselves.

In Estonia, the teachers noted significantly more peer problems than the students ($F(1,150) = 25.23$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .14$), but in Finland no such difference appeared ($F(1,137) = .01$, $p = .924$, $\eta p^2 = .00$), and there was no rater*gender interaction effect either in Estonia ($F(1,150) = .19$, $p = .666$, $\eta p^2 = .00$) or Finland ($F(1,137) = .21$, $p = .648$, $\eta p^2 = .00$).

In Estonia, there was no difference between the students' and teachers' ratings concerning prosocial strengths ($F(1,150) = 3.40$, $p = .070$, $\eta p^2 = .02$), and there was no rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,150) = 2.66$, $p = .105$, $\eta p^2 = .02$). In Finland, the students reported significantly more prosocial strengths than their teachers ($F(1,139) = 25.15$, $p = .000$, $\eta p^2 = .15$), and there was no rater*gender interaction effect ($F(1,139) = 2.99$, $p = .086$, $\eta p^2 = .02$).

Based on crosstabs (student rating vs. teacher rating) between different student groups (1) fewer problems, 2) average and 3) more problems), we found that 52.6% of the Estonian students fell into same category in both groupings (58.6% of boys, 47.6% of girls; Table 4). In Finland, the figure was 48.1% (46.9% of boys, 50% of girls; Table 5). In Estonia, 8.6% (N = 13; 3.7 % of girls (N = 3); 14.3% of boys (N = 10)) of all the students had rated themselves as having more problems, even though their teachers rated them as having fewer problems. In Finland, the corresponding figure was 2.3% (N = 3; 1.9% of girls (N = 1); 2.5% of boys (N = 2)). In Estonia, 4.6% (N = 7; 7.3% of girls (N = 6); 1.4% of boys (N = 1)) of the students were placed into the 'fewer problems' category based on their own their ratings and into the 'more problems' category based on their teachers' ratings. In Finland, the same figure was 6.9% (N = 9; 11.5% of girls (N = 6); 3.8% of boys (N = 3)).

Tables 4 and 5 about here

Discussion

Our first aim was to investigate how congruent sixth grade students' self-ratings and the teachers' ratings of their students are between the neighboring countries of Estonia and Finland. Our results reveal that there were similarities and differences in the students' self-reports and teachers' ratings between the two participating countries. However, in most of the

cases, the effect sizes were quite small, indicating that the differences were not remarkable, even though they were statistically significant. Our second aim was to investigate how congruent the students' own ratings and their teachers' ratings of them were in Estonia and Finland. Our results show that the students' self-reports and the teachers' ratings differed somewhat in both countries, and that there were gender-related differences. Next, we highlight the main findings of the current study.

As we expected, Estonian teachers noted more externalized problems among their students than the Finnish teachers did; they reported significantly more hyperactivity, conduct and peer problems. The Finnish teachers, on the other hand, noted significantly more emotional problems among their students than the Estonian teachers did. The results of the students' self-reports were very similar. The Estonian students reported higher levels of difficulties with hyperactivity and peer problems, while the Finnish students noted more emotional problems and rated themselves more highly for prosocial behavior. When comparing the results from the two countries, we may speculate that the differences represent actual differences between the countries' samples, which in our case would mean that teachers and students actually confront more externalized problems in Estonia, while teachers and students in Finland encounter more internalized problems instead. These differences may result from structural differences in the school system and culture, or even from teacher training (e.g., Talvio, Lonka, Komulainen, Kuusela, & Lintunen, 2015). These results might also stem from socio-economic differences between countries. As an indicator of the socio-economic background, mothers' and father's education was controlled for. The results showed no change in the main results suggesting that differences between countries were not primarily accounted for by socio-economic background in the present data.

However, one alternative explanation for the diversity in ratings might be that the same standardized assessment form was used in both countries. Even though the items were

translated, they do not necessarily hold the same meanings for respondents in both societies (see Pike, 1967 for the etic and emic method). It has been suggested that SDQ assessments are strongly influenced by cultural expectations (Weisz, McCarty, Eastman, Chaiyasit, & Suwanlert, 1997). In the current study, between-country differences in values (i.e., survival values in Estonia vs. self-expression values in Finland; WVS-6; Inglehart, et al., 2014) may have given direction to these expectations (e.g., what is experienced/interpreted as good or disrupting behavior or how external or internal problems are emphasized). Previously, it has been stated, for example, that caregivers and teachers in different societies might vary more in how they rate internalizing problems than in how they rate externalizing problems (Rescorla et al., 2012). In other words, the way of viewing internalizing problems might be less universal.

Second, we sought to determine how the students' self-ratings and the teachers' ratings of students differ in Estonia and Finland. Based on correlations that were statistically significant but small to moderate, the teachers' and students' ratings were only somewhat related in both countries. In other words, teachers and students share a partly different reality in the area of the evaluation of children's emotional and behavioral problems. This is in line with previous results in both Estonia (Sarv & Roos, 2010) and Finland (Ojala, 2017). For example, Sarv, Leino, Ots, & Pallas (2008) argue that, in many Estonian schools, the students and teachers live in separate worlds. It seems that there is a mismatch and the 'self-portrait' of the Estonian teacher does not fit adequately with the curriculum objectives, aspirations and developments of the educational reality (see Sarv & Roos, 2010). Ojala's (2017) recent findings show that students' internalizing difficulties remain invisible in Finnish schools and that teachers do not recognize them.

When congruence within both countries was inspected in our data, two interesting phenomena emerged. First, in Finland, there was no significant difference concerning the

students' and teachers' ratings for hyperactivity, but there was a significant rater*gender interaction effect, with an effect size as high as .22. Even though the girls and boys rated themselves as equally hyperactive, there was a significant difference in the teachers' ratings: the boys were rated as much more hyperactive and the girls much less hyperactive than they rated themselves. This is in line with research findings showing that ADHD is more related to the male gender (e.g., Keshavarzi, Bajoghli, Mohamadi, Holsboer-Trachsler, & Brand, 2014; Nilholm, 2014). Hyperactivity is one of the key features of ADHD, and ADHD diagnoses have increased rapidly in recent years. Many researchers have stated that ADHD is overdiagnosed and that boys are more readily labelled as ADHD sufferers than girls (e.g., McMahon, 2012; Pickett, 2016). Ruchkin et al. (2012) have also found, using Russian data, that teachers tend to report higher externalizing symptoms among boys compared to girls. According to our results, in contrast to Finland, there was no such tendency in Estonia.

A common finding in both countries is that the students noted more emotional problems than their teachers did. As also observed in previous studies (e.g., Cefai, Cooper, & Camilleri, 2009; Forness, 2003; Ojala, 2017; Soles, Bloom, Heath, & Karagiannakis, 2008), it seems that teachers are unable to see students' internalized problems, which means that their needs in this area cannot be properly met. It was notable that even though, in both countries, the girls experienced more emotional problems than the boys did, this did not come up in the teachers' ratings. Ruchkin et al. (2012) have suggested that teachers often want to think that their students are doing fine, and, because of that, they note fewer problems than the students themselves do. Signs of internalized problems are also harder to recognize, and it is easier to ignore these problems because they seldom disturb others (e.g., Cooper, 2006; Gresham & Kern, 2004). Even though these emotional problems may not disturb others, they often disturb the academic performance and learning of students who experience them. Emotions direct the use of cognitive resources, and negative emotions, such as being afraid or worried,

restrain the cognitive resources available (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992; Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007).

Despite certain differences, the countries were similar in terms of prosocial strengths. In both Estonia and Finland, girls rated themselves as more prosocial than boys, as did their teachers. This is in line with previous studies (Di Riso, Salcuni, Cessa, Rauduno, Lis, & Altoè, 2010; Ruchkin et al., 2012). In addition to emotional problems, this was the only subscale that had a significant gender difference in the students' own reports in Estonia. In Finland, there was a minor difference in conduct problems as well, indicating that the boys rated themselves as having slightly more conduct problems than the girls. Based on our data, it seems that gender differences in both Estonia and Finland are restricted to certain specific areas—mainly in the area of prosocial behavior—and this applies both to the students' own ratings and to those of their teachers.

Our study reveals that students and teachers in Finland and Estonia only partly share a mutual understanding of the social, emotional and behavioral difficulties occurring in classrooms. In classroom interactions, it is crucial for teachers to be able to evaluate and recognize students' behavior and mental health, and to read them correctly, to prevent problems and intervene as needed. It has been often noted that, because of this lack of evaluation skills, students do not get enough support (e.g., Forness, 2003; Owens & Hamel-Lambert, 2007). In the future, more research efforts should be directed to investigate the possibilities of screening for social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties, and to integrate the screening with existing assessment and intervention practices. As Eklund et al. (2009) suggested, universal teacher-rated screening of social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties would help to identify at-risk students. Our results suggest that in addition to teacher ratings, student's self-ratings should be included as well. Like Nilholm (2014), we believe that disturbing behaviors are an educational problem, not a medical one, and that teachers need

more knowledge and classroom management skills to cope with challenging behaviors and to recognize internalizing problems. ADHD-like behaviors are one example of a problem that is currently underserved, at least in Finland (Honkasilta, Sandberg, Närhi, & Jahnukainen, 2014). Regular class teachers seldom have the skills to cope with ADHD-like behavior. In fact, it is not just a matter of coping, but also a matter of actively intervening. Students ought to be taught prosocial skills and constructive interactions (e.g., Capara et al., 2014; Capara et al., 2000). This presents a challenge both to our school systems and to the current content of our teacher training curricula.

Based on our data, it is impossible to analyze whether the differences between the two participating countries, both with great PISA success but different economic backgrounds and histories, are real differences or mainly due to cultural differences that are related to different expectations. Thus, it is possible that, rather than showing that Estonian students have more externalized problems, our results suggest that Estonian students and teachers have higher expectations when it comes to school discipline than their Finnish counterparts, for example. Similarly, it is impossible to state whose experience is more correct—that of teachers' or that of students'. Further, these might not be relevant questions at all. Experiencing something as a strength or as a problem is always subjective and context-bound, and experiencing something as a strength or difficulty should be enough without trying to figure out if the experience is real or unreal. However, these different viewpoints should not be overlooked. For example, the observed gap between teachers' and students' experiences considering emotional problems cannot be ignored as a sign of different views. Even though it is a sign of different viewpoints, it also tells about teachers' inability to see internalizing problems that, in the future, may be a potential threat to students' school well-being and academic success.

Authors report no conflict of interest

References

Baker, J. A. (2006). Contributions of Teacher-Child Relationships to Positive School Adjustment during Elementary School. *Journal of School Psychology, 44*, 211-229.

Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment. Journal of School Psychology, 35, 61-80.

Botha, J., & Kourkoutas, E. (2016) A community of practice as an inclusive model to support children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in school contexts. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 20*, 784–799.

Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Pastorelli, C., Bandura, A., & Zimbardo, P. (2000). Prosocial foundations of children's academic achievement. *Psychological Science, 11*, 302–306.

Caprara, G. V., Kanacri, B.P.L., Gerbino, M., Zuffianò, A., Alessandri, G., Vecchio, G., … Bridglall, B. (2014). *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. *38*(4), 386–396.

Cefai, C., & Cooper, P. (2010). Students without voices: The unheard accounts of secondary school students with social, emotional and behavior difficulties. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 25*(2), 183–198.

Cefai, C., Cooper, P., & Camilleri, L. (2009). Social, emotional and behaviour difficulties in Maltese schools. *The International Journal of Emotional Education, 1*(1), 8–49.

Cooper, P. (2006). Biology and behaviour: The educational relevance of a biopsychosocial perspective. In Clough, P., Garner, P., Pardeck, J. T. & Yuen, F. (Eds.). *Handbook of emotional & behavioural difficulties* (pp. 105–121). London: Sage.

Cooper, P., & Cefai, C. (2013). Evidence-based approaches to social, emotional and behavior difficulties in schools. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy. 2013 Special Issue*, 81–101.

DiLalla, L. F., Marcus, J. L., & Wright-Phillips, M. V. (2004). Longitudinal Effects of Preschool Behavioral Styles on Early Adolescent School Performance. *Journal of School Psychology, 42*, 385-401.

Di Riso, D., Salcuni, S., Chessa, D., Raudino, A., Lis, A., & Altoè, G. (2010). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Early evidence of its reliability and validity in a community sample of Italian children. *Personality and Individual Differences, 49*, 570–575.

Edovald, T. (2011). *Prevalence of emotional and behavioural problems among Estonian youth.* Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs Commissioned Report.

Eisenberg, N., Fabes, R. A., & Spinrad, T. L. (2006). Prosocial behavior. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.). *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 646–718). New York: Wiley.

Eklund, K., Renshaw, T. L., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S. R., Hart, S. R., Jones, C. N., & Earhart, J. (2009). Early identification of behavioral and emotional problems in youth: Universal screening versus teacher-referral identification. *The California School Psychologist, 14*, 89-95.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017. *The Structure of the European Education Systems 2017/18: Schematic Diagrams. Eurydice Facts and Figures*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Eysenck, M. W., & Calvo, M. G. (1992). Anxiety and performance: The processing efficiency theory. *Cognition and Emotion, 6*, 409-434.

Eysenck, M. W., Derakshan, N., Santos, R., & Calvo, M. G. (2007). Anxiety and cognitive performance: Attentional control theory. *Emotion, 7,* 336–353.

Forlin, C., & Cooper, P. (2013). Student behaviour and emotional challenges for teachers and parents in Hong Kong. *British Journal of Special Education, 40*(3), 58– 64.

Forness, S. R. (2003). Barriers to evidence-based treatment: Developmental psychopathology and the interdisciplinary disconnect in school mental health practice. *Journal of School Psychology, 4*, 61–67.

Gardner, F. & Shaw, D. S. (2008). Behavioral problems of infancy and preschool children (0–5). In M. Rutter, D.V.M. Bishop, D. S. Pine, S. Scott, J. Stevenson, E. Taylor, & A. Thapar (Eds.). *Rutter's child and adolescent psychiatry* (pp. 882–893). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Goldberg D. P., Krueger R. F., Andrews, G., & Hobbs, M. J. (2009). Emotional disorders: Cluster 4 of the proposed meta-structure for DSM-V and ICD-11. *Psychological Medicine, 39,* 2043–2059.

Goodman R. (1997). The strengths and difficulties questionnaire: A research note. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 38, 581-586.

Greenberg, M., Domitrovich, C., & Bumbarger, B. (2001). The prevention of mental disorders in school-aged children: Current state of the field. *Prevention & Treatment, 4*(1), 1–59.

Gresham, F. M., & Kern, L. (2004). Internalizing behavior problems in children and adolescents. In R. B. Rutherford, M. M. Quinn, & S. R. Mathut (Eds.). *Handbook of research in emotional and behavioral disorders* (pp. 262–281). New York: Guilford.

Hafen, C. A., Ruzek, E. A., Gregory, A., Allen, J. P., & Mikami, A. Y. (2015). Focusing on teacher–student interactions eliminates the negative impact of students' disruptive behavior on teacher perceptions. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 39*(5), 426–431.

Hamre, B.K., & Pianta, R. C. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development, 72,* 625-638.

Hamre, B. K., Pianta, R. C., Downer, J. T., & Mashburn, A. J. (2008). Teachers' perceptions

of conflict with young students**:** Looking beyond problem behaviors. *Social Development, 17*(1), 115–136.

Harðardottir, S., Julıusdottir, S., & Guðmundsson, H. S. (2015). Understanding resilience in learning difficulties: Unheard voices of secondary school students. *Child Adolescent Social Work Journal, 32*, 351–358.

Honkasilta, J. Sandberg, E. Närhi, V. & Jahnukainen, M. (2014). ADHD in the context of Finnish basic education. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties***.** *19*(3), 311–323.

Inglehart, R., C. Haerpfer, A. Moreno, C. Welzel, K. Kizilova, J. Diez-Medrano, M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin & B. Puranen et al. (eds.). 2014. *World Values Survey: Round Six - Country-Pooled Datafile Version*: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp. Madrid: JD Systems Institute.

Inglehart, R. & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kantomaa, M. T., Tammelin, T. H., Demakakos, P., Ebeling, H. E,. & Taanila, A.M. (2010). Physical activity, emotional and behavioural problems, maternal education and self-reported educational performance of adolescents. *Health Education Research, 25*(2), 368–379.

Keshavarzi, Z., Bajoghli, H., Mohamadi, M. R., Holsboer-Trachsler, E., & Brand, S. (2014). Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children is found to be related to the occurrence of ADHD in siblings and the male gender, but not to birth order, when compared to healthy controls. *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice, 18*(4), 272–279.

Kidger, J., Araya, R., Donovan, J., & Gunnell, D. (2012). The effect of the school environment on the emotional health of adolescents: A systematic review. *Pediatrics,*

2011–2248.

Kirk, S., Gallagher, J., & Coleman, M. R. (2015. Children with exceptionalities and their families. In S. Kirk, J. Gallagher, & M. R. Coleman (Eds.). *Educating exceptional children* (14th ed.) (pp. 3-30). Stamford, USA: Cengage.

Kõiv, K. (2010). Expected political participation: Differences between adolescents with and without behavioural problems. In P. Cunningham & N. Fretwell (Eds.) Lifelong learning and active citizenship (pp. 328–332). London: CiCe.

Kõiv, K. (2011). Attitudes towards future political participation among students with and without behavioral problems. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 29, 1518 –1523.

Kokko, K., & Pulkkinen, L. (2000). Aggression in childhood and long-term unemployment in adulthood: A cycle of maladaptation and some protective factors. *Developmental Psychology, 36*, 463–472.

Krueger R. F. (1999). The structure of common mental disorders. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 56*, 921–926.

Lees, M. (2016). *Estonian Education System 1990-2016*. Reforms and their impact. Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

Lippman, L. H., & Wilcox, W. B. (2014). *World family map 2014: Mapping family change and child well-being outcomes*. Retrieved from http://worldfamilymap.org/2014/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WFM-2014-Final_ForWeb.pdf

Madill, R. A., Gest, S. D., & Rodkin, P. C. (2014). Students' perceptions of relatedness in the classroom: The roles of emotionally supportive teacher–child interactions, children's aggressive–disruptive behaviors, and peer social preference. *School Psychology Review,43*(1) , 86–105.

McMahon, S. E. (2012). Doctors diagnose, teachers label: The unexpected in pre-service teachers' talk about labelling children with ADHD. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 16*(3), 249–264.

Miller, A. (2003). *Teachers, parents and classroom behavior. A psychosocial approach.* Berkshire:: Open University Press.

Nash, P., Schlösser, A., & Scarr, T. (2016). Teachers´ perceptions of disruptive behavior in schools: A psychological perspective. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 21*, 167–180. doi: 10.1080/13632752.2015.1054670

Nilholm, C. (2014). Commentary. ADHD: An educational challenge. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 19*(3), 324–326.

OECD. (2016a). PISA 2015 Results (Volume I): Excellence and Equity in Education, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en.

OECD. (2016b). OECD Reviews of School Resources: Estonia 2016.

OECD. (2018). *Gross domestic product (GDP) (indicator*). doi: 10.1787/dc2f7aec-en

Ojala, T. (2017). *Kun peruskoulun oppilaat oireilevat psyykkisesti – opettajien kokemuksia.* [When pupils have emotional and behavioural disorders in comprehensive school – Teachers' experiences]. *Jyväskylä studies in education, psychology and social research*. Jyväskylä, Finland: Jyväskylä University Printing House.

Owens, J. S., & Hamel-Lambert, J. (2007). Rising to the challenge: Transforming training to prepare the mental health workforce for inter-professional collaboration. *Report on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Youth, 7*, 33–34; 44–47.

Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom assessment scoring system (CLASS) manual, K–3*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Pianta, R., & Stuhlman, M. W. (2004). Teacher-child relationships and children's success in the first years of school. *School Psychology Review, 33*, 444-458.

Pickett, J. (2016). Management of ADHD in children and adolescents: ADHD. *Prescriber, 27*(2), 17–23.

Pike, K. L. (1967). *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structures of human behavior* (2nd ed.). The Hague: Mouton.

PISA in Focus. (2017) Are students happy? PISA 2015 results: Students´ well-being. *PISA in Focus #71*. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-in-Focus-No-71-Are-students-happy.pdf.

Polou, M. (2014). The effects on students' emotional and behavioural difficulties of teacher-student interactions, students' social skills and classroom context. *British Educational Research Journal, 40*(6), 986–1004.

Rescorla, L. A., Achenbach, T. M., Ivanova, M. Y., Bilenberg, N., Bjarnadottir, G., Denner, S., … Verhulst, F. C. (2012). Behavioral/Emotional Problems of Preschoolers: Caregiver/Teacher Reports From 15 Societies. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 20,* 68–81. http://doi.org/10.1177/1063426611434158.

Riley, M. (2004. Voices of disaffected pupils: Implications for policy and practice. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 52*(2), 166–179.

Ruchkin, V., Koposov, R., Vermeiren, R., & Scwab-Stone, M. (2012). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire: Russian validation of the teacher version and comparison of teacher and students reports. *Journal of Adolescence, 35,* 87–96.

Sanders, D. E., Merrell, K. W., & Cobb, H. C. (1999). Internalizing symptoms and affect of children with emotional and behavioral disorders: A comparative study with an urban African American sample. *Psychology in the Schools, 36,* 187–197.

Sarv, E-S. (2014). A status paper of school teacher training in Estonia. *Journal of International Forum of Educational Research, 1*(2), 106–158.

Sarv, E-S., Leino M., Ots L., & Pallas, L. (2008). Teacher's views of students in estonian schools. *The International Journal of Learning: Annual Review, 15,* 169-182.

Sarv, E-S., & Roos, V-R. (2010). Mida ootavad õpilased õpetajalt ja koolilt ning kuidas nad hindavad oma ootuste täitumist? [What are students expecting from their teacher and school and how do they evaluate the fulfilment of expectations?] In V-R. Ruus, & E-S. Sarv (Eds.). *Õpetaja esmaharidus. Olukord ja probleemid 21. sajandi alguses.* Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikooli Kirjastus, 36–47.

Skalická, V., Stenseng, F., & Wichstrøm, L. (2015). Reciprocal relations between student–teacher conflict, children's social skills and externalizing behavior: A three-wave longitudinal study from preschool to third grade. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 39*(5), 413–425.

Soles, T., Bloom, E. L., Heath, N. L., & Karagiannakis, A. (2008). An exploration of teachers' current perceptions of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 13*(4), 275–290.

Soo, K., Ainsaar, M., & Kalmus, V. (2012). Behind the curtains of e-State: Determinants of online sexual harassment among Estonian children. *Studies of Transition States and Societies, 4*(2), 35−48.

Sutherland, K. S. (2000). Promoting positive interactions between teachers and students with emotional/behavioral disorders. *Preventing School Failure, 44,* 110–115.

Talvio, M., Lonka, K., Komulainen, E., Kuusela, M., & Lintunen, T. (2015). The development of teachers' responses to challenging situations during interaction training. *Teacher Development, 19*(1), 97–115.

The structure of the European education systems. Schematic diagrams (2015). Brussels: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2013). Significant trends in the development of Finnish teacher education programs (1860–2010). *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 21*(59), 1–19.

Värnik, A., Sisask, M., & Värnik, P. (Eds.). (2011). *Õpetajate ja õpilaste baasuuringu tulemused. Vaimne tervis ja riskikäitumine.* [*Results from basic research among teachers and students. Mental health and risk behavior*]. Tallinn, Estonia: Eesti-Rootsi Vaimse Tervise Suitsidoloogia Instituut.

Visser, S. N., Danielson, M. L., Bitsko, R. H., Holbrook, J. R., Kogan, M. D., Ghandour, R. M., & Blumberg, S. J. (2014). Trends in the parent-report of health care provider-diagnosed and medicated attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: United States 2003–2011. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *53,* 34-46.

Walker, H. M., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F. M. (2004). *Antisocial behavior in schools: Evidence-based practices* (2nd ed.). Florence, KY: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Weisz, J. R., McCarty, C. A., Eastman, K. L., Chaiyasit, W., & Suwanlert, S. (1997). Developmental psychology and culture: Ten lessons from Thailand. In S. S. Luthar, J. A. Burak, D. Cicchetti, & J. R. Weisz (Eds.). *Developmental psychopathology: Perspectives on adjustment, risk, and disorder* (pp. 568–592). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Health Organization [WHO]. (2004). *Prevention of mental disorders: Effective interventions and policy options. Summary Report.* Geneva: WHO.

Youngstrom, E., Loeber, R., & ,Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (2000). Patterns and correlates of agreement between parent, teacher, and male adolescent ratings of externalizing and internalizing problems. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 68, 1038-105.*

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Student Background Factors in Estonia and Finland

	Estonia % (N)				**Finland % (N)**			
	B Ed		**M Ed**		**B Ed**		**M Ed**	
Teacher education	48% (73)		52% (79)		16.4% (25)		74.3% (113)	
	<6 years	**6–10 years**	**11–20 years**	**>20 years**	**<6 years**	**6–10 years**	**11–20 years**	**>20 years**
Teaching experience	0% (0)	37.5% (57)	50.7% (77)	11.8% (18)	6.6% (10)	15.8% (24)	53.9% (82)	23% (35)
	<500		**>700**		**<100**		**>200**	
School size	61.2% (93)		38.8% (59)		25% (38)		75% (114)	
	11–15	**16–20**	**21–25**	**26–30**	**11–15**	**16–20**	**21–25**	**26–30**
Class size	17.1% (26)	18.4% (28)	38.2% (58)	26.3% (40)	27.6% (42)	40.1% (61)	29.6% (45)	0% (0)
	Primary level	**High school/gymnasium**	**Vocational**	**Academic degree**	**Primary level**	**High school/gymnasium**	**Vocational**	**Academic degree**
Mother's education	7.2% (11)	18.4% (28)	27.6% (42)	45.4% (69)	8.6% (13)	20.4% (31)	50.7% (77)	9.9% (15)
Father's education	11.8% (18)	20.4% (31)	28.3% (43)	34.2% (52)	9.2% (14)	7.9% (12)	55.3% (84)	13.8% (21)
	2 Parents	**1 Parent**	**Other Guardian**		**2 Parents**	**1 Parent**	**Other Guardian**	
Family structure	73.7% (112)	26.3% (40)	0% (0)		75% (114)	22.4% (34)	2.6% (4)	

Note. The counts in parentheses represent frequencies. B Ed = Bachelor of Education, M Ed = Master of Education

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for the Different SDQ Scales in Estonia and Finland

	Estonia								Finland									
	Girls		Boys		ANOVA (gender)		All		Girls		Boys		ANOVA (gender)		All		ANOVA (country)	
Scale	**M**	**Sd**	**M**	**Sd**	**F**	ηp^2	**M**	**Sd**	**M**	**Sd**	**M**	**Sd**	**F**	ηp^2	**M**	**Sd**	**F**	ηp^2
Prosocial	7.40	1.72	6.24	1.84	15.84***	0.10	6.78	1.87	7.61	1.53	6.91	1.48	7.68**	0.05	7.34	1.54	8.32**	0.03
Hyperactivity	3.23	1.95	3.22	2.11	0.00	0.00	3.22	2.03	2.51	1.70	2.79	1.71	0.93	0.01	2.62	1.70	7.75**	0.03
Emotional	2.21	1.76	1.40	1.34	10.39**	0.07	1.78	1.60	2.71	2.17	1.98	1.98	4.19*	0.03	2.43	2.12	9.13***	0.03
Conduct	1.84	1.52	1.89	1.19	0.05	0.00	1.87	1.35	1.68	1.46	2.21	1.63	4.23*	0.03	1.89	1.55	0.01	0.00
Peer	1.93	1.39	2.21	1.73	1.17	0.01	2.08	1.58	1.52	1.59	1.60	1.81	0.07	0.00	1.55	1.67	7.86**	0.03
Total difficulty	9.21	4.73	8.72	4.33	0.45	0.00	8.95	4.51	8.55	5.10	8.43	4.90	0.02	0.00	8.50	5.00	0.63	0.00
Prosocial^{Teacher}	6.80	1.78	6.21	1.79	4.16*	0.03	6.48	1.80	6.95	1.72	5.65	2.19	15.65***	0.10	6.43	2.02	0.05	0.00
Hyperactivity^{Teacher}	4.03	2.41	4.67	2.28	2.84	0.02	4.38	2.36	1.46	1.82	3.98	2.94	39.92***	0.22	2.47	2.64	42.69***	0.13
Emotional^{Teacher}	1.04	1.46	0.90	1.39	0.35	0.00	0.97	1.46	1.49	1.65	1.14	1.65	1.51	0.01	1.35	1.65	4.37*	0.02
Conduct^{Teacher}	1.73	1.78	2.15	1.47	2.52	0.02	1.95	1.62	0.85	1.48	1.30	1.30	3.49	0.02	1.03	1.42	26.84***	0.08
Peer^{Teacher}	2.66	1.60	3.07	1.57	2.61	0.02	2.88	1.59	1.56	1.77	1.51	1.98	0.03	0.00	1.54	1.86	44.35***	0.13
Total difficulty^{Teacher}	9.46	4.84	10.79	4.50	3.10	0.02	10.18	4.70	5.33	4.92	7.93	5.13	9.13**	0.06	6.38	5.15	43.52***	0.13

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 3. Correlations between the Students' and Teachers' Ratings in Estonia and Finland

Scale	Estonia	Finland	All
Prosocial	.33***	.31***	.31***
Hyperactivity	.54***	.42***	.50***
Emotional	.45***	.42***	.44***
Conduct	.39***	.31***	.33***
Peer	.25**	.44***	.38***

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 4. The Congruence between the Students' and Teachers' Ratings in Estonia

	Teachers' Ratings								
	1 Fewer Problems			**2 Average**			**3 More Problems**		
Students' ratings	All f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	All f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	All f (%)	Girls (%)	Boys (%)
1 Fewer Problems	29 (19.1)	13 (15.9)	16 (22.9)	13 (8.6)	7 (8.5)	6 (8.6)	7 (4.6)	6 (7.3)	1 (1.4)
2 Average	14 (9.2)	9 (11.0)	5 (7.1)	23 (15.1)	11 (13.4)	12 (17.1)	15 (9.9)	10 (12.2)	5 (7.1)
3 More Problems	13 (8.6)	3 (3.7)	10 (14.3)	10 (6.6)	8 (9.8)	2 (2.9)	28 (18.4)	15 (18.3)	13 (18.6)

Note. $\chi 2(df=4) = 28.23^{***}$ for all; $\chi 2(df=4) = 11.11^{*}$ for girls; $\chi 2(df=4) = 24.93^{***}$ for boys

Table 5. The Congruence between the Students' and Teachers' Ratings in Finland

	Teachers' Ratings								
	1 Fewer Problems			**2 Average**			**3 More Problems**		
Student Rating	All f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	All f (%)	Girls f (%)	Boys f (%)	All f (%)	Girls (%)	Boys (%)
1 Fewer Problems	17 (13.0)	4 (7.7)	13 (16.5)	12 (9.2)	6 (11.5)	6 (7.6)	9 (6.9)	6 (11.5)	3 (3.8)
2 Average	20 (15.3)	4 (7.7)	16 (20.3)	20 (15.3)	8 (15.4)	12 (15.2)	10 (7.6)	6 (11.5)	4 (5.1)
3 More Problems	3 (2.3)	1 (1.9)	2 (2.5)	14 (10.7)	3 (5.8)	11 (13.9)	26 (19.8)	14 (26.9)	12 (15.2)

Note. $\chi 2$ (df=4) = 25.14*** for all; $\chi 2$(df=4) = 8.80 for girls; $\chi 2$(df=4) = 19.00** for boys