

Why secondary kids act in a laddish behaviour

Law



Context and concepts Paul Willis conducted a study called " Learning to labour" in 1977 in which he studied 12 working class students in their last 18 months at a school in the West-Midlands, the methods he used were observation and participant observation. The boys he studied were known as the " lads". These boys knew what they needed to do in order to achieve and get qualifications but instead they chose to reject school and developed laddish behaviour, because they believed that education was unmasculine and uncool and that they would get a job even if they didn't have any qualifications.

They thought that manual labour was more worthy than work at a desk or an office. This is where my first concept " laddism" stems from. This is a male script of toughness which is characterised by negative feelings towards school. Willis found that there were two types of pupils in the class, the " earoles" who commit themselves to their education and the lads who took little notice of school rules, teachers and work, instead they thought school was all about having a " laff".

These are all coping strategies the boys had developed in order to cope and minimize the boredom of school and the future routine based jobs they would ultimately end up in. The boys thought that manual labour was more worthy than work at a desk or office. Mitsos and Brown also looked at why boys underachieve in education and thought it was mainly due to what teachers expected of them, which leads me to my second concept " teacher expectations". They found that teachers tend to be less strict with boys, expecting low standards of work from them, leading them to underachieve as they failed to push them to achieve their full potential.

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This also means that the boys started to become overconfident and also started to overestimate their abilities to do something and so making themselves believe that they don't need to work as hard in order to gain qualifications. Boys were also more likely to be sent out of the classroom or get expelled (80% are boys) from school than girls, which means they lose valuable school time. Another reason for their underachievement could be due to the decline in manual labour, which has resulted in them losing their motivation as they see little point in education as it won't lead them to the type of job they seek.

The lack of opportunities for these young men has given them a low self-esteem. It is these problems which have led to an "identity crisis for men". As there is a rise in the more "female" jobs and a decline in the more traditional "male" jobs, the future of some males looks bleak as they lack a clear purpose. On the other hand according to Hargreaves et al the underachievement of boys in education may be due to the way the pupils are perceived by the teachers. Hargreaves et al analysed the processes that led to pupils being classified, and they put forward three stages which are: ?

Speculation- this is where the teachers make presumptions about the type of pupils they are dealing with, this leads to the formation of a hypothesis. ?

Elaboration- It is here that the established hypothesis is either gradually confirmed or rejected. ? Stabilisation- when this stage is reached the teacher will feel like that they are familiar with the type of pupil they are dealing with. It is this third stage of stabilisation, where the behaviour of the pupil is compared against the type of pupil they are thought to be.

If some pupils are regarded as being badly behaved, then it will be hard for their good behaviour to be seen, which is the “labelling theory”.

Nevertheless it is the predictions made by the teacher that has lead to the “self-fulfilling prophecy”, where the pupils start to live up to the predictions that the teacher have made about them, which is my fourth concept. So if a teacher labels pupils as being bright and expects a higher standard of work from them then these pupils will start to believe they are indeed bright and as a result work hard and obtain good examination results.

Thus the actions of pupils are partly a reflection of what teacher expect from them. Sociologists Rosenthal and Jacobson decided to carry out an experiment which lasted over a year, which was designed to test the “labelling” and “self-fulfilling prophecy” theories and how they affected educational achievement. They conducted their study in an elementary school where they selected 20% of the students, whom they expected to show rapid academic growth. In order to prove this they tested the IQ of the pupils before and one year after the experiment started and the selected pupils had gained IQ.

Rosenthal and Jacobson explained that this was due to the teacher conveying the message that the selected sample had more potential than the rest. This led to the sample believing that they were capable of achieving highly and live up to the label they were given and subsequently led to the self-fulfilling prophecy. Main research methods and reasons The main method of research that would be most suited to my topic is non-participant observation in a classroom. Paul Willis also used non-participant observation

when he was conducting his research in order to see boys behave in a “laddish” way.

I will take up an interpretivist approach like Willis, where I will collect my qualitative data rather than quantitative data. This type of research method could help me explore the concepts of “teacher’s expectations”, as teachers can show different attitudes to the two opposite sexes which could lead to underachievement and form “laddish” behaviour. While observing I will be looking out for signs of “laddish” behaviour and levels of standards that are set by the teacher and if this affects the amount of work that is produced by the pupils.

For example teachers tend to be less strict with boys and they tolerate low standards of work from them, which leads to them overestimating their abilities and they become overconfident and not work hard enough in order to achieve highly, which links to my second concept of “teacher’s expectations” Before I operationalise my research method I will need to design an observational framework that meets the needs of my research and that corresponds to my contextual studies. It will also help me to be consistent in what I observe.

The things that I will need to look out for are: the way that the pupils are seated, the amount of times that the lesson has been stopped due to disturbance and if this was mostly from boys, and how the badly behaved pupils react to the good kids, do they bully them? Also I will be looking at the way that the boys contribute to the lessons, are they keen to learn? This will show that the boys are behaving in a “laddish” way, which operationalises

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my first concept. However before I officially observe the classes I will conduct a pilot study in which I will test the efficiency of my observational framework.

In this research I will be observing four English classes all in year 11. all four classes will be observed in the second period of the morning through the week, as pupils tend to be more focused in the morning on a Monday compare to a morning on a Friday. Before I can observe a class I will need to gain permission from the subject teacher. Then I will enter the classroom before the pupils get there and sit somewhere unobtrusive where hopefully students will not pay too much attention to me, which would also improve my data.

Whilst observing the class I might also come across situations where issues of confidentiality are raised. Potential problems Potential problems that could be met while conducting my research are that the behaviour of some pupils and teachers might change as the sense the presence of a stranger in the classroom. This could mean that I will not be obtaining accurate or valid data to show why boys are underachieving in education. The data obtained will be qualitative which means that I will not be able generalise the findings to the wider society, which means that my study will lack ecological validity.

Another problem could be getting the permission to observe these classes, the teacher might not be comfortable with the fact that I will be observing their class while they are teaching and so refuse me access, leaving me with no data. Also there might be timetabling issues, which means that I may not be able to observe the class I intended to, because my timetable might not let me, as I can also have lessons at that particular period of the day. While

observing the class I will record my findings on an observational framework and as I am doing this I might miss some crucial events that have taken place while I was recording my data.

Due to this I might also end up being biased and focus only on certain events or even add my own interpretations to actions, which means that I will be selective as I am trying to prove a point. During the time I am in the classroom observing I may come across an event that has taken place in my presence which is serious and so automatically I am put in a position where I have to take a certain action which can be: do I report what has happened, or do I keep it to myself as the teacher has allowed into their classroom, do they expect me to be trustworthy? So issues of confidentiality may arise.