NAUGHTY OR NICE: SOCIAL INTERACTION ON THE SCHOOL BUS

Courtney C. Galliger

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2006

Committee:

Marie S. Tisak, Advisor
John Tisak
Jen Gillespie
Past research has found that different contexts create unique experiences that contribute to a child's development. A context that remains unexplored, however, is the bus ride to and from school. The current study explored the school bus as a unique context for social interaction. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to understand any gender differences, developmental differences, and differences in being an actor versus a recipient in the rate and types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors that occur on the bus ride to and from school. One hundred and fifty-seven elementary school students (78 males and 79 females) in grades 3, 4, and 5 completed a questionnaire concerning the rate and types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors that occur on the school bus. Overall, the results indicated that students were prosocial more often on the school bus than they were aggressive. Regarding the rate of prosocial and aggressive behaviors, the results showed several significant effects with respect to participant gender, peer gender, being an actor versus a recipient, and age. Regarding the types of social behaviors, five types of prosocial behavior were identified and five types of aggressive behavior were identified. Although the types of social behaviors were consistent with past research, differences found in the current study were distinctive. For example, participants mentioned non-traditionally studied prosocial behaviors (e.g., companionship and benevolence) more often than traditionally studied behaviors (e.g., sharing and helping). In addition, participants mentioned physical aggression more often among their female peers than among their male peers. It is concluded that the present results have important implications for the school bus context and for future research.
This project is dedicated to over 23 million children who ride the school bus.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to those who helped make this process an enjoyable learning experience by guiding me through the development of this project. I would first like to thank Dr. Marie Tisak for her guidance, encouragement, and great expectations. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. John Tisak, and Dr. Jen Gillespie for their thoughtful suggestions and their valuable time. Lastly, I would like to thank the principals, teachers, parents, and students for their time and willingness to participate in this project. I am greatly appreciative.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Research</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The School Bus Ride</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Interaction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive Behavior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Behavior</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and Hypotheses</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of Prosocial Behavior and Aggressive Behavior</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Prosocial and Aggressive Behavior</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHOD</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent Procedure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Coding of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice and Not Nice Behavioral Ratings</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice Behavioral Ratings</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Nice Behavioral Ratings</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of Nice Behaviors .............................................................. 18
  Helping ................................................................. 18
  Comforting ............................................................ 19
  Benevolence .......................................................... 19
  Companionship ......................................................... 20
  Sharing ................................................................. 21
Types of Not Nice Behaviors ......................................................... 21
  Verbal Aggression ....................................................... 21
  Physical Aggression .................................................... 22
  Stealing ................................................................. 23
  Relational Aggression .................................................. 24
  Non-Prosocial Behavior ............................................... 24
DISCUSSION ................................................................. 25
  Nice and Not Nice Behavioral Ratings ................................ 25
    Participant Gender Differences in the Rate of Nice and Not
    Nice Behaviors .......................................................... 26
    Developmental Differences in the Rate of Nice and Not
    Nice Behaviors .......................................................... 27
    Differences in Being a Recipient Versus Being an
    Actor in the Rate of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors .................. 27
    Peer Gender Differences in the Rate of Nice and
    Not Nice Behaviors .................................................... 28
    Types of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors ................................ 29
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Gender Differences in the Types of Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Differences in the Types of Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Being a Recipient Versus Being an Actor in the Types of Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Gender Differences in the Types of Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Gender Differences in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Differences in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in Being a Recipient Versus Being an Actor in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Gender Differences in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A. SCHOOL OFFICIAL LETTER</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B. SCHOOL OFFICIAL CONSENT FORM</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C. PARENT LETTER</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX D. PARENT CONSENT FORM</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aggression Behavioral Categories Found in Past Studies</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prosocial Behavioral Categories Found in Past Studies</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prosocial Behavioral Categories of Current Study</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Prosocial Behavioral Categories: Participants to Peers</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Prosocial Behavioral Categories: Peers to Participants</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aggressive Behavioral Categories of Current Study</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Aggressive Behavioral Categories: Participants to Peers</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations of Aggressive Behavioral Categories: Peers to Participants</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Means of male and female participants’ nice ratings as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Means of male and female participants’ not nice ratings as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Means of benevolence among male and female participants as a function of age</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Means of benevolence among male and female participants as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Means of benevolence among younger and older participants as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Means of companionship among male and female participants as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Means of companionship among boy and girl peers as a function of direction of action</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Means of sharing among male and female participants as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Means of physical aggression among boy and girl peers as a function of direction of action</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Means of physical aggression among younger and older participants as a function of peer gender</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 Means of physical aggression among younger and older participants as a function of direction of action ................................................................. 75
12 Means of stealing among male and female participants as a function of direction of action ......................................................................................... 76
INTRODUCTION

The majority of developmental research has focused on the study of children within a specific setting in an attempt to understand how various environmental circumstances influence development (Berk, 1999). For example, when studying bullying and victimization, Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004) found that the school plays a significant role in the socialization of children, preparing them “for how they deal with conflict and shaping the kind of citizen they are likely to become” (p. 50). Though this type of research has made valuable contributions to our understanding of child development, it has remained unidimensional, focusing largely on events and conditions immediately surrounding the child and their impact on the child (Kiesner, Poulis, & Nicotra, 2003). Other theorists view development as a complex system of relationships that are affected by multiple factors or contexts. These contexts include but extend beyond home, school, and neighborhood settings in which children spend their everyday lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Lerner & Fisher, 1994). From this perspective, the term “context” denotes more than a setting, such as the home or the school; rather, “context” includes the activities and interaction patterns within a particular setting as well. That is, researchers from developmental contextualism view an array of relationships and activities experienced by the child within various settings as the basis of her development.

Developmental contextualism theorists further emphasize that contexts are bidirectional, as proposed by Bell (1968). That is, parents affect their child’s behavior, however a child’s individuality--their physical attributes, personalities, and capacities--also affect the behavior of her parents. For example, a child who has a positive temperament--friendly and attentive--is likely to evoke positive reactions from her parents (Bell, 1968; Thomas, Chess, Birch, Hertzig, & Korn, 1963). In another example, Eccles and colleagues have shown that an adolescent’s success in middle school may in part be determined by the

Therefore, not only do various contexts contribute to a child’s development, but children have come to be understood as active producers of their own development (Lerner, 2002; Lerner & Spanier, 1978; Lewis & Rosenblum, 1974). As these reciprocal interactions become well established over time, they have an enduring impact on development (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Therefore, according to the contextualism position, development does not depend on environmental factors or inner dispositions alone; rather, children are products and producers of their environments.

Contextual Research

Recent studies have considered multiple contexts, in order to determine whether or not specific contexts create unique experiences for the child, and, if they do, what those unique contributions might be (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Kiesner et al., 2003; Snyder, Brooker, Patrick, Snyder, Schrepferman, & Stoolmiller, 2003; Tisak, Tisak, & Goldstein, 2001). For example, studying high school students, Hansen et al. (2003) recorded the types of developmental experiences adolescents reported across organized youth activities. The authors found that organized youth activities contribute uniquely to personal development (e.g., emotional development and identity exploration). In addition, these organized activities uniquely contribute to interpersonal development as well (e.g., developing teamwork skills and forming networks with community members). These findings illustrate that organized youth activities are contexts for individual development.

In another study, Kiesner et al. (2003) examined peer networks across two different contexts, in-school and after-school environments. The goal of their study was to determine if both the in-school and the after-school peer networks of 12-year-olds contribute to the
variation of individual behavior. The authors found that even though both peer networks, in school and after school, have some behaviorally similar characteristics (i.e., delinquency), the individual is still exposed to behaviors that are uniquely confined to one peer group. For example, an individual who is rejected by classroom peers in school may be accepted as a friend and/or group member by nonclassroom peers after school. Multiple contexts seem to play a unique role in development, as these contexts provide unique experiences for the individual.

More specifically, Kiesner et al. (2003) reported that outside of school delinquency was positively related to peer acceptance, whereas in-school problem behavior was negatively correlated to peer acceptance. These findings suggest that peer acceptance and the behavioral correlates of acceptance likely differs across contexts. Although this particular study did not examine the comparisons of peer relations across contexts, it does suggest, nonetheless, that nonclassroom settings are important contexts that require further study.

The importance of context is further illustrated in a study conducted by Tisak et al. (2001). Specifically, preschoolers’ perceptions regarding what misconduct behaviors peers are likely to commit within two different contexts, in school and at the grocery store, were examined. Several interesting findings were noted. That is, not only do young children consider gender of the individual when making attributions about peers’ social expectations, but they also consider the context as well. In particular, children anticipated moral violations (e.g., hitting and stealing) to occur in the school context rather than in the grocery store. However, preschoolers’ expected social conventional misbehaviors (e.g., not listening to the teacher and being too noisy) to occur in both contexts. As the results of this study indicate, young children differentiate peers’ social behaviors across contexts.

In another study, Snyder et al. (2003) observed peer interactions of 5- to 7-year-olds on the school playground. They found that victimization experienced on the playground is
very different from victimization experienced in other contexts. On average, the majority of children experienced peer physical or verbal harassment approximately once every three to six minutes on the playground. Further, only 5% to 10% of the children that were observed during any five-minute period were never victimized on the playground. These findings suggest that the playground provides a unique context for social interaction and that focusing only on the classroom context may not represent a complete picture of how children interact in a less structured environment.

These studies illustrate that children’s social interactions are somewhat context dependent. These studies also begin to provide a range of contexts within which children move from structured and monitored environments to less structured and less monitored environments. Extracurricular youth activities, during and after-school peer interactions, in the grocery store, and playground interactions provide comparisons of children’s behavior in more structured to less structured environments. Structure and adult monitoring may be two variables that contribute to the differences in contexts that promote different social interactions in children. A context that has not been studied but may provide a unique opportunity for social interaction is the bus ride.

The School Bus Ride

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (1999), 23 million children travel approximately 4.3 billion miles on 440,000 school bus each year. Nearly 60 percent of school-age children ride the bus to and from school every day. Yet despite the prevalence of the school transportation system, there is a surprising scarcity of research regarding the school bus. Information about the ride to school that has emerged consists largely of anecdotal accounts of bullying (Spence, 2000; Zars, 1998). Systematic research on the school bus ride as a unique context for social interaction is nonexistent.
Research that has studied the school bus context focused on how different characteristics of the bus ride may affect the students, such as the length of the bus ride. For example, Thibeault, Zetler, and Wilson (1997) sought to determine if the amount of time riding the school bus and/or school size influenced the achievement of high school, bus riding students in 40 Montana high schools. The authors noted that though the size of the school was able to explain some achievement variation, riding the school bus for up to 90 minutes did not significantly effect the achievement of transported students.

In another study, Howley, Howley, and Shamblen (2001) examined the differences between rural bus riding experiences and suburban bus riding experiences in five states based on 1,194 surveys completed by elementary school principals. The results demonstrated that there are differences between rural and urban bus riding experiences. Students living in rural areas are more likely than suburban students to ride the bus for a longer period of time (30 minutes or longer) and to experience rougher rides (e.g., traveling over bumpy roads).

Though these studies have contributed valuable information to the safety of the students, a very important aspect of the school bus has been forgotten, social interaction. Though Fox (1996) contends that the time spent on the school bus ride is “empty time,” since students tend to spend this time completing homework, talking, or sleeping, various peer interactions are heavily prevalent on the school bus. Considering the effects of peer interaction on children, the ride to school on the bus seems to be filled with influential socialization experiences (Kranz, 2000; Roberts, 2002).

The school bus is an unstructured but “nonelective social ecology” (Snyder et al. 2003) where children may encounter a diverse group of peers. The ride to school becomes an opportunity for unmonitored children to explore the possibilities of new friendships, victimization of other children, and peer hierarchies.
Social Interaction

While some children are well-liked and enjoy many friendships, other children have no friends and are generally disliked by most (Parker & Asher, 1987). Regardless of the type of interaction that a child experiences, peer interactions make differential contributions to a child’s development, creating various psychological costs or benefits (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996, 1997). Aggressive behavior is one type of interaction that contributes to a child’s social development.

Aggressive Behavior

Over the past several decades, a great deal of research has focused on the study of childhood aggression. These studies have uncovered the harmful effects of aggression, such as compromising the safety of children and inhibiting their development (e.g., Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003; Parker & Asher, 1987; Snyder et al., 2003). Furthermore, it has been shown that being a victim or a actor of aggressive acts can have serious consequences, such as depression, negative school adjustment, difficulties in forming positive peer relationships, and later adult problems (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004; Goldstein & Tisak, 2004; Gottheil & Dubow, 2001; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). These studies emphasize the importance of research in childhood aggression in order to gain a better understanding of the social contributors to children’s developmental difficulties (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Ladd et al., 1997).

Though many researchers agree that aggressive behavior compromises positive child development, there has been much debate regarding the definition of aggression (reviewed in Coie & Dodge, 1998). One reason for this debate may be due to the fact that past research has primarily focused on aggressive behavior in boys, seemingly underestimating the degree of aggressive behavior in girls and overlooking different forms of aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). It is important to note that both boys and girls exhibit aggressive behavior;
however, there tends to be gender differences within the type of aggressive behavior performed (e.g., Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Crick & Grotz, 1995).

Crick and Bigbee (1998) have differentiated two forms of aggressive behavior: overt aggression and relational aggression. In contrast to overt aggression, which includes physical acts and verbal threats towards others (e.g., hitting, pushing, or threatening to beat up a peer), relational aggression attempts to harm others through damage to peer relationships and/or reputations (e.g., rumor spreading or social exclusion). Recent studies on gender differences in aggressive behavior reveal that overtly aggressive behavior typically occurs among boys, whereas relationally aggressive behavior typically occurs among girls (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al., 1999; Crick & Grotz, 1995). However, other research has shown that boys and girls both display relational aggression, although when girls are aggressive they are typically relationally aggressive (Galen & Underwood, 1997; Goldstein & Tisak, 2004; Underwood, Galen, & Paquette, 2001). Nonetheless, the findings provide support of including both overt and relational forms of aggression when studying aggressive behavior.

It is important to note that in a more recent study, Tisak, Tisak, and Galliger (2005) differentiated more specific forms of overt and relational forms of aggression that occur amongst children (see Table 1). Thus, it is important for the definition of aggression to allow for the consideration of multiple forms of aggressive behavior. For the purpose of this study, aggression refers to any form of behavior that is perceived to injure someone physically or psychologically (reviewed in Tisak et al., 2001).

The emphasis of aggressive behavior within psychological literature reflects the importance of studying negative behaviors in human social interaction (Eisenberg, 1982). Though aggression research has made valuable contributions to our understanding of childhood aggression and the effects of aggression on a child’s development, aggressive
behavior is not the only type of peer interaction that occurs among children. Prosocial behavior is another type of interaction that also influences a child’s social development.

**Prosocial Behavior**

Since the 1970’s, a growing amount of research has begun to focus on prosocial behavior. Such research has proved to be of importance in the study of child development specifically, as prosocial behavior has been found to be in the repertoire of very young children (Hamburg & Hamburg, 2004), and certain prosocial behaviors (e.g., helping) tend to increase as a child matures (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). In addition, prosocial interaction has been linked to certain psychological benefits for the child, such as social competence (Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Goldberg, 1982), self-control, and coping skills (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). Although prosocial behavior has begun to gain much attention and has made imperative contributions to the field of child development, researchers have yet to agree on what constitutes prosocial behavior (Tisak & Ford, 1986).

Although a number of definitions have been purposed by various researchers, differing opinions exist regarding various aspects of prosocial behavior. For example, while some researchers argue that another’s well-being must be of primary concern (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Bauman, 1976; Hoffman, 1977; Staub, 1978), other researchers argue that prosocial behavior should not be based on unobservable underlying motivations (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989; Gelfand & Hartmann, 1980). Though prosocial behaviors are intended to achieve positive consequences for others (Jackson & Tisak, 2001; Tisak & Ford, 1986), these behaviors are performed for various reasons, occasionally even for selfish reasons. Regardless of intent, the definition can not be limited to the motives underlying prosocial behavior, as it is nearly impossible to assess the motivations of acting in a prosocial manner (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989).
In addition to definitions differing in regards to intentionality, the definitions of prosocial behavior also vary in regards to the behavior itself. Past research has often used a limited definition of prosocial behavior, focusing its attention primarily on helping and sharing behaviors. Focusing on helping and sharing behaviors alone creates limitations within the study of prosocial behavior in child development, as there are multiple forms of behavior that children consider to be prosocial (see Table 2). Using a limited definition of prosocial behavior does not encompass the variety of behavior participated in by children (Tisak, Holub, Tisak, & Mullins, in press).

Taking previous research into consideration, the definition of prosocial behavior must allow for the consideration of multiple forms of prosocial behavior, regardless of the motivations behind the action. For the purposes of the present study, prosocial behavior is defined as any action that is perceived to benefit others, or prompt harmonious relations with others (reviewed in Tisak et al., 2001).

Current Study

Though the past decade has seen an explosion of research on peers as a factor of child development (e.g., Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982; DeRosier & Thomas, 2003; Dodge et al., 2003; Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003), little attention has been paid to the peer interactions that occur on the bus ride that may influence a child’s social development as well. Although various reports of the bus ride have suggested that the peer interactions that occur on the ride to school are impacting students in a negative way, these reports have emerged largely form anecdotal accounts of bullying and inappropriate sexual behavior (Fox, 1996). Taking into account the effects of aggressive behavior and the number of anecdotal accounts of aggressive interactions that occur on the ride to school, it seems important to conduct systematic research on the bus ride in order to gain a better understanding of the school bus as a context for social development. Yet focusing only on aggressive behavior
only would limit this research, as children frequently participate in multiple forms of peer
interactions and, as mentioned previously, these different forms of interactions (e.g.,
prosocial) make differential contributions to a child’s development (Ladd et al., 1997). In
order to obtain a better understanding of the social interactions that occur on the bus ride,
both prosocial behavior and aggressive behavior was examined, as both types of interaction
have been found to contribute uniquely to a child’s development (Parker & Asher, 1987).

The school bus presents a context that is different from the school or home contexts.
The school bus is an unstructured, non-elective, context where hierarchies, allegiances,
bases, and reputations become established within a very confined space. Typically, the only
supervision these children have is by the bus driver, who is not in a position to effectively
supervise a large number of children while safely operating a 10 ton vehicle simultaneously.
Ultimately, this unstructured, unmonitored, non-elective context provides “unique ecological
niches” (Snyder et al., 2003, p. 1882), where children are presented with more freedom to
explore certain social situations. This study explored the school bus as a unique context for
social interaction. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to understand the rate and
types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors that occur on the bus ride to and from school.

Goals and Hypotheses

It is important to note that this study was exploratory; therefore, we were unable to
form any specific hypotheses regarding the rates and types of social behaviors that occur
within this environment. Although the bus ride consists of contextually unique
characteristics (e.g., unstructured), there is no evidence to know whether or not this
environment uniquely contributes to the rate and types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors
that occur on the school bus specifically. Though this study was an exploratory study, as the
school bus has not been examined as it relates to prosocial and aggressive behaviors, past
research guided the direction and goals of this research.
Rate of Prosocial and Aggressive Behavior

In past research the occurrence of prosocial and aggressive behaviors seems to be context dependent. That is, in certain contexts (e.g., school) prosocial behavior occurs more often than aggressive behavior (Tisak et al., 2005), while in other contexts (e.g., playground) aggression seems to be the primary form of behavior performed (Snyder et al., 2003). Thus, the first primary goal was to investigate the rate that prosocial and aggressive behaviors occur on the school bus.

The first secondary goal was to investigate any gender differences that may exist in the rate of prosocial and aggressive behaviors that may occur on the school bus. In regards to aggressive behavior, prior research has found that though both boys and girls behave aggressively, gender differences exist regarding the rate that these behaviors occur. Particularly, it has been found that boys tend to engage in higher levels of aggression than females (Boxer, Tisak, & Goldstein, 2004; Tisak, Nucci, Jankowski, 1996). Although there tends to be little, if any, overall gender differences in the rate of prosocial behavior (Maccoby, 1986), it is necessary to assess whether or not gender differences exist in the rate of prosocial behavior as well, as the bus ride may prove to be a unique context.

The second secondary goal was to assess the developmental changes that may occur in the rate of prosocial and aggressive behaviors that are present on the bus ride, as past research has found that the rates at which these behaviors occur changes with age. More specifically, it has been found that in school older students tend to be more aggressive towards their peers than younger students, while younger students tend to exhibit more prosocial behaviors than their older counterparts (Tisak et al., 2005).

Types of Prosocial and Aggressive Behavior

As mentioned previously, research that has examined prosocial and aggressive behaviors in children has identified various forms of prosocial and aggressive behaviors as
illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2. In addition, this research has found that the types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors are context dependent; that is, depending on the context, different prosocial and aggressive behaviors are expected (Tisak et al., 2001). Based on the categories presented in Table 1 and Table 2, the second primary goal of the present study was to assess which types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors occur on the bus.

In regards to gender differences in prosocial and aggressive behavior, it was previously mentioned that though both boys and girls exhibit aggressive and prosocial behavior, they do so in different ways. That is, while overtly aggressive behavior typically occurs among boys, relationally aggressive behavior typically occurs among girls (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al., 1999; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). In addition, when behaving prosocially, girls tend to exhibit more helping and sharing behaviors than boys (Tisak, Holub, et al., in press). Consequently, the third secondary goal of the present study was to investigate any gender differences in the types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors that occur on the school bus.

Past research that has identified various forms of social behavior, has also found that both age differences and gender differences exist within the type of prosocial and aggressive behavior performed by children. In regards to age differences in prosocial behavior, when assessing helping, sharing, cooperating, and comforting behaviors specifically, it was found that while younger children tended to share and cooperate more than older children, older children tended to comfort more than younger children (Jackson & Tisak, 2001). Thus, the fourth secondary goal of the present study was to investigate the developmental changes that may occur in the types of prosocial and aggressive behaviors performed on the school bus.
Naughty or Nice

METHOD

Participants

Data for this study were collected using 157 elementary school students (78 males and 79 females) from four elementary schools located in small to mid-sized Midwestern cities. The students ranged in age from 8 to 12 years ($M = 9.35$, $SD = 0.95$) and were recruited from 3rd (36.3%), 4th (29.3%), and 5th (34.9%) grade classrooms. The ethnic composition of this sample was 91.08% Caucasian, 3.18% Latino, 0.64% African American, and 4.45% other. Thirty-one point two percent of parents had completed some college, 29.3% had completed college, 22.29% had completed only high school, 10.83% had completed a post-graduate, and 2.55% had only completed some high school. The amount of time students had ridden the bus ranged from their first year to eight years ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.57$).

Consent Procedure

Prior to recruiting subjects, local elementary schools received a letter describing the study and a consent form requesting permission for student participation (see Appendix A). A consent form was attached to the information letter (see Appendix B). Once consent was provided by the school(s) and once bus-riding students were identified, each parent received a letter briefly describing the study and requesting permission for their child to participate (see Appendix C). A permission form and form requesting demographic information, attached to the letter, was returned to the school (see Appendix D and E). Once parental permission was granted, the study was described to each group and the children were asked to sign an assent form (see Appendix F and G).

Measure

The questionnaire was designed to assess the rate and types of social behaviors, prosocial behavior (e.g., sharing) and aggressive behavior (e.g., hitting), that occur on the bus
ride (see Appendix H). Questions followed the format developed by Tisak, Tisak, et al. (2005). The questionnaire contains eight 4-point Likert scale items (ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (all the time), that ask participants about the ratings of nice and not nice behaviors that occur during the bus ride (e.g., How often are you nice to other girls on the school bus?”). In addition, the questionnaire contains eight free response questions (e.g., “What are some things you do on the school bus that are nice for other girls?”) that ask the students about the types of nice and not nice behaviors that occur during the bus ride. Within the survey, the term “nice” was used to refer to prosocial behaviors and “not nice” was used to refer to aggressive behaviors, as “nice” and “not nice” have been found to be synonymous with their counterpart in past research (Tisak et al., 2005).

The questionnaire examined two types of relationships: participant gender and peer gender.

**Participant Gender (Actor) to Peer Gender (Recipient)**

1. Male participants committing nice and/or not nice acts to boy peers (e.g., “How often are you nice to boys on the school bus?”)
2. Male participants committing nice and/or not nice acts to girl peers (e.g., “How often are you nice to girls on the school bus?”)
3. Female participants committing nice and/or not nice acts to boy peers (e.g., “How often are you nice to boys on the school bus?”)
4. Female participants committing nice and/or not nice acts to girl peers (e.g., “How often are you nice to girls on the school bus?”)

**Peer Gender (Actor) to Participant Gender (Recipient)**

1. Boy peers committing nice and/or not nice acts to male participants (e.g., “How often are boys nice to you on the school?”)
2. Boy peers committing nice and/or not nice acts to female participants (e.g.,
“How often are boys nice to you on the school?”)

3. Girl peers committing nice and/or not nice acts to male participants (e.g.,
“How often are girls nice to you on the school?”)

4. Girl peers committing nice and/or not nice acts to female participants (e.g.,
“How often are girls nice to you on the school?”

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered in an unoccupied classroom or area within the elementary school(s). The surveys were distributed and completed in a small to mid-sized group setting, with approximately 13-21 students in each group. As mentioned previously, children were told about the nature of the study and asked to sign a subject assent form. A researcher read each question to the group. Time was allotted after each question for the students to answer. Once all the students completed their questionnaires, a debriefing statement was read to the entire group (see Appendix I).

Response Coding of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

Once questionnaires were collected, one researcher created a list of all nice behaviors mentioned by the participants (e.g., “I share my pencils”) and all not nice behaviors mentioned by participants (e.g., “I hit them”). Based on the list of responses, the researcher created categories for nice and not nice behaviors (e.g., physical aggression, helping, sharing). Once categories were developed, a researcher recorded whether a child mentioned a category (1) or did not (0), so each child received either a one or zero for each behavior category. A second independent researcher then rated 20% of the behavioral responses to obtain inter-rater agreement. Inter-rater agreement was 95%. Disagreements were be discussed and resolved.
RESULTS

Nice and Not Nice Behavioral Ratings

Separate analyses were conducted for the ratings, one set for children’s ratings of nice behaviors and a second set for children’s ratings of not nice behaviors. Within each set of ratings there were two independent variables: participant gender (1=male and 2=female) and participant age (1=younger participants and 2=older participants). The dependent variables for nice and not nice ratings were: direction of action (1=actor and 2=recipient), peer gender (1=boy peers and 2=girl peers), and behaviors (nice and not nice). In order to facilitate the difference between participant gender and peer gender, the terms male and female will be used to refer to the participants, and boy and girl will be used to refer to the peers.

Nice Behavioral Ratings

A 2 (participant gender) X 2 (participant age) X 2 (direction of action) X 2 (peer gender) mixed ANOVA was conducted, with direction of action and peer gender being the repeated measures (within subjects). This analysis was conducted not only to explore the rate of nice behaviors between male and female participants, younger and older participants, and male and girl peers, but to assess the rate of nice behaviors elicited when being a actor versus being a recipient of nice behaviors as well. Follow-up analyses were conducted using paired comparison t-tests. Overall, the mixed ANOVA model accounted for 57% of the variance.

The results indicated a significant main effect for gender, $F(167, 460)= 27.65, p< .0001$, age, $F(167, 460)= 30.01, p< .0001$, and direction of action, $F(167, 460)= 68.46, p< .0001$. More particularly, the results indicated that female participants ($M=3.01, SD=.67$) were nicer to peers than were male participants ($M=2.64, SD=.75$). The analyses also revealed that older participants ($M=3.02, SD=.64$) were nicer to peers than were younger participants ($M=2.64, SD=.76$). In addition, the analyses indicated that participants
Naughty or Nice

(M=3.11, SD=.77) considered themselves to be nicer to their peers than peers were to them 
(M=2.55, SD=.87).

A significant interaction was found as well, between gender of the participant and gender of peers, $F(167,460)= 64.56, p<.0001$ (see Figure 1). Specifically, social interactions between female participants and girl peers ($M=3.34, SD=.68$) were significantly nicer than social interactions between male participants and girl peers ($M=2.44, SD=.94$), $t(156)= 1.97, p=.05$.

Not Nice Behavioral Ratings

A 2 (participant gender) X 2 (participant age) X 2 (direction of action) X 2 (peer gender) mixed ANOVA was conducted, with direction of action and peer gender being the repeated measures (within subjects). This analysis was conducted not only to explore the rate of not nice behaviors between male and female participants, male and girl peers, and younger and older participants, but to assess the rate of not nice behaviors elicited when being a actor versus being a recipient of not nice behaviors as well. Follow-up analyses were conducted using paired comparison t-tests. Overall, the mixed ANOVA model accounted for 45% of the variance.

The results indicated a significant main effect for age, $F(167, 460)= 12.57, p<.0004$ and for direction of action, $F(167, 460)= 12.17, p< .0005$. The analyses revealed younger participants ($M=1.75, SD=.59$) were not nice more often than older participants ($M=1.52, SD=.58$). In addition, the results indicated that the participants ($M=1.75, SD=.73$) considered themselves to be the recipients of not nice behaviors more often than their peers ($M=1.53, SD=.70$).

There were also a significant interaction between participant gender and peer gender, $F(167,460)= 6.26, p<.0127$ (see Figure 2). The follow-up analyses indicated that not nice
interactions occurred more often between male participants and girl peers ($M=1.79$, $SD=.75$) than between female participants and girl peers ($M=1.53$, $SD=.65$), $t(156)=2.08$, $p=.04$.

Types of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

Separate analyses were conducted for the categories, one set for the types of nice behaviors and a second set for the types of not nice behaviors. Within each set of categories there were two independent variables: participant gender (1=male and 2=female) and participant age (1=younger participants and 2=older participants). The dependent variables for the nice ratings were: direction of action (1=actor and 2=recipient), peer gender (1=boy peers and 2=girl peers), behaviors (nice and not nice).

*Types of Nice Behaviors*

Overall, five nice categories were identified (see Table 3). A 2 (participant gender) X 2 (participant age) X 2 (direction of action) X 2 (peer gender) mixed ANOVA was conducted for each of the five categories, with direction of action and peer gender being the repeated measures (within subjects) (see Table 4 and 5 for the means). These analyses were conducted to not only to explore the types of nice behaviors between male and female participants, male and girl peers, and younger and older participants, but to assess the types of nice behaviors elicited when being a actor versus being a recipient of nice behaviors as well. Follow-up analyses were conducted using paired comparison t-tests.

*Helping*

The results revealed a significant main effect for participant gender, $F(168,459)=9.67$, $p=.002$. Overall, helping occurred amongst female participants ($M=.29$, $SD=.32$) more often than amongst male participants ($M=.20$, $SD=.29$). In addition, a significant main effect for direction of action was found, $F(168,459)=11.89$, $p=.006$. That is, participants ($M=.29$, $SD=.38$) considered themselves to be more helpful to their peers than
their peers ($M=.20, SD=.32$) were to them. This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 53% of the variance.

**Comforting**

The analyses revealed a single significant main effect for participant gender, $F(168,459)=14.17, p=.002$. The results indicated that comforting occurred more often amongst female participants ($M=.12, SD=.22$) than amongst male participants ($M=.04, SD=.11$). This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 43% of the variance.

**Benevolence**

The results indicated significant main effects for direction of action, $F(168,459)=7.86, p=.005$, and for age, $F(168,459)=5.87, p=.02$. That is, participants ($M=.25, SD=.34$) considered themselves to be more benevolent towards their peers than their peers ($M=.18, SD=.31$) were to them. In addition, benevolence occurred more often amongst older participants ($M=.24, SD=.30$) than amongst younger participants ($M=.18, SD=.28$).

In addition, the results revealed three significant interactions. The first interaction was between participant gender and age, $F(168,459)=14.83, p=.0001$. As demonstrated in Figure 3, benevolence occurred more often among older male participants ($M=.28, SD=.32$) than among younger male participants ($M=.12, SD=.23$), $t(156)= 1.99, p=.05$.

The second significant interaction occurred between participant gender and peer gender, $F(168,459)=8.18, p=.004$ The results showed that benevolent acts occurred more often between male participants and girl peers ($M=.26, SD=.38$) than between male participants and boy peers ($M=.14, SD=.29$), $t(156)= 2.77, p=.006$ (see Figure 4). Lastly, there was a significant interaction between age and peer gender, $F(168,459)=5.68, p=.02$. Benevolent acts occurred more often between older participants and girl peers ($M=.41, SD=.46$) than between older participants and boy peers ($M=.19, SD=.30$), $t(156)= 2.20, p=.03$ (see Figure 5).
In addition, a significant three-way interaction was found between participant gender, peer gender, and direction of action, \( F(168,459) = 9.41, p = .002 \). Particularly, male participants were more benevolent towards girl peers (\( M = .36, SD = .48 \)) than they were towards boy peers (\( M = .14, SD = .35 \)), \( t(156) = 3.85, p = .0002 \). In addition, male participants considered themselves to be more benevolent towards girl peers (\( M = .36, SD = .48 \)) than girl peers were to them (\( M = .15, SD = .36 \)), \( t(156) = 4.21, p < .0001 \). Lastly, female participants (\( M = .29, SD = .46 \)) were more benevolent towards boy peers than male participants were to boy peers (\( M = .14, SD = .35 \)), \( t(156) = 2.08, p = .04 \). This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 53% of the variance.

**Companionship**

Although the results indicated no significant main effects, two significant interactions for companionship were found. First, an interaction occurred between participant gender and peer gender, \( F(168,459) = 36.99, p < .0001 \) (see Figure 6). Companionship occurred more often between female participants and girl peers (\( M = .45, SD = .42 \)) than between male participants and girl peers (\( M = .21, SD = .34 \)), \( t(156) = 3.01, p = .003 \). Secondly, companionship occurred more often between female participants and girl peers (\( M = .45, SD = .42 \)) than between female participants and boy peers (\( M = .22, SD = .35 \)), \( t(156) = 4.34, p < .0001 \). Lastly, companionship occurred more often between male participants and boy peers (\( M = .35, SD = .40 \)) than between male participants and girl peers (\( M = .21, SD = .34 \)), \( t(156) = 2.60, p = .01 \).

The second significant interaction occurred between peer gender and direction of action, \( F(168,459) = 10.17, p = .002 \) (see Figure 7). Specifically, boy peers were considered to be the recipients (\( M = .36, SD = .48 \)) of companionship more often than the actor (\( M = .21, SD = .41 \)), \( t(156) = 3.95, p = .0001 \). This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 49% of the variance.
Sharing

Although the analyses revealed no significant main effects for sharing, there was a significant interaction between participant gender and peer gender, $F(168,459)=4.01, p=.05$ (see Figure 8). Particularly, sharing occurred between male participants and boy peers ($M=.10, SD=.26$) more often than between male participants and girl peers ($M=.04, SD=.16$), $t(156)= 2.16, p=.03$.

In addition to the significant interactions, the results revealed a significant three-way interaction between participant gender, age, and direction of action, $F(168,459)=4.00, p=.05$. Younger male participants considered their peers to share more with them ($M=.10, SD=.26$) than they shared with their peers ($M=.05, SD=.19$), $t(156)= 2.02, p=.05$. Oppositely, younger female participants considered themselves to share more with their peers ($M=.14, SD=.26$) than their peers shared with them ($M=.05, SD=.19$), $t(156)= 2.37, p=.02$. This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 49% of the variance.

Types of Not Nice Behaviors

Overall, five not nice categories were identified (see Table 6). A 2 (participant gender) X 2 (participant age) X 2 (direction of action) X 2 (peer gender) mixed ANOVA was conducted for each of the five categories, with direction of action and peer gender being the repeated measures (within subjects) (see Table 7 and 8 for the means). These analyses were conducted not only to explore the types of not nice behaviors between male and female participants, male and girl peers, and younger and older participants, but to assess the types of not nice behaviors elicited when being a actor versus being a recipient of not nice behaviors as well. Follow-up analyses were conducted using paired comparison t-tests.

Verbal Aggression

The analyses revealed significant main effects for participant gender, $F(168,459)=7.74, p=.006$, age, $F(168,459)=5.39, p=.02$, and direction of action,
Particularly verbal aggression occurred more often amongst female participants ($M=.23, SD=.29$) than amongst male participants ($M=.16, SD=.24$). In addition, verbal aggression occurred more often amongst younger participants ($M=.22, SD=.29$) than amongst older participants ($M=.16, SD=.24$). Further, participants considered themselves to be the recipients ($M=.23, SD=.33$) of verbally aggressive behaviors more often than the actors ($M=.16, SD=.28$). This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 46% of the variance.

**Physical Aggression**

The analyses revealed significant main effects for age, $F(168,459)=12.63, p=.0004$, peer gender, $F(168,459)=5.65, p=.02$, and direction of action, $F(168,459)=5.79, p=.02$. More specifically, physical aggression occurred amongst younger participants ($M=.09, SD=.16$) more often than amongst older participants ($M=.04, SD=.11$). In addition, physical aggression occurred amongst girl peers ($M=.08, SD=.21$) more often than amongst boy peers ($M=.05, SD=.18$). Lastly, participants considered themselves to be the recipients ($M=.09, SD=.19$) of physical aggression more often than the actors ($M=.04, SD=.15$) of physical aggression.

The analyses also indicated significant interactions as well. A significant interaction was found between peer gender and direction of action, $F(168,459)=5.79, p=.02$ (see Figure 9). The results revealed that girl peers were considered to be the actors ($M=.11, SD=.32$) of physical aggression more often than the recipients ($M=.04, SD=.19$), $t(156)=2.89, p=.004$.

The analyses also revealed a significant interaction between age and peer gender, $F(168,459)=3.93, p=.05$ (see Figure 10). Physical aggression occurred more often between younger participants and girl peers ($M=.12, SD=.26$) than older participants and girl peers ($M=.03, SD=.12$), $t(156)=2.60, p=.01$.

A significant interaction was also found between age and direction of action, $F(168,459)=3.89, p=.05$ (see Figure 11). Younger participants were the recipients ($M=.13,
of aggressive behavior more often than the actors ($M=.05, SD=.17$), $t(156)=3.06$, $p=.003$. In addition, younger participants experienced physical aggression ($M=.13, SD=.22$) more often than did older participants ($M=.03, SD=.14$), $t(156)=2.70, p=.008$.

In addition to the significant main effects and interactions found, the results revealed a significant three-way interaction between age, peer gender, and direction of action, $F(168,459)=3.89, p=.05$. The results indicated that girl peers are more physically aggressive to younger participants ($M=.19, SD=.39$) than to older participants ($M=.04, SD=.19$), $t(156)=4.49, p<.0001$. In addition, girl peers ($M=.19, SD=.39$) were more physically aggressive to younger participants than were boy peers ($M=.05, SD=.22$), $t(156)=1.98, p=.05$. Lastly, girl peers were considered to be the actors ($M=.19, SD=.39$) of physical aggression to younger participants more often than they are the recipients ($M=.05, SD=.22$) of physical aggression from younger participants, $t(156)=3.14, p=.002$. This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 46% of the variance.

**Stealing**

The results revealed significant main effects for participant gender, $F(168,459)=3.99, p=.05$, and direction of action, $F(168,459)=7.99, p=.005$. Particularly, stealing occurred more often among female participants ($M=.02, SD=.08$) than among male participants ($M=.003, SD=.03$). In addition, participants considered themselves to be the recipients ($M=.02, SD=.12$) more often than the actors ($M=.00, SD=.00$) of stealing.

In addition to the main effects found, the results revealed a significant interaction as well. A significant interaction was found between participant gender and direction of action, $F(168,459)=3.99, p=.05$ (see Figure 12). That is, female participants considered themselves to be the recipients ($M=.04, SD=.16$) of stealing more often than the actors ($M=.00, SD=.00$), $t(156)=2.15, p=.03$. This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 34% of the variance.
Relational Aggression

The analyses revealed a significant main effect for age, \( F(168,459)=4.33, p=.04 \). Relational aggression occurred among older participants (\( M=.20, SD=.25 \)) more often than among younger participants (\( M=.15, SD=.22 \)). This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 42% of the variance.

Non-Prosocial Behavior

The analyses indicated a significant main effect for peer gender, \( F(168,459)=3.87, p=.05 \). More specifically, non-prosocial behaviors occurred more often among girl peers (\( M=.02, SD=.11 \)) than among boy peers (\( M=.003, SD=.04 \)). This mixed ANOVA model accounted for 33% of the variance.
DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to explore the school bus as a context for social development. The rate and type of nice and not nice behaviors that occur on the school bus were investigated. As mentioned previously, the terms “nice” and “not nice” were used as they are considered to be synonymous with prosocial behavior and aggressive behavior, respectively (Greener & Crick, 1999; Tisak et al., 2005). The specific objectives of this study were to examine whether or not there were gender differences and/or age differences in the rate and types of nice and not nice behaviors. In addition, peer gender (boy peers vs. girl peers) and the direction of the action (recipient vs. actor) were examined as well.

Nice and Not Nice Behavioral Ratings

As noted previously, the occurrence of prosocial and aggressive behavior seems to be context dependent. While in some contexts (e.g., schools) prosocial behavior occurs more often than aggressive behavior (Tisak et al., 2005), in other contexts (e.g., playgrounds) aggression seems to be the primary behavior performed by children (Snyder et al., 2003). The results of the current study reveal that the school bus is a context similar to the former; children tend to be more prosocial than aggressive on the bus ride to school. Although the school bus presents a context that seems to allow children more freedom than other contexts (e.g., school) to behave aggressively, as there is little adequate supervision, the bus is a context where the social environment is governed by the students, with very little, if any, adult intervention. The school bus is a context where children are able to form allegiances, biases, and hierarchies within a very confined space. Due to the lack of space and sufficient adult supervision, it is only through prosocial behavior where students are able to avoid potential peer harassment or victimization and negotiate a system of mutual understanding and create a sense of connectedness with peers (Eisenberg, 1987).
Participant Gender Differences in the Rate of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

Regarding nice behaviors the current study found that prosocial behaviors occurred more often among female participants than among male participants. Although the majority of past research has failed to find evidence of gender differences in prosocial behavior (for example, Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989), a few studies have detected gender differences, favoring females as being more prosocial that males (Eisenberg-Berg & Lennon, 1980; Persson, 2005; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, Wagner, & Chapman, 1992). It has been suggested that these gender differences exist due to both biological and socialization factors. More specifically, it has been found that very early in life, before much socialization has taken place, females tend to exhibit more prosocial involvement than do males (Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1991). Moreover, gender specific socialization processes exist where females are expected to be more prosocially responsive to others than are males (Brody, 1985; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992). Ultimately, the school bus may provide a context where these biological and learned gender scripts of prosocial behavior are reinforced.

While a significant gender difference was found in the rate of nice behaviors, there was not a significant gender difference in the rate of not nice behaviors. Prior research has found that males tend to be more aggressive than females (Block, 1983; Boxer et al., 2004; Maccoby, 1990; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1980; Tisak, et al., 1996). More recent research, however, has argued that studies that have found gender differences have overlooked different forms of aggression (e.g., relational aggression), and therefore, underestimate the degree of aggressive behavior in females (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Research that has assessed different types of aggression (e.g., overt and relational forms) has found no gender differences in the overall rate of aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Persson, 2005).
Developmental Differences in the Rate of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

Age differences were found for both nice and not nice behaviors. While prosocial behavior occurred more often among older participants than among younger participants, aggressive behavior occurred more often among younger participants than among older participants. This finding replicates previous research that has found that prosocial behavior increases with age (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989; Romano, Tremblay, Boulerice, & Swisher, 2005), while aggressive behavior decreases with age (Brame, Nagin, & Tremblay, 2001; Park et al., 2005; Romano et al., 2005). Greener and Crick (1999) suggest that a reason is because as children age there tends to be “…greater reliance on the peer group, where members are less obligated to accept others” (p. 351). In addition, it has been suggested that younger children are more likely than older children to behave aggressively due to their lack of ability to effectively handle conflicts (Parker, Rubin, Price, & DeRosier, 1995), or aggression (Tisak & Tisak, 1996a, 1996b).

The school bus may present challenges to maintaining positive peer relations as hierarchies, biases, and allegiances are formed within a confined space, making it more difficult to escape or avoid peer harassment or victimization. The age differences found in the current study may not only reflect older children’s reliance on peer groups, but these differences may also reflect younger children’s evolving abilities to handle these conflicts appropriately by regulating their emotions and behavior and responding in a more constructive and skillful manner (Parker et al., 1995; Tisak & Tisak, 1996a, 1996b).

Differences in Being a Recipient Versus

Being an Actor in the Rate of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

The current study also sought to determine whether there was a difference in nice and not nice behavioral ratings if the participant was the recipient versus the actor of these behaviors. For both nice and not nice behaviors, there was a significant difference in the
direction of the action. Particularly, participants indicated they were nicer to their peers, than their peers were to them. In addition, participants were the recipients of not nice behavior more often than were their peers. These differences, however, require a note of caution. Past research that has investigated children’s perceived social competence has found that children tend to overrate their prosocial ability, or their ability to help, share, take turns, or be nice to other children (Holub, 2005).

It is possible that the differences in the rate of nice and not nice behaviors in being a recipient versus an actor were found due to children’s tendency to overrate their social competence. To further understand these findings additional research is needed, as will be discussed later.

Peer Gender Differences in the Rate of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

Another interesting finding was that prosocial behavior occurred more often between female participants and girl peers than between female participants and boy peers. This finding is not particularly surprising given that when gender differences are found in prosocial research, girls tend to be more prosocial than boys, as mentioned previously (Eisenberg-Berg & Lennon, 1980; Persson, 2005; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992).

Furthermore, aggressive behavior occurred more often between male participants and girl peers than between female participants and girl peers. In girls’ peer groups “…a girl risks ostracism and the breaking off of highly valued friendships if she shows hostility or even disagreement too openly” (Maccoby, 1986, p. 274). In boys’ peer groups, however, disagreement and fighting do not necessarily carry high risk of exclusion (Maccoby, 1986). The differences in how female participants and male participants interact with girl peers on the school bus may be due to the differences in what is acceptable behavior in their same-sex peer groups. While female participants take precautions to avoid rejection from their girl
peers, boys may be less cautious, and interact with girl peers similarly to how they would interact with boy peers.

Types of Nice and Not Nice Behaviors

Past research that has investigated the types of nice and not nice behaviors performed by children have seemed to use methodologies that may not capture all of the forms of prosocial and aggressive behavior evident in children’s peer interactions. These studies tend to either focus only on a small number of behaviors (e.g., helping, sharing, or altruism) (Bryan, 1975; Eron & Huesmann, 1984; Karniol, 1982) or they use measures that limit the amount of social behaviors that can be captured (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Brame et al., 2001; Crick, 1996). Although a few studies have used open-ended questions, which allow for the consideration of multiple behaviors (Begin, Talley, & Hamer, 2002; Greener & Crick, 1999; Tisak & Block, 1990; Tisak, Holub, et al., in press; Tisak, et al., 2001), these studies focused either on prosocial behaviors or aggressive behavior. As mentioned previously, focusing on one type of behavior only limits research, as children frequently participate in multiple forms of peer interactions, making differential contributions to a child’s development (Ladd et al., 1997; Tisak et al., 2005). The current study not only focused on both prosocial and aggressive behaviors that occur on the school bus, but included open-ended questions in order to allow for the possibility of all forms of prosocial and aggressive behaviors to be captured on the bus ride as well.

Types of Nice Behaviors

The nice categories that were differentiated within the current study are similar to the categories differentiated in past research (Begin et al., 2002; Greener & Crick, 1999; Tisak et al., 2005). It is important to note, however, that while participants in this study did mention more traditional behaviors that seem to be focused on in other studies, such as helping, sharing, and comforting, the participants also mentioned categories that remain somewhat
scarce in past literature, benevolence and companionship. What is perhaps more interesting is that these less traditionally discussed categories were not necessarily mentioned the least. In fact, consistent with Greener and Crick’s (1999) findings, companionship was mentioned more often than helping and sharing. Within the current study, however, companionship was mentioned more often than comforting as well, a comparison that was not discussed in Greener and Crick’s (1999) study.

Moreover, benevolence was mentioned more often than sharing and comforting. There are a couple of explanations for these findings. One explanation is that the school bus may be a context where forming and maintaining social ties/friendships serves as particular importance to children. Another explanation is that forming and maintaining ties is of importance regardless of context; rather, the school bus serves as a context that allows these prosocial behaviors to be performed more often. For instance, some children said that they let other children sit next to them or they save another child a seat on the bus. In school, however, children may, more often than not, have assigned seats. Regardless of the reason non-traditional prosocial behaviors were cited more often than traditional behaviors, these findings further emphasize the need for future research in prosocial behavior to refrain from limiting the types of prosocial behavior studied, as there are multiple types of prosocial behaviors that exist within children’s peer interactions.

**Participant Gender Differences in the Types of Nice Behaviors**

Studies that focus on one or two types of prosocial behavior not only limit our “...understanding of the development of socially significant prosocial behaviors” (Begin et al., 2002, p. 13), but they create inconsistencies when looking at gender and developmental trends as well (Jackson & Tisak, 2001). Though past research has found that females tend to be prosocial more often than males (Eisenberg-Berg & Lennon, 1980; Persson, 2005; Zahn-Waxler et al., 1992), studies that have investigated different types of prosocial behavior have
found no significant gender differences (Begin et al., 2002; Greener & Crick, 1999). Unlike the latter studies, the current study found significant gender differences. Overall, helping and comforting behaviors occurred more often among female participants than among male participants. Past research has found that females tend to respond more empathetically than do boys, and it has been suggested that “…girls tend to be interpersonally responsive and sensitive to affective cues in others and in themselves as a consequence of socialization” (Feshbach, 1982, p. 330). Thus, female participants may be more helpful and comforting on the school bus because they are better able to identify someone who is in need of help and/or comforting.

*Developmental Differences in the Types of Nice Behaviors*

Regarding developmental differences, studies that have included multiple forms of prosocial behavior have found the types of prosocial behaviors performed by younger children is different than the types performed by older children (Greener & Crick, 1999; Jackson & Tisak, 2001). More specifically, younger children are more likely to focus on more traditional forms of prosocial behavior than do older children (e.g., sharing). Greener and Crick (1999) and Jackson and Tisak (2001) attribute this difference to the possibility that older children are more confident in behaving in other prosocial ways (e.g., comforting). Unlike these studies, however, the current study found no significant age differences in helping, sharing, comforting, or in companionship. Overall, the only age difference was found in being benevolent. Benevolence was more common amongst older participants than younger participants.

The lack of age differences may be due to the fact that the school bus presents a context that allows for multiple forms of prosocial behavior to be performed by both younger and older children, and perhaps allows younger children more opportunity to practice more non-traditional prosocial behaviors towards their peers. The age difference in benevolence,
however, may be attributed to the fact that it is a behavior that tends to be performed more
often in opposite-sex peer interactions, interactions that become more common once children
enter early adolescence (Berk, 1999).

_Differences in Being a Recipient Versus Being an Actor in the Types of Nice Behaviors_

Similar to the ratings of nice behaviors, participants considered themselves to be the
actors of the majority of prosocial behaviors more often than they were the recipients of
prosocial behaviors. Specifically, they considered themselves to be more helpful, more
benevolent, and offer more companionship to their peers than their peers did to them. In
addition, younger male and female participants considered themselves to share more often
with their peers than their peers did with them. Again, it is possible that the differences in the
types of nice behaviors performed by participants versus the types performed by peers is due
to children’s tendency to overrate their social competence rather than the sample consisting
of the more helpful or benevolent students, or students who share more or offer more
companionship. In addition, being benevolent or offering companionship may be more
abstract concepts/behaviors that may not be easily recognized when performed by a peer.

_Peer Gender Differences in the Types of Nice Behaviors_

Gender differences were found in relation to peer gender for benevolence,
companionship, and sharing. Interestingly, while companionship occurred more often within
same-sex interactions than within opposite-sex interactions, benevolence occurred more often
within opposite-sex interactions than same-sex interactions. As mentioned previously, it is
only through prosocial behavior where students are able to avoid potential peer harassment or
victimization, create a sense of connectedness with other children, and negotiate a system of
mutual understanding, which goes for both same-sex and opposite-sex peer interactions.
While past research has found that same-sex friendships are most common in childhood,
opposite-sex peer interactions do occur as well (Maccoby, 1986), and are perhaps
unavoidable on the school bus. While same-sex friendships are maintained on the school bus through a more intimate form of prosocial behavior, companionship, students seem to maintain positive opposite-sex peer interactions by not necessarily befriending opposite-sex peers but by being benevolent, or demonstrating more basic acts of kindness (e.g., manners).

*Types of Not Nice Behaviors*

The not nice categories that were differentiated within the current study are comparable to the categories differentiated in past research (Tisak et al., 2005). Despite this similarity to past research, gender and peer gender differences, that were found in the current study are distinctive.

*Participant Gender Differences in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors*

As mentioned previously, both boys and girls exhibit aggressive behavior; however, there tends to be gender differences within the types of aggressive behavior performed (e.g., Crick et al., 1999; Crick et al., 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). More specifically, recent research has found that while boys tend to be overtly aggressive (e.g., physical aggression or verbal threats), girls tend to be more relationally aggressive (e.g., gossiping, spreading rumors, threatening friendship) (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al., 1999; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The current study, however, found somewhat different results. Verbal aggression and stealing occurred more often amongst female participants than male participants. In addition, there were no participant gender differences in physical aggression, relational aggression, or non-prosocial behavior. These results suggest that the school bus may be a unique context in that it may allow females more freedom to behave aggressively or become the victims of aggression more often. Due to the fact that there is little adequate supervision and because boys are stereotypically more aggressive, the bus driver may be watching for aggression more closely among the male students than the female students, allowing more aggression to occur amongst the females.
Developmental Differences in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors

Consistent with past research, the current study found that verbal and physical aggression were more common amongst younger participants than older participants (Brame et al., 2001; Coie & Dodge, 1998), while relational aggression was more common amongst older participations than younger participants (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Galen & Underwood, 1997). While the school bus may provide a unique context in certain conditions (e.g., gender differences), it seems to maintain norms in others.

Differences in Being a Recipient Versus Being an Actor in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors

Exactly opposite of the findings from the types of nice behaviors, participants considered themselves to be the recipients of verbal aggression, physical aggression, and stealing more often than the actors. There were, however, no significant differences in being a recipient versus the actor of relational aggression or non-prosocial behavior. It is possible that these findings occurred due to the fact that it is easier to justify being relationally aggressive or acting in a non-prosocial way than it is to justify overtly hurting someone.

Peer Gender Differences in the Types of Not Nice Behaviors

Although past research has found boys to be more overtly aggressive and girls to be more relationally aggressive (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al., 1999; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), the current study found quite different finding pertaining to peer gender. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings within the current study was that girl peers were considered to be more physically aggressive than boy peers. As mentioned previously, the school bus may be a context that allows females to behave more aggressively, as there is little adequate supervision. Due to the fact that the bus drivers are unable to monitor every student sufficiently, it is possible that he/she tends to monitor those who are likely to be more aggressive, which stereotypically are boys.
LIMITATIONS

A limitation to the current study was that the data were collected from a fairly homogenous sample; all schools were located in small to mid-sized Mid-western towns, with similar median household incomes (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000). Additionally interesting results may be found from bus riding students who attend inner city schools or schools within larger cities. Further, the results may be different for bus riding students who come from lower SES areas. In addition, while the length of time spent riding the bus was not obtained in the current study, it may be beneficial to collect such information. Social interactions may be different for students who ride the school bus for a longer amount of time to and from school.

Another limitation to the current study was mentioned previously. When comparing the participants as the actor versus the recipients of the ratings and types of nice and not nice behaviors, it is possible that the differences were found due to children’s tendency to overrate their social competence. In order to better understand the differences between the actors and recipients of both nice and not nice behaviors it would be necessary to obtain a larger sample of students who rode the same bus and/or to obtain the information from a second source, such as sociometric questionnaires, questionnaires filled out by bus drivers, or, depending on availability, observing bus behavior taped from the bus cameras.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A. SCHOOL OFFICIAL LETTER

Dear School Official,

My name is Courtney Galliger and I am currently a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am currently working on my Masters Thesis involving school-aged bus riding students. I am working on this project under the direction of Dr. Marie Tisak. The purpose of this study is to get a better understanding of the types of behavior that are occurring on the bus ride to and from school. Although very few studies have explored children’s experiences on the school bus ride, we believe that the ride to school on the bus seems to be filled with important influential experiences. For example, we know from news stories that negative behaviors, such as hitting, have become a problem some school buses. However, we also know that positive behaviors, such as sharing or helping, can occur as well. Learning more about the school bus can help parents and individuals in the school system understand more about the types of behavior that occur with in a less structured environment, an environment very different from the home or the school environments.

Upon your permission, we will send information letters and consent forms to parents of bus riding students. Following parental permission, the project will be described to the students. Each child will then be asked if he/she would like to participate in this research by filling out a questionnaire. Participation is completely voluntary. Although there are no anticipated risks to the students by participating in this project, if a student chooses not to participate or wishes to stop participation at any time, he/she will be free to do so for any reason.

The total time involved for the students is 20 minutes per child. The students will be asked 16 questions regarding different types of nice and not nice behaviors that occur on the school bus. All participants’ answers and comments will be kept confidential. Our interest is not in a particular child’s thinking but in an understanding of a children’s thinking as a group. To ensure confidentiality, all questionnaires will be marked with an ID number only. This ID number will be used in analyzing or reporting the results of this study, rather than the individual’s name or other identifying information. Any identifying information will be destroyed at the completion of the study. When the project is completed, a report will be sent to you.

Please indicate on the next page your decision regarding your school’s participation. If you have any questions concerning any part of this research, please feel free to contact me at (419)372-3261 or Dr. Tisak at (419)372-2273. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgnet.bgsu.edu), if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Courtney C. Galliger
Graduate Student
(419) 372-3261
cgallig@bgnet.bgsu.edu

Marie S. Tisak Ph.D
Professor of Psychology
(419) 372-2273
mtisak@bgnet.bgsu.edu

Bowling Green State University
Department of Psychology
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0228
Tel: (419) 372-2301
Fax: (419) 372-6013
APPENDIX B. SCHOOL OFFICIAL CONSENT FORM

Bowling Green State University

I, __________________________, agree to allow ______________________ School to participate in the research on the types of social interactions that occur on the school bus. The researcher will answer any additional questions that I may have about this project.

Signature of School Official __________________________________ Date__________

Title ___________________________

Department of Psychology
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403-0228
Tel: (419) 372-2301
Fax: (419) 372-6013
APPENDIX C. PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Courtney Galliger and I am currently a graduate student at Bowling Green State University. I am currently working on my Masters Thesis involving school-aged bus riding students. I am working on this project under the direction of Dr. Marie Tisak. The purpose of this study is to get a better understanding of the types of behavior that are occurring on the bus ride to and from school. Although very few studies have explored children’s experiences on the school bus ride, we believe that the ride to school on the bus seems to be filled with important influential experiences. For example, we know from news stories that negative behaviors, such as hitting, can occur. We also know that positive behaviors, such as sharing or helping, can occur as well. Learning more about the school bus can help parents and individuals in the school understand more about the types of behavior that occur within a less structured, less monitored environment, an environment that is very different from the home and the school environments.

We have been granted permission to conduct this research project from the principal of your child’s school, who gave us permission to contact you. We would like to include your child in this project. Participation is completely voluntary. Following your permission, the project will be described to your son/daughter. Your son/daughter will then be asked if he/she would like to participate in this research by filling out a questionnaire. Although there are no anticipated risks to your child by participating in this project, if your child chooses not to participate or wishes to stop participation at any time, he/she will be free to do so for any reason.

The total time involved for your son/daughter is approximately 20 minutes. Your child will be asked questions regarding different types of nice and not nice behaviors that occur on the school bus. All of your child’s answers and comments will be kept confidential. Our interest is not in a particular child’s thinking, but in an understanding of children’s thinking as a group. To ensure your child’s confidentiality, all questionnaires are marked with an ID number only. This ID number will be used in analyzing or reporting the results of this study, rather than your child’s name or other identifying information. Any identifying information will be destroyed at the completion of the study. When the project is completed, a report will be sent to the school, where it will be made available to you upon request.

We hope you will give permission for your child to participate in this study. Please indicate on the next page your decision regarding your child’s participation. If you have any questions concerning any part of this research, please feel free to contact me at (419) 372-3261 or Dr. Tisak at (419) 372-2273. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgnet.bgsu.edu), if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Courtney C. Galliger
Graduate Student
(419) 372-3261
cgallig@bgnet.bgsu.edu

Marie S. Tisak Ph.D
Professor of Psychology
(419) 372-2273
mtisak@bgnet.bgsu.edu
APPENDIX D. PARENT CONSENT FORM

I have read the attached letter. At this time,

_____ I give permission for my child to participate

_____ I do not give permission for my child to participate

in this study on children’s social experiences on the school bus. I have been informed that I may terminate my child’s participation in the study at any given time.

If you do not wish to give your child permission to participate, you may stop now and you do not need to return these forms.

If you allow your child to participate, please fill out the following information:

Child’s name (please print) _________________________________________________

Child’s school ___________________________________________________________

Child’s age: __________   Child’s date of birth: __________________

Signature of parent or guardian_______________________________________________

Your relationship to this child ______________________________________________

Today’s Date _______________

If you agree to allow your child to participate, and if you are willing, please complete the demographic information on the attached page. Please give these forms to your child to return to school. We have included an envelope for you convenience. You can put both forms in the same envelope. Thank you
APPENDIX E. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The following information will help us understand the background of the children and families who have participated in our study. Please answer these questions as completely as possible.

Please circle your child’s gender: Male Female

Please circle which of the following best describes your child’s ethnic background:

African American/ Asian White Hispanic/ Latino Mixed/ Ethnic Other

How long has your child been riding the school bus? ______________

Please circle your highest educational experience completed?

Some High School High School Graduate Some College College graduate Post Graduate

Thank you your time! It is greatly appreciated.
APPENDIX F. RESEARCHER’S SCRIPT

Hi, my name is ___________ and I work at Bowling Green State University. I am here today to see whether you are interested in helping me with a project that I am working on. I will be reading the information and instructions to you. The reason for this is to be sure everything is clear and we don’t miss anything important. I am interested in what children think about issues that concern them, and that is why I am asking for your help. First, I want to learn more about how often you are nice or not nice to other children on the school bus, and then I would like to learn more about how often other children are nice or not nice on the school bus.

As part of this project, I will be interested in obtaining other information about you, like your birthday. To help with this project, I will have some forms for you to fill out. We will read the questions on these forms along with you.

Before we go any further there is some information that I want to explain to you that is very important. First, helping with this project is voluntary. This means that you do not have to do this project if you do not want to. Second, if you do agree to do this project, you are free to stop at anytime without anything happening to you. Third, if you agree to do this project, all of the information I obtain will be confidential. This means that information I get will not be given to anyone. So that we can do this, I will be assigning you an ID number and the information you give me will be matched by your ID number only. The reason I do this is that I am not interested in just the view of one child, but in everyone’s view as a group.

As I said, I’d like it if you would help us out with this project because we would like to know what you think about certain behaviors, but if you do not want to, that is okay and nothing will happen to you.

I will now pass out the forms I was talking about. If you would like to help, you will need to complete the questions on these forms. If you do not wish to do this project, you do not need to fill out any of the questions. Are there any questions?

I will now begin to read the forms along with you

* I will then read the permission form out loud. Then I will ask them to sign the permission form if they wish to participate. (Please refer to the subject permission form). Then, after the interview, I will read the study questionnaire instructions with them, and will read every item along with them. (Please refer to the study questionnaire.
APPENDIX G. PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

Bowling Green State University

I, _______________________, agree to serve as a participant in the research about the school bus. The purpose of this study is to see what nice things and what not nice things children do on the school bus. I will answer questions about my behaviors and about the behaviors of my classmates.

The decision to be involved is up to me. I can stop at any time if I want to, even if I haven’t finished, and nothing will happen to me. If I decide to take the survey, my name will not be attached to my answers. I know that my participation will help understand children in the future, and that any questions I may have about the project, I can raise my hand, and the researcher will answer my question.

At this time,

_____ I do wish to participate
_____ I do not wish to participate

Signature of Participant: __________________________________

Print your name: _________________________________

Birthday: ______________________

Age: ______

Today’s Date: ______________
APPENDIX H. INSTRUMENT

On the school bus, there are some days that students are nice to boys and some days they are not nice to boys.

1. How often are you nice to boys on the school bus? (please circle one)
   Never   Sometimes   A lot of times   All the time

   If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.
   What are some nice things you do on the school bus for boys? _________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. How often are boys on the school bus nice to you? (please circle one)
   Never   Sometimes   A lot of times   All the time

   If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.
   What are some nice things that boys do on the school bus for you? _________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. How often are you not nice to boys on the school bus? (please circle one)
   Never   Sometimes   A lot of times   All the time

   If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.
   What are some not nice things you do on the school bus to boys? _________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. How often are boys on the school bus not nice to you? (please circle one)
   Never   Sometimes   A lot of times   All the time
If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.

What are some not nice things that boys do on the school bus to you? _______________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

On the school bus, there are some days that students are nice to girls and some days they are not nice to girls.

1. How often are you nice to girls on the school bus? (please circle one)
   Never  Sometimes  A lot of times  All the time

If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.
What are some nice things you do on the school bus for girls? ______________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. How often are girls on the school bus nice to you? (please circle one)
   Never  Sometimes  A lot of times  All the time

If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.
What are some nice things that girls do on the school bus for you? ____________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. How often are you not nice to girls on the school bus? (please circle one)
   Never  Sometimes  A lot of times  All the time

If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.
What are some not nice things you do on the school bus to girls? ____________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
4. How often are girls on the school bus not nice to you? (please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>A lot of times</th>
<th>All the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.*

What are some not nice things that girls do on the school bus to you? __________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. How often are girls on the school bus not nice to you? (please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>A lot of times</th>
<th>All the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*If you answered sometimes, a lot of the time, or all the time, please answer the next question.*

What are some not nice things that girls do on the school bus to you? __________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX I. DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

I want to thank you for your help with this project. As I mentioned earlier, the purpose of the project was to find out what children think about nice and not nice behaviors that occur on the school bus. Please be assured that all your information will not be given out to anyone, and your identity will not be revealed to anyone. My interest is not in a particular child’s view, but what a group of children think. Do you have any questions? Thank you very much!
Table 1

*Aggressive Behavioral Categories Found in Past Studies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Descriptions (and Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggression (general)</td>
<td>Non-specific aggressive behaviors (&quot;teasing&quot; &quot;get mad&quot;) (e.g., Tisak et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>Actions that are physical in nature (&quot;hitting&quot; &quot;pushing&quot;). (e.g., Crick &amp; Grotpeter, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Aggression</td>
<td>Actions that exclude another student from participating in an activity with another person(s) or actions that threaten to damage another’s reputation (&quot;ignoring&quot; &quot;spreading rumors&quot;) (e.g., Crick &amp; Grotpeter, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Aggression</td>
<td>Actions that are verbal in nature (&quot;being bossy&quot; &quot;yelling&quot; &quot;calling names&quot;) (Tisak, Tisak, et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2  

Prosocial Behavioral Categories Found in Past Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Descriptions (and Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>Giving assistance or aid to another student (“help when they get hurt” “help with their school work”) (e.g., Eisenberg, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting</td>
<td>Expressing empathy or sympathy (“talking to them”)                                           (e.g., Jackson &amp; Tisak, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>To participate in, use, enjoy, or experience jointly with another student (“let them play” “give them suggestions” “share pencils”) (e.g., Eisenberg, 1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Verbal or physical acts of kindness other than sharing, helping, or comforting (“not bothering them” “say ‘hi’”) (e.g., Tisak et al., 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Inclusion</td>
<td>To befriend or include someone (“let them play”)                                             (e.g., Greener &amp; Crick, 1999)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Prosocial Behavioral Categories of Current Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Descriptions (and Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>Giving assistance or aid to another student (“help me on and off the bus” “help with their school work”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Support/Comforting</td>
<td>Expressing empathy or sympathy (“I help them forget about the bad things”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>Verbal or physical acts of kindness other than sharing, helping, or comforting (“I say please and thank you”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship/Relational Inclusion</td>
<td>To befriend or include someone (“I sit by them”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>To participate in, use, enjoy, or experience jointly with another student (“I share my pencils”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Younger Male Part.</th>
<th>Older Male Part.</th>
<th>Younger Female Part.</th>
<th>Older Female Part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>.28 (.45)</td>
<td>.23 (.42)</td>
<td>.26 (.45)</td>
<td>.24 (.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td>.10 (.30)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>.13 (.33)</td>
<td>.23 (.42)</td>
<td>.16 (.37)</td>
<td>.50 (.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>.45 (.50)</td>
<td>.18 (.38)</td>
<td>.42 (.50)</td>
<td>.16 (.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td>.11 (.31)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Younger Male Part.</th>
<th>Older Male Part.</th>
<th>Younger Female Part.</th>
<th>Older Female Part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boy Peer</td>
<td>Girl Peer</td>
<td>Boy Peer</td>
<td>Girl Peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>.15 (.36)</td>
<td>.13 (.33)</td>
<td>.16 (.37)</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.05 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolence</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.21 (.41)</td>
<td>.26 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>.28 (.45)</td>
<td>.25 (.44)</td>
<td>.26 (.45)</td>
<td>.26 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>.13 (.33)</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.05 (.23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | Boy Peer           | Girl Peer        | Boy Peer             | Girl Peer          |
|                  | .26 (.44)          | .26 (.44)        | .20 (.41)            | .25 (.44)          |
|                  | .13 (.34)          | .13 (.34)        | .15 (.36)            | .10 (.30)          |
|                  | .23 (.43)          | .21 (.41)        | .15 (.36)            | .23 (.42)          |
|                  | .13 (.34)          | .38 (.49)        | .18 (.38)            | .53 (.51)          |
|                  | .05 (.22)          | .05 (.22)        | .03 (.16)            | .10 (.30)          |
### Table 6

*Aggressive Behavioral Categories of Current Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Descriptions (and Examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Aggression</td>
<td>Actions that involve derogatory or non-derogatory Comments (“call me names” “they yell at me”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Aggression</td>
<td>Actions that make physical in nature student (“I hit them” “punch my seat”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Actions that involve stealing another student’s Belongings (“they take my stuff”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Aggression</td>
<td>Actions that exclude another student or attempt to damage another students’ reputation (“they ignore me” “they talk about me behind my back”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Prosocial Behavior</td>
<td>Refraining from acting in a prosocial manner (“not help them” “they are selfish”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Younger Male Part.</th>
<th>Older Male Part.</th>
<th>Younger Female Part.</th>
<th>Older Female Part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boy Peer</td>
<td>Girl Peer</td>
<td>Boy Peer</td>
<td>Girl Peer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>.18 (.38)</td>
<td>.18 (.38)</td>
<td>.11 (.31)</td>
<td>.11 (.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.23 (.43)</td>
<td>.23 (.43)</td>
<td>.13 (.33)</td>
<td>.15 (.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>.18 (.38)</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.13 (.34)</td>
<td>.26 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.15 (.37)</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.10 (.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Prosocial</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Younger Male Part.</th>
<th>Older Male Part.</th>
<th>Younger Female Part.</th>
<th>Older Female Part.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>.23 (.42)</td>
<td>.25 (.44)</td>
<td>.08 (.27)</td>
<td>.13 (.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.20 (.41)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
<td>.05 (.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.13 (.33)</td>
<td>.18 (.39)</td>
<td>.26 (.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Prosocial</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.05 (.22)</td>
<td>.00 (.00)</td>
<td>.03 (.16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Figure 1.* Means of male and female participants’ nice ratings as a function of peer gender.
**Figure 2.** Means of male and female participants’ not nice ratings as a function of peer gender.
Figure 3. Means of benevolence among male and female participants as a function of age.
Figure 4. Means of benevolence among male and female participants as a function of peer gender.
Figure 5. Means of benevolence among younger and older participants as a function of peer gender.
Figure 6. Means of companionship among male and female participants as a function of peer gender.
Figure 7. Means of companionship among boy and girl peers as a function of direction of action.
Figure 8. Means of sharing among male and female participants as a function of peer gender.
Figure 9. Means of physical aggression among boy and girl peers as a function of direction of action.
Figure 10. Means of physical aggression among younger and older participants as a function of peer gender.
Figure 11. Means of physical aggression among younger and older participants as a function of direction of action.
Figure 12. Means of stealing among male and female participants as a function of direction of action.