THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT BULLYING BEHAVIORS AND SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explored the relationship between student bullying behaviors and the self-esteem of intermediate elementary school students in grades 3-5. While bullying behaviors of students have existed for centuries, research on the topic of bullying has only begun in the past couple of decades and more recently since the turn of the century due to increased school shootings and school-related incidents of violence. Very few studies have specifically examined the effects of bullying upon student self-esteem. At a small rural elementary school in Northwest Ohio, 197 intermediate students (ages 8-13) were surveyed using the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) consisting of 39 items that measured the frequency and degree of bullying behaviors for both the victim and the bully (Olweus, 2004). The results of this survey revealed that nearly half of all students had not been bullied in the past couple of months; however, 15% had been bullied several times a week, though 8.2% claim that bullying has gone on for several years. Students were bullied most frequently by being called names, made fun of or teased in a hurtful way. Victims were typically bullied by one boy in their class, but it was also reported that both boys and girls bully others. Bullying behaviors are also more likely to occur in unstructured and unsupervised areas.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES) was also administered to measure the levels of student self-esteem. This survey consisted of 10 items that revealed student self-worth, attitude, and satisfaction with oneself. Students overall had a positive self-esteem. However, some students did feel useless at times and wish they could have more respect for themselves.
When examining the relationship between bullying behaviors and self-esteem, a significantly negative mutual relationship was found to exist between the bullying behaviors of victims and bullies and their self-esteem. A significant difference was also found between the bullying behaviors of victims in grade 3 and grade 4. Students in grade 5 exhibited significantly lower levels of self-esteem as the bully than students in grades 3 and 4. Students in grade 4 reportedly had the highest levels of self-esteem and the lowest levels of both victim and bully experiences. As bullying behaviors increased, levels of self-esteem decreased. Lower levels of self-esteem also increased bullying behaviors. In addition, as self-esteem increased, bullying behaviors decreased for both the victim and the bully.

It is recommended that educational leaders work to create a sense of urgency within their schools that addresses bullying behaviors in order to develop a positive, caring, safe and secure educational environment where learning thrives and respect for others abounds. Local school board policies regarding bullying should be current, relevant, and clearly communicated to the school community. While there are numerous programs that can be implemented to address bullying behaviors, none are more comparable than the building-up of caring relationships between parents and their children and staff and their students that foster care and respect for others. These are the relationships that bind and which help children to find their own special interests, encouraging them to build up their individual self-esteem.

It is also recommended that additional studies be conducted on the long-term effects of bullying and self-esteem as well as the more current issues of cyber bullying, examining the profiles of victims who become passive/aggressive cyber bullies and who have the potential to become violent and cause harm to others in the immediate or near future.
This dissertation is dedicated to my darling son, Samuel, the absolute joy of my life and the purest bulb in the garden. The gift of your life is more precious to me than the very breath that I breathe. There is no doubt that your life, your sweetness, and your determination has already made an incredible impact upon my life forever. Have faith in yourself and the One that brings the sunshine after the rain, and the bullies of tomorrow will be no more. Your inner strength is your greatest asset, already producing one of the most beautiful and sweetest smelling flowers of the garden.
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In an ideal world, children would come to school to receive an education in a safe environment where unity and harmony abound with a love for learning. An absolute respect for others would rule student demeanor and an aura of positivism would encompass student self-esteem. However, this paradigm for learning is very far from the realities that many students face when entering our schools today, where issues of disrespect to others and property have become commonplace. Therefore, it is not surprising that bullying among school-aged children is recognized as one of the leading forms of violence in our schools today (Bulach, Fulbright, & Williams, 2003; Olweus, 2003; Siris & Osterman, 2004; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002). The actions and reactions of students who have been bullied can be deadly.

Bulach et al. (2003) believe that behaviors of bullying play a major role in the violent actions of students committing crimes in school. For example, the violence of bullying behaviors attracted national attention in Georgia in 1998 when a student died as a result of bullying. From this incident, Georgia lawmakers enacted a law dealing specifically with bullying behaviors (Bulach et al.). The 1999 law defined bullying as: “Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; or Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm” (Official Code of Georgia § 20-2-751.4 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.5).

On January 24, 2006, the 126th Ohio House of Representatives passed HB 276 requiring mandatory school policies prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying of any student on school property or at a school-sponsored activity (Francis, 2007). Under the proposed law, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) would be required to develop a model policy with the same requirements and audit schools to determine if districts have adopted a policy that would
include initiatives to prevent bullying. This bill passed both chambers and became effective on March 30, 2007 (Ohio Revised Code §§ 3313.666-3313.667).

In 2006, state officials in Kentucky considered HB 270 (Hassert, 2006). This bill is similar to Ohio’s HB 276, but would also require schools to report to the state the names of those students who have a history of bullying or who have been bullied. It was in Paducah, Kentucky where school violence made national headlines in 1997 when 14 year-old Michael Carneal opened fire with a .22 caliber pistol at Heath High School, killing three students and injuring five others (Moore, Petrie, Braga & McLaughlin, 2003). Moore et al. also reported that Michael had several social problems, including the fact that he was small in stature and frequently the target of teasing and bullying. At least 21 other states have similar bullying laws or are in the process of approving bills to help reduce the effects of bullying (Hassert, 2006).

One of the most devastating effects of bullying may be the result of destruction to self, to others or their harasser(s). In extreme cases of persistent and continued harassment or bullying, some students have retaliated by externally threatening or actually causing physical harm to their bullies or ending their own fear and intimidation through suicide (Wessler, 2001). On February 9, 2006, Alexander Stone, age 10, of Galion, Ohio, died of a gunshot wound to the head. Franklin County Coroner, Dr. Bradley Lewis ruled his death a suicide (Staff, 2006). Matt Stone, Alexander’s father, said that Alexander had recently come home with a black eye and that bullying had contributed to his son’s death (Gannett, 2006).

While some victims have not been able to withstand the pain and torture of bullies and end up committing suicide in their youth, other victims harbor their fears into adulthood, suppressing hatred toward their bullies until they violently strike back at other innocent victims. Consider the recent tragedy on October 2, 2006 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where
Charles Carl Robert IV, age 32, entered an Amish schoolhouse, barricaded the doors and then forced 11 female students and one teacher’s aide to line up against a chalkboard (Liberty, 2006). He then bound their feet with wire ties and flex cuffs and shot them execution-style before turning the gun on himself. Five Amish girls and Charles Robert IV, died as a result of Robert’s alleged anger and revenge directed toward females for something that happened 20 years ago when he was only 12 years old.

Also consider the case of John Famalaro, the man convicted of abducting Denise Huber off a California freeway in 1991 (Clabaugh, 1999). A jury listened to testimony that he had sodomized and murdered her and then froze her body for three years. However, during the trial Famalaro’s sister testified that he had been bullied so much in grade school that he dreaded going to school and would often break into nervous fits of anxiety at the very thought of having to go to school. Regardless of his sister’s testimony, Famalaro was sentenced to death by lethal injection on September 5, 1997, six years after the murder (Department of Rehabilitation, 2006). Famalaro and 648 other condemned inmates are currently on death row at San Quentin State Penitentiary in California. With only two executions in California since 2002, Huber’s parents may never see the death of Famalaro during their lifetime (Department of Rehabilitation, 2006).

Though the cases of Robert and Famalaro are extreme, it can no longer be said that ‘sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never harm you.’ Surely words do harm others and the words of hate can break the soul, leaving many children without a sense of hope or purpose. Though bullying may or may not have been the direct cause or result of either of these deaths, or those many others for that matter, the effects of bullying may have contributed to the fear and intimidation that aggravated these victims to take drastic measures with their own lives and the lives of others. While most students physically survive and endure the pain and
humiliation of bullying, they may carry with them emotional scars that last a lifetime. In addition, their right to and enjoyment of a free and appropriate education may be in jeopardy.

Brown (2003) estimated that approximately 160,000 students across the nation make attempts to stay home from school each day because of their fear of being tormented and harassed by a school bully. Beale and Scott (2001) reported that, while at school, many children are afraid to go to the restroom (an area typically unsupervised by school personnel) for fear of being harassed by other students. In fact, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development conducted a study and found that nearly one-third of U.S. students in grades 6 – 10 were directly or indirectly involved in serious, frequent forms of bullying either as the bully, the victim of a bully or both (Garbarino & deLara, 2003). Cannon (2001) studied school-age children and found that 81% of boys and 72% of girls had been bullied. Parents also believe that their children are being bullied at school, according to a Reader’s Digest poll (Brown, 2003).

The effect of bullying continues to be a problem for millions of students who experience the pains of bullying on a daily basis. In a nationwide study conducted by Nansel, Overpeck, Pill, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001), an estimated 2,027,254 students were reported as being involved in moderate bullying and 1,681,030 students were involved in frequent bullying. Olweus (2003) also reported that an estimated one out of every seven children are either bullied or have been the victim of a bully. While many studies have been conducted to explore why students bully others or are involved in acts of bullying (Bulach et al., 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; & Olweus, 2003), other studies have researched the various kinds of bullying taking place on school campuses (Espelage & Asidao, 2003; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2003; & Khosropour & Walsh, 2001). Recent studies have also included research on cyber bullying, which occurs when students are using the latest and greatest technology trends (iSafe, 2004;
National Children’s Home, 2002; & National Children’s Home and Tesco Mobile, 2005). Still, other studies have been conducted that examine the general effects of bullying upon students (Beale, 2001; Casey-Cannon, Hayward & Gowen, 2001; Craig, 1998; Egan & Perry, 1998). However, these studies are not specific to the effects of bullying upon student self-esteem and, therefore, create a gap of pertinent information that would be helpful to school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers seeking to understand the effects of bullying on student’s self-esteem and reduce the bullying and violence within their schools.

In addition, as our nation’s schools focus on meeting and exceeding the measures of standards-based testing, the issues of academic achievement and attendance are now more significant today than in the past. And the role of self-esteem is critical to student academic achievement, and the student’s overall educational success. Sadly, those students who are bullied and have lost their desire to learn may fall through the cracks of the educational walls, deteriorating student learning.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between the degree of bullying experiences and self-esteem for intermediate elementary school students who attend a small rural elementary school in Northwest Ohio. The data analyzed in this research will assist other rural school administrators, counselors and educators to consider the ramifications of bullying behaviors upon their students’ self-esteem and how they can work progressively to address and reduce these effects in order to improve the school-learning environment for all students. The independent variable was the degree of bullying experiences, which includes the frequency rate at which a student is bullied and the severity of those bullying experiences that occurred to the student while at school. The dependent variable was the level of self-esteem for
intermediate elementary students and how the degree of bullying experiences differs by grade level and gender.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5) experience bullying behaviors as a victim in school?
2. To what extent do intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5) experience bullying behaviors as the bully in school?
3. What are the levels of self-esteem for intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?
4. Do the degrees of bullying and the levels of self-esteem differ by grade level among intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?
5. Do the degrees of bullying and the levels of self-esteem differ by gender among intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?
6. What is the relationship between the degree of bullying experiences and student self-esteem?
   a. Does self-esteem differ by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for victims?
   b. Does self-esteem differ by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for bullies?

Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspectives of this research study include two separate, but closely related theories that work together to form a relationship. Though student bullying and self-esteem are individual perspectives, both have a fundamental principle based upon childhood experiences. The first theoretical perspective to consider is student bullying. This concept centers on research that was conducted by Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus in the early 1970s when
bullying emerged as a subgroup from his studies on aggression (Olweus, 1978). Specifically, he began by looking at “dominance hierarchy,” or the pecking order, and found parallel patterns of social relations to those of bullies (p. 8). He noted that aggressive tendencies in bullies are often displaced behaviors of aggression upon those who are innocent victims, similar to the “scapegoat theory” (p. 9). He also noted that there are relatively stable personality characteristics of each individual (i.e., genetics, relationship to one’s parent, and childhood experiences) that help to determine personalities and typical situational reaction patterns. In addition, students with special characteristics (psychological or physical) may be predisposed to becoming either a bully or a victim. Prior experience to aggression or violence also plays an important role in how individuals react to conflicts, including subgroups such as bystanders. In the school environment, other influences that impact the reactions of individuals and, thus, their educational learning opportunities, are the climate of the group, the size and composition of the class, the manner in which the teacher conducts the class, and the teacher’s personality traits. These concepts of social structures, characteristics, experiences, and learning circumstances laid a solid foundation for his theoretical sketch and continued interest in bullying.

Not surprisingly, in 1982, Olweus’ theoretical sketch of bullying began to play itself out in real-life, in deadly occurrences when three adolescent boys between the ages of 10 and 14 who had been severely bullied at school committed suicide in Norway (Veen, 2004). The deaths of these students brought a national awareness to the issue of bullying like never before. In 1983, the Ministry of Education in Norway issued a nationwide campaign to stop bullying in their Norwegian schools. Olweus was commissioned to conduct research in Norway as well as other Scandinavian countries in order to develop and create a bullying prevention program (Olweus, 2003). Olweus’ research for Norway’s schools, and ultimately on behalf of innocent bullied
victims around the world, began with an evaluation that involved approximately 2,500 students in grades 4-7 (Veen, 2004). In his quasi-experimental design, Olweus found that the students who were bullied experienced greater levels of personal failure and issues of self-esteem that directly affected their learning behaviors while at school. In concurrence with Olweus’ work, the present research study will build upon his findings, expecting to discover that the degree to which students are bullied has a direct negative influence on student self-esteem.

The second theoretical perspective of the present research study, as it pertains to the concept of self-esteem, centers on research that was conducted in the United States by Morris Rosenberg in the mid-1960s. With the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 and the impact of the civil rights movement, social psychologists, like world-renowned Rosenberg, began to explore the depths of self-esteem (Flynn, 2003). Rosenberg examined how social structural positions such as race and ethnicity and institutional structures such as schools and families are closely related to self-esteem. However, self-esteem makes up only one component of the self-concept. The other components are self-efficacy or mastery, and self-identities (Department of Sociology at University of Maryland, 2006). Self-concept is shaped by a characteristic set of individual experiences that create a pattern, thus forming one’s self-esteem.

Rosenberg’s study of adolescent self-esteem is important because it directly relates to and is derived from a larger social structure comprised of reflected appraisals, social comparisons and basic human needs (Flynn, 2003). Reflected appraisals suggest that one’s self-esteem is a product of how he or she believes others see him or her. Social comparisons occur when people compare themselves to others. The idea that self-esteem is a basic human need is dependent upon one’s culture or influence of the Western world. This theory became solidified when Rosenberg studied the self-esteem of adolescent African-Americans.
Rosenberg originally believed that when assessed with his self-esteem scale, a subordinate group of immigrants or African-Americans would compare themselves to the white American dominant group and have significantly lower levels of self-esteem. Surprisingly, he found that African-Americans demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem than do white Americans because the adolescents of his study compared themselves to those of their own ethnicity group rather than to how others (white Americans) saw them. Thus, the subgroup avoided threats against their self-esteem because they were able to associate themselves to members of their own subgroup (Flynn, 2003).

Individual associations and set experiences are dependent upon culture and influence, which help to determine one’s self-esteem. Rosenberg (1989) said:

It is perceived and experienced reality that affects the individual’s self-esteem. If we are to understand people’s reactions, we must understand the contexts in which they live, for it is these perceived and experienced worlds that shape their feelings toward themselves and toward life. (p.xxviii)

In order to understand the contexts of the lives of our students, administrators and educators must look closely at their students’ perceptions and their students’ world experiences, including those at school. As stated earlier, Rosenberg believed that the institutional structure of the school played an important part in the development of adolescent self-esteem. Therefore, in order to examine school-related experiences and the relationship between bullying behaviors and self-esteem, careful consideration must first be given to federal and state mandated requirements placed upon the public academic society.
Significance of the Study

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in January 2002, student performance based on achievement outcomes have increasingly become critical issues for educators and their school districts striving to attain improvement of their local state report cards and adequate yearly progress (AYP) reports. State achievement tests are mandated and used as the measuring tools for determining student learning, achievement, and success. Greater student achievement scores equate to more effective schools, reflecting heavily upon educator performance and administrative leadership abilities. Lower student achievement on state achievement tests reflects ineffective schools, educators and their leaders.

Accountability provisions for schools and their districts are included within the law and are based on a standard goal that every child will reach state-defined educational standards by the end of the 2013-2014 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). States are required to develop benchmarks (both standards and assessments) to measure student progress in order to ensure that student learning is taking place. States must then disaggregate student achievement data and hold schools and their districts accountable for growth or lack thereof and individual subgroup performance including but not limited to students with disabilities, students in Title 1 programs, economically disadvantaged children, and racial and ethnic minorities, insuring that no child will fall through the cracks.

In order to improve student learning and achievement, it is imperative that school districts work to create a positive and safe learning environment that is conducive to enhancing the student’s overall educational experiences and, thus, promoting both achievement and success. However, due in part to repeated or isolated bullying experiences, some students may lose their self-esteem and/or confidence in themselves, which may impact their learning performance and
lessen their opportunities to attain scholarships and higher educational degrees. Some students may even drop out of school, and become unable to contribute to or work in society at a proficient level.

In extreme cases where students retaliate and seek revenge from having been a victim of bullying, school safety and the liberty of life are jeopardized. When the United States Secret Service questioned 41 school shooters in 37 incidents of school-related shootings, they found that two-thirds of the students had been bullied, and the reason they attacked was to seek revenge (Vossekuil, et al., 2002). Therefore, it is the ethical responsibility of every school administrator to help protect the sanctity of education and life by providing and promoting a school environment where all students feel safe, welcomed and encouraged to learn and grow alongside their peers, reaching and attaining their educational goals and dreams in order to become engaging and productive citizens in our future communities, our nation and our world.

With this paradigm in mind, this study identified the degree of bullying experiences at a small rural school district in Northwest Ohio. It also determined and evaluated the degrees of bullying behaviors and their effects upon student self-esteem. It is the hope of this researcher that the findings and implications discovered in these data will assist other school administrators in becoming aware of the impact of bullying behaviors upon student self-esteem and the school environment and become motivated to find appropriate solutions that provide safe school learning environments, putting an end to the fear and intimidation experienced by many students. Some appropriate solutions might include but are not limited to implementing character education programs, student mediation programs, and quality management tools programs (e.g., Baldridge, etc.), as well as instilling school pride and school spirit, improving security measures,
promoting parental awareness and involvement, and providing professional development for staff awareness, supervision, conflict management/mediation and leadership.

Definitions of Terms

**Bully.** One who abuses power physically, psychologically, or sexually. They tease and taunt others, purposefully exclude certain classmates, and spread rumors (Committee for Children, 2006).

**Bullying.** The repeated exposure, over time, to negative actions from one or more other students. Negative actions can include physical, verbal or indirect actions that are intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another (Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 1999). For the purpose of this study, bullying is measured using the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (2003).

**Bystander.** A person who fails to help someone being teased in isolation for fear of being teased (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2003).

**Cyber bully.** Anyone who repeatedly misuses technology to harass, intimidate, or terrorize another person (Franek, 2004).

**Cyber bullying.** The use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory online personal polling Web sites, to support the deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others (Belsey, 2006).

**Global Self-Esteem.** The individual’s positive or negative attitude toward the self as a totality (Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995).

**Ijime.** A type of aggressive behavior by which someone who holds a dominant position in a group-interaction process, by intentional or collective acts, causes mental and/or physical
suffering to another inside the group (Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano, & Slee, 1999).

*No Child Left Behind Act.* A federal law established on January 8, 2002 and built upon four pillars that are designed to improve student achievement: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options and expanded local control and flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

*Peer belief.* Perceptions that students have about other students (Dennis & Satcher, 1999).

*Student self-concept.* Self-concept refers primarily to the descriptive views of self-attributes (Brinthaupt & Lipka, 2002).

*Student self-esteem.* Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one’s worth or value (Rosenberg, 1965). For the purposes of this study, student self-esteem is measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES) (1965).

*Victim.* Usually a single student, who is generally harassed by a group of two or three students, often with a “negative leader” (Olweus, 1999).

*Whipping boys.* A boy who for a fairly long time has been and still is exposed to aggression from others; that is, boys or possibly girls from his own class or maybe from other classes often pick fights and are rough with him or tease and ridicule him (Olweus, 1978).

Delimitations and Limitations

The authenticity of this study relies heavily upon the young participant’s willingness to be honest when answering the questions on the surveys and completing the surveys to the best of his or her ability. Participant names were omitted from the surveys to ensure students of the importance of keeping their answers confidential. Additionally, the researcher assumes that the
teacher had control of his/her classroom and read aloud both of the administering survey instruments. The researcher also assumes that the teacher allowed ample amount of time between each question for the young participants to appropriately answer. However, the primary limitation that may detract from the generalizations of the study may be the individual teacher explanations given of specific questions asked by students for clarification purposes. Another limitation may be the reduction of the sample size due to student absenteeism or tardiness to school on the day the surveys were administered. The surveys are also limited in that the locations where the participants take the surveys may vary according to homeroom and teacher assignment. Finally the subgroups are predominantly White American. Additionally, potential differences may appear in the findings between the targeted population and the accessible population.

Organization of the Remaining Chapters

Chapter II contains a thorough review of the literature, including the historical aspects of bullying, bullying experiences, and the effects of bullying as well as an examination of self-esteem. Chapter III describes the methods utilized for this research project. Chapters IV and V present the findings and implications of this study and further recommendations for studying student bullying behaviors.
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to bullying and its effects on student self-esteem. It explores the historical aspects of bullying, bullying experiences (both nationally and internationally, as well as cyber bullying), and the effects of bullying behaviors on student self-esteem. It will also reveal the development of self-esteem and its foundational research as well as self-esteem as it relates to peer relations.

Historical Aspects of Bullying

Origin of Bullying

The term “bully” brings an unforgettable, painful memory to the mind of anyone who has ever witnessed or experienced first-hand the violence, threats, torments of anguish, or the humiliating tones of teasing by one who is in greater power and control over that person. Five hundred years ago, the word “bully” held an opposite meaning from what we know it to mean today. The root of the word bully stemmed from the Dutch word ‘boel,’ meaning brother, lover, friend, family member, or sweetheart (PBS, 2002). In the 21st century, the term bullying takes on a completely different connotation. In Scandinavia, the translated term used for bullying is “mobbing,” stemming from the English word “mob,” which implies a large group of people engaged in harassment or other violence (Olweus, 1993). Bullying can be carried out by a group of individuals or by one person, a bully, and directed at one person or a group in various forms.

Varying forms of bullying, including violence and murder, have existed since the beginning of time. In the 16th century, Machiavelli warned in The Prince that all men are evil and cannot be trusted (Wootton, 1995). He was referring to the social and political power that men hold over other men. Throughout the ages of human history, this holding power went unquestioned under the social order of slavery. African men and women witnessed this social
order first-hand as they were captured and placed into captivity against their will, sold as personal commodities into slavery. In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, “For more than two centuries our foreparents labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; and they built the homes of their masters in the midst of brutal injustice and shameful humiliation” (King, 1963/2000, p. 544). Though slavery was eventually outlawed in this country, people of all races, ethnicities, religions and genders have continued to be oppressed throughout time by those who hold the greatest strings of power. The temptation to abuse such power for personal gain is inevitable. Whether or not bullying occurs may depend upon the psychological state of the bully, the support or connivance of others within the group, the response of the victim, and the institutional framework where such bullying may occur (Smith, et al., 1999). Bullying is particularly likely in groups or settings where the potential victim cannot escape. Because schools are the primary institutional settings where education is compulsory, this is a very likely place where bullying occurs.

Bullying among schoolchildren is widely known today and educators have been aware of its existence for years. In fact, Thomas Hughes, an 1850s English author of the novel *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, clearly describes how a younger boy who attended an English boarding school was forced by a group of older bullies to undergo a painful and sadistic roasting in front of an open fire (Hughes, 1968). Down through the ages, bullying experiences such as these have been looked upon with the attitude that kids will be kids. Because of this accepted attitude regarding schoolyard bullies, research on the topic of student bullying did not surface until the 1950s when researchers like Russell and Shrodes (1950) studied the stimulating effects of bibliotherapy on student behavior and learning. Though primarily used as a clinical treatment,
these researchers believed that bibliotherapy, or the reading of literature-based values, could benefit and have an effect on student behavior.

In the 1970s and 1980s other researchers began to systemically study bullying and focused their research on the schools of Scandinavia (Olweus, 2003). Since this research, bullying in the United States has become an interesting topic to school administrators and educators who are concerned with the effects of bullying as it directly relates to school shootings and school violence (Vossekuil, et al., 2002).

**Foundation of Bullying Research**

In order to conduct research on bullying, which requires specific criteria for classifying students as bullies, victims, or bystanders, a researcher must first identify when a student is being bullied. According to Olweus (1993, p. 12), “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.” A bully, on the other hand, was defined as the person who makes attempts to intentionally inflict injury or discomfort on another person, acting out negative actions of aggressiveness, typically characteristic of a bully (Olweus, 2003).

Bullying, in and of itself, is an “imbalance in strength (or an asymmetrical power relationship),” which means that students who experience negativity have difficulty defending themselves (Olweus, 1993, p. 10). Therefore, bullying becomes a proactive aggression that typically occurs and reoccurs without any apparent reason or provocation from the victim. Olweus estimated that one out of every seven children are either bullied or have been a victim of a bully. The U.S. Department of Education reports that 77 percent of middle and high school students surveyed have been bullied along their educational pathway (Garbarino, et al., 2003). And, in a recent *Reader’s Digest* poll, 70 percent of parents surveyed said that their children are
bullied at school (Brown, 2003). With the increase of bullying experiences, schools and parents alike are changing their attitudes from ‘kids being kids’ to ‘kids who bully other kids’, and researchers are beginning to critically analyze bullying experiences (Espelage & Asidao, 2003).

Bullying Experiences

Many forms of bullying help to determine the level or degree to which students experience bullying. Espelage et al. (2003) conducted a study for the purpose of investigating bullying and victimization experiences of middle school students. Participants in the study included 89 middle school students in grades 6 – 8 in three different schools located in three mid-sized Midwestern towns and consisted of 55 (62.6%) males and 34 (37.4%) females of various racial compositions. In-depth interviews with the participants ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. In the interviews, participants were asked to define where bullying takes place, why they believe students bully others or are the target of a bully, and what they believe to be the definition of bullying. Results of the study indicated that when participants were questioned about where bullying takes place, they responded that bullying mostly occurs out of the sight and hearing of an adult such as in the hallways, cafeteria, locker rooms, restrooms, during recess, in class, during passing periods, and outside of the school. Another 6th grader said, “It goes on all around. It is not only in one spot, but somewhere where the teacher is not going to look” (Espelage, et al., 2003, p. 7). Primarily, bullying can take place anywhere, but generally in unstructured areas where adult supervision is lacking.

When participants were asked about why they believe that students bully others or are the target of bullying, the bullies responded that they were sometimes provoked, or they did not like the victim, or they were feeling particularly angry or upset and decided to take it out on someone else (Espelage, et al., 2003). However, responses from all participants clarified the
motivation behind most acts of bullying as wanting to feel superior over another, to be “cool” or popular, to give in to peer pressure, to get attention, to show a dislike for the victim, to manipulate the victim, to just have fun, and/or to get revenge. One 7th grade male student commented about his decision to bully, “Students bully so they can be a part of a group and they do it so the group will respect them more….People just want to be cool and fit in” (Espelage, et al., 2003, p. 5). Participants believed that those who became the targets of bullying usually appeared physically different in some way (too fat, too thin, wore glasses, did not wear fashionable clothing, etc.). They also were seen as weaker, did not have much money, were unpopular or too smart, or simply the bully felt inadequate or jealous of the victim (Espelage, et al., 2003).

Finally, participants defined bullying as involving both verbal and physical aggression as well as “threats, manipulation, spreading rumors, destroying other’s property, taking other people’s property, seeking revenge or retaliation, and seeking power” (p. 4). Espelage et al., (2003) also reported that participants in this study were able to distinguish between playful teasing and bullying. One sixth-grade student responded,

Bullying is pushing someone around and making them feel like a failure…like if you are beating someone up, that is bullying, and also if you are blackmailing or threatening them, that is bullying….If it is playful teasing, no, but if you are hurting someone’s feelings, yes. (p. 4)

Khosropour and Walsh (2001) conducted a specific study for the purpose of investigating how children conceptualize bullying in school settings, and how they differentiate bullying from teasing. In this study, bullying was defined as “unwanted words or physical actions that make a person feel bad” (p. 2). The sample consisted of 40 volunteer students from four schools, 18 boys
and 22 girls. Interviews of 30 to 60 minutes each were conducted. Data from the interviews were coded and transferred into percentages. Only half of the students interviewed discussed physical aggression as a form of bullying, but referred to a bully as “someone who beats up other kids” (p. 16). According to Khosropour and Walsh, 44% of the students interviewed believe that bullying is worse when the bully physically harms the person he or she is targeting. From the interviews reported, it was evident that students may experience a wide range of bullying behaviors from verbal aggression to various forms of physical aggression. The results from this study indicated that students are more likely to use the word “teasing” in place of “bullying” until the problem becomes physical in nature.

Verbal aggression, however, tends to be the most reoccurring form of bullying among both boys and girls. Dennis and Satcher (1999) conducted a study for the purpose of gaining greater understanding of name calling among elementary school students in the United States. The sample included 191 elementary school students of second, third, fourth, and fifth grades in a Southeast US school district. Ninety-nine of the students were boys and 91 were girls (one student did not report gender). Eighty-five students were identified as African-American, 101 were identified as European American, and five students described their race as “other.”

Dennis and Satcher (1999) used two instruments to conduct their research, a Name Calling Survey (NCS) to measure the extent to which students experience being called different types of names and the Peer Beliefs Inventory (PBI) to measure perceptions that students have about other students. Differences by grade level, gender, and race were tested using a factorial analysis of variance. However, no significant differences were found in their experience of being called names. Bivariate correlations were examined between the NCS and the PBI scores by grade level, gender and race. A significant correlation was found between the experience of
being called names and the peer belief of children in the fourth grade and those in the fifth grade. Correlational analyses demonstrated that as the experience of being called names increased, students’ positive peer beliefs generally decreased.

*Cyber Bullying*

While verbal aggression may be the most common form of bullying, other types of bullying may include threats as well as rejection (Nansel, et al., 2001). Though bullying is usually experienced first-hand and in person, more recent forms of bullying are occurring within the wave of the technology craze. This form of bullying is called cyber bullying where threats, rumors and degrading comments are made to students through emails, instant or text messages, and websites (Daniel & Pauken, 2002; and Franek, 2004). Cyber bullying is different from face-to-face bullying in that the cyber bully can hide behind the anonymity of the Internet and can bully a greater number of students more often and at a faster rate of speed (Belsey, 2006). The cyber bully can also disguise him or herself as someone else, making it difficult to identify the bully. These kinds of bullies could be considered high tech bullies and their silent, savvy method of intimidation is on the rise.

In October 2005, a Portage, Indiana high school student, via the Internet, threatened to kill another student, while in San Francisco, California, an unidentified student hacked into the school’s website, posting another student’s picture over vulgar images that depicted the student as a racist (Ascione, 2006). Due to the increase of student use and access, cyber bullying behaviors such as these are not uncommon. A Mobile Youth Survey conducted in 2004 revealed that 97% of students between the ages of 12 and 16 own a mobile phone (National Children’s Home and Tesco Mobile, 2005). As new and innovative technology becomes available to students, growing concern for their use of this technology increases.
In 2002, Great Britain’s National Children’s Home (NCH) was the first children’s organization to identify cyber bullying through text messaging. The NCH conducted a national survey in the UK. This survey found that one in four 11 to 19 year olds had been bullied or threatened using their mobile phone or PC. Sixteen percent had received bullying or threatening text messages. In 2005, NCH teamed with Tesco Mobile to continue its research of cyber bullying. They surveyed 770 students (ages 11 to 19) and found that one in five students (20%) had experienced bullying through Internet emails, chatrooms, and text messaging. Ten percent of students said that someone had taken a photograph of them using a mobile phone camera, making them feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or threatened, and 10% admitted that they had sent a bullying or threatening message to someone. This survey also estimated that four million students in the UK own a camera phone, and that by the year 2007, this figure is expected to double to eight million.

Though the National Children’s Home and Tesco Mobile survey (2005) found a decrease in the amount of cyber bullying from 2002 to 2005, there is still a concern that this behavior is continuing and efforts are underway to stop bullying in any form. In an online study conducted in 2004 of 1500 students in grades 4-8 by iSafe America, a nonprofit internet safety foundation for K-12 students, 42 percent were bullied while online, 35 percent were threatened online, and 21 percent received mean or threatening eMail or instant messages (Ascione, 2006). More recently, in October of 2005, Hinduja and Patchin announced the results of one of the first major university-sanctioned studies on cyber bullying. Their online survey of 1,400 students found that more than one-third of those surveyed had experienced bullying online, mostly in chat rooms or through text messaging (Hinduja & Patchin, 2005). With the advancement of technology and its
increased student use in school and at home, it is no wonder that bullies are finding ways to attain power through this accessible means of communication.

**International Bullying**

As studies from other countries have revealed, bullying is not isolated only to schools in America. Wherever there are institutional frameworks of education, bullying is a potential problem that all educators and administrators worldwide must consider. In their studies of a cross-national perspective, Smith, et al. (1999) concurred that bullying is an innate trait that has the potential to occur within any educational institution where there is an increase of social and racial segregation among its students and a ‘social distance’ between its teachers and its students. In spite of social and racial differences found among all nationalities, Smith, et al. also reported that aggressive behavior in schools correlated to the type of school, its size and the size of its individual classes, the educational climate, teacher attitudes, students’ age, family characteristics, peer group relations, personality variables, attitudes toward violence, and leisure time spent at home and at school. However, with regard to ‘social distance’ between student and student and student and teacher, consider two shocking cases of student suicides that occurred in Japan in 1986 and 1994. The suicide notes claimed that Ijime, or bullying, led them to their deaths (Morita, Soeda, H., Soeda, K., & Taki, 1999). In the 1986 case, continued acts of Ijime, both mentally and physically, had led to a 13-year-old boy’s death. Both classmates and teachers alike had treated him as if he were dead and staged a mock funeral for him in the classroom and later wrote him messages of condolences. In 1994, the case was brought before the Tokyo High Court, which recognized the existence of mental Ijime by his classmates as the cause of the boy’s suicide. The court ordered Tokyo Metropolitan, Nakano Ward, and the parents of two of the bullies, to pay 11,500,000 yen (approximately $90,000 US) for damages. This was the first

In the second case, another 13-year-old boy also committed suicide, leaving behind a suicide note that said he was often threatened to pay his bullies large amounts of money. If he did not give them money, they would hit and kick him many times and push his face into the river when he did not give them the money they requested. For over two years he had given them more than one million yen (approximately $8,000 US) (Morita, et al., 1999).

Both of these cases spurred-on the Monbusho national survey on Ijime conducted in Japan during the 1994-1995 school year (Morita et al., 1999). A nationwide sample consisted of 9,420 students from elementary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools. The findings reported that 21.9% of elementary school students experienced Ijime, compared to 13.2% of lower secondary school students and 3.9% of upper secondary school students. Of the 21.9% of elementary school students experiencing Ijime, 60.4% experienced Ijime ‘more than once a week’ in comparison to 71.2% of the lower secondary school students, and 74.8% of upper secondary school students. Those students who reported being the aggressors of Ijime were 25.5% of elementary school students, 20.3% of lower secondary school students, and 6.1% of upper secondary school students. The types of Ijime reported included verbal (i.e., teasing and verbal threats), indirect (i.e., exclusion from social groups and ignoring), and physical Ijime, which included hitting and kicking. Sadly, throughout the three levels of schools, only 22.5% of the victims of Ijime reported the incidents to their teachers. Forty-six percent of elementary school students did not tell their teachers for ‘fear of retaliation by aggressors’. Lower secondary school students also pointed to ‘fear of retaliation by aggressors’ as the primary reason (34.3%), followed by ‘doubt that teachers would be able to solve the problem’ (31.1%). However, 29.5%
of upper secondary school students surveyed said that ‘the Ijime is their own problem, but not the teacher’s affair’, followed by 26.1% reporting a ‘doubt that teachers would not be able to solve the problem’ (Morita, et al., 1999).

In Australia, researchers Rigby and Slee (1991) published one of the first reports on bullying in their country in the early 1990s. They sampled 685 students in South Australian schools between the ages of 6 and 16 years old. When students surveyed other students in their class, Rigby and Slee reported that approximately 10% were ‘picked on a lot’. However, when the surveying method changed and students were given self-reports, Rigby and Slee reported that 13% of girls and 17% of boys reported having been bullied by other students ‘pretty often’. As these researchers continued their studies on bullying, they developed the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ). Between 1993 and 1996, Rigby and Slee (1999) collected data from 60 Australian schools where 15,152 boys and 10,247 girls between the ages 8 to 18 years old were surveyed. The results of this large study revealed that 20.7% of boys and 15.7% of girls reported having been bullied ‘at least once a week’. These results were shocking to the Australian government and school administrators. As a result, administrators began to provide training to educators and counselors to combat bullying in their country. Contrary to the social and racial differences of tyranny in the ‘old Australia’, the contemporary Australia now works to create a community that is accepting of all people so that no one is seen as an outsider (Rigby & Slee, 1991).

The last stop across the globe is Ireland where a few high profile national surveys have been conducted since the late 1980s. However, one nationwide survey, utilizing the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, was conducted during the 1993-1994 school year by the Department of Education and sampled students ages 8 years old in primary schools (elementary) up to the
sixth year in second-level schools (high school) in some 530 schools; 320 were primary schools and 219 were secondary schools (Byrne, 1999). The 530 total schools represented 10% of all primary schools and 27% of all post-primary schools. The results of this survey were released in 1996, which found that 1 out of every 20 primary school students is victimized once a week and 1 out of every 50 students at the post-primary level. Of the students surveyed, 51% said that they would join in bullying another student whom they did not like. And those students who were bullied, but would not tell anyone in school increased with their age, from 54% of third class pupils to 74% of sixth class pupils, to as high as 92% of second-level students. Likewise, 80% of post-primary students had not told someone in their home that they were being bullied. This survey also indicated that in Ireland, bullying peaks in the second year of post-primary schools (Byrne, 1999).

As a result of this study and others, the Education Minister of Ireland, in an effort to raise awareness of bullying in schools and communities, drew up guidelines requiring schools to create a school policy to deal specifically with bullying behaviors and the overall framework of school codes of behavior and discipline (Byrne, 1999). He encouraged schools to set aside a day when staff could receive professional training on the subject of bullying, followed by an awareness day for students and their parents/guardians.

Regardless of where the research was conducted, abroad or within the United States, research on student bullying behaviors is producing evidence that bullying behaviors do have an impact on student learning behaviors and the effects of student perceptions about school.

The Effects of Bullying Behaviors

The result of students experiencing differing forms of bullying behaviors at school, either as the victim or as the bully, may have varying implications on students and their education. The
effects of bullying behaviors on students have been explored by research conducted in a study by Nansel, et al. (2001) for the purpose of measuring the occurrence of bullying behaviors among US youth and to determine the associations between bullying experiences and the indicators of psychosocial adjustments. The representative sample was composed of 15,686 students in grades 6 through 10 in both public and private schools throughout the United States. The sample design used a stratified two-stage cluster of classes with the sample selection being stratified by geographic region, comparing the largest urban areas to non-urban areas. The study was conducted in the spring of 1998.

According to Nansel, et al. (2001), respondents of the study were asked to report the frequency with which they either bullied others at school or were the victim of a bully by listing five types of bullying (e.g., belittled about religion/race, looks/speech, hit/slapped/pushed, subject of rumors or lies, and subject of sexual comments/gestures). The study utilized the proportional odds model to determine the regression of the ordinal data and was used to identify any correlations. Robust variance estimates were used to account for the dependence between the outcomes. Results of the study found that 29.9% of the sample reported moderate or frequent involvement in bullying behaviors (13% as a bully, 10.6% as the target of a bully, and 6.3% as both bully and victim). Of the 13% of students who bullied others, 8.8% admitted to bullying others once a week or more (frequent bullying). Of the 10.6% of students who were the target of bullying experiences, 8.5% reported having been bullied sometimes and 8.4% were reported having been bullied once a week or more. The study also revealed that boys bully others and are bullied more frequently than girls, and that bullying was most likely to occur in grades 6 – 8. No significant differences were found when comparisons were made of the frequency of bullying among students from urban, suburban, town and rural areas.
Nansel, et al. (2001) also reported that bullies, those who had been bullied, and those students reporting both bullying and being bullied demonstrated poorer psychosocial adjustment than those students who were not involved in bullying behaviors. Fighting was demonstrated as a reaction to being bullied as well as alcohol use, smoking, poor academic achievement, decline of peer relationships, and poor perception of school climate and attitude about school. Interestingly, Nansel, et al. reported that the ability of students to make friends was negatively related to being bullied, whereas making friends was positively related to those who were identified as bullies.

Cannon, Hayward, and Gowen (2001) reported notable effects of bullying behaviors in a study they conducted specifically for the purpose of learning more about the phenomenological experience of relational victimization of bullying behaviors on adolescent girls. The researchers wanted to gain a better understanding of the relational style of aggression and the extent to which peer victimization in girls may be related to changes in their self-image and social relationships with others. Participants included 157 seventh-grade female students from a Northern California public middle school of predominantly lower to middle class families with the majority of the representation being ethnic-minority students. The researchers administered the Social Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) and conducted follow-up interviews of 20 selected participants. The interviews consisted of 12 open-ended questions assessing the details or characteristics of the event(s), which were qualitative in nature (e.g., location, duration); the perceptions of the relationship with the perpetrator, including their perceived reasons for the aggression; and the coping responses, both emotional and behavioral. Due to the limited sample size, results of the SEQ were reported as part of the victimizing behaviors, and therefore, no statistical analyses were conducted. However, results of the study indicated that the most frequent forms of relational victimization were the exclusion of peers and the spreading of rumors. The most
frequent overt victimization experienced was being yelled at or called derogatory names regarding physical appearance or personal characteristics such as intellect. The emotional reactions resulting from these experiences involved feeling sad, unhappy, hurt, or rejected. Behavioral reactions involved ignoring the act of the perpetrator, returning the insult or retaliating with physical aggression, and asking a teacher or parent for help.

Corsaro and Eder (1993) found from their research that bullying, even in the form of teasing, is commonly experienced among adolescents and can have serious consequences (Espelage, et al., 2003). The impact of students who experience bullying can be quite traumatic. For some students, it affects self-image and peer relationships and for others, it may result in them planning and devising acts of violence toward the perpetrator or other innocent victims. Consider the two students involved in the Columbine High School shootings. According to Bulach, et al. (2003), these two students were teased mercilessly, and they retaliated in a violent school massacre, awakening America’s responsibility to stand up and address the seriousness of bullying.

The Development of Self-Esteem

The development of self-esteem is highly dependent on the social factors that one experiences throughout his/her lifetime (Rosenberg, 1965). Social factors are with us from birth and determine opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about one’s self. These social factors are important because they help to determine an individual’s values, which are the building blocks of one’s self-esteem. They may begin with the economic status given at birth to the norms that surround the family structure including authority in the family, child-rearing practices, and family traditions. Social group norms must also be considered to be highly influential upon one’s self-esteem as the interactions with others have a strong bearing on self-evaluation. Consider the
social factors of honor, achievement, competitiveness and reputation at school, in the home, in sports activities, and in business. The standards of excellence are set for each social factor depending upon the social norm within its particular society. Self-evaluation is referenced by specific criteria, which are derived from those standards of excellence that have been based on historical conditions of each society and characteristics of the social group (Rosenberg, 1965). Military skill and valor, for example, were important criteria for self-evaluation during the times of medieval Europe. But today, entrepreneurship, leadership and being on the leading edge of innovation are the skills that are more applauded. All groups in society have their own individual standards of excellence. It is within the frameworks of these standards that people conduct their own self-evaluations that either enhance and build their self-esteem or degrade and lower it (Rosenberg, 1965).

Foundation of Self-Esteem Research

Having been coined by American psychologist and philosopher William James in 1890, the term “self-esteem” is one of the oldest concepts in psychology today (Self-esteem, 2007). Prior to Rosenberg’s study on self-esteem in 1965, hundreds of studies had been conducted that focused on self-concept, but no generally accepted measure of self-esteem was available (Rosenberg, 1965). Therefore, one of the main purposes of Rosenberg’s study was to determine how social factors made an impact on self-esteem and how self-esteem influenced socially significant attitudes and behavior. Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as “a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self” (p. 30). However, it does have two different connotations. The first is that a person may think that he/she is “very good”; the other is that of thinking he/she is “good enough.” More simplistically, a person can feel superior to
others, but inadequate to him or herself, depending on the certain standards that he/she has set for
him or herself.

In Rosenberg’s study, high self-esteem expresses the feeling that one is “good enough,” a
person of worth with respect for him or herself. The person or student with high self-esteem does
not necessarily consider him or herself superior to others. While they know their virtues and
deficiencies, they are confident to learn, grow, improve and overcome. Contrary to high self-
esteeem, low self-esteem implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and contempt for one’s self.
He or she does not respect him or herself and dislikes the picture of the person that he or she
sees, wishing it were different (Rosenberg, 1965).

Another primary purpose of Rosenberg’s study was to learn how differing social
experiences, stemming from association in groups characterized by different values, perspectives
or conditions of existence, would make a difference on the levels of self-esteem and self-values
(Rosenberg, 1965). In order to select groups with differing social experiences, Rosenberg’s
population of students selected for the study were those attending public high schools in the state
of New York State where various social classes, races, religions, rural and urban communities
and nationalities could be represented. The same consisted of 10 randomly selected public high
schools, where Rosenberg sampled a total of 5,024 high school juniors and seniors. One of the
limitations of this study was that since the sampling unit was of high schools rather than
individual students, adequacy of representing the various social groups of the population could
not be determined; and also, the sample omitted students in parochial or private schools, students
who had dropped out of school and students who may have been absent on the day the survey
was administered (Rosenberg, 1965).
With regard to socio-economic status, Rosenberg (1965) found that self-esteem differed considerably among boys than among girls when class or socio-economic differences were reported. The highest class of students was those whose fathers had attended college, and whose fathers’ incomes were well above average. The lowest class of students was those whose fathers were service workers or manual laborers, not having attending school beyond grade school. The highest-class boys were more likely than the lowest-class boys, by 19%, to have high self-esteem; the highest-class girls were more likely to have high self-esteem, but only by 6%.

According to Cartwright (1950):

The groups to which a person belongs serve as primary determiners of his self-esteem. To a considerable extent, personal feelings of worth depend on the social evaluation of the groups with which a person is identified. Self-hatred and feelings of worthlessness tend to arise form membership in underprivileged or outcast groups. (p. 440)

However, Rosenberg believed that each individual did not have to accept the social evaluation of his or her worth as his or her personal worth and identity, but could adopt a variety of “coping mechanisms” to save one’s self-esteem from social disparity (Rosenberg, 1965).

When students were questioned about having been discriminated against, there was a high correlation between experiences of discrimination and low self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Students who experienced prejudice were also identified with low self-esteem and in addition, they were more likely to develop fear, anxiety, insecurity, and tension. These insecurities may stem from the lack of integration in a social group, such as social isolation. Thus, students sense being “different” than others and experience an absence of “belongingness.” However, Rosenberg believed that as children grow and change, their traits at one stage may be appropriate and acceptable to society, but in the next stage they may not be tolerable and vice versa. These
shifts of change and growth establish an initial level of acceptance to one of rejection with feelings of unworthiness, or just the opposite. These shifts can occur from age to age or grade level to grade level, depending on the dynamics of the student’s social group and his or her personal achievements and newly found interests (e.g., academic achievement/intellect, and athletics) (Rosenberg, 1965).

In 1989, Rosenberg, Schooler & Schoenbach released the results of a secondary analysis drawn from a study that was conducted nearly 20 years ago in 1968. The secondary analysis was conducted to specify the degree to which self-esteem was directly related to delinquency, depression, and grades or vice versa, how these variables affected self-esteem. The study was conducted in two separate waves at the University of Michigan. The first wave was conducted in the fall of 1966 and was based on a sample of 2,213 tenth-grade boys from 87 high schools throughout 48 states. The second wave consisted of 1,886 of the 2,213 participants from the first wave. The data collection from this phase was conducted in the spring of 1968. The researchers used 6 of the 10 items from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to measure self-esteem. School performance was measured by the student’s self-reported grade point average. Juvenile delinquency was measured by a 7-item index of delinquent behavior in school, a 9-item index of frequency of delinquent behavior, a 10-item index of the seriousness of delinquent behavior, a 9-item index of theft and vandalism, a single-item of whether or not the youth was ever expelled from school, and another single-item of whether or not the youth ever had trouble with the police. Depression was measured using a 5-item index and socio-economic status was measured with an index that consisted of: father’s occupational status; parent’s education; possessions in the home; number of books in the home; and number of rooms per person. In order to achieve a
linear structural equation model, self-esteem, delinquency, and depression were each estimated at two points in time.

The results of Rosenberg et al. (1989) demonstrated that low self-esteem was significantly associated with an increase in delinquency and also that delinquency may possibly be associated with an increase in self-esteem, but this did not reach the significant level. When the socio-economic status (SES) groups were placed into the mix, self-esteem did have an impact on producing greater delinquency in the higher SES group than in the lower. However, delinquency was more effective for boosting self-esteem in the lower than in the middle and higher SES groups.

With regard to school marks, the results indicated that grades have a stronger positive effect on self-esteem than self-esteem has on grades. When comparing the data with the SES groups, the reciprocal effects were found to be similar in all three groups (lower, middle, and higher). When they looked at the effects of self-esteem on depression and vice versa, the data showed that both significantly affect one another, but depression did have somewhat more of an effect on self-esteem than self-esteem on depression. Also, both effects were stronger in the lower SES groups than in the higher SES groups (Rosenberg, et al., 1989). Researchers also noted that these findings of self-esteem leading to depression were consistent with the self-esteem theory, which holds that “people are motivated to maximize their self-esteem” (p. 1012).

While this study was based on zero-order of correlations and the effects were estimated by means of a linear structural equation analysis that took into account the measurement error of both the sample as a whole and the separate SES subgroups, it is not without limitations. One of the limitations of this study is that the selected sample was restricted only to boys. It also cannot be determined whether the causal dynamics that were retrieved at the time of the initial study in
1966 and 1968 would even persist in 1989 when the second analysis of the study was published (Rosenberg, et al., 1989). However, from the data analyzed within this research study, Rosenberg began to question whether or not his findings would be the same or different if he were looking more closely at specific self-esteem rather than global self-esteem.

Therefore, as Rosenberg continued his studies on self-esteem, he began to investigate the relationship between global self-esteem, which is an individual’s positive or negative attitude about him or herself as a totality (his or her psychological well being), and specific self-esteem, which is relevant to one’s behavior (Rosenberg, et al., 1995). To clarify, Rosenberg, et al. (1995) believed that a specific behavior is best predicted by a specific self-esteem that is connected to that behavior, and psychological well-being is best predicted by one’s global self-esteem. The primary characteristic of global self-esteem is self-acceptance or self-respect. To confirm their beliefs, Rosenberg, et al. (1995) conducted an eight-year longitudinal study of 87 high schools representing 48 states and consisting of 2,213 tenth-grade male participants. This correlational study included four waves of which their analysis was limited to 1,886 males who participated in the first two waves of the study. Global self-esteem was measured by 6 of the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES). Specific self-esteem focusing on academic self-esteem was measured using the three-item Bachman’s School Ability Self-Concept Index and self-reported grade point average. The psychological well-being consisted of 10 measures, including depression, anomie, general anxiety, resentment, anxiety and tension, irritability, life satisfaction, guilt, happiness, and negative affective states. Clearly a stronger relationship appeared, as was hypothesized, that global self-esteem is more closely associated to the measures of psychological well-being than is specific self-esteem, and conversely, specific academic self-esteem has a greater effect on school marks than does global self-esteem (Rosenberg, et al., 1995). The mean
strength of the relationship between global self-esteem and all 10 psychological well-being measures was .337, whereas the mean strength of the specific academic self-esteem to all 10 psychological well-being measures was only .079. Therefore, Rosenberg, et al. (1995) concluded that global self-esteem more closely correlated to one’s psychological well-being and specific academic self-esteem more closely correlated to one’s specific behavior and performance (e.g., school marks).

Rosenberg, et al. (1995) also introduced controlled variables upon both global self-esteem and academic self-esteem to determine any reciprocal effects. These variables included race, age, intact family, mother’s education, father’s education, family socioeconomic status, father’s occupational status, mother’s occupational status, and number of siblings. When these controlled variables were added to the study, the researchers found that global self-esteem and academic self-esteem do significantly affect one another, but that academic self-esteem had a much greater impact on global self-esteem than vice versa. In addition, Rosenberg, et al. (1995) took a closer in-depth look at the concept of reciprocity to see if similar patterns appeared when considering a more specific facet of self-esteem such as self-concept when self-concept was viewed as the self-estimate of one’s intelligence. Self-concept should not be misconstrued for self-esteem. Brinthaupt and Lipka (2002) believe that self-concept should be viewed as “referring primarily to descriptive views of self-attributes, whereas self-esteem should be viewed as more of an affective and evaluative assessment of the adequacy of the content of the self-concept in the context of one’s personal standards and self-expectations” (p. 371). This is more easily understood when considering self-concept as a hierarchical structure. When Rosenberg, et al. (1995) viewed self-concept as the self-estimate of one’s intelligence, they considered it to be a highly specific level such as a child’s assessment of his or her reading or math ability. A
broader level of the spectrum within their study would be the child’s academic self-esteem, based partly on reading and math ability and partly on other facets as well. The scope would broaden even greater when a child takes an assessment of his or her overall general intelligence level, considering his or her academic self-esteem and other facets.

The awareness of the differentiation between self-concept and self-esteem is relevant to the research conducted in the present study, as other studies (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Callaghan & Joseph, 1995; Johnson & Lewis, 1999; and Neary & Joseph, 1994) have been conducted on the correlations between bullying and self-concept or self-perception rather than bullying and self-esteem. However, the relativity of self-concept, as discussed by Rosenberg, et al. (1995), was an important factor within their study as it helped them to provide a basis for their recommendations to educators and policymakers. These recommendations focused on addressing specific self-esteem issues when making and establishing future educational interventions that will further impact specific learning behaviors rather than global self-esteem.

**Self-Esteem and Peer Relations**

Unlike the vast international research conducted on bullying in countries around the world, studies that correlate bullying to some aspect of the self, namely self-esteem, self-concept and self-perception, have mostly been conducted in the UK or Ireland. The following studies will specifically identify the country of origin where each study was conducted.

In Ireland, Neary and Joseph (1994) developed a six-item self-report Peer-Victimization Scale, which they designed to be combined with a 36-item Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) developed by Harter in 1985. The SPPC was mostly used to measure self-perception in children between the ages of 8 and 11 and contained five specific domains including: scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, and behavioral
conduct. In addition, the SPPC also contained a 6-item scale of global self-worth. The Peer-Victimization Scale consisted of six selected items, three of which referred to having been the victim of negative physical actions (i.e., being hit and pushed, picked on, bullied, etc.) and the other three referred to having been the victim of negative verbal actions (i.e., teased, called names, laughed at, etc.). In conjunction, the study also utilized the 18-item Birleson Depression Inventory Scale developed by Birleson in 1981. In addition to completing the SPPC and the Birleson Depression Inventory Scale, the girls were also asked to name any children in the class who they thought were being bullied.

With these scales and inventories, Neary and Joseph (1994) conducted a study on 60 Irish schoolgirls between the ages of 10 and 12 to determine if a relationship existed between peer-victimization and self-concept and depression. Of the 60 girls surveyed, 12 identified themselves as having been bullied, which registered a mean score of 2.72 on the Peer-Victimization Scale. Though only 12 girls identified themselves as victims, 30 girls were identified at least once by their peers as someone who they thought was bullied, which registered a mean score of 2.19 on the Peer-Victimization Scale. Of the 30 remaining girls, their mean score on the same scale registered 1.59. This difference in mean scores was highly significant indicating that the Peer-Victimization Scale was able to differentiate between those girls who were bullied and those who were not bullied based on self and peer-reports. Also, higher scores on the Peer-Victimization Scale correlated to the lower scores on all the SPPC subscales, except for athletic competence, and higher scores on the Birleson Depression Inventory (Neary & Joseph, 1994).

In order to replicate the work of Neary and Joseph and to confirm the internal reliability of the Peer-Victimization Scale and its convergent validity with self- and peer-reports of who was bullied, Callaghan and Joseph (1995) studied the effects of peer victimization among
schoolchildren and their self-concepts. In 1994, they sampled 120 schoolchildren between the ages of 10 and 12 years old. The sample consisted of 63 boys and 57 girls from four classes attending two separate schools in Northern Ireland. All of the children completed the Birleson Depression Inventory and the SPPC. Again, at the end of this survey, the participants were asked if there were any children in the classroom who were being bullied, including them, and to write down the names of those children. Of the 120 participants, 70 children were identified by at least one of their classmates as someone who was bullied. Of those 70, only 13 identified themselves as having been bullied. The 70 children who were identified as having been bullied and the 13 children who identified themselves, both scored significantly higher on the Peer-Victimization Scale and the Birleson Depression Inventory than the other 50 children. The mean score of the 13 students who identified themselves registered 2.82 on the Peer-Victimization Scale and the mean score for the 70 who were identified was 2.33. This group of bullied students also scored lower on the social acceptance scale, the behavior conduct scale, and the global self-worth scale. The internal reliability of the Peer-Victimization Scale was high (Cronbach’s Alpha was equal to .83) (Callaghan & Joseph, 1995).

When comparing the girls and the boys, the girls scored significantly lower on the Peer-Victimization Scale than did the boys suggesting that more boys than girls may be bullied (43 out of 63 boys). These 43 boys also scored significantly higher on the Peer-Victimization Scale than did the other 20 boys. Of the 57 girls, 27 were identified as someone who was bullied. These 27 girls also scored significantly higher on the Peer-Victimization Scale than did the other 30 girls. Not surprisingly, the girls who were bullied also scored significantly lower on the physical appearance subscale than the boys, but no significant differences were found for the
other measures. From this data, Callaghan and Joseph (1995) were able to confirm that lower self-concept is related to those children who are bullied.

Another study conducted by Austin and Joseph (1996) also looked to confirm the internal reliability of the Peer-Victimization Scale and its association with scores on the SPPC and scores on the Birleson Depression Inventory using a sample of English schoolchildren. In the study, however, Austin and Joseph also wanted to investigate the perpetrators of bullying as well as the victims. They developed a six-item Bullying Behavior Scale used in conjunction with the Peer-Victimization Scale, which would allow them to classify children into bully/victim groups in order to further investigate the similarities and differences between the groups.

Austin and Joseph (1996) studied 425 schoolchildren consisting of 204 boys and 221 girls between the ages of 8 and 11 years old who were attending five primary schools in Merseyside, England. Internal reliability for the Peer-Victimization Scale and the Bullying-Behavior Scale were found to be satisfactory with a Cronbach’s alpha of .83 and .82 respectively. The Peer-Victimization Scale demonstrated no significant difference between the boys and the girls although the boys scored higher than the girls on the Bullying-Behavior Scale.

Based on the works of Neary and Joseph (1994) and Callaghan and Joseph (1995), the mean scores of peer-identification were between 2.20-2.33 and those that correspond to self-identification were between 2.70-2.82 (Austin & Joseph, 1996). Therefore, when Austin and Joseph (1996) classified their participants into four groups, they chose a mean cut-off score of 2.50 on both the Peer-Victimization Scale and the Bullying-Behavior Scale. The groups were then identified as the following: 9% high bully and low victim (bully only group), 22% low bully and high victim (victim only group), 15% high bully and high victim (bully/victim group), and 54% low bully and low victim (not involved group). By using the mean cut-off score of 2.50,
46% of participants were classified as being involved in bullying, either as bullies, victims, or both. Even though Austin and Joseph (1996) found no difference between the bully/victim group and the remaining groups for physical appearance, the bully/victim group scored the lowest on behavioral conduct, were similar to bullies only in athletic competence, but were similar to victims only group in scholastic competence, social acceptance, global self-worth, and depression.

The group that scored the lowest on the SPPC scales and yet higher on the Birleson Depression Inventory was the victims only group (Austin & Joseph, 1996). Though no difference was found between the bullies only group and the victims only group in scholastic competence, the victims only group scored significantly lower on the social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, and global self-worth scales and significantly higher on the behavioral conduct scale and the Birleson Depression Inventory than did the bullies only group. These results demonstrate that bullying does have a significant impact on self-concept and issues related to depression.

One of the limitations of this study is that the mean cut-off score of 2.50 may be too high of a cut-off score to identify children who are bullied. The mean cut-off score is higher than the mean scores found for peer identified bullied children in the research conducted by Callaghan & Joseph (1995) (Austin & Joseph, 1996).

Though the previous study by Austin and Joseph (1996) began to look more closely at the comparisons of classified groups of students involved or not involved in bullying, Johnson and Lewis (1999) conducted a study that focused more specifically on the self-esteem of bullies verses non-bullies. Their study was conducted in England of 245 participants whose ages were 14-15 years old and in their 10th year of school from three different schools (a boys’ school, a
The purpose of their study was to look at the elements of the self-concept (more specifically self-esteem, perceived social competence, and perceived scholastic competence) of those teenagers identified as bullies. They used a modified version of ‘The Life in School Checklist’ developed by Arora and Thompson (1987), which was a 40-item checklist originally designed to identify victims of bullying based on specific actions occurring ‘more than once.’ However, with the modified version, the checklist changed the tense of the statements on the questionnaire from passive to active in order to identify bullies rather than victims. Johnson and Lewis (1999) also utilized the Perceived Competence Scale for Children (PCSC) developed by Hatter (1982) as a measurement of self-concept. The PCSC, similar in make-up to the SPPC, contained four scales (athletic competence, social competence, scholastic competence, and global self-worth) of seven items each. Each item was scored from one to four, with some being reverse scored, but the overall mean score being 2.50 (Johnson & Lewis, 1999).

The results from this study were reported separately by Johnson and Lewis (1999), first by the frequency of bullying and then followed by a mean score of the PCSC. At the boys’ school, 36.9% reported being involved in bullying behaviors, whereas the girls’ school reported only 4.4% bullying behaviors and 13.3% of bullying behaviors occurred at the mixed school. While there is no explicit definition to the differences of frequencies within each of these separate schools, Johnson and Lewis (1999) did report a notable firm anti-bullying policy located within the girls’ school. With regard to the PCSC scores, as expected, bullies scored 2.37 on the scholastic scale, 3.00 on the social scale, and 3.00 on the self-esteem scale. In comparison, non-bullies scored 2.50 on the scholastic scale and 3.12 on the social scale and 2.75 on the self-esteem scale. These results confirmed the hypothesis that adolescents displaying bullying behaviors scored higher on measures of self-esteem than did their peers of non-bullying
behaviors. However, those same adolescents displaying bullying behaviors scored generally somewhat lower in the area of scholastic self-concept, though not significantly.

The limitations of this study include the validity of the modified bullying-behavior checklist and regardless of the anonymity provided, participants may not admit even to themselves that they engage in bullying behavior.

While Johnson and Lewis (1999) found bullies to have a high self-esteem of themselves, another study conducted by O’Moore and Kirkham (2001) disputed those findings. On a much larger scale, they conducted a nationwide study of primary and post-primary school children in the Republic of Ireland. This study consisted of 13,112 school children between the ages of 8 and 18. The number of primary school children consisted of 7,315 (3,652 boys and 3,663 girls) between the ages of 8 and 11 years old from 259 primary schools. The number of post-primary school children consisted of 5,797 (2,147 boys and 3,650 girls) between the ages of 12 and 18 years old from 135 post-primary schools. The purpose of their study was to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and bullying behavior with a large population sample. They utilized a modified version of the Olweus self-report questionnaire on school bullying and the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, which was an 80-item self-report designed to determine how children and adolescents felt about themselves. The self-concept scale included the measure of global self-esteem and six cluster scales that included behavior, intellectual and school status, physical appearance and attributes, anxiety, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction.

From this study, O’Moore and Kirkham (2001) reported that children of primary and post-primary school age who had been victims of bullying had significantly lower global self-esteem than those who had not been bullied. At the primary school age, those children who had been bullied several times a week scored a mean total of 42.5 in comparison to those who had
not been bullied that scored a mean total of 61.4. At the post-primary school age, children who had been bullied several times a week demonstrated an even lower mean score (39.7) than children at the primary school age. In comparison, those who had not been bullied at the post-primary school age scored a mean of 57.4. Analysis of the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale demonstrated that both primary and post-primary victims saw themselves as more troublesome, more anxious, less popular, less physically attractive and as having lower intellectual and school status than those children who had not been bullied. Feelings of inadequacy increased as the frequency of bullying experiences increased.

When reviewing the results of the children from both the primary and post-primary school age who had stated that they bullied others, it was reported that those children were found to have significantly lower global self-esteem scores than children who had not bullied others (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001). At the primary school age, those children who had bullied others several times a week scored a mean total of 48.4 in comparison to those children who had not bullied who scored a mean total of 60.2. Similarly, at the post-primary school age, those children who bullied others several times a week scored a mean total of 48.9 in comparison to those who had not bullied others scored a mean of 56.8. The results indicate lower global self-esteem scores are found when the frequency of children bullying other children increases. Also, those children at the primary school age who bullied most frequently were found to have significantly greater feelings of inadequacy on all six of the cluster scales. Children at the post-primary school age who bullied most frequently were found to have significantly greater feelings of inadequacy on four of the six cluster scales compared with students who had not bullied. Their perceived feelings of inadequacy were reported to be more troublesome, to have a lower intellectual and
school status, to be less popular, and to be more unhappy and dissatisfied (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001).

Interestingly, in addition to revealing the results of those students who were identified as either bullies or victims, comparison results were made between students who were reported as pure bullies (those students identified as bullies only) at both the primary and post-primary school age and bullies who admitted to also being a victim (bully/victim). These results revealed that bully/victims have significantly lower global self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy than those students who are identified as pure bullies. The results also indicated that as bullies were more frequently victimized, their scores of global self-esteem lowered and also increased their feelings of inadequacy on all six of the cluster scales. O’Moore & Kirkham (2001) also reported that pure bullies made-up 32% of the primary school students and 40% of post-primary school students. These pure bullies displayed higher self-esteem than did the bully-victims at both the primary and post-primary school ages.

It is important to note that gender differences were not addressed in this study. A limitation of this study is that it relied solely on self-reports of bullying and self-esteem, which may be inflated or deflated depending on the students’ self-perception and support of his or her self-esteem.

Finally, a study conducted by Tritt and Duncan (1997) closely examined the long-term effects of the involvement of childhood bullying as it was related to young adult self-esteem and loneliness. These researchers hypothesized that young adults who were bullies in their childhood would be more lonely than those who had not been involved in bullying behaviors. And, that there would be a relationship between the level of victimization and bullying and the levels of self-esteem and loneliness.
Tritt and Duncan (1997) studied 86 men and 120 women participants in America between the ages of 18 and 22 who were volunteer undergraduate introductory psychology students earning extra credit at a small, regional state university. The majority of the students were Caucasian. The participants were given three questionnaires: a modified version of the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ) developed by Rigby and Slee (1991); the Domain-Specific Self-Esteem Inventory (DSSEI) developed by Hoyle (1991); and the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (RULS) developed by Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980). All of the questionnaires are 20-item scales that measure different variables. The PRQ measured the childhood peer relationships on a 4-point Liken scale. The DSSEI measured self-esteem with scores that ranged from 20 to 140, with lower scores reflecting lower self-esteem, and the RULS measured loneliness with scores ranging from 20 to 80, with higher scores reflecting greater loneliness. All of the three questionnaires were found to have good internal consistency and reliability.

The results from the PQR indicated that of the 206 participants, 6 women and 19 men were identified as having been a bully in their childhood. Additionally, 13 women and 8 men were identified as having been a victim of a bully in their childhood. The results from the DSSEI found that non-bullies scored the highest self-esteem mean score of 96.9, followed by bullies who scored 95.4, and those who were victims scored a mean of 89.3. The RULS results found that non-bullies are less lonely with a mean score of 34.7, followed by bullies whose mean score was 40.2 and then victims who scored a mean of 40.9. The results of this study identified a significant correlation between the victims of bullying and those who had not been involved in bullying, as well as between those who had bullied and those who had not bullied. Both victims and bullies reported more loneliness than those who had not been bullied, but there was no significant difference between the loneliness of bullies and victims. Nor was there any
significance difference found between the self-esteem of bullies, victims or those not involved in bullying at the young adult age level (Tritt & Duncan, 1997).

One of the limitations of this study is the retrospective nature of examining relationships from childhood on an adult psychological functioning level. An additional limitation is that it is possible that the participants denied participation in childhood bullying, either as a victim or a perpetrator, due to social issues or not wanting to admit the painful occurrences to themselves (Tritt & Duncan, 1997).

Summary

In summary, bullying behaviors have been occurring in schools for many years. Bullying behaviors can be identified as both verbal and physical (Espelage & Asidao 2003). Though verbal aggression is more likely to occur than physical aggression, both can be considered forms of bullying. Khosropour and Walsh (2001) studied the differences between bullying and teasing and noted that students tend to refer to verbal aggression as teasing rather than as a form of bullying. The limitations of this study consisted of the low sample size used and no statistical data recorded, other than the calculated percentages to verify the findings. When Dennis and Satcher (1999) studied elementary student’s perception of name-calling, they found that those students who were called names by others considered this a verbal form of bullying.

Bullying behaviors in either the verbal or physical form have been shown to have effects on student behaviors at school. Nansel et al. (2001) demonstrated the frequency of bullying experiences (both of the bully and victim) and the effects of those students involved in some form of bullying. Their research demonstrated that students who are being bullied tend to react in different ways. While some students ignore the bullying behaviors, other students retaliate in violent and physical forms. Cannon et al. (2001) also studied the effects of bullying on
adolescent girls and found that girls internalized the bullying experiences, primarily affecting them emotionally.

In review of the effects of bullying upon student self-esteem, Rosenberg (1965) began his studies on the effects of social factors upon self-esteem and noted how belonging to a certain class or group could change the effects on one’s self-esteem including, socio-economic status as well as prejudice against one’s religious group. As he continued his research studies with other researchers (Rosenberg, et al., 1989), he began to explore the effects of self-esteem on delinquency, depression and school marks. He found that self-esteem did have an effect on delinquency, depression and school marks, and that there also was a reciprocal effect that took place, though these results were not as significant. Rosenberg et al. (1995) further continued these studies by narrowing the topic of self-esteem such that he was able to identify two separate relationships. The first was the effects of specific behaviors upon a specific self-esteem connected to that behavior and the other was one’s general psychological well-being upon one’s global self-esteem. Conclusively, he found the results for both of these relationships. In addition, he discovered self-concept to be a specific level of self-esteem that is used for self-estimating purposes such as the self-estimation of one’s intelligence.

Following Rosenberg’s studies, Neary and Joseph (1994) conducted a study that identified victimized students of bullying and found that a relationship existed between the victimized student and his/her self-concept and depression. Callaghan and Joseph (1995) replicated this study to verify the internal validity of Neary and Joseph’s study. For their study, Callaghan and Joseph (1995) doubled their sample size and achieved similar results, finding that students who were bullied had a lower self-concept of themselves. Following suit of the previous two studies, Austin and Joseph (1996) conducted a similar study of the relationship between peer
victimization and self-concept. However, from the information they attained from the Peer-Victimization Scale, they classified the participants as: bullies, victims, bully/victim and not involved. These groups then allowed them to take a closer look at the relationship between each group and each specific social and behavior factor, confirming that victims of bullying held a lower self-concept of themselves than did those of any of the other three groups.

Since the majority of research relating to bullying and self-esteem primarily focused on the victim, Johnson and Lewis (1999) conducted their study with the intent of focusing on the self-esteem of the bully. The results of their study found that bullies had a high self-esteem. However, contrary to their study, O’Moore and Kirkham (2001) disputed those findings from the results that they received from a nationwide study that they conducted in Ireland. Their results indicated those participants who identified themselves as bullies had significantly lower global self-esteem scores than children who had not bullied others. However, one interesting note from their results was that those participants who were identified as a bully/victim had significantly lower global self-estees and feelings of inadequacy than those students who are identified as pure bullies.

The final study on self-esteem reviewed in this chapter, conducted by Tritt and Duncan (1997), was selected because it focused on how bullying during the childhood years effected young adult self-esteem and loneliness. Therefore, the participants in this study were not school age students, but rather young adults, attending college. The study identified students who had related childhood bullying experiences either as the bully or as the victim. It was determined that there was a significant correlation between the loneliness of bullies and victims in comparison to those who had not been involved in bullying, but that there was no correlation found between childhood bullying experiences and self-esteem at the young adult age level. While this study
represents a sample of the average young adult in America attending college, it cannot take into account the feelings and self-esteem of every young adult who has ever been victimized and the severity of victimization that may have taken place.

The studies and facts mentioned above are just a few of the serious problems associated with bullying in the United States and around the world. The consequences of ignoring the issues of bullying can be devastating, as was witnessed by the tragedies of Columbine High School and the many other schools where the desire for violence and revenge superseded logic and humanity. Therefore, it is imperative that school administrators consider the effects of bullying behaviors on both the individual student being bullied and the effects on the overall school climate.

While these studies demonstrated bullying effects upon student behaviors, except for one (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001), the studies did not include the effects of bullying upon student self-esteem. Even the study of O’Moore and Kirkham (2001), which utilized the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, was conducted in Ireland during the early to mid 1990s and did not utilize a true self-esteem scale, such as the Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale, but rather measured self-esteem using the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale. Other studies conducted to determine the effects of bullying upon self-esteem were mostly all conducted in the UK and Ireland and as were previously reported, did not measure self-esteem in primary school children, but rather focused either on measuring self-concept and self-perception or sampled participants at the secondary level or post-primary level. Therefore, the present research proposed to address the gaps in the literature review by carefully examining how bullying experiences directly relate to and effect student self-esteem.
CHAPTER III. METHODS

This chapter presents a description of the methods that were used to determine the relationship between student bullying behaviors and self-esteem. It closely examines the research design used to determine the relationship while also looking at the individual research questions posed in the study, the participants, the instruments used to gather the research data, the variables, the procedures used for collecting the data, and the data analysis procedures.

Research Design

This study utilized a correlational research design to determine the degree to which a relationship exists between the degrees of bullying experiences and the levels of student self-esteem. This research design was able to look at two or more variables and determine if a relationship exists between those variables (Creswell, 1994). It primarily focused on the relationship between bullying behaviors (both as a victim and a bully as well as their frequency and degrees) and student self-esteem, but also included subtopics that specifically addressed how the effects of bullying differ by grade level and gender.

Participants

The participants selected for this study consisted of 197 intermediate students in grades 3-5 enrolled at a small rural elementary school during the spring of 2006. These participants consisted of 67 third graders, 59 fourth graders, and 71 fifth graders. Among the participants were 84 girls and 113 boys, and their ages ranged from 8-13. For end-of-the-year student reporting purposes, 210 students were enrolled in the intermediate elementary school (grades 3-5). However, on the day that the surveys were administered, 94% of students were in attendance with 13 students absent from school. The total elementary students enrolled in the district, including both primary and intermediate grade levels (K-5) was 448 students; and the total
student enrollment of the entire K-12 school district was recorded at 1055 students. All of the students in grades 3-5 attend the same elementary school at the same K-12 campus facility. The socio-economic status of the school district falls between the lower and middle class levels, with 27% of the entire K-12 student population qualifying to receive free or reduced-price lunches and 14% qualifying to receive special education services. There are approximately 60 to 90 students in each intermediate elementary grade level.

Each intermediate student in grades 3-5 was asked to participate in the study as part of a school-wide initiative to determine the degree of bullying experiences occurring at school and to search for methods of improving the school-learning environment. All students, including students with special needs, took both surveys in their homerooms. Teachers read both of the surveys aloud to all of their students. The Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) was administered first followed by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES). All students took both surveys with the exception of one male fifth grade student who did not complete the SES survey. This student’s SES survey was therefore excluded from the correlational analysis; however, data from his BVQ survey were included in the overall BVQ descriptive results.

Parent permission to administer the surveys was not necessary because the data used from the surveys did not include student names or require information that would violate student privacy issues. However, a notice to the parents was distributed to inform them about the scheduled date that the surveys would be administered and the purpose for collecting data on student bullying behaviors (see Appendix A). Also, due to a school-wide initiative recommended on behalf of the school’s behavior leadership team and approved by the district’s superintendent (see Appendix B, the surveys directly aligned to the school’s behavior action plan to monitor
student behavior patterns (specifically those of bullying and harassment behaviors) by attaining direct data about their bullying behaviors at school.

Instrumentation

This study utilized two survey instruments. The first instrument used to gather data on student bullying behaviors was the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ). This instrument is based on the Likert rating scale and was developed in 1996 by Dan Olweus and revised in 2004. It consists of 39 questions that closely examine bully/victim problems such as the exposure to various physical, verbal, indirect, racial, or sexual forms of bullying/harassment, various forms of bullying other students, where the bullying occurs, pro-bully and pro-victim attitudes, and the extent to which the social environment (teachers, peers, and parents) is informed about and reacts to the bullying.

This instrument was designed specifically for students in grades 3-5 with an age range of 8 through 13. Permission to administer this survey was granted by Dan Olweus. Instructions for administering the survey appear in Appendix C. A brief description of the results of this research project (including approximate number and age range of participants and gender) will be reported to Olweus at the conclusion of this research project. The BVQ was designed to measure the frequency of bullying experiences of each student. There are two primary groups of questions after the first three preliminary informational questions (items 1-3). The first primary group of questions (items 4-23) pertains to students being bullied by other students. This group of questions includes three subgroups of questions that allow students to answer how frequently the student has been bullied in the past couple of months, to what degree (items 5-18), and where the victim was bullied (items 18a.-18k.). The final subgroup of these questions requests the student to answer if he or she told anyone that he or she was being bullied (items 19, 19a.-19f, & 20-23).
Data on whether the victim told anyone about the bullying do not address a particular research question, but are presented for descriptive purposes. The second group of primary questions is specific to students bullying other students (items 24-39). This group of questions has only one subgroup that asks how frequently he or she was involved in bullying others.

Large representative samples of more than 5,000 students have yielded internal consistency reliability coefficients for the BVQ, ranging from .8 to .9. With regard to the validity of self-reports on variables related to bully/victim problems, earlier Swedish studies correlated self-reporting items on the survey in the .40-.60 range (Pearson correlations) with reliable peer ratings (Olweus, 1994). Also, Perry, Kusel, and Perry (1988) reported a correlation of .42 between a self-report scale of three victimization items and a reliable measure of peer nominations of victimization in elementary school children. In addition, class-aggregated student rating estimates of the number of students in the class who were bullied or bullied others during the reference period were found to highly correlate with class-aggregated estimates derived from the students’ own reports of being bullied or bullying others. Correlations were in the .60-.70 range.

Evidence for the construct validity was found that correlated the topics of “being victimized” and “bullying others.” A strong linear relation was found between the degree of victimization and the degree of bullying others as they relate to other variables such as self-reports of depression, poor self-esteem and peer rejection (Bendixen & Olweus, 1999).

The second instrument used in this study for the purpose of identifying varying levels of student self-esteem was the Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (SES) (Appendix D). This scale was originally designed in the 1960s as a Guttman scale, but is now scored as a Likert scale. The SES has a Flesch-Kincaid grade level readability of 3.5 and a reading ease of 79.8. The original
sample consisted of over 5,000 high school students from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State. This survey has 10 items that are answered on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree).

The questions on this survey related directly to how the student feels about him/herself in regard to his or her self-worth, attitude and satisfaction of oneself. Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8 were positively based questions that required reverse scoring when the data were entered into SPSS. Therefore, the mean scores that were generated imply that higher the score, the higher the student self-esteem. This survey was attached to the BVQ and was administered following it. The BVQ included preliminary information about gender and grade level, in order to correlate levels of self-esteem to bullying behaviors.

The scale has demonstrated a high reliability with test-retest correlations typically ranging from .82 to .88, and Cronbach’s alpha for various samples were in the range of .77 to .88 (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1993). The scale was also shown to be a valid and reliable unidimensional measure of self-esteem, as well as a two-factor structure measuring self-confidence and self-deprecation. These factors were dependent upon the participant’s age and other characteristics (i.e., occupation) of the sample measured (Silbert & Tippett, 1965).

Research Questions

1. To what extent do intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5) experience bullying behaviors as a victim in school?

2. To what extent do intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5) experience bullying behaviors as the bully in school?

3. What are the levels of self-esteem for intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?
4. Do the degrees of bullying and the levels of self-esteem differ by grade level among intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?

5. Do the degrees of bullying and the levels of self-esteem differ by gender among intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?

6. What is the relationship between the degree of bullying experiences and student self-esteem?
   
   a. Does self-esteem differ by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for victims?
   
   b. Does self-esteem differ by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for bullies?

Variables

The independent variable is the degree of bullying experiences, which includes the number of times or frequency that a student experienced bullying behaviors while at school or at school-related activities. The types of bullying behaviors include the following: called mean names, made fun of, excluded from groups or ignored, hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors, spreading of rumors, extortion or personal items damaged, threatened or forced to do something, called mean names about race or color, called mean names of a sexual nature or gestures with a sexual meaning.

The frequency or number of times that a student was bullied was determined by the following response choices on the BVQ: not having been bullied at school in the past couple of months, it lasted one or two weeks, it lasted about a month, it has lasted about six months, it has lasted about a year, and it has gone on for several years. The degree of bullying experiences was gathered by collecting information about the frequency and type of bullying experienced by the participants. The survey was scored using the Likert rating scale with frequency scores ranging from 1-4, 1-5 or 1-6. These scores measured the frequency of the bullying experiences by having
the participant identify each experience as one of the following: I haven’t been bullied at school in the past couple of months, only once or twice, 2 or 3 times a month, about once a week, or several times a week.

The dependent variable is the level of self-esteem for students (or victims) who have been bullied by other students, or those who bully other students (the bully). The levels of self-esteem may individually differ by bullying role and/or by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for victims and/or bullies.

**Procedures for Collecting Data**

The method of data collection was the administration of two surveys. The surveys were administered as part of the school district’s initiative plan to help create a positive and safe learning environment for students to learn and achieve, and thus, increase student test scores and the overall educational learning experience. The researcher utilized these surveys as secondary data for the implementation of this study.

In order for the teachers to become familiar with the surveys and the directions, they were given one copy of each survey instrument and the individual directions two days before the scheduled date of administering the surveys to the young participating students. On the scheduled day and time, the researcher (also a school administrator in the district) distributed the survey packets in advance, requesting that the classroom teacher quiet the entire class and state the purpose of the surveys to the young participants, noting the importance for them to be open and honest as no one would know their responses.

At the appropriately scheduled time, the teachers administered the survey instruments, reading the explicit instructions and each individual question. The amount of time to administer the surveys was approximately 30-45 minutes. When the surveys were completed, the teacher
collected the surveys from each participant and returned them to the envelope. Before sealing the envelope, the teacher completed a cover sheet to be enclosed with the surveys, identifying classroom and student information as well as any notations of strange occurrences that may have transpired during the administration of the surveys. At the set time, the researcher walked to each classroom of the 3-5 grade level wing and collected the individual survey packets from each teacher.

Data Analysis Procedures

After receiving approval from Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) to utilize the data from the school district, the surveys’ responses were separated categorically by grade level, classroom, and then by gender since the surveys included preliminary informational questions as the only identifiers for the participants. The data from the BVQ and the SES were entered into an SPSS-compatible data spreadsheet for analysis of comparisons and correlations of self-esteem to bullying behaviors.

In order to answer the proposed research questions, several statistical methods were utilized. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the frequencies, means, and standard deviations for both bullying and self-esteem inquired in research questions 1-3. Inferential statistics were used to test for individual differences between the two variables of bullying and self-esteem for both victims and bullies also in research questions 1-3. The Pearson Correlation was the most beneficial in working with quantitative scores of both variables, as it measured the correlation between the varying degrees of bullying behaviors to perceived student self-esteem levels as was asked in question 6. The $t$-test was used to determine if self-esteem differs by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for victims (question 6a.), and (low versus high) for bullies (question 6b.).
Also included within the analyses were comparisons of gender correlations and student grade level correlations found in research question 5, which applied a t-test of individual samples. The ANOVA and post hoc Scheffé tests were used to measure comparisons of student grade level correlations found in Question 4. A median score for these tests was calculated based on a close approximation of the median’s distribution. This distribution fell at 2.0, which helped to determine the approximate cut-off of these scores. The data were screened for any outliers or missing information using the Levene test.
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the degree of bullying experiences and self-esteem for intermediate elementary school students who attend a small rural elementary school in Northwest Ohio. This chapter includes descriptive information of the sample and the results of the correlation analysis after the data were entered into SPSS from both the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) (2003) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES) (1965). Frequency tables of all items for both surveys were constructed and included the means and standard deviations. The results of this survey are presented by research question.

Sample

The sample for this correlational study consisted of 197 intermediate students in grades 3-5. There were 67 participants from grade 3, 59 from grade 4, and 71 from grade 5. The student gender consisted of 84 girls and 113 boys, and their ages ranged from 8-13 years of age. One participant was excluded from the SES data analysis due to incomplete survey responses.

Correlational Analysis

The BVQ survey, which was administered first, began by asking students if they liked or disliked school. Half of the students (50.7%) responded that they liked school, 30% neither liked nor disliked school, 9.1% of the students disliked school, and 10.2% disliked school very much. When the students were asked about the number of good friends that they had in their class, an overwhelming 60% of the students responded with the highest possible answer, that they had 6 or more good friends in the their class. The percentages decreased in order for the responses of 4 or 5 good friends—23.9%, 2 or 3 good friends—10.7%, and 1 good friend—3%. Unfortunately, 2% of the students answered that they had no good friends in their class.
Research Question #1

To what extent do intermediate elementary students (grades 3-5) experience bullying behaviors as a victim in school?

Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide descriptive statistics to aid in determining the frequency of bullying, various bullying behaviors as well as specific locations of bullying experiences and who the victim informed about the bullying experiences. Survey items 4-13 report the frequency of victims experiencing bullying behaviors. There were five possible frequency choices for victims to choose from: category 1—it has not happened to me in the past couple of months, category 2—it has happened only once or twice, category 3—two or three times a month, category 4—about once a week, or category 5—several times a week. Table 1 illustrates the frequency of bullying behaviors as experienced by the victim as well as the frequency in the types of bullying behaviors. Of the students being bullied, 43% \((n=83)\) have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months. However, almost 10% of students \((n=19)\) have been bullied two or three times a month (a month of school equates to approximately 20 week days). Even more alarming was that almost 15% of students \((n=28)\) reported having been bullied several times a week.

The most frequent kinds of bullying behaviors as reported by 11.3% of the victims included being called names, being made fun of or being teased in a hurtful way. This was followed by 9.8% of victims who were bullied with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning. The lowest frequencies of bullying behaviors reported were 3.1% and involved extortion, or having had money or other things taken away from them or damaged. Bullying behaviors of being threatened or forced to do things they did not want to do was also reported at 3.1%. When students were asked to respond with a written answer if they had been bullied in
another way, 9% of the students responded. While most of the student responses listed the names that they were called, other students wrote that they were “spit on,” had their “hair pulled,” and were “made to play on the girl’s team.”

Of the means generated from Table 1, the amount of bullying ($M=2.23$) occurring is on average between once and twice in the past couple of months and two or three times a month. When considering the kinds of bullying experienced by the victim, the greatest mean ($M=2.22$), being called names, teased, etc., fell closely in line to the amount of bullying. This was followed closely by the spread of rumors/lies with a mean score of 2.02, and then excluded or ignored with a mean of 1.99. The overall mean score for bullying experiences of the victim was 1.81.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of Bullying Experienced by Victim (n=197)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1*</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bullied in past 2 mo.</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Called names, teased</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excluded/ignored</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hit, kicked, etc.</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spread rumors/lies</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Threatened/forced</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Called racial names</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Called sexual names</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bullied another way</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *1=Haven’t been bullied in the past couple of months, 2=It has only happened once or twice, 3=Two or three times a month, 4=About once a week, and 5=Several times a week. Numbers in the cells represent percentages of respondents.

For the next set of survey items, 14-18, students were asked general kinds of questions about being bullied. The first possible choice for each of these questions allowed the student to respond by checking that they had not been bullied at school in the past couple of months. For each of the questions, the student responses were fairly consistent for responding to choice #1
(haven’t been bullied in the past couple of months). The percentages for these five items were in order as follows: 40%, 39%, 35%, 40% and 42.6%. This percentage aligns with the frequency of bullying found in item #4, where 43% of victims responded that they had not been bullied in the past two months. When the victims were asked about which class(es) or grade levels the student(s) were in who bullied them, 22.3% responded that the bully was in his/her class and 17.1% responded that the bully was in the same grade level, but in another class. When victims were asked if boys or girls had bullied them, 18.4% responded that mainly one boy bullied them, followed closely with 17.9% of victims responding that both boys and girls bullied them.

Students were then asked how many students bullied them. Of the victims responding, 25.6% responded that one student mainly bullied them; while 21% responded that they were bullied by a group of 2-3 students. When considering the duration of the bullying (students were asked how long the bullying had lasted), 18.9% responded that it lasted one or two weeks, but sadly 8.2% of victims (n=16) responded that the bullying has gone on for several years. Item #18 sought to determine where the victim had been bullied. Nearly 57% of students (n=108) responded that they had been bullied in one or more places in the past couple of months.

Survey items 18a-18k in Table 2 illustrate the frequency of the location where the victims reported bullying experiences. Not surprisingly, students noted that the most likely places where bullying is occurring is in locations where supervision is limited. Over 50% of victims reported that bullying takes place on the playground, followed by 38.6% on the school bus, then 34.6% in the hallways/stairwells. In both the classroom where the teacher was not present and in the lunchroom, 30.6% reported having been bullied in both of these locations. Item18k also allowed students to write a written response if they had been bullied somewhere else in school. For this question, 20.8% of victims responded with a written response. Many of the written responses,
however, were locations that had already been included in survey items 18a-18j. Other written
responses not previously mentioned in the survey items 18a-18j included computer class, music
room, library, field day, and when the student walked to school.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Location of Bullying Experienced by Victim (n=197)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18a</td>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18b</td>
<td>Hallways/Stairwells</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18c</td>
<td>Classroom (Teacher present)</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18d</td>
<td>Classroom (Teacher absent)</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18e</td>
<td>Restroom</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18f</td>
<td>Gym class/locker room</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18g</td>
<td>Lunch room</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18h</td>
<td>To &amp; from school</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18i</td>
<td>Bus stop</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18j</td>
<td>School bus</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18k</td>
<td>Elsewhere at school</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* %Yes indicates the percentage of students bullied in each location.

Survey item #19 inquired of the victims if they had told anyone that they had been bullied
at school in the past couple of months. Of the victims responding (*n*=113), 43.9% (*n*=86)
reported that they had told somebody about the bullying and 13.8% (*n*=27) had not told anyone.
Table 3 illustrates the person whom the victim told about the bullying experience. Victims were
most likely to tell their friends (46.9%), followed by their parent/guardian (43.7%). Item #19f
allowed the students to write a written response if they had told someone else that was different
from the choices provided throughout items 19a-19e. The written responses to item 19f varied.
Of the 18.5% of students who responded to item 19f, 10.8% wrote in the name of the person to
whom they had told; 40.5% specified a family member other than parent/guardian such as a
cousin, grandparent, aunt or other relative; 21.6% responded that they had told a bus driver
and/or the superintendent of busses, a substitute teacher, or a high school helper (this group of
written responses may not have considered their answer to be related to item 19b—having told another adult at school), 5.4% had told God, and 2.7% had told their dog.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Person That Victim Informed of Bullying Experience (n=86)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19a</td>
<td>Classroom teacher</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19b</td>
<td>Staff member</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19c</td>
<td>Parent/Guardian</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19d</td>
<td>Brother/Sister</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19e</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19f</td>
<td>Someone else</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next four questions of the BVQ Survey inquire about how often teachers, other adults at school, or students at school tried to put a stop to the bullying, and whether any adult from home tried to intervene after the victim told someone that they had been bullied. The last question in this group asked the student how they felt or thought when they witnessed someone being bullied at school. While 45.2% of students responded that teachers and other adults at school almost always try to put a stop to bullying, 15.7% ($n=31$) said just the opposite that teachers or other adults at school almost never try to put a stop to bullying. With regard to other students putting a stop to bullying at school, student responses varied, but 24.9% said that other students almost never try to put a stop to bullying, followed closely by 23.9% of students who said that other students sometimes will try, and then 20.8% responded that other students would try once in a while.

When students were asked if any adult at home had contacted the school to try and put a stop to the bullying in the past couple of months, 44.4% of students responded that they had not been bullied in the past couple of months. The remaining victims responded at a rate of 39.3% ($n=77$) that an adult at their home had not made contact with the school to try to stop them from
being bullied. Only 13.3% \((n=26)\) said that an adult had contacted the school once to try to stop the bullying.

From a personal perspective, when students were asked how they felt or thought when they saw a student their age being bullied, overwhelmingly, 73.1% of students responded that they felt sorry for him or her and want to help him or her. Only 3.6% of students said that that is probably what he or she deserved.

**Research Question #2**

*To what extent do intermediate elementary school student (grades 3-5) experience bullying behaviors as the bully in school?*

Items 24-33 in Table 4 address the frequency of bullying behaviors of bullies. In the past couple of months, 68.9% of students responded that they had not bullied another student(s) at school. Those students, 21.9% \((n=43)\), who had admitted they bullied or taken part in bullying another student at school, responded that it had only happened once or twice. And 3.1% of students \((n=6)\) admitted that they had bullied another student at school several times a week.

The most frequent kinds of bullying behaviors as reported by the bullies included the following: called others names, made fun of, or teased him or her in a hurtful way. While 24% of the bullies reported that this only happened once or twice in the past couple of months, 3.1% reported that these were the kinds of bullying behaviors that they use to bully others several times a week. Other bullies, 16.8%, responded that they bullied others by exclusion or having kept them out of things on purpose (excluded them from the group or friends or completely ignored them) within the past couple of months. As was consistent with the victims’ reports, the lowest frequencies of bullying behaviors reported by 3.6% of the bullies, involved extortion or taking money or other things and causing damage to others’ belongings. When considering
violent behaviors directed toward students, 9.2% of bullies \((n=18)\) reported that they hit, kicked, pushed and shoved another student around or locked him or her indoors in the past couple of months, whereas 1.5% of bullies \((n=3)\) admitted that these were the kind of bullying behaviors that they performed several times a week. When students were asked to respond with a written answer if they had bullied in another way, of the 6.1% that responded, all of the responses that were given were choices provided in items 25-32.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of Bullying Experienced by Bully*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1*</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bullied in past 2 mo.</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Called names, teased</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Excluded/ignored</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Hit, kicked, etc.</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Spread rumors/lies</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Extortion</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Threatened/forced</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Called racial names</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Called sexual names</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Bullied another way</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *1=Haven’t bullied another student(s) in the past couple of months, 2=It has only happened once or twice, 3=Two or three times a month, 4=About once a week, and 5=Several times a week. Numbers in the cells represent percentages of respondents.*

The final survey items of the BVQ (34-39) address general questions about bullying. When students were asked if their class or homeroom teacher or any other teacher had talked with them about bullying other students at school in the past couple of months, 73.7% reported that they had not bullied others in the past couple of months. However, 11.9% reported that their teacher or another teacher had talked with them about bullying once, 5.7% reported that their teacher or another teacher had talked with them about bullying several times. When asked if any adult at home had talked with them about bullying other students at school in the past couple of
months, though 76.9% responded that they had not bullied others in the past couple of months, 15.9% (n=31) reported that no one had talked with them about bullying others. Those students who reported that an adult at home had spoken with them several times about bullying were 3.1% (n=6).

Students were then asked if they thought they could join in bullying a student whom they did not like. While the majority of students, 73.1%, responded “definitely no,” “no,” or “no, I don’t think so,” 26.9% responded “yes,” “maybe” or they “did not know.” Then students were asked how they usually react if they see another student their age being bullied. Almost half (48.7%) of students responded that they would try to help the bullied student in one way or another; 23.9% reported that they had never noticed that students their age have been bullied; 16.2 reported that they don’t do anything, but they think that they ought to help the bullied student; 9.1% just watch what goes on; and 2% would take part in the bullying.

Item 38 asked students if they were afraid of being bullied by other students in their school. Though 43.7% reported that they never were afraid, 9.1% (n=18) reported that they were very often afraid of being bullied; followed by 5.6% (n=11) who responded that they were often afraid of being bullied by other students at school. Finally, the last item on the BVQ Survey asked the students how much the class or homeroom teacher has done to counteract bullying in the past couple of months. Though more than half of the students (65%, or n=128) positively responded that their teachers had done much or a good deal to counteract bullying, 35% (n=69) reported that their teacher had done somewhat, fairly little or little to nothing to counteract bullying in the past couple of months.
Research Question #3

*What are the levels of self-esteem for intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?*

Table 5 provides descriptive statistics that assist in analyzing the Rosenberg SES results. It is important to note that when the data from this survey were entered into SPSS, it was recoded for items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8, such that what was an old value of “1” for these particular questions became a value of “4,” otherwise known as reverse scoring. The purpose of reverse scoring was to align the values of each response so that they followed the same numerical direction. The overall mean for self-esteem was 3.03 out of 4 with a standard deviation of .48. These scores indicate that students have an overall positive self-esteem, but they do feel useless at times and wish that they could have more self-respect. Concern and consideration should be given to the individual standard deviation score of 1.13, which indicates that at times, some students (16.9%) think that they are no good at all.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Level of Student Self-Esteem*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1*</td>
<td>Equal to others</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2*</td>
<td>Several good qualities</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feel like a failure</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4*</td>
<td>Able to do things as well as most others</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Not much to be proud of</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6*</td>
<td>Positive attitude about self</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7*</td>
<td>Satisfied with self</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8*</td>
<td>Wish for self-respect</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Feel useless at times</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>At times thinks they are no good at all</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Self-Esteem</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * Indicates reverse scoring. Respondents used a 4-point Likert scale, with 1=strongly agree to 4=strongly disagree.
Research Question #4

*Do the degrees of bullying and the levels of self-esteem differ by grade level among intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)*?

The results of the descriptive statistics identifying the mean and standard deviation of victim experience, bully experience, and student self-esteem by grade level are illustrated in Tables 6, 7, and 8. An analysis of variance was also conducted to examine the differences in the degrees of bullying and levels of self-esteem by grade level. A one-way ANOVA and post hoc Scheffe tests results indicated that there is a significant difference between bullying behaviors for students in grade 3 and students in grade 4 for victims (F(2,194)=3.99, p=.02). However, the effect size utilizing the eta squared was small ($\eta^2 = .04$). Table 6 illustrates that students in grade 3 ($M=2.02$) experienced higher levels of bullying as a victim than did students in grades 4 and 5, although the difference between grades 3 and 5 was not statistically significant. Students in grade 4 had the least amount of bullying experiences as a victim with an overall mean score of 1.62.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2.02*</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *Significant difference, at $p<.05$, between grades 3 and 4.

Table 7 demonstrates that students in grade 5 achieved an overall mean score of 1.29, and therefore, they experienced more bullying behaviors as the bully than did students in grades 3 and 4. The mean scores of students in both 3 and 5 were nearly equivalent ($M=1.29$ and $M=1.25$ respectively). However, even though students in grades 3 and 5 experienced more bullying
behaviors as the bully than did students in grade 4, there were no significant differences found for bullies among grade levels \( F(2,194)=1.56, p=.212 \).

Table 7

**Bully Experience by Grade Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>( N )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When self-esteem was considered by grade level, as represented in Table 8, students in grade 5 (\( M=2.89 \)) had a lower mean score than did students in grades 3 (\( M=3.10 \)) and 4 (\( M=3.11 \)). Therefore, students in grade 5 demonstrated significantly lower levels of self-esteem, \( F(2,193)=4.60, p=.011 \), than did students in grades 3 and 4. Again, utilizing the eta squared, the effect size was rather small (\( \eta^2 = .05 \)).

Table 8

**Student Self-Esteem by Grade Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2.89*</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant differences, at \( p<.05 \), between grades 3 & 5 and grades 4 & 5.

With further inspection of the data presented for the victim experiences, bullying experiences, and self-esteem of students by grade level in Tables 6, 7, and 8, it could be concluded that students in grade 3 have had greater bullying experiences as the victim, students in grade 5 have had greater bullying experiences as the bully (though data are not significant for this area), and also, these students in grade 5 have lower levels of self-esteem than students in grades 3 and 4.
Research Question #5

Do the degrees of bullying and the levels of self-esteem differ by gender among intermediate elementary school students (grades 3-5)?

Table 9 illustrates the results of a t-test of independent samples, which reveal that as a victim, male students have a greater mean score of 1.90 than female students ($M=1.69$). Male students also have a greater mean score of 1.28 as being the bully than female students ($M=1.17$). However, neither of these differences was significant. Also, male students scored a slightly lower level of self-esteem ($M=3.01$) than did female students ($M=3.05$). And again, these differences were not significant.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Victim</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Bully</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Self-Esteem</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question #6

What is the relationship between the degree of bullying experiences and student self-esteem?

Table 10 presents the correlations between the degree of bullying experiences and student self-esteem. A significant negative correlation was found to exist between the victim and self-esteem, with $r(197) = -.319$, $r^2 = .10$, and also between the bully and self-esteem, with $r(197) = -.256$, $r^2 = .07$. This would indicate that the self-esteem for both the victim and the bully is negatively related to bullying behaviors. The results were significant at the $p<.01$ level. Therefore, as the bullying experiences for both the victim and the bullying increased, self-esteem decreased.
Table 10

Pearson Correlation for Levels of Victim, Bully, & Student Self-Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Bully</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-.319*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.256*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

Research Questions #6a and 6b

Does self-esteem differ by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for victims?

Does self-esteem differ by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for bullies?

The analysis for research questions 6a and 6b utilized a *t*-test of independent samples to determine whether or not self-esteem differed by the degree of bullying (low versus high) for victims and (low versus high) for bullies. A mean score of 2.00 separated the students from having either a low or a high level of bullying. Therefore, students with low levels of bullying would have a mean score between 0 and 1.99, and those students with high levels of bullying would have a mean score between 2 and 5. A Levene’s Test was conducted to examine the equality of variances among the sample sizes victim-low and victim-high and also bully-low and bully-high. This test revealed unequal variances among the sample sizes, in particular the sample sizes of the bully-low and bully-high categories. Therefore, a *t*-test of independent samples and unequal variances was conducted to determine the equality of the means between the bully-low and bully-high. An equal mean difference of .3015 was found between the bully-low and bully-high samples.

As illustrated in Table 11, individuals reporting high levels of bullying experiences as a victim had significantly lower levels of self-esteem (*M*=2.85 for victim-high) than did individuals reporting low levels of bullying experiences as a victim (*M*=3.16 for victim-low). In
addition, individuals reporting high levels of bullying experiences as a bully had significantly lower levels of self-esteem ($M=2.75$ for bully-high) than did individuals reporting low levels of bullying experiences as a bully ($M=3.05$ for bully-low). Therefore, individuals who experienced high levels of bullying, either as the victim or the bully, had significantly lower levels of self-esteem than did individuals who reported having fewer bullying experiences, either as the victim or the bully. However, when considering the percent of variance in self-esteem explained by its relationship with degree of bullying, the results indicated a small effect size with $r^2 = .09$ for low verses high for victims with self-esteem, and also a small effect size for low verses high for bullies with self-esteem with $r^2 = .03$.

Table 11

*t-test of Independent Samples—Results Comparing Low and High Levels for both Victim and Bully with respect to Self-Esteem*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>$r^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victim-low</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.0001</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim-high</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully-low</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.0240</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully-high</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

This chapter presented the statistical results obtained from data collection of two survey instruments: the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES). The results of the Olweus survey revealed that half of the students liked school, but nearly 20% disliked school, and that most students had several friends in their class.

Regarding bullying behaviors, 43% of students had not been bullied in the past couple of months, but 15% had been bullied several times a week. Students were bullied most frequently by being called names, made fun of or teased in a hurtful way. Victims were typically bullied by
one boy in their class, but it was also reported that both boys and girls bully others. Bullying behaviors typically lasted for one or two weeks, though 8.2% of victims claim that the bullying has gone on for several years.

Bullying behaviors are most likely to occur in areas where supervision is limited such as the playground, hallways, school bus, lunchroom, and in the classroom when the teacher is not present. It is also likely to happen in unstructured classrooms such as the library, music room, computer room, gym, etc.

Almost half of the students reported telling their friends and family about the bullying; and almost half of these students reported that an adult at home had contacted the school to try to stop the bullying. However, 45.3% of students reported having told their classroom teacher and other adults at school. Sadly, 15.7% reported that teachers or other adults would almost never try to stop it, and nearly the same amount (13.2%) believed that their teacher had done little or nothing to counteract bullying in the past couple of months.

Students who bully other students report that it generally only happened once or twice, but 3.1% bully other students several times a week and mostly in the manner of calling others names, making fun of them or teasing them in a hurtful way. However, 1.5% of bullies hit, kicked, pushed and shoved another student several times a week. Though this is a low percentage, these violent bullying behaviors may be having an impact on the 14.7% of students who are afraid of being bullied at school.

The results of the Rosenberg survey revealed that students overall have a positive self-esteem. However, some students do feel useless at times and wish they could have more respect for themselves.
Statistically significant relationships were found between the degree of bullying experiences and self-esteem for intermediate elementary school students. First, there was a significant difference found between the bullying behaviors of victims for students in grade 3 and grade 4. There were no significant differences found between bullying behaviors of victims for students in grades 3 and 5, though these students in grade 5 experienced more frequent bullying behaviors than did students in grade 4. Also, students in grade 5 exhibited significantly lower levels of self-esteem than did the students in grades 3 and 4. Students in grade 4 reportedly had the highest levels of self-esteem and the lowest levels of both victim and bully experiences.

Significant negative correlations were found between both the victim and self-esteem and the bully and self-esteem. These results will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V. In addition, the limitations of this study are also discussed as well as future implications.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

Chapter V provides an overview of the current study including an interpretation of the results presented in Chapter IV as well as meaningful findings and conclusions for practical application of these results. This chapter also includes limitations of the study as well as implications for future research in the field of bullying behaviors and self-esteem.

Overview of the Study

The present study examined six research questions concerning the impact of student bullying behaviors upon student self-esteem. Research has shown that student bullying behaviors do have a significant impact on a student’s psychosocial adjustment (Cannon et al., 2001; Corsaro & Eder, 1993; and Nansel et al., 2001). The majority of research pertaining more specifically to student-bullying behaviors on student self-perception and self-concept (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Johnson & Lewis, 1999; Neary & Joseph, 1994; O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001; and Rigby & Slee, 1999) has been conducted in the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland and Australia. However, this research was conducted primarily on students in the middle to upper grade school levels. Minimal research has been conducted on the effects of student bullying behaviors on intermediate school-aged students and their self-esteem. More recent research has begun to be conducted in the United States due to the increase of school shootings and school violence across the nation since the turn of the century, but this research has focused primarily on the effects of school-wide bullying/anti-violence programs and their successes as well as the impact of student bullying through technological means such as cyber bullying (Ascione, 2006; Hinduja & Patchin, 2005; and National Children’s Home and Tesco Mobile, 2005). Due to the lack of literature found on studies conducted on student bullying behaviors of intermediate elementary school students’ self-esteem in the United States, this present study was conducted to test the evidence
within this previously unstudied specified area. The literature has shown that student-bullying behaviors affect student psychological adjustments such as self-perception, self-concept and self-esteem. From the perspective of a victim of bullying experiences, bullying behaviors have demonstrated a negative impact on student self-esteem (Cannon et al., 2001, and O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001). Austin and Joseph (1996) reported that students who were identified as both the victim and the bully were found to score the lowest on behavior conduct. In contrast to the studies conducted by Cannon et al. (2001) and O’Moore and Kirkham (2001), other research indicates that bullies have a high self-esteem (Johnson & Lewis, 1999). However, this finding was not prevalent among the other literature findings. Interestingly, literature was found on the study of adults who had experienced bullying behaviors as a child (Tritt & Duncan, 1997). This research found that those adults who had experienced bullying behaviors in their childhood, either as the bully or as the victim, were lonelier than those who had not experienced any bullying behaviors.

In relation to these studies previously mentioned, the present study focused on finding the frequency of bullying experiences including the kinds of bullying most frequently experienced, the location of the bullying experiences, how long the bullying lasted, and by how many students. However, this study also sought to find a correlation between intermediate elementary students who experienced greater bullying experiences and the levels of their self-esteem. Is there a relationship between the degree of bullying experiences and student self-esteem? O’Moore and Kirkham (2001) attempted to answer this question as well when they conducted a massive study on primary and post-primary school students in Ireland using a modified version of the Olweus BVQ and the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale. While the study of O’Moore and Kirham (2001) most closely resembles the present study, it did not address gender differences
and was not conducted in the United States. As a result, this study provided evidence that the correlation between student bullying behaviors and self-esteem among intermediate elementary students in the United States would be worthy of further exploration.

The purpose of the present study was similar to O’Moore and Kirkham’s (2001) in that it attempted to narrow down the broad scope of bullying, linking it specifically to self-esteem. This study was also an attempt to investigate whether or not students and staff were taking action against bullying, and if students felt safe to go to school. Due to the heightened awareness of violence in America’s schools today, it is important to know if bullying is an issue of concern that might bring about future violence within the school or impede student learning in unsafe environments that create fear and intimidation. Consequently, the school-learning environment significantly impacts student self-esteem and his or her overall performance at school. Students cannot be expected to perform effectively when they feel threatened or unsafe, and are afraid of humiliation and degradation. They must know that school is a safe place to be in order to learn. For this reason, it was imperative to expand the body of literature that existed on student bullying behaviors and self-esteem, giving evidence that supported a relationship that might co-exist and explore ways to improve the overall school-learning environment.

Committee for Children (2006) defines a bully as one who abuses power physically, psychologically, or sexually. They tease and taunt others, purposefully exclude certain classmates, and spread rumors. Given this detrimental behavior, the relationship that exists between a bully and a victim and its affects on self-esteem is of great significance. Therefore, data were collected and analyzed from surveys taken from 197 intermediate elementary students in grades 3-5 (67 third graders, 59 fourth graders, and 71 fifth graders) at a small rural
elementary school in Northwest Ohio, which was 94% of the total school’s total enrollment. Student ages ranged from 8 to 13 with 84 girls and 113 boys.

Two separate well-known surveys were used to conduct this study. The first was the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ), a 39-item survey modified in 2001 for the purpose of identifying bullying behaviors in school environments. This survey has been used extensively around the world in its modified version for the past few years and in its original version for the past couple of decades, to measure the independent variable, student-bullying behaviors (Veen, 2004).

The second instrument used in this study measured the dependent variable, self-esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES) has been used since the mid-1960s in studies to further explore the relational aspect of self-esteem. It was modified from the original survey in language only in order to accommodate the read ability level of the participants.

The data were entered into an SPSS computer program and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlations. The significance of these results is summarized and discussed in the following sections.

Implications from Descriptive Statistical Results

Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire

The BVQ survey began by asking students if they liked or disliked school, followed closely by how many good friends they had in the same class. Student scores paralleled fairly closely between these two questions with the majority of students reporting that they liked school and had four or more good friends in their class. In addition, the scores were also parallel for those students reporting a dislike for school and having few friends within their class. Due to the closeness of these relationships, there may be cause to believe that those students who have
several friends may have a higher opinion about school and themselves than those who do not have as many friends. Olweus (1993) confirmed that peer relations at school do have an impact upon the school environment and students’ feelings about school. In his Bully Prevention Program, Olweus (2003) helps schools work to improve their peer relations at school. Certainly social aspects do play an important role in determining the likes and dislikes for the places, such as educational institutions, where students spend a majority of their time, and where bullying experiences may be a grim reality affecting the social aspects for many students.

The next set of questions addressed the frequency of victims experiencing bullying behaviors at school in the past couple of months. The descriptive results indicated that 57% of students have been bullied at school within the past couple of months, and that 15% of those reported having been bullied several times a week. The most frequent kinds of bullying behaviors experienced by the victim were being called names (including racial as well as sexual names and gestures), being made fun of, being teased in a hurtful way, and having rumors or lies spread about them. It is not surprising that these are some of the most common types of bullying behaviors because they are verbal bullying behaviors that only require the victim to hear them when the teacher or another staff member is not within hearing range.

In their study on verbal aggression and name calling among elementary students in the United States, Dennis and Satcher (1999) found that as the experience of being called names increased, students’ positive peer beliefs generally decreased, indicating that those victims of bullying behaviors, specifically name calling behaviors, lowered their perceptions of their peers. This might also be attributed to the lack of intervention they received from their peers when the bullying was occurring or just a greater dislike for those peers who bullied them.
Some students in the present survey listed other ways that they were bullied, which included being spit on, having their hair pulled, and being made to play on a girl’s team. Other types of bullying behaviors noted and that are considered more violent and physical in nature were bullying behaviors such as being hit, kicked, pushed around, or shoved. These types of bullying behaviors could potentially cause injury to the victim or another student in proximity. So where are these bullying behaviors taking place?

According to the descriptive results, students reported that the bully who victimizes them is a student in his or her class or in the same grade, but a different class. This is probably due to the interaction that grade level students have with one another. Typically, schools with multiple classes per grade level follow a schedule that is designed around grade level activities and common instruction time (i.e., all students in the third grade each lunch at the same time followed by a common recess time together). But who are the students who are bullying others?

The present study revealed that victims are typically bullied by one boy, followed by both boys and girls. Dennis and Satcher (1999) and Olweus (1978) found that the bullying behavior of boys is generally more extreme than the bullying behaviors of girls. Though both genders call other students names, girls are more likely to use this form of bullying as well as exclusion from groups than boys who might revert to physical forms of aggression and bullying behaviors. Where are these bullying behaviors occurring?

When students bully, either alone or in clusters, it is most likely to be in an inconspicuous place with minimal adult supervision such as the playground, restroom, hallways, lunchroom, and school bus. This finding was consistent with the findings of Espelage, et al. (2003), which revealed that bullying behaviors generally occurred in unstructured areas where sufficient adult supervision is lacking. Though there may be adults on duty in these locations, it is not always
possible to see and hear everything. Even in the classroom where the students and the teacher are in a confined space, bullies may seize an opportunity to bully others at a time when the teacher is not looking or during unstructured time when the teacher’s back is turned. Could this be that the bully is brave and conniving, or that he/she believes that the teacher will not do anything about it?

Findings within the present study reveal that approximately 15% of students believe that teachers do not do anything to try to put a stop to or counteract bullying behaviors in the classroom. Though there is no way of knowing for sure, these respondents may have previously reported bullying experiences or knew of someone who did, but felt that nothing had been done to sop it. With this margin of error or allowance of bullying behaviors to occur, bullies may very well be ceasing upon the opportunities of teachers who do not step up and take action against bullying. The classroom management of the teacher may also play a very vital role in the control and counteraction of bullying behaviors within his or her classroom.

Bullying behaviors were also reported in less structured classes such as gym, music, computer, and library. In these areas, the focus is not generally centered on academics, but rather the fine arts, which encourages student interactions in close proximity with others. In these areas, students may feel more relaxed, and therefore, more at liberty to act out and demonstrate bullying behaviors. Though there are teachers in each of these areas, because they are non-academic teachers, students may believe that they do not have to follow the same rules as they do in the academic classrooms.

After bullying experiences occur in these areas, do students tell anyone? Most victims do tell someone, but some of them do not. Those who do tell someone are most likely to tell either their friends or their parent/guardian followed by an immediate family member such as a brother
or sister. Sadly, when students do tell the adults in their family, generally nothing is done to try and prevent the bullying, which may potentially increase the victim’s sense of helplessness, creating a fear for attending school. Students also reported having told God and their dog. Possibly some prayed to God to intervene and stop the bullying. Or, when they had told their dog, they may have sought comfort from their pet, one that is often considered as close as a friend or possibly their only friend.

There may be a number of possibilities to explain why victims of bullying do not tell their teachers or other staff members at school. Perhaps the victim feels humiliated that he or she is a victim of bullying or does not want to get the bully in trouble. Or, possibly the victim does not have a good rapport or trusting relationship with the teacher/staff member or does not believe that he or she will do anything about it or may even consider the information as tattling to get someone in trouble rather than as a bullying experience. Reid, Monsen and Rivers (2004) found that students are reluctant to report bullying behaviors due to fears of not being supported by peers and teachers, lack of assertiveness, low self-esteem, and poor conflict resolution skills. Is there a lack of relationship between victims of bullying and their teachers? Are teachers and other adults at school making a conscientious effort to protect students from bullying, and thus, building and nurturing a relationship of trust and confidence?

Though most teachers have great concern for the safety and welfare of their students and would not intentionally ignore the pleas of the victims of bullying behaviors, some may not be fully aware of the various kinds of bullying behaviors that occur right in front of them. Reid, et al., (2004) believes that teachers underestimate the frequency and significance of how bullying behaviors manifest themselves into the lives of their students, and thus, their schools. These authors suggest that teachers need to be aware of the types of indirect bullying such as social
isolation, spreading rumors, etc. in order to confront and prevent bullying situations. When victims know that their teacher and other adults at school care about them and their welfare, believes in them when they report incidents of bullying, and is working to prevent further bullying behaviors, they have a secured sense that someone is helping them, and thus, a relationship of trust and confidence begins.

Most likely, the reason that victims do not tell their teachers or another adult at school may be because of their fear of the possible consequences of continued or more extreme bullying behaviors from the bully when he or she finds out that the victim has reported the experience and the bully gets in trouble. This ‘fear of retaliation by the aggressor’ was also reported by Morita et al. (1999). The victim may try to ignore the bullying behaviors, hoping and praying that the bullying will stop or increase his or her absenteeism from school in order to avoid contact with the bully. Reid, et al., (2004) found that long-term indirect bullying behaviors may be directly linked to both absenteeism and poor school performance as well as lowered levels of self-esteem.

Though victims sometimes tell their friends about their bullying experience(s), their friends may not be able to intervene and put a stop to bullying due to the power that the bully holds over other students. Some students may fear that if they do try to intervene, they might potentially become the new target or victim of the bully as well. They may also believe that there is nothing they can do to stop it; they are powerless in comparison to the physical strength of and/or social power that the bully holds over them. Others may believe that they should mind their own business and not become involved at all.

When bullying incidents do occur, most students will try to help the bullied student. Some students, however, may never be privy to witnessing acts of bullying due to their high social status or popularity grouping, of which bullying behaviors may not be found or witnessed
those students who do witness bullying behaviors, but do not do anything to assist the victim may be afraid to intervene due to peer pressure, or he or she may have previously experienced bullying behaviors as a victim, and therefore, seek diversion in order to avoid becoming the victim again. Students who might join in on bullying others or who have the potential to become a bully may be seeking to increase their social status or gain power over others. Olweus (1978) found that students who would not normally be aggressive would become involved in acts of bullying when increased levels of excitement or arousal were present when viewing the bullying behaviors directed toward other students.

Though most students do not engage in bullying behaviors, the few that do admit that they generally call others names, make fun of them, exclude them, or ignore them. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Dennis and Satcher (1999), who also found verbal aggression/name calling to be the most reoccurring form of bullying among both boys and girls. It is this form of bullying behavior that teachers may find as being insignificant, and therefore, may go unnoticed for years, tearing down the self-esteem of students, creating a sense of life-long worthlessness and degradation that may never be able to be undone.

Other bullies use physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, etc., or they tend to use extortion, take money/belongings, or destroy others’ property. When considering the safety of students, it is frightening to think that some bullies may resort to physical aggression, inflicting physical harm to their victims several times a week. Though this kind of bullying is rare, when it does happen, there is great cause for alarm. Surprisingly, these bullying behaviors may not necessarily be conducted by the bully who is displaying physical prowess to gain friends and social status, but could potentially be conducted by the underdeveloped student
who is trying to fit in and prove him or herself, a finding consistent with the study conducted by Espelage, et al. (2003).

In general, students do know right from wrong and in the event that they were asked to join in bullying others, they would not. However, there is a growing concern for those students (passive bullies) who cave into peer pressure and join in after an aggressive bully instigates a situation in an attempt to gain the bullies’ approval (Coy, 2001). The self-esteem of the passive as well as the aggressive bully is inflicted by the poor choices that he or she makes when displaying bullying behaviors to others. The wound of bullying behaviors upon self-esteem is not limited to the victim of bullying alone, but is two-fold and manifests itself as a deep wound that has the potential to tear down the self-esteem of the bully as well, through one act or multiple acts of violence against others (O’Moore & Kirkham, 2001). It is important then, that adults as well as teachers address bullying behaviors when they see them occurring so as to put an immediate stop to the bullying behaviors that hold the potential of causing emotional and physical harm to others, including the bully. However, teachers and adults can only address those bullying situations that they are privy to witness or that come to their attention either by the victim, other students, or other adults such as school staff and family members.

When adults in the family recognize bullying, they, too, must take a stand against it and communicate with their child about the dangers of bullying behaviors and the damage that it can cause to their self-esteem and the self-esteem of others. The findings of the present study revealed that an adult at home spoke to only 3.1% of bullies about their bullying behaviors. This data raises the question of whether or not parents are aware of their child’s bullying behaviors. Are teachers and administrators keeping parents informed about actual or potential bullying
behaviors? If so, what are parents actually doing to correct these behaviors and instill appropriate behaviors within their children?

Seale (2004) recommends that educators and administrators communicate the district’s anti-bullying policies, keep parents informed of bullying behaviors, meet with both sets of parents, individually or collectively, to resolve the problem, make a plan of strategies to help victims counteract bullies or create a contract with bullies and their parents to stop the bullying, and finally, it is important for educators and administrators to follow-up on the plans and contracts, assuring that the bullying behaviors have ceased.

Regarding the parental role, Seale (2004) recommends that parents train their children on strategies that will help them to avoid becoming either the bully or the victim of bullying behaviors by building relationships with others that foster skills of respect and empathy toward others, while developing an appreciation for those with differences. For younger children, parents should also teach strategies that assist their children in learning how to control their anger and impulsivity such as talking about their frustrations, silent counting, and deep breathing. Learned negotiation and listening skills also play an important role in the development of student relationships as well as learning to express emotions appropriately in a non-intimidating manner, and being able to recognize the clues of others’ emotions and feelings. Of course, parents should also model appropriate behaviors for their children and use positive discipline strategies that work to build up their own relationships of mutual trust and respect.

Even though the data reveal that a few students have long-lasting bullying experiences that are sometimes mentally and physically severe, it is important to note that bullying usually is not long term. While the location of bullying experiences does not vary, increased supervision within those areas could potentially decrease bullying behaviors. However, bullying experiences
may vary from year to year depending upon several dynamics that bring about change, altering its culture and environment for learning such as the school setting, schedule, personnel, student behaviors, student to staff ratios and policies/student expectations. Overall, the school policies and the student expectations (The 3 B’s: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Prepared) that this school has in place are generally working and helping to create and foster a culture of learning.

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey*

The SES survey began by asking students questions about their feelings and beliefs about themselves, and also how they compare themselves to others. Most students answered favorably and believe that they have several good qualities (89.7%), that they have much to be proud of (80.3%), and do not feel like failures (86.6%). Even at the early adolescent ages of 8-11, it is very encouraging that most students would be able to recognize their good qualities, have much to be proud of, and not feel like failures. This information speaks volumes to the teachers and parents/guardians who work to help students recognize their value and worth as people.

This pattern of most students answering favorably with high levels of positive self-esteem continued for questions regarding a positive attitude about themselves and being satisfied with themselves. However, when the question arose as to whether or not students wished that they could have more self-respect, the answers were fairly equal with an average of 25% ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Olweus (1978) found similar findings between the students that he studied and categorized as bullies, whipping boys (victims), or the control group. Their varying responses may be due to the youth of the students and their growing desire to gain more self-respect for themselves.
The next questions asked on the Rosenberg may be very similar to the question of self-respect in terms of Rosenberg’s global self-esteem theory as it relates to a generalization of self-respect, which may or may not be dependent upon outlying or preconditioned factors such as the youth of the student or the circumstances impacting his or her personal life (not necessarily related to bullying experiences, but which may be more relevant to home, environmental, or economic factors). These questions asked whether or not the student feels useless at times and if at times he or she thinks that he or she is no good at all. Nearly 60% of students agreed that at times they do feel useless. The response to this question must be considered from the perspective of an early adolescent. The phrase in the question, i.e., at times, may allow students the opportunity to reflect upon past or present difficult times in their lives when their actions, choices or circumstances caused them to feel useless. And thus, this could be contributing to a greater percentage and possible low levels of self-esteem that may or may not be directly correlated to bullying behaviors.

With regards to thinking that he or she is no good at all, approximately 40% agreed that at times they think they are no good at all. Realistically, this could be attributed to the learning behaviors and choices made by students. When students make mistakes or make poor choices, however large or small, the inward feelings derived from these actions may be feelings of no good or wrongdoing. The acts of bullying others, for example, might give some students a sense of being no good. Or, on the other hand, students who are continuously put down physically, mentally, and emotionally through acts of bullying, may contend and even believe that they, too, are no good at all. Even adults might answer this question similarly after receiving a poor job evaluation or made to feel that they have no worth. In turn, they might also feel like they are no good when they, too, have made a mistake in their job performance, the rearing of their children,
or after having made a regretful comment to a friend or a co-worker. But regardless of the condition, the response is still demonstrative that some students feel they are not good at all. Sadly, if this area of self-esteem or self-image is not improved upon, this negative attitude directed solely towards the self at this point in time could potentially become destructive to the individual and/or to others in the near or distant future.

Craig (2006) believes that parents play an important role in helping their children develop healthy self-estees through physical, intellectual, social, and emotional encouragement. Physically, parents can play sports-related games and activities with their children, encouraging them to try their best and praising them when their efforts merit acknowledgement. Intellectually, parents can be a role model for learning by exploring the world through literature and encouraging their children to get their hands dirty and to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. Parents can also read with their children and encourage them to ask questions about the world around them. Socially, children learn by observing others, and therefore, they need to see their parents interacting with others in a positive manner. Parents can also encourage their children to play appropriately with others and respect others for who they are. Finally, parents can be supportive of their children emotionally by encouraging them to express their feelings to others in a respectful manner. Parents should also never belittle their children or make them feel as though they ‘should only be seen and not heard’.

The final question on the SES asked students about their sense of value as a person in comparison to that of others. Overwhelmingly, almost 84% responded favorably; that they consider themselves to be a person of value, while 9.3% \((n=18)\) disagreed and 7.2% \((n=14)\) strongly disagreed and did not consider themselves to be of worth or value. When students compared how well they were able to do things as well as most other people, again, about 80%
of students responded favorably; that they were able to do things as well as most. However, remaining 20% \((n=38)\) did not feel the same, demonstrating an obvious area of low self-esteem. One of the factors that is undetermined in this question is that it cannot be known what the student is referring to or thinking of when he or she reads and ponders upon the word ‘things’ (I am able to do ‘things’ as well as most other people). The student may mentally refer to a variety of topics as they relate to the word ‘things’, which may include sports, academics, life skills, social skills, and fine arts skills. The focus of one particular topic over the generality of ‘things’ could potentially skew any student’s given answer. But regardless of the unknown thinking process of each student, it cannot be overlooked that almost 20% of students feel inadequate in comparison to other students.

Overall, data analyzed from the SES indicate that generally students have high levels of self-esteem with an overall mean score of 3.03 and a standard deviation score of .48 with both boys and girls having very similar levels of self-esteem (girls—\(M=3.05, SD=.48\) and boys—\(M=3.01, SD=.48\)). However, it cannot be discounted that bullying behaviors may be negatively impacting some students’ levels of self-esteem, in particular, those students (16.9% or \(n=33\)) who believe that they are not good at all.

The Relationships that Bind

*The Relationship Between Victim and Self-Esteem*

Descriptive statistics were analyzed from both the BVQ and the SES to identify the mean and standard deviations among grade levels. These findings revealed that students in grade 3 have more victim experiences than students in either grade 4 or 5. It should be noted that there was a large population of special needs students (nearly 24% of students in grade 3) that could potentially be the cause for increased victim experiences. In addition, a significant difference
was found for victim experiences between students in grades 3 and 4, but not between students in grades 3 and 5. It is possible that the seniority of students in grade 5, the oldest in the school, may have prohibited this group of students from experiencing bullying behaviors as a victim.

Data from the bully group indicated that students in grade 5 experience more bullying behaviors as the bully than students in grades 3 or 4, but there was no significant difference found. Surprisingly, the self-esteem of students in grade 3 was higher ($M=3.10$) than students in grade 5 ($M=2.89$), but nearly the same for students in grade 4 ($M=3.11$). In fact, the one-way ANOVA and the post hoc Scheffe revealed that, at the $p<.05$ levels, students in grade 5 had significantly lower levels of self-esteem than did students in grades 3 and 4. Is it possible that bullying behaviors of bullies have a greater impact upon lowering student self-esteem than being on the receiving end of bullying behaviors as a victim? Or, due to the increased number of special needs students in grade 3, is it possible that the self-esteem of these students reverts back to Rosenberg’s social structure theory of 1965 which implied that adolescent self-esteem is dependent upon the social comparisons of others within their subgroup (i.e., special needs students) (Flynn, 2003)? In addition, Cartwright (1950) believed that the primary determiners of self-esteem are dependent upon the group(s) to which one belongs. Thus said, perhaps the victims of bullying behaviors in grade 3 compared themselves to other victims within their grade level, allowing them to achieve a higher level of self-esteem than bullies who could not associate themselves to others within their group or grade level.

The results of a $t$-test of independent samples indicate that male students tend to have greater bullying experiences as both the bully and the victim than female students do. However, there were no significant gender differences found at the $p<.05$ level. Contrary to the statistical findings in the present study, Nansel, et al. (2001) found male students to have experienced more
bullying behaviors both as the victim and as the bully. The present findings in this study could be attributed to the kinds of bullying behaviors that were found to be predominant at this school, which included being called names, being made fun of, or being teased in a hurtful way. Dennis and Satcher (1999) found that verbal bullying behaviors of this nature are typically associated to females, which could be why there was no significant difference found between male and female students who experience bullying behaviors as the bully.

Further analysis of the overall relationship between the victim and self-esteem reveals that a significant negative correlation does exist between the victim and self-esteem, with \( r(197) = -0.319 \), indicating that a mutual reciprocal relationship co-exists between the two variables of bullying and self-esteem in that low self-esteem is related to higher bullying experiences and high self-esteem is related to low bullying experiences. These results support at least one other study. When Olweus (1978) conducted his investigations on whipping boys (or victims) and bullies using self-evaluations, he found that whipping boys were more anxious, more afraid that something unpleasant might happen to them, less sure of themselves, and generally had more negative attitudes toward themselves or a lower self-esteem than did bullies or the control group.

Brinthaupt and Lipka (2002) believe that as a child enters the stages of early adolescence, the self of each individual is threatened and becomes less stable due to the ambiguousness of one’s true attributes and the perceptions that he or she receives about him or herself from others. These perceptions are like pictures or glimpses that are conveyed to each person from other’s actions and spoken words. In Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (see Appendix E) (Abraham H. Maslow: Toward a psychology of being, 1955), Maslow demonstrated that humans have psychological needs as well as physiological needs. Once the physiological needs are met, an individual can progress to the second level, the need for safety and security. The third level is the
need for love and belonging. These needs are met on this level through friendships, supportive family members, and identification with a group. These needs help to establish the fourth level where self-esteem develops. This group, according to Maslow, requires both recognition from others that promotes acceptance and status within a group and fosters self-esteem that brings about feelings of adequacy, competence, and confidence. The lack of attaining satisfaction and gratification of esteem needs results in discouragement and feelings of inferiority, making the progress to the fifth level (self-actualization) difficult to achieve without the proper support and encouragement from friends and family.

Without the psychological ability or motivation to grow and excel, students who have low levels of self-esteem may not reach or achieve their full potential, and thus, stifling not only their future, but America’s future as well. Or worse, those victims who are helpless and suffer from extremely low levels of self-esteem may be lured into what they believe is their only option, the gloom of death and desperation, becoming the Matt Stone’s or the Famalaro’s of tomorrow, taking not only their own lives, but also the lives of others due in part to the hurt and the pain inflicted by bullies.

The Relationship Between the Bully and Self-Esteem

Descriptive statistics were also analyzed from both the BVQ and the SES to identify differences among grade levels and gender for the bully and his or her self-esteem. These findings revealed that students in grade 5 experience more bullying behaviors as the bully than students in grades 3 and 4, but there were no significant differences found among any of the grade levels. In fact, the mean scores demonstrated a fair consistency of bullying behaviors occurring among the three grade levels. Grade 4, however, displayed the lowest mean score of \( M=1.16 \) on the BVQ with a standard deviation score of .30. Furthermore, the results of the
descriptive statistics for student self-esteem indicate that students in grade 5 had significantly lower levels of self-esteem than students in grades 3 and 4. This finding indicates that students in grade 5 experience more bullying behaviors as the bully, and in addition, these students have lower levels of self-esteem.

The overall relationship of self-esteem as it relates to bullies was determined utilizing the Pearson Correlation. With $r(197) = -0.256$, there is a significant negative relationship between bullying behaviors as experienced by a bully and his/her self-esteem as well as a negative relationship between the bullying behaviors as experienced by a victim and self-esteem ($r = -0.319$). With a mutual reciprocal relationship similar to that found for the victims of bullying, low levels of bullying behaviors are related to high levels of self-esteem and high bullying behaviors of bullies are related to low levels of self-esteem. For example, because a student has low self-esteem, he or she is potentially more likely to experience more bullying experiences as a bully in order to try to build up his or her low levels of self-esteem (compensation for lack thereof). This finding is consistent with the results reported by O’Moore and Kirkham (2001), who also found significantly negative correlations between bullying behaviors as experienced by both the victim and the bully and his or her self-esteem. However, this finding contradicts the findings of Johnson and Lewis (1999) and Olweus (1978). Both of these studies found bullies to have significantly higher levels of self-esteem than non-bullies. The difference between these findings may be attributed to student populations and geographical locations (England and Scandinavia, respectfully). It may also be attributed to an inflated self-esteem that could not be detected from the survey instruments.

Though the present study specifically examined the effects of student bullying behaviors upon self-esteem rather than the causes or reasons why students bully others, it is important to
include a glance at the potential causes of bullying due to the reported poverty level of this rural school district (i.e., 27% of the K-12 student population qualified to receive free or reduced-price lunches and breakfasts). In her book, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, Ruby Payne (2005) outlines a working definition of poverty as “the extent to which an individual does without resources.” The resources that she refers to are the following:

- **Financial**—having the money to purchase goods and services.
- **Emotional**—being able to control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations without engaging in self-destructive behavior (this is an internal resource that shows itself through stamina, perseverance and choices).
- **Mental**—having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing, etc.) to deal with daily life; **Spiritual**—believing in divine purpose and guidance.
- **Physical**—having physical health and mobility.
- **Support systems**—having friends, family, and back-up resources available to access in times of need (external resources).
- **Relationship role models**—having frequent access to adults who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the child, and who do not engage in self-destructive behaviors.
- **Knowledge of hidden rules**—knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

(p. 7)

Given the poverty level of this school district, though not as extreme as most urban school districts, there is still a cause to ponder the issue of poverty and its effects on student behaviors, specifically student bullying behaviors. Clearly, many of these listed resources are
lacking in both the victim and the bully of those students who come from poverty stricken homes. For the victim, the lack of these resources equates to helplessness and desperation. For the bully, the lack of these resources equates to a mentality associated with ‘survival of the fittest’.

Baumeister (2001) believes that bullies act the way that they do because they suffer from unearned high self-esteem and are possibly overcompensating for that which they do not have or did not have growing up. Because of poverty, the self-esteem of bullies may be oversensitive, causing them to react more quickly to insults and humiliation through forms of retaliation and bullying behaviors than those students who do not experience poverty. Consider the street-gang member who has entered the gang to compensate for a lack of social status (caused often by poverty), a sense or a need to belong, and/or to gain power over others. The gang member may hold very favorable opinions about him or herself, but then resolve to violence when his or her power is challenged or shaken. Branden (1969), however, refers to this kind of favorable opinion about one’s self as “pseudo self-esteem” and is not really “true self-esteem” at all, but more of a make-believe self-esteem that disguises the hurt, the pain, the poverty, the desperation, the loneliness, and the lack of support from home.

In his investigations of whipping boys and bullies, Olweus (1978) reported that bullies thought more of themselves (again, this could be “pseudo self-esteem”) and demonstrated a “spirit of violence” that may have stemmed from a lack of a relationship or contact that they, the bullies, held with their own parents, and in particular, their fathers. The bullies believed that nobody cared for them, and in their desperation to compensate for that which they lacked; they made others feel their hurt and pain through bullying behaviors.
While this adolescent behavior of bullying might initially make the bully feel better about
him or herself, in the long run, the poor behavior and choices works against him or her, tearing
down their self-esteem and leaving them feeling more inadequate, more helpless, and more
lonelier as they weaken their relationships with others that they so desperately seek to gain.
Internally, adolescents (even bullies) know and understand their poor choice of actions directed
towards others (Olweus, 1978).

Summary of Conclusions

Though many changes occur during the early adolescent years, the psychological
development of youth is one of the most important factors that impacts a person’s self-esteem for
life. As was noted from the results of this study, bullying behaviors have a mutually significant
negative impact upon the self-esteem of both bullies and their victims. When examined by
individual grade level, there were also significant differences; students in grade 5 had
significantly lower levels of self-esteem than student in grades 3 and 4. No significant
differences were found for bullying experiences of bullies among the three grade levels;
however, students in grade 3 had significantly higher levels of bullying experiences as the victim
than students in grade 4.

It is reasonable to expect that during early adolescence most students will become
exposed to bullying behaviors as the bully, the victim, a bystander, or a combination of the three.
But because bullying behaviors have demonstrated a mutual relationship of significant negativity
upon student self-esteem and self-esteem upon bullying behaviors, it is possible that at such a
fragile stage in life, the development of self-esteem may become damaged and possibly require a
longer process of recovery than those students who do not experience bullying behaviors either
as the victim or the bully. Brinthaupt and Lipka (2002) note similarly that while the evaluation of
one’s self-perception, self-image, and self-esteem are ongoing throughout the life cycle, repeated negative experiences during early adolescence with peers may distort the self-evaluation for years to come. Therefore, it may be concluded that bullying behaviors have a significant negative impact upon student global self-esteem; and thus, inadvertently affect not only the individual student, but in turn, hold the potential to impact others within the school environment, creating lower levels of academic achievement, potential for school violence, and a school climate of fear and intimidation.

Implications for Leadership Practice

What can administrators do to combat bullying behaviors within their schools and create positive learning environments where fear and intimidation of bullying behaviors cease to exist? Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” Creating an environment of change is never an easy thing to do, but as the educational leader, it should become a primary responsibility in order to remove bullying behaviors in the school and provide protection and care for our students and staff.

In order to create a positive, safe and secure educational learning environment where learning thrives and respect for all persons abounds, administrators must begin by taking upon themselves the responsibility of care. Mayeroff (1995) held that we must be aware of another person’s needs and their requirements and then act on his or her behalf. Therefore, we must become aware of our students’ needs and begin to demonstrate an ethic of care to them by intervening on their behalf and working with staff to build stronger relationships that are built upon compassion, trust, and dedication. Mayeroff believed that by caring for another person, we help them to grow and to actualize themselves. There is no greater charge to administrators and educators than to instruct and care for the students that have been entrusted to us. Respectfully,
we are our brother’s keeper, or the mentor who never forsakes and never gives up, not because of
his or her duty, but because of his or her ethic of care.

An ethic of care can encompass several strategies that administrators may choose to implement to help improve the school’s learning environment and overall school climate. As the instructional leader of the school, the administrator can revise the school’s curriculum to include the topic of bullying. Some schools may choose to use literature on bullying to address a problem or to stimulate thinking about bullying issues while providing collaborative learning through in-depth classroom discussions. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) (2005), the introduction of literature that addresses specific problems for the purpose of treatment is known as bibliotherapy (Russell & Shrodes, 1950). Bibliotherapy was previously used to treat the mentally ill, assist soldiers to cope with the traumas of war, and aid in the healing process of disabled veterans.

Some schools choose to implement a character education program that instills values based upon good citizenship. The character education program recently implemented by the intermediate elementary school in this study is called *Bee Your Best: A School Full of Character* (Gatewood, Senn, Bowman, & Callahan, 2001). This program is classroom based and teachers incorporate it into their daily lessons to help raise the levels of student self-esteem, while decreasing negative behaviors of bullying. The school where this study was conducted also employs a full-time guidance counselor that works collaboratively with teachers to help reinforce the *Bee Your Best* program. The counselor meets not only with individual students, but also conducts individual classroom instruction units based from the anti-bullying program, *Bully Free Classroom* (Beane, 1999). The counselor also uses portions of this program to help instruct small groups of students that experience bullying behaviors. These sessions are held during the
students’ lunch hour and do not interrupt classroom instruction time. The additional time spent to reinforce good character and anti-bullying tactics has helped to improved the overall school climate and culture. In addition, the school collaborates with community agencies that also help to support and reinforce good character skills.

Numerous programs such as the *Bee Your Best* and *Bully Free Classroom* have been developed and marketed for schools to purchase and implement (Gatewood, et al., 2001; Beane, 1999; Olweus, 2003; Smith & Sharp, 1994; King, Vidourek, Davis, & McClellen, 2002; and NAESP, 2007). The primary purpose of these programs is to provide schools with resources that help to put a stop to bullying behaviors and decrease school violence. Among other school-wide intervention programs made available to school administrators is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, which has shown to substantially reduce bully/victim problems in schools (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). The Olweus program is a model similar to ‘train the trainer,’ in which a team of staff members are trained (who then train the remainder of the staff) on how to care for and become aware of bullying behaviors within the school environment, how to confront bullying situations among students, and then provide mediation to both students (the victim as well as the bully) to resolve the conflict or stop the bullying. The program is based on the belief that daily attitudes, routines and behaviors of school personnel are the decisive factors that provide the greatest assistance in preventing and controlling bullying behaviors, as well as redirecting these behaviors into more socially acceptable avenues. The Olweus program leads caring staff into chartered territories of setting high expectations that combine with an active, engaging curriculum of meaningful literature, similar to the idea of bibliotherapy.

Given the objectives of the Olweus program (to become aware of bullying, to confront bullying situations, and then to provide mediation) the school in the present study would greatly
benefit from the implementation of this kind of program. Due to the concern of the victims who reported that teachers or other adults at school do little or nothing to counteract bullying, this program would train the school’s staff, helping them to create a more positive learning environment where the prevention of bullying behaviors are reduced and controlled. Staff would also learn the importance of building student/teacher relationships and rapport in addition to how to intervene and confront bullying when they see it occurring and model/role play behaviors of respect and appropriateness. Given the significantly low levels of self-esteem found for both victims and bullies alike, students would greatly benefit from learning how to effectively handle bullying situations while maintaining respect for themselves and others while continuing to focus on their positive attributes and specific interests.

Other strategies that educational administrators may want to consider include peer mediation and training students how to utilize the skills of conflict resolution in order to solve problems. According to Smith and Sharp (1994), there are six key benefits for students who receive conflict resolution training. The first is that conflict encourages more effective and thought-provoking decision making skills that train students to be more effective, imaginative and analytical thinkers as well as communicators. Secondly, conflict skills provide enhancement of personal relationship and teach students to value others. Thirdly, stages of social and moral development are attained when working through conflicts with learned skills. The next reason is that conflict stimulates interest and motivates students to learn when existing concepts are challenged. The fifth benefit is that conflict enables each student to learn about who he or she is as a person. Finally, these skills teach students about citizenship and leadership. When these skills are taught in school settings, interpersonal relationships are enhanced among students and
between students and teachers. In addition, those who are involved in the process will have developed learned strategies that will help them with their next encounter of conflict.

Also recommended by Smith and Sharp (1994) is assertiveness training, particularly for students who are the victims of bullying behaviors, but also for bullies as well. This training empowers students to take positive actions against bullying, encouraging them to interact with others in an assertive manner rather than retaliating through physical aggression or submissiveness. These skills promote improved self-esteem and enhance student social skills by teaching them how to join in games with others and more readily make friends.

Building students’ self-esteem through a mentor program such as Healthy Kids is also another strategy for educational leaders to consider implementing. Healthy Kids is a multidimensional mentoring program that consists of four primary components including relationship building, self-esteem enhancement, goal setting, and academic assistance (King, et al., 2002). This program pairs an adult or youth with a student who is in need of reducing risky behaviors. The mentor serves as a positive role model who provides emotional and social support as well as academic assistance. The primary focus of this program is to get students actively involved in school and community activities while teaching them decision-making skills. It also includes parental involvement, peer counseling, tutoring, and of course, mentoring.

Used as a positive reinforcement program, the school utilized in the present study incorporates a program called, *Caught You Being Good* (NAESP, 2007). This program reinforces good behavior and according to the school’s SWIS (School-Wide Information System) data reports, office referrals have decreased dramatically by 30% since the program was initiated for the 2005-2006 school year. When a staff member catches a student ‘doing good,’ that student is given a ticket. The student places his or her name onto the back of the ticket and turns it into a
fish bowl located in the school office where they also receive a stamp that says “Caught You Being Good” as well as a fish logo. Student tickets are drawn from the fishbowl weekly, and those students receive a ‘Caught You Being Good’ button as well as recognition over the PA system and in the school newsletter. Student tickets are also drawn monthly from the fishbowl, and those students receive recognition over the PA system as well as recognition at the monthly board of education meeting, and their picture in the monthly newsletter. At the board meeting, students receive a $10 gift card.

Potentially more important than acknowledging a student’s individual action through tokens that help to raise global self-esteem and psychological well-being is the actual assistance of helping them to find their interests (academics, athletics, fine arts, etc.) that will stimulate and increase their individual self-esteem. Rosenberg, et al. (1995), recommended to educators and policy makers that addressing specific self-esteem issues when making and establishing future educational interventions would have a greater impact on specific learning behaviors than those that address global self-esteem. Therefore, it is imperative that administrators, educators, and staff members work together to build relationships with their students, caring for them and helping them to ‘grow and actualize’ themselves by helping them to find specific interests that will raise their levels of self-esteem, thus leading them away from bullying behaviors.

Though there are a wide variety of proactive anti-bullying programs that are making a difference in schools across the nation, it is also important to look closely at the school policies against bullying at hand. It also must not be remised that as technology becomes an everyday occurrence in modern education, new methods of counteracting bullying behaviors are necessary. Educational leaders should revisit current board policies regarding anti-bullying behaviors and revise these policies to reflect current and up-to-date school-wide practices and
procedures as they relate to bullying in general as well as cyber bullying through technological means at school. These policies should at the very minimum address cyber bullying that exists through text messaging, email, and Internet chat rooms.

Limitations of the Study

Two comments were noted from teachers who administered the surveys. The first comment relates to an original speculation about students being honest in their responses. A fifth grade teacher noted that one student who is often in trouble for bullying behaviors began laughing and looking around the room at other students as the questions were read aloud. This behavior on the part of the student could imply that he or she might not have been honest in his or her answers, and also, by him or her looking around the room at other students, this behavior may have intimidated other students from also answering truthfully.

Another comment of concern regarding the SES survey, as reported by a third grade teacher who had six students with special needs in her homeroom, was that some of those students were unsure about the difference between the response choices of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. In addition, those students with special needs also had difficulty reading and following along, and they appeared to mark down answers before listening to the complete question and possible answers read aloud. Both surveys were administered to a total of 32 special needs students in grades 3-5 (16% of the 197 participants).

In addition, while student names were omitted from the surveys in order to attain a greater confidence level with the students, had the names of the students been placed upon the attached surveys, this information would have allowed the researcher to make further studies of comparisons and relationships between learning and social behaviors of students who experience bullying behaviors. Such learning and social behaviors could include, but are not limited to,
individual academic performance levels on state recorded achievement tests and school reported grade cards, attendance rates, frequented visits to the school nurse and reported discipline referrals to the school office.

Finally, this study was conducted at a small rural school where the subgroups were predominantly White American. Only a small percentage of minority students attend this school, limiting the findings of this study to majority populations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Due to the overwhelming burden to demonstrate continued and improved student learning abilities on state achievement tests and the requirements placed on schools across the nation by the No Child Left Behind Act, studies that examine the relationship between student learning behaviors and bullying behaviors would be beneficial for school administrators when making instructional decisions. In addition, studying the relationship between student social behaviors and bullying experiences would also benefit school leaders, educators and guidance counselors when making school-wide decisions regarding the school culture and its learning environment.

Also, a study that surveys not only students, but their parents, teachers, staff, and administrators regarding the negative impact of bullying experiences would help to provide a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between bullying behaviors and self-esteem. While most studies, including this study, focus on identifying either the bully, the victim, or both the bully/victim, a study that identifies bystanders who witnesses bullying experiences, but may or may not do anything to intervene, would be relevant information for school leaders to have in determining the importance of implementing programs that train students on how to intervene in such circumstances. A qualitative study that examines why bystanders such as students, staff and administrators do not intervene and try to put a stop to bullying experiences would also bring
relevant information to the area of social related behaviors of school cultures in America.

Furthermore, a study that examines the profiles of victims who become cyber bullies may help school leaders to gain a better understanding about the passive student who uses aggression in the form of technology to get revenge upon his or her bully. In addition, a quantitative study that surveys school administrators within a given state or across the nation about whether or not anti-bullying programs have been implemented in their schools would provide information on how America’s administrators view the importance or need to have an anti-bullying program within their schools.

Finally, in order to provide information about the long-term effects of bullying behaviors of students who are identified as either the bully or the victim in their youth, and how these bullying behaviors affect their lives as adults, a longitudinal study could be conducted that tracks the future behaviors of identified youth bullies and victims. This longitudinal study could track students into their adulthood, reporting information on their current career paths/job placements, the amount of education they attain, how they interact with others in their workplace and/or their reaction to the bullying behaviors of others in the workplace, and any links to possible criminal records or school violence.

Conclusion

Research conducted within this study utilizing the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (BVQ) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES) has demonstrated that a significant negative relationship does exist between student bullying behaviors and self-esteem for both the victim and the bully of bully experiences. In addition, students in grade 3 were identified as having experienced significantly more bullying behaviors as a victim than students in grade 4. No significant differences of bullying behaviors as the bully were found among grade levels.
However, students in grade 5 were identified as having experienced significantly lower levels of self-esteem than students in either grade 3 or grade 4. These findings demonstrate that bullying behaviors are having a significant negative impact on student self-esteem of early adolescents.

Early adolescence is a time for change, challenge, growth and development. It is a time to build relationships, seek-out potential abilities, and discover the person yet to become through the evaluation of self and the experiences that shape one’s global self-esteem, including bullying experiences. Branden (2001) believes that self-esteem is one of the most important factors for establishing emotional health. It is the foundation on which students build the rest of their lives. There is no greater psychological development than the evaluation that he or she places upon him or herself. Self-evaluation is not always a conscious or verbalized judgment, but rather it is more of a feeling that evolves around every emotional experience and response to that experience. It reflects both the beneficial and harmful relationships to oneself, asking the ever thought-provoking question “Is this for me or against me?” Self-evaluation has profound effects upon the emotions, desires, values, and goals of each individual. It may very well be one of the most significant links to one’s chosen behavior. Each individual maintains his or her own set of standards by which he or she judges and evaluates him or herself. This complete process of self-evaluation is the building of a framework for one’s self-esteem, which encompasses his or her self-confidence and self-respect, providing a psychological assurance that one is competent to live and worthy of living (Branden, 2001).

While the need for self-esteem is inherent from nature, one is not born with knowing what will satisfy his or her individual need, or the standard by which he or she will use to gauge his or her self-esteem. Therefore, each person must discover this standard of self-evaluation for him or herself. Because each person is different, so too, is his or her self-esteem and the
particular set standard by which he or she uses to measure and weigh each individual experience and response as either positive or negative and its impact upon the development of his or her self-esteem.

Consider the growth of a flower. From the planting of a bulb, the flower sprouts forth a stem in the spring when the sun begins to shine and the rain begins to fall. While the sun, rain, and soil conditions are the primary providers of nourishment to the flower, enabling it to grow and to bloom, the proper amount of these conditions determines the growth and development of the bloom for each individual flower. A bulb planted in unfertile soil may or may not produce a beautiful flower, depending upon the soil, the weathering conditions, and the hardiness of the bulb itself. Or, if a bulb (either hardy or tender) is planted in good soil, but poor weathering conditions occur during the growth period such as a frost or too much or too little precipitation, these conditions may stunt or impact the growth and development of the bulb, producing a bent over or malformed flower. Healthy bulbs (whether hardy or tender) planted in fertile soil, and which receive the proper amounts of nourishment provided to them by the sun, rain and weathering conditions, tend to produce the strongest and most beautiful, pollen producing flowers of the garden.

Such is the similarity of the self-esteem of each child. Every experience in his or her hardy or tender life and his or her response to that experience helps to provide the conditions that determine his or her level of self-esteem. While there are other factors besides bullying that impact student self-esteem, the negativity of bullying behaviors holds high stakes when students examine themselves through the lens of self-evaluation, creating their complete global self-esteem as they mature and grow from children into adolescents and finally into adulthood.
In spite of the greatest of efforts put forth by educators and administrators to reduce and put a stop to bullying, the nature of mankind as predicted by Machiavelli, warns that the human race is socialized to take advantage of others’ weaknesses or perceived weaknesses in order to get ahead or to exploit the insecurities of others in order to mask their own. While this insecurity is embedded within our nature, educational leaders must counteract those traditions so that children remain flowers in fertile soil and do not become weeds in unfertile soil. Marian Wright Edelman said, “We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.” Therefore, the gardening efforts of educational leaders to reduce and put a stop to bullying behaviors do not go in vain. As the gardener tends to his or her flowerbed, so too, must the educational leader as he or she seeks to produce an educational garden filled with beautiful, well-nourished flowers and plants that continue to bloom, blossom, and reproduce year after year. The lives and the futures of students and their self-esteem are invaluable to securing and maintaining a civilized nation where freedom and liberty allow students to learn and to grow without fear and intimidation.

Given the accounts of school violence and shootings within our own nation and society, establishing a well-maintained educational garden that is rich in instruction and rooted in the goodness of safety and security should be one of the primary goals at the forefront of the educational system in America and around the world today. Educational leaders must be encouraged to create a sense of urgency regarding bullying behaviors within their schools and work to implement programs and professional development for staff that cultivate a safe and secure learning environment for all present students and those students yet to come through the opportunity-filled doors of our public educational system.
REFERENCES


NAESP. *Caught you being good.* Retrieved April 28, 2007, from the NAESP database.


APPENDIX A:

INFORMED PARENTAL NOTICE

Survey Notice to Parents
From Mrs. Spade

On Friday, May 26th students in grades 3-5 will take two survey instruments. The first survey addresses issues of bullying and is being conducted as part of our school’s effort against bullying and to improve the school environment. The second survey is based on student self-esteem and will be used to determine how students feel about themselves. These surveys will be used to measure the effects of bullying behaviors upon student self-esteem and may be used for future research purposes. The information gathered from these surveys will help us to take a closer look at the needs of our students and their learning environment here at Riverdale Elementary School. All surveys will be kept confidential and will not include student names. Thank you for your continued support of our school.
APPENDIX B:

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: SUPERINTENDENT

Memo: Permission to Conduct Survey  
To: Whom It May Concern  
From: Dr. Joyce Plummer, Superintendent of Riverdale Local Schools  
Date: May 1, 2006

As part of the Riverdale Local School’s involvement in the OISM (Ohio Integrated Systems Model) Project, which may potentially involve the implementation of the Olweus Bullying Program, I give Julie Spade, the Elementary Principal, permission to conduct the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire as well as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey in order to determine the need for a bullying program at the elementary level. I also give her permission to use the data gathered from these surveys for further investigation and research purposes beyond the scope of the school setting.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the permission granted within this notice, please feel free to contact me at (419) 694-4994. Thank you.
APPENDIX C:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF OLWEUS SURVEY AND INFORMATION SHEET

(OLWEUS, November 2001/2004) (INSTRUCTIONS JUN+SEN)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE REVISED OLWEUS BULLY/VICTIM QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

There are only very minor differences between the two versions of the questionnaire – the JUNIOR and SENIOR versions, designed for use in grades 3 through 5 (or in classes where there are language problems) and 6 through 10 or higher, respectively. However, the way of administering the questionnaire is somewhat different for students in lower and higher grades. In the lower grades (3-5), all of the text in the questionnaire including the response alternatives is to be read aloud by the person who administers the survey, called the “Administrator” in the following. With students in higher grades (6 +), only the introductory text is read aloud and after that the students respond to the questions on their own. The details of the instructions for students at different grade levels are given below. It is important that the Administrator thoroughly familiarizes himself/herself with these instructions in advance, and follows them carefully.

SOME GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Make sure that the students sit as far apart from each other as possible so that they cannot see or copy others answers. It is important to put an immediate stop to any tendencies towards commotion or kidding. In such cases, the students should be encouraged to take the matter seriously and to answer the questions honestly and properly.

The Administrator should familiarize himself/herself with the questionnaire in advance. The Administrator should preferably not walk around in the classroom, as this can easily be perceived as an attempt to see what the students have answered. However, if individual students have trouble filling out the questionnaire, the Administrator must, of course, provide the necessary assistance.

The survey normally can be completed in approximately one school period. The students should answer all questions without a break, even if this should take more time than one school period (mostly in lower grades).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE
After the questionnaires are handed out, the Administrator should ask the students to fill out their grade/homeroom (ex. 4H). The Administrator should write this information on the blackboard.

The Administrator also should state that: **The purpose of this survey is to gather information from you, our students, about bullying in order to make our school environment a good and safe place to learn.**

The Administrator then reads the following text (in bold) aloud to the students (including the various response choices). The same text is found on the second page of the questionnaire.

I will now read from my packet and I would like all of you to follow along carefully.

You will find questions in this booklet about your life in school. There are several answers next to each question. Each answer has a box in front of it. Like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How do you like school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ I dislike school very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ I dislike school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ I neither like nor dislike school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ I like school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ I like school very much</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer the question by marking an X in the box next to the answer that best describes how you feel about school. If you really dislike school, mark an X in the box next to "I dislike school very much". If you really like school, put an X in the box next to "I like school very much", and so on. Only mark one of the boxes. Try to keep the mark inside of the box. **Now put an X in the box next to the answer that best describes how you feel about school.**

*If you mark the wrong box, erase it. Then put an X in the box where you want your answer to be.*

*Don’t put your name on this booklet. No one will know how you have answered these questions. But it is important that you answer carefully and how you really feel. Sometimes it is hard to decide what to answer. Then just answer how you think it is. If you have questions, raise your hand.*
Most of the questions are about your life in school in the past couple of months, that is, the period from after Christmas vacation until now. So when you answer, you should think of how it has been during the past 2 or 3 months and not only how it is just now.

Now you can answer the next question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Are you a boy or a girl?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>girl</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boy</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has everyone answered question number 2? Does everyone understand what to do? (The Administrator must be certain that the students understand how they are to complete the questionnaire before they continue.)

Now you can turn to the next page. I will read the text and you can follow along.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. How many good friends do you have in your class(es)?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have 1 good friend in my class(es)</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have 2 or 3 good friends in my class(es)</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have 4 or 5 good friends in my class(es)</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have 6 or more good friends in my class(es)</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABOUT BEING BULLIED BY OTHER STUDENTS

Here are some questions about being bullied by other students. First we define or explain the word bullying. We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students

- say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
• completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose

• hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room

• tell lies or spread false rumours about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her

• and other hurtful things like that.

  When we talk about bullying, these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. We also call it bullying, when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way.

  But we don’t call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight.”

Does everyone understand what is meant by bullying?

If there are questions or comments about the meaning of the word bullying, the Administrator can elaborate and provide illustrative examples. It is important that the Administrator has a good understanding of the specified definition, which builds on three criteria. Bullying means

1) negative, mean behavior that
2) occurs repeatedly (usually over a certain period of time)
3) in a relationship that is characterized by an imbalance of power or strength (the person who is bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.)

It may be particularly difficult for the students to differentiate between teasing that is relatively friendly and benign (= not bullying) and mean and hurtful teasing (= bullying).

The Administrator then continues to read aloud all of the questions with their response options for students in lower grades. Please observe that this also applies to questions #18 and #19. Here it might be natural for non-bullied students to skip the sub-questions about where the bullying has occurred and if the student has told anybody about his or her being bullied. In order not to single out bullied students for special attention from their peers, it is important that all sub-questions with response alternatives (no or yes) are read aloud and filled out by the students.

Notes:

* If the students have difficulty understanding the expression “words, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning” (questions #12 and 32), the Administrator may give some examples (e.g., “gay”, “homo”, “queer” etc.)

* There may be a need to explain what is meant by homeroom teacher (questions 19b, 34, and 39).

SOME ADDITIONAL GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
If some students finish before the others, they should be encouraged to draw on the back of the questionnaire or perform some similar activity quietly at their seats. No students should be allowed to leave before all (or most, cf. next point) of the questionnaires have been completed.

If some students clearly need more time than others to complete the questionnaire (e.g., due to reading/language difficulties), the Administrator may allow them to remain in the classroom for a period of time after the others have gone to recess. If there are many students in the class who have reading/language difficulties, it may be a good idea to conduct the survey separately for these students (possibly together with other students from other classes who have similar difficulties).

When everyone is finished answering the questions on this survey, continue on with the Self-Esteem Survey (See attached instructions for the administration of the SES). When everyone has completed both surveys, collect all of the surveys and immediately place them in the provided large envelope, without looking at them.

Please complete the cover sheet with information regarding the class, number of boys/girls who answered the questionnaire, any comments, and place it in the envelope. (It may be possible to fill out some of this information in advance.) Then the Administrator seals the envelope while the students watch.

The Administrator should note the number of girls and boys who have answered the questionnaire, total number of students taking the survey and the name of the person administering the survey on the green sheet attached to the front of the large envelope. Mrs. Spade will collect these. DO NOT send them with a student to the office.
COVER SHEET

(TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON WHO HAS ADMINISTERED THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY AND PLACED TOGETHER WITH THE STUDENTS COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES IN A LARGE ENVELOPE, OR IN A SEPARATE ENVELOPE [SEE INSTRUCTIONS].)

SCHOOL: Riverdale Elementary School

DATE: Friday, May 26, 2006

CLASSROOM TEACHER: Mrs. Phelps

Who administered the survey? (Name and function, e.g., grade level teacher, homeroom teacher or substitute teacher)

Name: ____________________________

Function: ____________________________

Number of girls in the class: ________

Number of boys in the class: ________

Number of girls who answered the questionnaire: ________

Number of boys who answered the questionnaire: ________

Number of students with significant reading/writing/language difficulties (which can make it difficult for them to understand/answer the questions; information to be obtained from the homeroom teacher): ________

Comments (possible unrest and commotion in the class, answers not taken seriously, possible separate administration of the survey to students with reading/language difficulties, other circumstances that are likely to affect the results (can be continued overleaf):

........................................................................................................................................

........................................................................................................................................
### APPENDIX D:

**ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SURVEY**

**SES Questionnaire for Students**

Directions: Your teacher will read the directions and the questions to you. Please answer the questions by marking an X in the box that best describes how you feel about yourself. If you mark the wrong box, simply erase it and put an X in the box where you want your answer to be.

Do not put your name on this paper. No one will know how you have answered these questions. But it is important that you answer each question carefully and how you really feel about yourself. If you have questions, raise your hand. When you are finished, your teacher will collect them. Please wait patiently and quietly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I feel that I'm a person of value, equal to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I feel that I have several good qualities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I have a positive attitude about myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I wish I could have more respect for myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I feel useless at times.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>At times I think I am no good at all.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E:

MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, represented as a pyramid (Maslow, 1970).