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Perceptions of parent and peer communication, racial esteem, and support influences on self-esteem among African American adolescents

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The Ohio State University, 1994
PERCEPTIONS OF PARENT AND PEER COMMUNICATION, RACIAL ESTEEM, AND SUPPORT INFLUENCES ON SELF-ESTEEM AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

by

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****

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To my husband, for his eternal love, patience, and encouragement
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The construct of self-esteem and influences upon self-esteem have been interests of scholars for many years (e.g., Coopersmith, 1967; James, 1890/1918; Rosenberg, 1965). This interest is continued in this study by examining the relative importance of parent and peer communication, racial esteem, and support variables on self-esteem among African American adolescents. Recently, self-esteem "improvement" has become a popular trend among the lay public. A variety of educational, cultural, and self-help programs increasingly emphasize self-esteem (Renshaw, 1990). Specific programs, among historically oppressed groups (e.g., African Americans or Blacks, women) are emerging (Kenway & Willis, 1990; Spencer, Brookins & Allen, 1985). The content of such programs range from a focus on goal setting and achievement to learning about one's history.

Theory and research have partially informed the current emphasis on self-esteem. For example, the work of Coopersmith (1967) which focused on White male children indicated several factors that contribute to the development of self-esteem: (a) accepting and concerned treatment from
significant others, (b) history of successes, (c) values and aspirations, (d) and
the manner of responding to devaluation. Rosenberg (1965) notes that
self-concept (which includes racial group orientation/racial esteem and
personal identity/self-esteem) is a "complex, intricate and multifaceted structure"
(p. 232). He notes that the ongoing interest in global self-esteem is a result of
its significance for psychological well-being rather than in predicting behavior.
Global self-esteem is a disposition or a general tendency to respond a
particular way, and one cannot infer from a global self-esteem to a specific
area self-esteem, such as a school self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1986). Yet, a
healthy self-esteem has been associated with more achievement oriented,
prosocial, independent, and creative behaviors (Coopersmith, 1967;

Coopersmith and Rosenberg indicate that the perceived attitude and
treatment of significant others (e.g., parents) are important to self-esteem.
However, traditional self-esteem research has not adequately inquired about
the specific communication (beyond frequency and valence) that informs the
attitudes that affect self-esteem, even though at the core of the self-esteem
research is a theory that explicates the interaction between self and society.
Symbolic interaction theory indicates that through interactions with significant
others an individual comes to have some knowledge of the value that others
have of the self, and the individual may be influenced to some degree in one's
self evaluation based on that knowledge (Baldwin, 1986).
Mead (1934) emphasized the interrelatedness between the biological individual and the physical and social environment. A basic assumption of the symbolic interaction framework is that humans are actors as well as reactors within the social environment (Baldwin, 1986; Peterson & Rollins, 1987). As an active investigator, the child interacts with the environment and uses information from that interaction to assist with future interactions. The interactions help the individual to learn about others and about self. As reactors the child or individual can be influenced by the significant interactant as well. This framework emphasizes the importance of the parent as foremost and influential in the young child's view of self (Baldwin, 1986). It would seem that since the self is so crucially and integrally born out of social and communicative interaction, analysis must return to that source when issues of evaluations of the self are of interest. The evaluation of self is based at least partly on communication with significant others of the self, and partly on the individual's own understanding of the self (as an active agent with particular wants and desires).

Communication has been theorized to influence self-esteem. For example, the literature on child development, family and parent-child communication point to the centrality of communication in creating certain realities and in influencing aspects of member's self-image. In reading the literature, it is largely positive communication about individual's self that is theorized that is of significance. This kind of communication that children
receive from significant others (parents and peers) is related to certain personality outcomes, including self-esteem (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Peterson & Rollins, 1987). However, McDermott (1983) points out that even though the theoretical perspective requires examination of communication influences on esteem, researchers have not identified the varied kinds of communication influences that impact self-esteem. McDermott and McDermott & Greenberg (1984) began to explore the communication influence of race on the esteem (self and race).

The importance of global self-esteem continues to be an important research arena because of the strong connection of self-esteem to other integral psychological and educational factors (Jones, 1988; Newman & Newman, 1984) and because of the continued controversy surrounding the formation of self-esteem among historically oppressed groups (Renshaw, 1990). In addition, Black families and black adolescents are underrepresented in family and communication research. Since this research addresses adolescents, it seems important to provide a brief perspective to adolescence at this juncture. Traditional psychosocial theory has viewed adolescence as a single unified stage ranging from 11 to 21 (even though the range may vary greatly, beginning earlier and lasting longer) with the central issue as one of identity versus identity confusion (Coleman & Hendry, 1990; Erikson, 1963, 1968; Murray, Smith & West, 1988; Newman & Newman, 1984). Other developmental researchers have identified two separate and distinct periods of
psychological development during this period: early and later adolescence (Newman & Newman, 1984). This latter, two-stage conceptualization will be utilized in this research. The early adolescent stage which extends from the onset of puberty and ends with graduation from high school (or approximately 12 to 18 years) is the focus of this study. Because the early adolescent is in a stage in which she begins to expand her surroundings and, typically, continues to maintain emotional attachment to the family, it seemed reasonable to utilize this age group.

In returning to problematic issues in research utilizing Black samples, the cultural bias in social science research has left the scientific community lacking in understanding the Black adolescent population (McKenry, Everett, Ramseur & Carter, 1989; Murray, et al., 1988). When studies have been done they have been approached from cultural-deviant or cultural-equivalent theoretical perspectives. This research utilizes a cultural variant or emergent perspective as an ideological perspective. This perspective views the ethnic family as a distinctive cultural form and attempts to explain the processes and patterns of families as a function of the sociocultural context (Allen, 1978; Murray, et al., 1988; Nobles, 1978). This ideological perspective differs from studies that have been conducted on Black families and Black adolescents that utilized the cultural-deviant or cultural-equivalent theoretical perspectives. The cultural equivalent perspective views the Black family as functional the closer it parallels the White family; whereas, the cultural deviant perspective views the
Black family as a different family form in a negative sense. This additional research and ideological perspective will expand our understanding of the Black family and its variations, and the relationship of communication to the Black adolescent's self-esteem.

Even though recent research rejects the notion that Blacks in general have low global self-esteem, it continues to be important to delineate variables that impact upon self-esteem for this population because of the general perception of underachievement and negativity associated with this racial group within the Western society-at-large (Rosenberg, 1986). Issues pertaining to public school education curriculums, parenting, Black foster care and adoption, and juvenile delinquency could all benefit from this line of research.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching purpose of this study is to examine the relative importance of parent and peer communication, racial esteem, and support variables on self-esteem among African American adolescents. Thus, there are three areas of focus. Previous research indicates that there are many sources that may impact self-esteem. In addressing the first focus, Rosenberg indicated that, perceived parental attitudes are highly significant for the child and as the child reaches adolescence, peer interactions also become important for self-esteem. Even though there are longstanding implications of the importance of positive and constructive communication on self-esteem, few studies have clarified the actual content and frequency of the communication
influences from parents and peers (e.g., see Demo, Small & Savin-Williams, 1987; Felson & Zielinski, 1989; Margolin, Blyth & Carbone; McDermott, 1983; McDermott & Greenberg, 1984; Peterson & Rollins, 1987). Thus, the first purpose of this study, from a symbolic interaction perspective, asks: Is the communication that is related to the adolescent's self-esteem, based more on the adolescent's perceived frequency of positive self and/or racial oriented messages exchanged between the parent-adolescent or those messages exchanged between the peer-adolescent?

The second focus of this research examines racial esteem. This variable has produced mixed results in its relationship to global self-esteem. Even though racial esteem has been designated from previous research as related to self-esteem, its operationalization and methodologies have varied (e.g., see Cross, 1991; McDermott, 1983). Racial esteem is a reflection of the historical Black-White comparison self-esteem studies that have implicitly connected racial esteem and self-esteem by explicitly measuring racial esteem, then stated inferences regarding the self (Cross, 1985; McDermott, 1983). Depending on which discipline of research or author referenced, the terms regarding racial and self-esteem are quite varied. Cross notes that past Black identity research assumed a linear correlation between racial esteem (racial group orientation, RGO) and self-esteem (personal identity, PI). Such practices have left a legacy of negative imagery of the Black race as well as the strong acceptance of the relationship between racial esteem and self-esteem.
The few empirical studies that have directly measured self-esteem and racial esteem have more often found no correlation between the two measures (Cross, 1981). However, Cross proposes "at this point in history it may not be an over-reaction to suggest that a minimum requirement of Black identity studies is the inclusion of separate measures of PI (personal identity) (or self-esteem) and RGO (racial group orientation) or (racial esteem)" (p. 36). In addition, McDermott (1983) and McDermott and Greenberg (1984), concerned with communication influences on esteem, note that researchers should explore how identification with one's race influences self-esteem and the variations in parental and peer communication on esteem (self and racial). Therefore, considering the historically assumed connection between these two estees and the need to provide more clarity regarding communication influences, the present study attempts to further explore the potential relationship between racial esteem and self-esteem and racial communication's influences.

The third variable of interest is social support. Family and adolescent research on self-esteem point to the child's general perception of the social environment (e.g., parental supportiveness, acceptance) as an important influence on self-esteem (Demo et al., 1987; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Hoffman, Ushpiz & Levy-Shiff, 1988; Walker & Greene, 1986). In addition to traditional labels for support such as warmth, affection, nurturance, or acceptance, other subdivisions are included in recent research, such as,
companionship, physical affection, rejection, and general support (Peterson & Rollins, 1987). Past research has shown that social support (broadly defined as the range of significant interpersonal relationships that have an impact on an individual's functioning) contributes to general adjustment and well-being (Cauce, Felner, & Primavera, 1982). Therefore, it is reasonable to further examine the relationship of adolescents' perception of the amount and kind of social support to self-esteem. That is, social support may account for some of the variance in adolescent self-esteem.

Demographic Variables

Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, & Lewis (1990) reviewed the research literature on Black families from the 1980s. They note that the appreciation of the diversity of Black youth is not evident in social science research. That is, Black youth come from different families, community settings and socioeconomic backgrounds. This research explores demographics such as family structure, parental relationship (or marital) status and socioeconomics (parents' job and education) in an attempt to capture the distinctiveness within this sample of African American adolescents and, perhaps, how such distinctiveness may reflect self-esteem. In addition, awareness of the kinds of families that the adolescents are part of may challenge or reflect what research and theorists suggest about structural influences (Edwards, 1987; Elder, 1985; Ganong, Coleman & Mapes, 1990; Taylor, et al., 1990; Watson & Protinsky, 1988;
Wilkinson, 1987). The demographic items related to the home suggest that family is an important and primary agent in the life of an adolescent.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The study of parent communication and peer communication influences on adolescent self-esteem is a recent research endeavor. Family and child-development studies reviewed by Rollins and Thomas (1979) between 1960 and 1974 found few studies that examined parental behavior in relation to issues of self-concept. However, research indicated that the social environment, parental attitudes, and peer relationships were related to self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982). Demo, Small and Savin-Williams (1987) note that family and parent-child studies published in the 1980s have looked more closely at the family environment and parental attitudes and concluded that a positive environment and positive parent attitudes are related to self-esteem.

Clearly lacking in the self-esteem literature are a line of studies that have identified how communication influences this important concept (McDermott, 1983). A few communication researchers have begun to explore and highlight the communication influences on self esteem among the adolescent population (McDermott, 1983; McDermott & Greenberg; 1984). In addition, virtually absent from the family and communication literature are studies utilizing representative
samples from the African-American and other ethnic populations (Broman, 1988; Demo et al., 1987).

The literature review will first address symbolic interaction as it is the theoretical perspective which grounds self-esteem research (the dependent variable). Next, the relationship between self-esteem and racial esteem is explored. Even though racial esteem is not the primary focus of the study, attitudes about race are situated in the communication variables. Therefore, it seems feasible to address this variable first in order to more fully understand its history in self-esteem research and its importance to the study. The independent variables, parent communication and peer communication follow, and the final independent variable of interest, social support, conclude the literature review.

**Symbolic Interaction and Esteem Research**

The study of self-esteem has a long-standing history within symbolic interaction. Symbolic interaction emerged from the writings of Mead (1934) who emphasized the interrelatedness between the biological individual and the physical and social environment. A basic assumption of the symbolic interaction framework is that humans are actors as well as reactors within the social environment (Baldwin, 1986; Peterson & Rollins, 1987). As an active investigator, the child interacts with the environment and uses information from that interaction to assist with future interaction. The interactions help the
individual to learn about others and about self. As reactors the child or individual can be influenced by the significant interactant as well.

Mead theorized that there is reciprocal influence between the individual and the environment. Maccoby and Martin (1983) note that an additional concern over and above reciprocal influence is the contribution of the individual's self component. That is, what influence does the individual's own behavior have upon the outcome of interest. James (1890/1918) seems to address this aspect of the self when he states that "our self-feeling in this world depends entirely on what we back ourselves to be and do (p. 310)." Such a view implies that one's own view of self also influences behavior. Self-esteem is determined by the ratio of successes to the pretensions (James, 1890/1918). If self-esteem research is to continue to advance it must combine the internal (one's own values and aspirations) and external perspectives (social environment of significant others) to provide a more wholistic view of the importance of all of the variables that reflect an individual's evaluation of self (Baldwin, 1986). While each perspective is important, the present research is concerned with perceptions of the external perspectives of the social environment.

Since self-esteem is of interest in this research, the symbolic interaction perspective would indicate that through interactions with significant others an individual comes to have some knowledge of the value that others have of the self, and the individual may be influenced to some degree in one's self
evaluation based on that knowledge. The clarification of who is a significant other versus a generalized other must be addressed. The significant other involves a view of self which can be seen from the perspective of those we know well and as "vague personalities that are about them that affect them and on which they depend (e.g., mother, father, sibling, peer, day care provider; teacher)" (Baldwin, 1986, p. 97). The generalized other is defined from the perspective of those farther removed from us—"organized community or whole team" (p. 99). Peterson and Rollins (1987) define significant others from a symbolic interaction framework as persons who are assigned importance and share affectionate bonds.

The framework also emphasizes the importance of the parent as foremost and influential in the young child's view of self (Baldwin, 1986). From an interpersonal relationship perspective symbolic interactionism is concerned with various significant others' input rather than focusing, for example, on one particular parent's influence. This position is reinforced by various studies of infants, and more recently young children and adolescents in the child development literature. Historical attachment studies focused on the presence of an adult figure, specifically, the mother, in the well-being of the child (e.g., Ainsworth, 1973; Lamb, 1976) and the indirect influence of fathers (Clarke-Stewart, 1978). Recent research that has focused on the father in addition to the mother point to the importance of similar and varied attachments to both parents (Cassidy, 1988; Fox, Kimmerly & Schafer, 1991;
Hinde and Stevenson-Hinde (1988) note that the relationship between mother-child is just one of many significant relationships.

Mead's descriptions of infants and stages over the life-cycle seem to follow a developmental approach in demonstrating when the child's sense of self is organized (Baldwin, 1986). The influence of personal relations seems constant; however, it would seem that as a child becomes older the influence is readjusted. The significance of the stage of development must be considered in the conceptualization of influence. For example, a young child is still developing a clearer, refined sense of self and may be very much influenced by the communications of parents and significant others. However, as a child increases in maturity, the expectation is that more reciprocal and asymmetrical influences are occurring impacting each participant (Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988).

A few recent studies that have explored the reciprocal influences between parent and adolescent on adolescent self-esteem have found that self-judgments of communication are important predictors for self-esteem for both adolescents and parents (Demo et al., 1987). Also, adolescents' reports of parental support affects self-esteem, and self-esteem also affects how much parental support children report (Felson & Zielinski, 1989). However, the primary focus of this present research is on the adolescents' perceptions of communication.
Self-Esteem Research

There have been two important lines of esteem research. One important line of research that examined self-esteem within the symbolic interaction perspective was that of Coopersmith (1967) and Rosenberg (1965). From 1959-1965 Stanley Coopersmith conducted a series of studies designed to clarify the antecedents to self-esteem. The term self-esteem is defined in his studies as the evaluation of one’s self. Coopersmith identified four major factors contributing to the development of self-esteem: (a) accepting and concerned treatment that an individual receives from significant others, (b) history of successes which are measured by material outputs and by social approval, (c) values and aspirations, (d) and the manner of responding to devaluation. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI), which has been tested for validity and reliability, consists of fifty items that measure the self-esteem from the perspective of the subjects with an age range of 8 to 10 years.

Rosenberg (1965; 1986) also has done considerable work on self-esteem. He notes that the ongoing interest in global self-esteem is a result of its significance for psychological well-being rather than in predicting behavior. Self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude toward the self. Rosenberg indicated that low-self-esteem is associated with psychological distress, depression, negative affective states, and low life satisfaction. High self-esteem is defined as self-acceptance, self-liking, and self-respect, conditionally and
unconditionally. Individuals with high self-esteem do not consider themselves superior or perfect.

Rosenberg developed a 10-item self-esteem scale that has been adequately tested for validity and reliability. The scale has been administered to over 5,000 students of different social, religious, and national backgrounds. Rosenberg stated that self-esteem for adolescents from subcultural groups are more influenced by subcultural norms rather than broader social classification. In addition, homogenous groups are more likely to base their feelings of self-esteem within a class or ethnic group rather than between groups. The self-esteem differences between boys and girls were negligible in his studies (1965).

Cross (1981, 1985, 1991) summarizes a second important line of esteem research. He critiqued historical Black identity studies that measured either self-esteem or racial esteem on the sample, or both self-esteem and racial esteem on the same sample. At this juncture, only Cross' critique of the self-esteem studies will be addressed. Cross noted that of the eighteen empirical studies on Black identity from 1939 to 1960 only one directly measured self-esteem (the others directly measured racial esteem or racial group orientation). The general conclusion was that Blacks had an out-group orientation "in that they exhibited a considerable attraction to symbols representative of the white perspective (Cross, 1991, pp. 72-73). However, the assumption that self-esteem must be correlated to other self-concept
dimensions led to generalizations of "self-hatred" among Blacks since the majority of the studies' conclusions indicated a "Negro out-group orientation" (Cross, 1991, p. 51).

Cross notes that from 1968 to 1980 there appeared to be a change toward a more positive self-esteem for Blacks as reflected in the racial esteem studies, however, careful analysis indicated that self-esteem was generally the same before and after the "new" Black identity period (average or normal levels); whereas, racial esteem moved toward an in-group orientation or greater appreciation of Black symbols (also see Hare, 1975, 1977; Phinney & Chavira, 1992, Scott, 1990; Taylor & Dube', 1986). Cross (1991) notes that during the emergence of the "new" Black identity (1968-1980) self-esteem and racial-esteem studies suggested identity change for Blacks at the racial-esteem and self-esteem dimensions of the self-concept. Cross reports that significantly more direct self-esteem studies were performed: of the 118 studies conducted between 1968 and 1977, 84 were self-esteem. Overall, this line of research provided evidence that Blacks were adequate to above average in self-esteem as compared to Whites.

Controversy: Self-Esteem and Racial-Esteem

In addition to the studies that administered validated indices of self-esteem to Black and White children, numerous other studies were conducted that compared White and Black participants' self-esteem based on racial characteristics (Cross, 1985). These studies were rooted in the social
comparison and reflected appraisal theories which argued that a child's own esteem is based on his or her social comparison with others (Festinger, 1954/1989; Mead, 1934; Rosenberg, 1986). Research based on these theories suggested that Blacks as a group would develop negative self attitudes due to lower status in society as compared to the broader White society. Even though early empirical studies documented such "self-hatred" among Blacks, studies between 1968 and 1977 showed that Blacks were adequate to above average in self-esteem (also see Clark & Clark, 1947; & Hare, 1977; Porter & Washington, 1982).

Rosenberg pointed out that the Black negative self-esteem conclusions drawn in the early studies was due to the referencing of significant others as found in the social comparison and reflected appraisals theories. That is, researchers who applied the social comparison and reflected appraisals theories looked at an alien society rather than those who enter the child's immediate experience (e.g., parents and peers). By inferring self-esteem from racial esteem, an interrelatedness was assumed that continues to cause concern for the clarification of these two concepts. Cross (1991) critiqued 199 investigations that examined identity development in children and adults between 1939 and 1980. He focused on the key constructs of self-esteem (personal identity) and racial esteem (group identity) which he argued had not been clearly distinguished in the studies related to Black identity development. Of the 18 studies conducted between 1939 to 1960, 17 (or 94%) focused on
racial esteem. Of the 181 studies conducted between 1968 to 1980, 29 (or 18%) were racial oriented, 89 (or 54%) were self-oriented, and 45 (or 28%) were self-esteem and racial esteem correlational studies. The unitary measure of racial orientation implied that racial esteem was indicative of self-esteem. That is, by having children to respond to measures that explicitly focused on racial features (i.e., color preferences) inferences were made about self-esteem and vice versa. The correlational studies produced mixed results.

Cross concluded that racial esteem and self-esteem are distinct, with race being only one of a large number of important factors that influence the child’s feelings of self-worth. Considering the methodological issues surrounding the historical Black identity studies (e.g., very young children; measurement and operationalization concerns), theoretical issues surrounding the self-concept, the present significance of self-esteem and the acceptance of a racial esteem and self-esteem correlation within the Black community, Cross emphasizes that it would be wise for any study related to identity to explicitly measure the relationship between self-esteem and racial esteem, rather than to infer a correlation (1981).

In studying Black adolescent self-esteem, McDermott (1983) utilized a sample of 82 African American young adolescents to address some of the concerns surrounding the conception of esteem and the assumed interrelatedness of racial and self-esteem from a communication perspective. He reconceptualizes esteem in order to form hypotheses regarding the
interrelatedness of self-esteem and racial esteem and communication influences. McDermott sought to clarify the communication influence on esteem (racial and self) in three ways: First, a person's esteem may be totally dependent on his/her racial group, therefore, ignoring communication that is directed at or communication that emphasizes the person's own personal self-esteem. Secondly, esteem may be totally independent of a racial esteem image. Although unlikely, McDermott notes that there may be children who are totally isolated from their racial reference group. Finally, a child's esteem may be a combination of racial identification and unique reinforcement. This appears to be the most reasonable scenario for the present research focus due to the urban surroundings that many of the adolescent students spend much of their time in, whether at school or home.

Even though McDermott offers a reconceptualization of racial esteem's relationship to aspects of communication about the self (or self-esteem), his study focused only on communication about race from an unidentified parent. However, this rethinking of communication influences points toward more explicitly explaining how communication is situated in assessment of the self. Therefore, continued investigation of this reconceptualization is warranted which this study attempts, in part, by first clearly exploring the relationship between racial esteem and self-esteem with a larger adolescent sample. Understanding the relationship between racial esteem and self-esteem for this study will provide further information about the important variables that impact
upon self-esteem for this present population at this time in history. Therefore, given the present cultural significance of racial esteem in the Black community, the historical contradictory empirical findings, and methodological concerns as outlined above, this dissertation study further explores the potential relationship between racial esteem and self-esteem. Thus, the first research question is:

RQ 1: What is the relationship between self-esteem and racial-esteem?

**Parental communication**

Researchers have indicated that, among children, perceived parental attitudes and perceived parental communication are highly significant and as the child reaches adolescence, peer interactions become important for self-esteem (e.g., see Demo et al., 1987; Felson & Zielinski, 1989; Openshaw, Thomas & Rollins, 1983; Peterson & Rollins, 1987; & Walker & Greene, 1986). As McDermott (1983) notes, few communication studies have examined the communication aspects of self-esteem. Given that self-esteem is based upon two aspects of communication (personal, i.e., about self; and social, i.e., about race) leads to the idea that communication about self and race would be related to self-esteem. In the family and interpersonal communication literature, the most recent study with such a focus was performed in 1984. This present research primarily examines perceived parental communication and perceived peer communication and adolescent self-esteem within the symbolic interaction framework.
Communication in the family has been noted as the greatest single factor affecting a person's health and relationship to others (Satir, 1972). The symbolic interaction perspective utilized in the present study complements the systemic literature with both emphasizing the bi-directionality and reciprocal process occurring between the parent and child. Since self-esteem is of interest in this research, the symbolic interaction perspective would indicate that through interactions with the parent the adolescent comes to have some knowledge of the value that the parent has of the adolescent (reflected appraisals), and the adolescent may be influenced to some degree in his or her self-evaluation based on that knowledge and vice versa (i.e., parent is influenced also).

The symbolic interaction perspective also complements the social-mold literature that points to the uni-directional influence of the parent (as a socializer role) to child (as a socializee role) that predicts a relationship between communication and child outcomes (e.g., self-esteem). This prediction is based upon such developmental qualifiers as the finding that young children may be influenced more by their parents than older children (Isberg, Hauser, Jacobson, Powers, Noam, Weiss-Perry; Follansbee, 1988; Martin & Maccoby, 1983; & McDermott, 1983).

The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasizes the importance of the parent as foremost and influential in the young child's view of the self (Baldwin, 1986). Demo, et al. (1987, p. 705) note that "because parents and their
offspring are among the most important persons in the other's life, it is reasonable to suggest that parent and child conceptions of self are significantly influenced by the nature of their relationship with one another."

With this emphasis on parental influence in mind, Margolin, Blyth and Carbone (1986) were interested in why investigations into family influences on adolescent self-esteem have consistently relied upon data from the adolescent only. In addition, when parental data was used there were weak correlations. Margolin et al. (1988) investigated this concern by directly assessing the parent's appraisals of the adolescent (rather than assuming that specific types of parent-adolescent interaction enhance self-esteem) and comparing the reports of interaction and the parent's appraisals or attitude. They administered questionnaires to 7th-10th grade male and female students and a subsample of mothers.

The main conclusions were that mother's appraisals of the adolescent's competency and the adolescent's view of family interactions were weakly correlated (supporting previous research, e.g., see Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Demo et al., 1987; & Coopersmith, 1967); mother's global appraisals of adolescent competency was a better predictor of adolescent self-esteem than perceptions of interaction patterns; and finally, mother's global appraisals added a unique contribution to the explanatory power of models that relied exclusively on family members' perceptions of interaction. These results point
to the importance of various perceptions in the understanding of the family environment.

Even though there are many empirical studies that have examined parental styles, parental attitudes, and family relations and their relationships to self-esteem, there is still considerable dearth of research demonstrating parent-adolescent interpersonal communication influences on esteem development (e.g., see Apolonio, 1973, Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis & Muller, 1988; Chartier & Chartier, 1975; Cooper, Grotevant & Condon, 1983; Growe, 1980; Loeb, Horst & Horton, 1977; & Peterson, Southworth & Peters, 1983). Even though communication has been suggested as integral to self-esteem (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Olson, McCubbin, Larsen, Muxen & Wilson, 1983), few studies have focused on specific aspects of this important variable. Barnes, Olson and associates note that open and frequent communication is crucial because it enables feelings of support and affection to be transmitted between family members.

Barnes and Olson (1985) examined the relationship between parent-adolescent communication and the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (a typology for classifying families on cohesion and adaptability dimensions). The authors view communication as the mechanism families use to move on these two dimensions. More specifically, "while positive communication facilitates movement to different levels of family organization,
lack of communication skills or negative communication is believed to inhibit the family system's ability to change levels of cohesion and adaptability" (p. 439).

Barnes and Olson's sample consisted of 426 "normal" families from across the nation. Data was gathered from both parents and one adolescent. The conclusions indicated that parents' and adolescents' perceptions of communication is different. Adolescents perceived less openness and more problems in their communication with parents; whereas, parents reported significantly more openness and fewer problems in communication with their children. Mothers reported better communication with their children than did fathers. There were no sex differences in how adolescent males and adolescent females perceived their communication with their parents.

Olson and Barnes' hypothesis that Balanced family types (optimal family --balance on both cohesion and adaptability) will tend to have more positive communication skills than Extreme families (extremely high or low levels on cohesion and adaptability) was supported by parents' responses but not by the adolescents' responses. That is, a higher proportion of the Balanced type adolescents were in the group of low communication scores and a higher proportion of Extreme types were in the high communication scores group. This result was attributed to a mislabeling of the high-scoring families since the sample was "normal" rather dysfunctional families. An analysis of the family versus individuals indicated that families with good parent-adolescent
communication had higher levels of family cohesion, family adaptability, and family satisfaction. The authors also feel that this research supports the inclusion of multiple family members (due to varying perceptual differences) which has been encouraged by family researchers. The concern with multiple perspectives suggests that the adolescent should be allowed to identify those significant others that she/he identifies in the family (as an active agent) as well as including the adolescents' perceptions of those occupying significant roles within the home (e.g., both mother and father).

Demo et al. (1987) included communication as an intervening variable in their study that examined the relationship of adolescent self-esteem to parental support, control, and participation. The sample consisted of 139 predominantly White, middle-class parent-adolescent dyads. The parent-adolescent communication measure included items related to frequency, valence, and a variety of topics. The results indicated that communication and participation with parents were the variables most strongly correlated with adolescent self-esteem. They also concluded that "the individual's perceptions of the relationship are consistently related to his or her self-esteem while the others' perceptions are generally unrelated" (p. 713). That is, the perspective of the target participant (regarding variables of interest) provides adequate information about reciprocal, mutually influencing relationships from a symbolic interaction perspective. This study reinforces the rationale of utilizing the target
(or adolescent perspective in this instance) in examining self-concept dimensions.

McDermott (1983) and McDermott and Greenberg (1984) note that communication about self should be directly related to a child's self-esteem whereas communication about race addresses self-esteem more indirectly, considering that for Black children racial identity is fairly strong. McDermott notes that one part of an individual's esteem is based on his or her indirect communication with others in relationship to his or her societal role (racial esteem). Another part of a person's esteem is based on the direct communication about the individual's unique self (self-esteem). However, in their studies McDermott & Greenberg only focused on communication about race from parents and peers. Their conceptualizations and initial empirical results point to the inclusion of communication about self and race. The McDermott and McDermott & Greenberg studies will be further addressed in the next section.

In light of the numerous studies and theoretical insights on positive parental communication the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: The frequency of adolescents' perceived parental communication emphasizing positive characteristics of the adolescent will be positively related to self-esteem.

The few direct inquiries into communication about race within the family, at this stage, suggests a research question:
RQ 2: What is the relationship between adolescent’s perception of parent communication about other children of the adolescent’s race and adolescent’s own self-esteem?

Peer Communication

In addition to the significant intrafamily components, the older child or adolescent is beginning to extend her/his social milieu to include peers. Peers have been recognized as strong socializing agents for adolescents (e.g., see review by Clark, 1988; Dicindio, Floyd, Wilcox & McSeveney, 1983; Gecas & Seff, 1990; Newman & Newman, 1984; & Nussbaum, 1989). Clark notes that "peers serve as a baseline for social comparison and thus are able to either strengthen or weaken the developing self-concept" (p. 175). Scholars have noted that close friends (i.e., voluntary associates) are more influential than the overall peer group (i.e., the involuntary group from which friends are chosen) in affecting changes in adolescent behaviors and attitudes (Clark, 1988).

Several recent studies on parental and peer influences on self-esteem support that, although peers are influential, parental influence continues to surpass that of peers, and that boys' self-esteem is more strongly influenced by parent-adolescent interaction than that of girls (Demo et al., 1987; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Smith, 1985; & Walker & Greene, 1986). Clark (1988) noted that among Black adolescents, the family is perceived as a strong source of influence. Now that communication has been established as an important variable for self-esteem, and parents and peers are important to the
adolescent, a logical concern becomes what is the relative importance of the parent and peer communication. Currently, there are only two empirical studies in the interpersonal communication literature that have addressed the parent and peer communication influences on self-esteem as variables of interest (McDermott, 1983 & McDermott & Greenberg, 1984). McDermott (1983) examined the differences among self, racial and comparative (other race) esteem and the amount and valence of communication from parents and peers with fourth and fifth grade Black children. McDermott was particularly interested in conceiving the impact of communication on esteem: self-esteem (conceptions about oneself) and racial esteem (conceptions about own race). After offering a reconceptualization of esteem McDermott performed empirical validation. He utilized five-item esteem indexes and measured the amount and valence of parental and peer communication about race.

The results indicated that the children had fairly high self-esteem with no significant difference between racial and self-esteem. However, he noted that even though the self-esteem and racial esteem measures had similar values does not mean that they measure the same thing. McDermott concluded that the kind of communication that impacts racial versus self-esteem is different. The results showed that children receive communication from their friends and parents (about Black children) that may impact esteem. Correlations between parental communication (about Black children) and self-esteem and racial esteem were both significant (less for self-esteem); yet, the differences between
the correlations was not significant). The correlations between peer communication (about Black children) was significant for racial esteem but not for self-esteem. McDermott notes that the parental communication results indicate that for children at the fourth and fifth grade levels the measurement differences between racial and self-esteem may not be that important for researchers interested in parental communication. However, for adolescents beyond these grade levels the aspect of race may be more salient and distinct (Brown & Lohr, 1987; Rosenberg, 1965).

McDermott and Greenberg (1984) focused on multi-influences of communication (parent and peer) and television on esteem. Their sample included 82 fourth- and fifth grade Black children (see McDermott study) who responded to questionnaires. The results showed positive racial and self-esteem. The children demonstrated positive evaluation of Black adult and child television characters. Parental and peer communication about child television characters was also very positive. However, the communication reported was less positive from parents and peers about adult television characters. Overall, interpersonal communication and television experiences are related to Black children's esteem (self- and racial esteem). This study also reinforced the finding that parental communication (more so than peer communication) is a most important factor in esteem development for preadolescent children, and that attitude toward television characters is an important mediator of viewing and esteem (with adult television models being
the most significant). Although television viewing is recognized as a potential force on self-esteem it is beyond the scope of the present research.

The communication focused studies that examine peer communication are still unfolding and it is reasonable that peer communication, especially in friendships, can have positive consequences as do peer relationships (e.g., see review Gecas & Seff, 1990; Rosenberg, 1965). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: The frequency of peer communication emphasizing positive characteristics of the adolescent will be positively related to self-esteem.

However, in light of the few empirical communication studies that have explicitly examined the peers’ communication about race a research question is proposed:

RQ 3: What is the relationship between adolescents’ perception of peer communication about children of the adolescent’s race and adolescent’s own self-esteem?

Social Support and Self-Esteem

This study has stated that social support is the third variable of interest in examining parent and peer communication and self-esteem within the symbolic interaction perspective. This section will explore the nature of social support and relevant studies. Consideration of the symbolic interaction framework and empirical research on perceptions of the family and social environment indicate
the inclusion of perceived social support as an additional variable of interest (i.e., support). (Cauce, Felner & Primavera, 1982; Demo et al., 1987; Ganong, Coleman & Mapes, 1990; Hoffman, Ushpiz & Levy-Shiff, 1987; Isberg et al., 1989; Peterson & Rollins, 1987; Thomas, Gecas, Wiegart & Rooney, 1974).

In discussing the historical context of research on parental behavior (support and control) influences on self-esteem, Thomas, et al. (1974) note that support has been found to be consistently related to self-esteem. They indicate that the concept of support in the parent-child literature is approached from social learning or psycholanalytic frameworks. From this perspective, support includes terms such as warmth, affection, nurturance or acceptance. However, from a symbolic interaction framework, the concept of support refers to the "quality of the interaction which is perceived by the investee (self) as the significant others establishing a positive affective relationship with him" (Thomas, et al., p. 10). The symbolic interaction perspective of support places importance on the child's perception of her or his socialization. In their extensive studies on support, Thomas, et al. utilized the Cornell Parent Behavior Description measure. This measure is intended for children as a measure of their perception of parental treatment.

More recently, social support has been conceived more multifaceted. Other dimensions have been identified including companionship, physical affection, rejection, and general support (Peterson & Rollins, 1987). Various social support measures have utilized different approaches to assess social
support that is grounded in the symbolic interaction perspective (Barrera, Sandler, & Ramsay, 1981; Siegelman, 1965; & Thomas, et al., 1974). For example, one type of measure assesses the nature and structure of social relationships, others look at perceptions of support, while others attempt to address a combination of supportive behaviors to reflect the diversity of natural helping behaviors (Barrera et al., 1981; Demo, et al., 1987; Walker & Greene, 1986; & Hoffman, et al., 1988).

This study utilizes the broader conceptualization of social support which includes "tangible forms of assistance such as the provision of goods and services as well as intangible forms such as guidance and expressions of esteem" (Barrera et al., 1981). In addition, the symbolic interaction framework warrants emphasis on the participant's perception of the quality of the specific social contacts. The following studies reflect the current social support and self-esteem research. Even though the social support measures vary, there seems to be some attempts in the more recent studies to address Barrera et al.'s claim that research on social support needs reliable and valid instruments.

Hirsch (1980) defined social support as "the set of presently significant others who are either members of one's social network (i.e., family or friends) or affiliated non-mental health professionals (e.g., physician, clergy). Since self-esteem has been established as related to social adjustment and well-being (e.g., see Rosenberg, 1965), to include the concept of social support
(which is the range of significant interpersonal relationships that have influence on the individual's functioning) seems appropriate for the present study. The following studies lend support for the inclusion of social support as a potentially important variable of interest.

Cauce, Felner and Primavera (1982) approached social support from the perspective of its stress buffering capability. They note that minority children and adolescents from lower socioeconomic class have been cited as being at high risk for development of problem behavior due to heightened levels of stress and that social support, as a buffer to stress, may mediate the adaptive process. Cauce et al. examined the structure of social support and its relationship to adjustment for predominantly Black, lower-income, inner-city 9th and 11th grade adolescents. White and Hispanic adolescents were also included in the analysis. The students' school performance, several self-concept dimensions (including general or global self-esteem), and perceived social support were the variables of interest. The Social Support Rating Scale (SSRS) was an adapted measure (National Longitudinal Study of High School Students, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1975) consisting of 10 items which assessed the perceived helpfulness of different individuals.

The results indicated three social support factors: family, formal, and informal. Black adolescents perceived a greater degree of total support and rated family members significantly more helpful than did Whites or Hispanics,
and older adolescents had higher formal support ratings than did the younger adolescents. Race by age and sex by race interactions were also found. Informal support was judged significantly more helpful by females than males and Black and White adolescent rated informal support significantly higher than Hispanics. Finally, the relationship between self-concept dimension scores and various social support dimensions were insignificant. Further analysis of these dimensions led to mixed results. This study supports the inclusion of various dimensions of support: family, formal, and informal.

Coates (1985) studied the relationship between adolescent self-concept and characteristics of social relationships as they are interrelated in the social network. She sought to explore the ways in which a broad array of social relationships (family, peer, nonfamilial adults, community, etc.) are organized and how they are perceived by the adolescent. The sample consisted of 363 middle to lower-middle class Black adolescents with an average age of 14.8 years.

Coates administered a multi-dimensional social network instrument (which included social support characteristics of the network), several self-concept measures (including self-esteem, public presentation, cognitive concept and mood state). The Social Network Record (SNR) which was validated and checked for reliability is a multi-dimensional, paper-and-pencil inventory. The results indicated that the network scales were related to the self-esteem scale, "identification with others" tasks and perception of others (how parents, male
friend and female friends "see" the adolescent). Overall, the network structure measures (e.g., network size, frequency of contact, proximity, density) were more related to "how others see me" self judgments and to social affiliation measures, whereas the support scales (e.g., quality of closeness, number of friends, number of persons one feels close to, sources of help, satisfaction with help) were more related to overall self-esteem. This is additional evidence for the inclusion of social support as a variable of interest.

Demo et al. (1987) indicate that there is growing consensus among researchers that "parental support and participation have a positive effect on adolescent self-esteem" (p. 706). Based on previous extant literature, Demo et al. examined the reciprocal relationship between parent-adolescent relations, including support, control, participation and parent-adolescent communication. The participants were primarily White, middle and upper middle-class. Both parents and the adolescent (age 10-17 years) were respondents. Support measures included parent's/adolescent's expression of support to the other and parent's/adolescent's perception of the other's support. The maternal and paternal support scales from the Cornell Parent Behavior Inventory measured adolescent's report of parent's support. This measure has been reported to be reliable and valid.

The results of the Demo et al. study revealed that communication and participation were most strongly related to adolescent self-esteem. Parental support was not significantly related to adolescent self-esteem, however,
adolescent support of parents was significantly related to self-esteem. Because the adolescents' reports of family relations were more similar with the reports of mothers than of fathers, the mother was seen as central in interpersonal family relations. Yet, by including both parents' reports, evidence suggested that fathers' self-esteem is related to a high level of communication with adolescents and mothers' self-esteem is adversely related to the stress associated with the parenting responsibilities. This study includes all occupants of the parent (mother, father) roles or whoever the adolescent designates as fulfilling one or both of these roles.

Another recent study by Hoffman et al. (1988) focused on the contingencies in the effect of social support from parents and friends on adolescent self-esteem. The participants were Israeli high school students. The results of the study indicated that peer effects on self-esteem are not independent from parental effects. That is, peer support had added influence when maternal support was low, but minimal impact when maternal support was high. The results pointed to the centrality of the mother over the life span. These results were consistent with the attachment theory which is generally consistent with the symbolic interaction perspective (even though symbolic interactionists do not emphasize the dominance of the maternal role versus father).
Based upon the theoretical perspective of support, consistent empirical results with self-esteem, and the importance of significant others from a symbolic interaction perspective, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: The adolescent's perception of frequent positive social support (with mother, father, and peers) will be positively related to self-esteem.

Summary

In summary, the following areas are the foci of the present study: (a) correlations between three types of variables and self-esteem: racial esteem; communication (parent and peer) about self and race, and support; and (b) the relative importance of parent communications, peer communications, racial esteem and support. Hence, the following questions and hypotheses were being asked and stated:

RQ 1: What is the relationship between self-esteem and racial esteem?

Hypothesis 1: Frequency of perceived parental communication emphasizing positive characteristics of adolescents will be positively related to self-esteem.

RQ 2: What is the relationship between adolescents' perceived parent communication about other Black children and the adolescent's own self-esteem?
Hypothesis 2: Frequency of adolescents' perceived peer communication emphasizing positive characteristics of the adolescent will be positively related to self-esteem.

RQ 3: What is the relationship between adolescents' perceived peer communication about other Black children and the adolescent's own self-esteem?

Hypothesis 3: Frequency of adolescents' perceptions of positive social support dimensions (with mother, father, and peer) will be positively related to self-esteem.

RQ 4: What is the relative importance of adolescents' perceived parent communication, perceived peer communication, racial esteem, and support by adolescents on the adolescents' own self-esteem?
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Participants

The unit of analysis for this study was the individual adolescent. Students were sampled from two Columbus Public Schools. These middle schools represented those with the highest percentage of Black students. The Ohio Public expenditure Council report published in 1991 indicated that Columbus Public Schools have an average family federal adjusted gross income of $23,278. One hundred and ninety-three (193) African American students were included in this sample. The accessible population consisted of four-hundred and sixty African American students. This sample size is adequate for the purpose of this study and in proportion to the accessible population (Ellifson, Runyon & Haber, 1982).

The participants consisted of one-hundred sixth graders and ninety-three seventh graders. Of the participants, one hundred were females (52%), ninety-two were males (48%) and one was unidentified by sex. Participants ages ranged from 10 years to 15 years with a mean age of 12.5 years, \( SD = .48 \). Thirty-three percent (33%) of the youth lived with both parents and forty percent (40%) lived with mother only. Eight percent (8%) lived with
step-parents, seven percent with parent and relatives (7%), six percent with relatives only (6%), and 2% or less with father or foster parent (see Figure 1 in Appendix C).

The adolescents provided self-reports on the parents' marital or relationship status (see figures 2 and 3 in Appendix C). Figure 2 shows that for mothers, participants reported that forty-five (23%) first married, sixty-one (32%) of their mothers never married, thirty-two (17%) divorced, twenty-three (12%) remarried, thirteen (7%) separated, 3% widowed or other and 4% no answer. Figure 3 shows the summary of the fathers' relationship status: 46 (24%) first married, thirty-eight (20%) never married, twenty-one (11%) divorced; twenty-eight (15%) remarried; fourteen (14%) separated; twenty-seven (14%) other; and fifteen (8%) no answer.

The participants reported that 133 (69%) of mothers worked and 5 (3%) did not work, 39 (20%) did not know or had no answer for mother's job; 103 (53.4%) of fathers worked, 4 (2%) did not work, and 69 (36%) did not know or had no answer for father's job.

In determining the demographic variables' relationship to the dependent variable, eta statistics were performed between each demographic variable: school, gender, who the child lives with, mother's and father's marital or relationship status, mother's job, father's job and the dependent variable, self-esteem. Eta's results can be interpreted as the amount of variance that the independent variable accounts for in the dependent variable. The results
showed no significant relationships between demographic variables and self-esteem. Based on \( \eta^2 \), each demographic accounted for only 2% or less variance in self-esteem.

**Procedure**

Permission to conduct this survey study of 6 and 7 grade students at two Columbus Public Schools was granted by the Behavioral and Social Sciences Human Subjects Committee at The Ohio State University, the Columbus Board of Education Research Division and each school principal.

Letters of consent were supplied to the parents and students (Appendix A, Form I). The signatures of the homeroom teacher and the principal were attached to the consent to assure the parents and students that their school was clearly knowledgeable of this request.

In school 1, the researcher met with the relevant teachers and all 6 and 7 grade students and informed them about the study all together in the school auditorium. Afterwards, consents (which included a cover letter and a brief questionnaire about parents' education and work; see Appendix A, Form I) were distributed to each classroom by a designated school counselor. This initial attempt to gather informed consent at school 1, which required signatures of the students and parents in advance of the study, resulted in a very low return rate (20/352 or 6%). Successive attempts involved going to each classroom to speak to students and talking with the teachers one-on-one
and in small groups to encourage student involvement. This did not improve
the return rate substantially (55/352 or 16%). Questionnaires were
administered to all 6 and 7 grade students with informed consent by the
researcher in the school cafeteria on one designated day (See Appendix
B). Of the 55 students 40 identified themselves as Black and were selected for
this study.

In school 2, the same consents (Appendix A, Form I) were given to each 6
and 7 grade homeroom teacher following a one-hour meeting with the teachers
only to explain the study and guidelines in its administration. With school 2
teachers’ feedback, and the knowledge of consent struggles with school 1 in
hand, a revised consent (see Appendix A, Form II) was prepared for school 2
immediately after an initial attempt resulted in a 10/314 or 3% return rate.
A revised consent required that the parent/guardian and student respond only
if participation was denied. This revised consent was approved by the
Columbus Board of Education Research Division and the school principal.
This method resulted in 235/314 or 75% return rate. Each homeroom teacher
then administered the questionnaires to their students on the same designated
day. Of the 235 students, 153 identified themselves as Black and were
selected for this study. In all, 193 consenting African American students from
school 1 and 2 were administered the questionnaire (see Appendix B).
Participants in school 1 were instructed by the researcher to respond honestly
to each item. They were told that there are no right or wrong responses.
Teachers who administered the questionnaire (school 2) to their classroom students were instructed to provide the same instructions as above.

The Instrument

Questionnaires (see Appendix B) contained 5 demographic items at the beginning of the questionnaire, 4 demographic items at the end, and 11 likert scales which measured the independent variables and dependent variable as described in the next sections. A pilot test of the questionnaire was performed with 20 Black students, ranging in age from 11 years to 13 years, M = 12.2. As a result of the pilot testing, the word "superior" on the self-esteem scale and subsequent measures was changed to "as good or as equal to anyone else." The adolescents felt uncomfortable or unclear about the interpretation of the word "superior." In addition, the decision was made to read the demographic sections and emphasize the introduction or transition to each section of the likert scales. Words such as "Stop" and "Wait" in bold were added to avoid ignoring directions.

Measurement of Independent Variables: The communication measure from McDermott and Greenberg (1984) was used to measure parental and peer communication by asking the amount and content of communication the adolescents engage in with parents and peers about self and race: "How often does your (mother, father, friend) tell you that you are good, important, friendly, kind, as good as or as equal to anyone else." Responses included "a lot," "sometimes," "not often," and "never." Cronbach alpha reliability were as
follows: mother .87, $M = 2.81$, $SD = .90$; father .91, $M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.06$; and peer .88, $M = 2.46$, $SD = .90$. All measures had a maximum value of 4.

The same statements will be used to obtain data about race: "How often does your (mother, father, friend) tell you that (race) kids are ..." (see Appendix B). Cronbach alpha reliability were as follows: mother .83, $M = 3.0$, $SD = .72$; father .88, $M = 2.06$, $SD = .94$; and peer .90, $M = 2.32$, $SD = .99$. All measures had a maximum value of 4.

The measure of racial esteem is a validated indice taken from McDermott (1983). The measure states: "I think Black kids in real life are...," followed by the concepts: good, important, friendly, kind, and as good or as superior to anyone else. The response categories include: "very, pretty, not very, and not (see Appendix B). Cronbach alpha reliability was .80, $M = 2.98$, $SD = .72$, maximum value of 4.

The measure of support is consistent with the symbolic interaction perspective which places importance on the child's perception of those significant others in her/his social environment. The support subscale of the short form of the Cornell Parent Behavior Description was utilized for the present study. This is the third version of the reliable and validated instrument and seemed most appropriate for the social objects of concern in this research study (Thomas, et al., 1974). The support for mother, father and peers was measured by the following items: "If I have any kind of a problem, I can count on her/him/friends to help me out. She/he/friends says/say nice things about
me. She/he/friends teach(es) me things I want to learn. She/he/friends make(s) me feel she is there if I need her/him/them." The response categories include: very often, fairly often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never. Cronbach alpha reliability for mother .84, \( M = 4.17, SD = .96 \); father .88, \( M = 3.38, SD = 1.37 \); and peer .75, \( M = 3.54, SD = .98 \). All measures had a maximum value of 5.

Measurement of Dependent Variable: A five-item index of self-esteem taken from McDermott's 1983 study was utilized. This self-esteem measure utilized concepts from the validated indices of Rosenberg (1965) and Coopersmith (1967), and is a shortened version of a measure designed and validated by Schwartz and Tangri (1965). The measure stated "Please tell us what you are like: I think I am ..." This was followed by response categories of Very (concept), Pretty (concept), Not very (concept), and Not (concept). The concepts were good, important, friendly, kind, and as good as or as equal to anyone else (see Appendix B). Cronbach alpha reliability was .76, \( M = 3.38, SD = .62 \). All measures had a maximum value of 4.

Data Analysis

The primary analyses consisted of Pearson correlations and regression analyses. A decision was made early in the process to separate the adolescents responses about mother and father. In accordance with symbolic interaction perspective, the child's experience with each parent can be
uniquely different (e.g., Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988). Much important data and explanatory power may be lost by not separating responses that reference mother and father. The separation enabled a clearer understanding of who the child had in mind. Also, in most instances participants would be able to identify a mother figure. Even though the participants were instructed verbally and in writing to write-in who they identified with as father or mother, they overwhelmingly referenced the biological parent, if living, even though absent from home.

In consideration of the different consent methods of acquiring participants for this study, t-tests were performed to address possible group differences on dependent and independent variables. T-test scores showed significance levels, $p < .05$, therefore, rejecting the null hypothesis of no difference between schools 1 and 2 on the following variables: peer communication about self, race-esteem, mother communication about race, father communication about race, peer communication about race, and peer support. However, for the remaining variables (self-esteem, mother’s communication about self, father’s communication about self, mother support, and father support), the null hypothesis of no difference could not be rejected, suggesting that schools were similar in responses (see Table 8 in Appendix D).
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Correlational Analysis

Simple Pearson-product moment correlation coefficients for interval variables were calculated between each of the independent variables and the dependent variable for research questions 1, 2, and 3. All of the independent variables, with the exception of father's support, were low to moderate significantly related to the dependent variable (Table 1). In reporting the results, the variable labels will exclude the term adolescent with the understanding that the adolescent's perception to each of the variables is being referenced. Racial esteem ($r = .44$), mother's communication about race ($r = .35$), father's communication about race ($r = .24$), peer communication about race ($r = .22$) demonstrated low to moderate relationships with self-esteem ($p < .01$).

Hypothesis 1 states that the frequency of mothers' and father's communication about the self will be positively related to self-esteem. Mother's communication about self and self-esteem was $r = .37$ at .001 probability, thus
Table 1
Peachon Correlation Coefficients for Major Variables

<table>
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*p<.05; **p<.01; Selfascal = self-esteem; Rascal = racial esteem; Matascal = Mother's communication about adolescent; Feascal = Father's communication about adolescent; Pesascal = peer's communication about adolescent; M-F-Pascal = Mother's, Father's and Peer's communication about the adolescent's race; M-F-P-supascal = Mother's Father's or Peer's support toward adolescent.
hypothesis strongly supported. Father's communication about self and self-esteem was \( r = .16 \) at .025 probability, therefore this hypothesis was supported as well.

Hypothesis 2 states that the frequency of peer’s communication about the self will be positively related to self-esteem. Correlation was \( .39 \) at \( p < .001 \) level of significance, thus, the hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 3 states that the frequency of adolescents' perceptions of positive social support dimensions with mother, father, and peer will be positively related to self-esteem. This hypothesis was partially supported. Mother support was \( r = .41 \) at .001 probability, thus strongly supported, father support was \( r = .11 \), insignificant; and peer support was \( r = .34 \) at .001 probability, which supported the hypothesis.

Regression Analysis

Research question 4 asks what is the relative importance of all variables on self-esteem. Multiple regression coefficients were calculated for all independent variables. The stepwise regression (Table 2) method yielded five significant variables: race esteem, mother support, peer communication about self, peer communication about race, and mother communication about self. The Beta’s represent a standard slope that is interpreted as for every one standard deviation change in the independent variable, there is a particular Beta change or increase (e.g., as race esteem increases one standard
Table 2

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Self-Esteem on the Significant Independent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Adjusted R</th>
<th>(F)</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
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<td>.001</td>
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<td>Pseiscal</td>
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<td>Pracscal</td>
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<td>.001</td>
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<td>Mselscal</td>
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<td>.344</td>
<td>20.04</td>
<td>.001</td>
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Deviation unit, self-esteem increases .39 when other variables are held constant or not included. Or, there may be a decrease; for example, as peer race communication increases one standard deviation, self-esteem decreases -.19 when holding other variables constant. Therefore, the standardized Beta regression coefficient provides information about the relative importance of the various predictors.

Table 2 also shows an adjusted \(R\) square of 34%. That is, 34% of the variation in self-esteem is explained by the set of independent variables taken combined. It appears that racial esteem accounts for 20%, mother's support adds an additional 8% and peer's communication about self adds 4%. The additional variables, peer's communication about race and mother's
communication about self, even though statistically significant in a global sense, do not really add much variation to the model.

**Additional Analysis**

Given the results of the above regression analysis (Table 2) and the correlational matrix (Table 1), it is interesting to note that there are several communication variables that are moderately related to the strongest predictor variable, racial esteem. In fact, mother's communication about race (mracscl $r = .46$), father's communication about race (fracscl $r = .37$) and peer's communication about race (pracscl $r = .46$) are higher than their comparable variables in relation to self-esteem (that is, mother's communication about self, father's communication about self, and peer's communication about self). In addition, the moderate relation between self-esteem and racial esteem seem to dismiss collinearity. Therefore, these observations seemed to warrant another look at the communication variables that might indirectly influence racial esteem, the most notable predictor. Therefore, a second regression model included all independent variables including self-esteem with racial esteem as the dependent variable. The stepwise regression method (Table 3) yielded four significant variables: mother's communication about race, self-esteem, peer's communication about race, and father support. Table 3 also shows an adjusted R square of 37%.
Table 3

Stepwise Multiple Regression of Racial Esteem on the Significant Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Adjusted R</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance levels</th>
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</thead>
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That is, 37% of the variation in racial esteem is explained by the set of independent variables taken together. Mother's communication about race accounts for 22%, self-esteem adds 10%, peer's communication about race adds 3%, and father support adds 2%. It appears that the first two variables contribute the majority of the variation in racial esteem.

In order to further clarify communication influences, two additional sets of regression analyses (Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7) further explored varied contexts in which communication variables were situated. In summary, Tables 4 and 5 regressed self-esteem and racial esteem respectively on the parent communication about self and race and peer communication about self and race variables. The results showed that, in these communication only models, communication from mother about self accounted for 15% variation and communication from peers about self accounted for an additional 5% of the
Table 4

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Self-Esteem on the Parent Communication About Self and Race and Peer Communication About Self and Race Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
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Table 5

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Racial Esteem on the Parent Communication About Self and Race and Peer Communication About Self and Race and Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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Table 6

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Self-Esteem on the Parent Communication About Self and Race; Peer Communication About Self and Race; and Mother, Father and Peer Support Variables**

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
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Table 7

**Stepwise Multiple Regression of Racial Esteem on the Parent Communication About Self and Race; Peer Communication About Self and Race; and Mother, Father and Peer Support Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Adjusted R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
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variation in self-esteem for a total of 20%. Whereas, for racial esteem (Table 5), communication from mothers about race accounted for 22% of the variation and communication from peers about race accounted for an additional 4% variation in racial esteem totalling 26%.

Finally, Tables 6 and 7 regressed self-esteem and racial esteem respectively on parent communication about self and race, peer communication about self and race; and mother, father, and peer support variables. In Table 6 mother's support accounted for 15% of the variation and peer's communication accounted for an additional 7% for a total of 22%. Whereas, on racial esteem (Table 7), mother’s communication about race accounted for 22%, peer’s communication about race an additional 4%, and the remaining variables added only 3% to the overall total of 29%.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The present study addressed three foci: parent and peer communication, racial esteem and support influences on adolescent self-esteem. Specifically, the study focused on the relative importance of the adolescents' perceptions of parent communication about race and self, peer communication about race and self, racial esteem, and parent and peer support variables on self-esteem among African American adolescents. Overall, it has been shown that the self-esteem level for this sample was very positive, which supports the more positive self-esteem levels of Black children in recent research. Positive low to moderate correlations were shown between racial esteem, mothers' communication about race, fathers' communication about race, peers' communication about race and the dependent variable, self-esteem. Hypotheses (1 & 2) that predicted a positive relationship between parents' communication about self and peers' communication about self and self-esteem were supported. The hypothesis (hypothesis 3) that predicted a positive relationship between parents' and peers' support and self-esteem was partially supported. Fathers' support was not significantly related to
self-esteem and racial esteem accounted for the greatest variance in self-esteem.

The discussion section will be organized by beginning with the specific focus of the study, that is, the relative importance of the adolescents' perceptions of parent communication about race and self, peer communication about race and self, racial esteem, and parent and peer support variables on self-esteem among African American adolescents (RQ 4). It seems logical to approach the discussion from this vantage since all prior research questions and hypotheses were connected to this overarching question. Afterwards, further discussion will highlight and speculate on the three foci in light of the specific focus of the study.

Relative Importance of Major Variables

The finding that racial-esteem accounted for the highest percentage of variance in self-esteem within the regression model was not expected. Based upon theories and studies of the effects of positive communication from parents on the well-being of children and the emerging emphasis of peer relationships, parent and peer communication about self were expected to rank highest as predictors of self-esteem (e.g., Demo et al., 1987; Peterson & Rollins, 1987). Past inquiries and the reconceptualizing of racial esteem presented by McDermott warranted inclusion of racial esteem in the regression model; however, the few studies that have examined communication as a major independent variable along with racial factors (e.g., see McDermott, 1983 &
McDermott & Greenberg, 1984) prompted caution in high expectations of racial esteem's direct influence on self-esteem. Even though scientific readings on Black family socialization indicate that Black families foster positive orientation toward the ethnic group, primary social science studies of communication and family functioning have not generally included racial esteem as a variable of interest (Berger & Metzer, 1984; Harrison, 1985; Peters, 1985).

At first glance, explicit communication seemed to provide only a small contribution to variation in self-esteem (see Table 2). Additional analysis sought to determine if any communication influences affected racial esteem in light of the moderate racial communication correlation values on racial esteem. Conceptually, this analysis was justified because of the personal (self) and group (racial) components of the self-concept (Cross, 1991; McDermott, 1883). It was interesting to see what percentage of explicit communication variables influenced each component. This model showed mothers' communication about race as the strongest predictor (Table 3) followed by self-esteem, peer's communication about race, and father support. In comparing the two models (Tables 2 and 3), the communication variables accounted for 6% variance on self-esteem and 25% variance on racial esteem. This might suggest that in recalling communication about self versus communication about race, the race talk is more salient and perhaps viewed more significantly by young adolescents. In considering the aspect of salience, one can consider that 11 and 12 year olds' boundaries are expanding and parents are preparing their
Black children for a world that will not totally accept them as an individual. One could speculate that the teachings about individual worth could be replaced or become less significant in the minds of parents and the adolescents when compared to lessons about a sometimes hostile society that has threatened the race to which they belong. Peters' (1985) small sample of Black parents reported that they did "special things" or "racial socialization" to prepare their preschool children for living in the American society while careful to keep racial identity issues in proper perspective.

Further investigations, as revealed through a series of stepwise regressions (Tables 4-7), showed that communication was making significant contributions. Tables 4 and 5 that utilized only communication variables within the regression (omitting self- and racial esteems), clearly revealed communication from mother and peer about self-accounting for 20% variance in self-esteem while mother and peer communication about race accounted for 26% of the variance in racial esteem. These results indicate that, within the context of communication variables only, communication from mother about the self (more so than peer) influences self-esteem. Whereas communication from mother about race (more so than peer) influences racial esteem. Again, these results further support McDermott's reconceptualization of esteem communication and race, that is, racial communication operates more indirectly on self-esteem. This particular comparison also shows that including self-esteem and racial esteem along with the specific communication variables within a model can result in
limited information about predictors because of the slight variation in nature of the measures (that is, the communication about self and self-esteem and communication about race and racial esteem).

Final comparisons were made between regressions of self-esteem and racial esteem (Tables 6 and 7) on all communication and support variables. First, on the dependent variable self-esteem, mother's support and peer's communication about self were notable predictor variables. Mother's support accounted for 15% variation and peer's communication about self accounted for 7%. It appears that when mother's support is present, mother's communication about self influence becomes insignificant (recall that in Table 4 mothers' communication about self also accounted for 15% variation). It is possible that mother's support and mother's communication about self were seen as comparable for this sample. The regression results and substantial correlation between the two variables (see Table 1, r = .55) suggest collinearity and that the presence of either variable is important to self-esteem (not necessarily both) for this sample. Further examination of this observation will be discussed further under the support heading. Finally, on the dependent variable racial esteem (Table 7), mother's communication about race and peer's communication about race remained the highest predictors for racial esteem, suggesting that, for racial esteem, racial communication is clearly linked to evaluations about race even when other variables, such as support
and self-esteem, are present. Again, the notion of salience of racial oriented communication in explaining this finding is worth noting.

In summary, the initial finding of racial esteem as the significant predictor of self-esteem was further explored in light of the correlational findings and further theoretical considerations about communication and race. It appears that specific communication from mothers about race is significantly influencing racial esteem which points to the indirect influence, after all, of communication on self-esteem. The findings within the regression contexts consistently point to the mothers' communications about self and race primarily (or support) followed by peers' communication about self and race as influential on evaluations of self directly and indirectly.

**Parent and Peer Communication**

The hypotheses addressing parent and peer communication about self were supported for mother, father, and peer (Hypotheses 1 & 2). The positive correlation between adolescents' perception of the parent's (mother and father) communication about self reflects traditional and more recent studies and theorizing that correlates positive communication and self-esteem (Peterson & Rollins, 1987; Peterson, Southworth & Peters, 1983). Examining peer communication and self-esteem is a more recent area of study which has been stimulated by the theorizing about the significant role that peers begin to play in the period of early adolescence. It is interesting to note that mother's ($r = .37$) and peer's ($r = .39$) communication about self correlate with
self-esteem in similar moderate strength; whereas, father’s ($r = .16$) communication about self correlates about two times lower in strength. Explanations for the above results could include related theorizing and empirical research findings about the significance of peer in the life of the adolescent. Recent research has suggested a strong overlap between parental and peer values and standards of behavior due to the parents’ involvement in guiding the adolescent’s peer environment (Foster-Clark & Blyth, 1991). Furthermore, the communication that the peer provides in the relationship with the adolescent may be more directly self-oriented (based upon correlation and regression results, Tables 1 and 2). In other words, the peer’s involvement with the adolescent is viewed more as affecting personal areas or self attributes and less general areas, such as social issues and racial group talk (Clark, 1988; Newman & Newman, 1984; Nussbaum, 1989).

Even though the correlation results between mother communication about self and peer communication about self appear comparable, the regression results consistently point to the stronger influence of mother’s communication about self for the young adolescent. In Tables 2, 4, and 6, mother’s communication is a higher predictor than peer’s. Mother support in Table 2 is included because the correlation between mother’s communication about self and mother’s support is substantial, suggesting collinearity. Related research that examined parental behavior and self-esteem has been rather consistent in noting that parental influence surpasses that of peers (e.g., Demo et al., 1987;
Foster-Clark & Blyth, 1991; Smith, 1985; Walker & Greene, 1986). The low positive correlation between father's communication about self and self-esteem could be addressed from the standpoint of traditional family and psychology studies that places father more removed from the everyday interactions in which the adolescent internalizes who she or he is and how to value the self. However, from the perspective of male communication patterns, fathers may get a bad rap for not promoting a sense of well-being about the self if words such as "kind, good, friendly" are used on self-esteem measurements. Renshaw (1990) criticized traditional measurements that left girls at a lower self-esteem level based on language used in the measurement itself. Perhaps, from a sociocultural perspective, understanding the communication (or the whole social interaction) of Black fathers that conveys positive feelings of self would be worth investigating.

From a symbolic interaction perspective, an individual will be affected by messages within his milieu. These messages, as we have seen, can be primarily about self. I will continue to consider the adolescents' perceptions of messages from parents and peers about race. The correlational finding between parents' communication about race and peer's communication about race and self-esteem (RQs 2 & 3) indicated that adolescent self-esteem is dependent to varied degrees upon mother, father, and peer communication about race and vice versa.
Mother's communication about race ($r = .35$) is stronger than father's ($r = .24$), and father's is comparable to the peers' ($r = .22$). Mother's communication about race was substantially correlated with mother's communication about self, suggesting, collinearity. Therefore, in examining both correlations and the regressions (Tables 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), mother's communication about race was overwhelmingly a greater influence on self-esteem and racial esteem than peers. These findings continue to reflect mothers' apparent and stable role in the interpersonal life of an adolescent. However, adolescents' perceptions of father's communication about race must not be overlooked in its association to self-esteem for this sample. The results support reports by Black fathers that race impacts on their parenting efforts to provide a warm and nurturing environment (Peters, 1985).

The fact that father and peer communication about race are not as strong as mothers' in their correlations to self-esteem may further point to alternative roles that mother, father, and peers play. Socialization research generally implies that mothers occupy the stronger communicative position when compared to fathers (Isberg, et al., 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; McDermott, 1983). The regression results for peers (Tables 2, 4; 6) suggest that peers role may focus on specific self oriented content for self-esteem. In discussing the parents and peer communications results the notion of varied communicative roles on self-esteem seems quite provocative. Perhaps as Black socialization studies indicate, the adults in the family (e.g., parents) are
likely conduits of messages of ethnicity and self pride whereas the peer’s role in the adolescent’s life may be more toward learning about and validating the personal self rather than the general or group identity.

In summary, communication from parents (mother and father) about self may not be viewed that differently from communication about race for this young adolescent sample which supports McDermott’s (1983) finding. Mother’s and peer’s communications were influential on self-esteem in the proposed regression analysis. Subsequent analyses focusing on communication variables alone and communication variables with support revealed mother’s communication about self as the greatest predictor of self-esteem and mother’s communication about race as the greatest predictor for racial esteem. Mother’s communication, followed by peer communication about self, is overwhelmingly the greater predictor for self-esteem (indirectly influencing racial esteem).

Racial Esteem

The moderate strength of the correlation in this study ($r = .44$) is in line with McDermott (1983) and McDermott & Greenberg (1984) using similar instruments. This observed correlation between racial esteem and self-esteem seems to reflect work on black self identity that implies two important components of self-identity or self-concept: personal, which is tied to unique self evaluations and social, which is tied to group evaluations (Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg & Kaplan, 1982; Taylor & Dube’, 1986). That is, from a
symbolic interaction perspective, the individual is utilizing messages from
general sources about race and self (e.g., school, media, etc.) as well as from
significant sources about race and self (parent, peer, etc.) that impact upon the
evaluations of one's personal self.

Underlying the discussion on the relationship between racial esteem and
self-esteem, inevitably, is communication. Communication, most basically,
informs the evaluations that individuals embrace about themselves and groups.
McDermott (1983) explained how the feelings about race may or may not
become intertwined with the adolescent self. The arguments that a person's
self-esteem may be totally dependent on her/his racial-group feelings;
self-esteem may be totally independent of a racial esteem image; and finally,
self-esteem may be a combination of racial esteem image and unique
reinforcement seem more compelling in light of this study's results. The
correlation results and the sociocultural context of this sample (urban school
and mainly urban households), provide evidence that the adolescents have
been exposed directly or indirectly to messages about race and unique
messages about themselves. Therefore, based upon McDermott's
conceptualization, a moderate relationship between racial-esteeem and
self-esteem would seem more likely in urban communities. Based upon my
own participant-observer role in local, predominantly Black urban schools and
general knowledge, talk of cultural pride and self-esteem are quite apparent.
The relationship also seems to reflect a common and often accepted popular
phenomenon between race and self (Cross, 1991; McDermott, 1983; Scott, 1990). As Cross notes, the two variables are many times equated.

Furthermore, the positive relationship between racial esteem and self-esteem reinforces the African American community’s ongoing concern with the Black images that are portrayed in various media (Comer & Poussaint, 1992; Kunjufu, 1989; McDermott & Greenberg, 1984; Murray et al., 1988). The concern lies primarily in the young adolescent generalizing stereotypical images of Blacks to themselves. Even if in the past (as Cross suggests) these two variables are different and distinct, with the passage of time and various messages on Black pride and other pro-ethnic messages, the distinction is at best murky. As the correlations and regressions in this study suggest, self-esteem and racial esteem covary. It seems naïve to think that a Black adolescent, in urban America, who hears so much more empowering and resistive rhetoric publicly and privately about identification with race as a source of personal pride would not begin to feel that the two must be related to some extent and behave accordingly. Fortunately, as these results show, these overt verbalizations about ethnicity have shown positive trends in racial and self-esteem (Harrison, 1985).

In summary, racial esteem was moderately related to self-esteem and was shown to be the highest predictor in the proposed regression model. Further regression analyses revealed that mothers’ communication about race was strongly influencing racial-esteem.
Support

As indicated earlier, on the correlational analysis and series of regression analyses, mother's perceived support (seen as collinear with mother's communication about self) was a major influence on the self-esteem findings. The results which supported mother's support but not father support continues to point to the literature that theorizes the centrality of mother's role in the life of the child. Traditional parent-child studies have predominantly utilized White mothers as informant or for observation (e.g., Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Peterson & Rollins 1987). This insignificant outcome for fathers also points to data on structural environments for Black families which may explain this result in part. In examining who the adolescents live with, about 40% lived in a household including father whereas about 97% were in households with a mother. In other words, the father was often absent, physically, for many of the adolescents. It would appear that it was difficult for this sample of adolescents to optimally experience the concept of support from the father when the adult is not physically present (Edwards, 1987; Elder, 1985; Ganong, Coleman & Mapes, 1990; Taylor, et al., 1990).

The insignificant correlation of the father support role from a sociocultural context could imply that there are definite roles that mothers versus fathers play in Black families. It is acceptable and encouraged that mothers embrace a more nurturing role in the Black families and that fathers play a supportive role to the mothers (Cauce, et al., 1982). In essence, father's area of support...
may not be tapped by the instrument utilized. Or, perhaps, some of the support fathers provide may filter through the mother, especially in two-parent households or extended families. This possibility is justifiable when considering the recent description of certain families. McAdoo (1988), in looking at parental styles of Black fathers in the socialization of children, pointed to the equalitarian nature of Black families (middle class more so than lower class). He noted that the effective fathers demonstrate support and sharing of parental responsibilities. He concurs with Belsky (1981) in the need to focus on reciprocity in studying family relationships or interactions and outcomes.

Belsky's review of research on the father-infant research included the reciprocal influences of the marriage on parenting and other influential links within the family system. In regards to marital effects, he pointed to developmentalists and theorists who have suggested and found that positive or happy marriages were related to positive parenting. In other words, support from a spouse (i.e., the father) may promote positive parenting. However, the moderate positive correlation between father support and mother support suggests that, for this sample, the mother and father support roles were perceived differently which points to the need to continue to more fully understand the basis of these varying perceptions beyond "father absence" (McAdoo, 1988).
Peers' support was also supported in hypothesis 3. Even though mother's support is slightly higher in strength ($r = .41$) than peer's ($r = .34$) they reflect moderate relationships that exists between self-esteem and these two variables. At this adolescent stage, the presence of an adult parent and peers are crucial to a healthy existence. Alternately, individuals with positive self-esteem could attract certain peers and make requests of needs of support from parent(s). In light of the symbolic interaction perspective, it seems more reasonable to speculate that it is the existing support system, in part, that informs the individual about her/his worth and this worth is reflected back to the individual in the form of positive or negative appraisals of self. Current work on social climate of peers reflect that peers are important in the lives of each other and supply certain identity needs (Clark, 1988; Murray, et al., 1988).

In summary, mothers' support was a significant contributor to the proposed self-esteem model. However, based on the correlational findings between support and communication about self variables, the adolescent participants did not view mother's, father's, and peers' support much differently from parents' and peers' communication about self which may indicate that for this age, there is not much difference between these two variables.

**Conclusion**

In this study, it has been shown that African American adolescents' scores on racial esteem, followed by mother's support and peer's communication about self were the strongest predictors of self-esteem in the proposed
research regression model. Additional analyses and consideration of theoretical models revealed that mother's communication was impacting upon racial esteem, thus, indirectly influencing the self-esteem variable. Further insight was added to peer communication in the finding that peer communication about self was more influential on self-esteem than peer communication about race. Utilizing similar measures, McDermott & Greenberg (1984) found no significance between adolescent perception of peer communication about race and self-esteem, but they did not test for peer communication about self. Also, by identifying the perceptual communication influences of individual parents, more specific statements were made about parental influences in consideration of future esteem research.

The observation that places racial esteem as the strongest predictor for self-esteem did not minimize the role of communication. In fact, as subsequent analyses showed, this outcome reinforces the notion of how certain kinds of communication may impact upon self-esteem. In this research, the presence of explicit communication variables about self were expected to be more related to self-esteem based on the majority research about positive communication within the family. However, in considering McDermott's (1983) conceptualization for this sample, it seems that identification with race was influencing self evaluations stronger than expected. The presence of both racial and self-variables in the same model (with racial appearing strongest) seems to suggest that racial talk may be more salient than self talk which may
be more mundane. The correlations among the parents’ and peer communication variables and self-esteem point to varied communications coming from significant others about self and race. It would be interesting to look more closely at how that communication is being contextualized and processed (e.g., formal or informal settings; accepted or rejected). This thought points to even greater specificity when approaching studies about self which includes a race factor.

Mothers’ support as a significant predictor variable of self-esteem reflects the stable and nurturing role that family literature and studies have presented of mothers. Even though 40% of the mothers in this sample were single-heads of households (which is comparable to the national average and to some extent normative, see Wilkinson, 1987), they offered the adolescents a sense of safety and security that is obviously not strongly apparent for the missing parent. The strong connection that Black adolescents have with their family is well-documented (e.g., see Cauce, et al., 1982; Edwards, 1987). Even though there is a prevailing negative image of the Black female single-head of household with children, Edwards notes that, regarding the well-being of children, the family structure has negligible effects. This finding was supported in this study in that there was no significant relationship between one parent versus intact or two-parent family and self-esteem.

The adolescent-peer relationship (peer’s communication about self and peer support were substantially correlated) emerged as significant in the
regression model even though the amount of added variation was small. This result supports theory and research that points to the emerging importance of adolescent-peer relationships (e.g., Clark, 1988; Dicindio et al., 1983; Gecas & Seff, 1990; Newman & Newman, 1984). Coleman and Hendry (1990) acknowledge that peer relationships or friendships may be of great importance in establishing identity even though Anderson and Carter (1978, p. 158) note that "some youths remain largely separately from peer group and still manage to pull together an identity" (also see Erikson, 1963, 1968). This concern about identity establishment and distortion raises interesting questions about the self-esteem of adolescents without friends. For example, what are the communication characteristics and self-esteem for lonely adolescents? From my own parental role as a mother of young adolescents and a school volunteer, I have observed young adolescents communicating, usually in the form of commenting on each other's behavior or characteristics and talking about common media interests and characters. The concern regarding loneliness and self-esteem points directly to suggestions that loneliness is related to health, particularly psychological well being (Murphy & Kupshik, 1992) and research results that indicate lonely adolescents have low self-esteem and stronger perceptions of self criticism (Brennan, 1982). The results in this sample suggest that further systematic inquiry would be insightful in understanding the kinds of communication that peers engage in that are affecting self-evaluations. Overall, it seems that the importance of at least one
involved parent and some peer relationships are quite important to the developing adolescent.

As in any research there are limitations; this study is no exception. A few methodological limitations were evident in this study. First, participants from the two schools were differentially selected (internal validity threat). Even though the participants came from similar schools and were considered homogenous, similar methods for securing participants would have been the preferred procedure. The consistently higher mean on dependent and independent variables for the t-test analysis might be a reflection of this differential selection of participants (see Table 8 in Appendix D). The school (group 1) with higher means was secured based upon informed consent (requiring parent signature) whereas the majority in the other school (group 2) did not provide informed consent. The first speculation is that the parents of these students in school 1 are generally more involved and that this general involvement and responsiveness may be reflected in the adolescents' attitudes and behavior. A second speculation points toward the significant differences between the schools on the several race related variables and peer variables. From the researcher's observations of the female school principal at school 1, she showed ethnic pride through Africentric clothing and encourages a friendly, warm climate among students. She also was adamant about informed consent. Future surveys should gather more information about family and school characteristics that may be helpful in explaining global self-esteem.
The second methodological limitation concerned the administration of the survey. Due to a school administrative decision, the researcher was unable to self-administer the research tool at both schools. Rather, each teacher at school 2 administered the questionnaire to the homeroom. This threat to external validity is concerned with the ability to generalize findings and replication.

A third limitation concerns the significance of memory in reporting events on survey type measures. Participants' remembrances or recall of past communication may be distorted or as Stafford and Bayer (1993) indicate in their review of parent-child studies, children's memories of parent communication could be correlated with their level of self-esteem. Regarding the former concern, it is possible that a clearer context (e.g., last few years, this month, etc.) for recalling racial and self-oriented communication between adolescents and parents and adolescents and peers would have affected results. However, because these communication questions were thought to reference everyday talk, it is doubtful that the adolescents found the communication items difficult to respond to. Yet, for the future, such specifications can leave less interpretation to the respondents and might offer more insight into the specific kinds of communication that are actually more or less salient or prevalent for the young adolescent. Regarding the latter aspect of memory and self-esteem, future studies could include questions and analyses directed toward assessing such a relationship. Copeland and White
(1991) and Fowler (1988) offer great insight into a variety of approaches to get beyond global evaluations and to improve self-report measures.

A final methodological limitation concerns aspects of the measurement instrument itself. Since there were substantial correlations between several measures: support measures and communication about self measures, and communication about race measures, questions were raised about the redundancy of the measures or their ability to secure distinct information. The other perspective might be, are these variables actually different in the minds of the participants? Future research directions are reflective of this concern.

Improving the survey instrument for future research is of prime importance. The observations raised regarding the instrument are largely related to subjectivity and specificity. First, regarding subjectivity, the perspective of the target respondent(s) toward the relationship can be captured at varying levels. Huston and Robins (1982) refer to "subjective events" as momentary ideas, thoughts, and emotions, and "subjective conditions" as relatively stable attitudes, attributes or beliefs that arise to some extent out of the interaction. In the present study, subjective conditions were captured. In the future, by adding items which obtain perceptions based on interactions within a shorter or more recent time frame would reflect subjective events and provide a clearer context for analysis. This approach would also address the later focus of specificity.
In continuing the focus on instrumentation, specificity can be addressed further by supplementing subjective data with descriptive data. The respondents can write-in communications that they actually hear in their home or with peers that they perceive as important. The final aspect of specificity concerns creating ways to insure accuracy in data obtained, specifically regarding child's perception of "significant other" versus who adolescent lives with versus who spends time with the child in the mother or father roles. These delineations can offer considerable insight into why certain effects were negligible (e.g., no significant relationship between father support and self-esteem and who child lives with and self-esteem). Securing such information from adolescents would require face-to-face interviewing or interesting graphics or visuals to clearly direct the adolescents' attention or focus:

After administering this survey, I would lean towards face-to-face interviewing for the above portion because of the possible subtle shifts in the adolescents' thinking about the parent role (shifting from who the adolescent designated as father or mother to the biological father or mother, if indeed different from the biological or adopted parents). The physical presence of an interviewer could insure accuracy and obtain information on shifts in thinking. I refer to the shifts in thinking as psychological shifts since in the normal routine or everyday way of behaving "mother" or "father" typically references the biological. Now, the adolescent is allowed to designate or choose in her/his own estimation significant others for a study. This may be very contrary to
reality which may offer no such choice. Rosenberg (1965) and Hare (1977) address the salience of significant others as important to how the self is affected. In summary, clearer contexts of questions, descriptive data, and face-to-face interviewing should help to improve the data collection and analysis in future research on this topic.

Symbolic interaction theory emphasizes the human being as an active investigator who interacts with the environment and uses information from that interaction to assist with future interactions. A logical extension from this description would imply that the child who is in a particular family or environment (and interacting in particular ways with particular people) would begin to view their social environment in a particular way and use this perspective to construct thoughts and feelings about oneself in relationship to environmental symbols. Spencer (1985), noted that an active human agent makes choices and selections based on his/her own needs and drives. Therefore, the adolescent has perceptions and thoughts about factors that influence self-esteem. In adding more explanatory power to survey instruments; it would be interesting in future research to examine the actual origins or sources of the thoughts or perceptions that the adolescent has about race and self. For example, is there a firm, prevailing belief system that the individual adheres to about the self or about race? Is it obvious that either is a result of strong interpersonal messages in the family, from friends, or the farther, generalized other? This line of inquiry could easily lead to hypotheses
about belief systems and the kind of communication most prevalent for self-esteem. Consider families and groups that might place themselves in certain categories (e.g., Muslim, Christian, Jews) and how their communication is linked to a belief system and, thus, evaluations of themselves.

Considering the dearth of empirical data on Black family communication in general, future studies warrant more descriptive studies that secure actual talk toward analyzing patterns and processes of self- and race-oriented talk and self- and race-oriented themes (Copeland & White, 1991; Minuchin, 1985). McDermott's conceptualization of communication and esteem and the present findings warrant such a descriptive move. Such data would also allow a more careful move from perceptual to actual messages that convey messages about the self. Naturalistic settings (unstructured and structured) would enable the most realistic representation of communication between peers and family members. Unstructured settings could be a family night activity at a local church or school; a structured setting could be a self-esteem group with a prepared agenda, consisting of youth who meet on a regular basis under adult leadership. Securing information from the parents or adults and peers about the behaviors and talk that they use which affects self and race evaluations would further add to our understanding of the kinds of communication impacting self-esteem.

A comparison of the adolescent-parent actual self-esteem and race-esteem talk to the adolescents' perception of talk would further yield
interesting insights about the significance of perceptions and actual interactions for this population. In everyday communication, mothers, fathers, siblings, and peers often (consciously and unconsciously) talk about the adolescent and vice-versa. The adolescent and others in the relationship are processing this communication in very concrete yet subtle ways—accepting, ignoring, rejecting, and/or forming perceptions of themselves (Coleman & Hendry, 1990).

Future directions warrant a more descriptive examination of interpersonal talk that impinges on self-evaluations utilizing a longitudinal study design. Researchers of adolescent identity point to the changing stages and nature of adolescent identity development. As researchers indicate (e.g., Block & Robins, 1993; Hirsch & DuBois, 1991; McDermott, 1983; Phinney and Chavira, 1992; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975/1982; Walker & Greene, 1986) it would follow that over time, perhaps, the adolescents' racial and global self-esteem change as well moving toward stabilization by a certain time period. There is consistent evidence that age-related changes in global self-esteem occurs between ages 13-23. There appears to be improvement in global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1986). Even though not explicitly addressed, such studies have been based on White middle class samples. It would be interesting to explore this notion of change by describing and measuring how explicitly communication about self and race may change as well.

Finally, my ongoing interest in this topic most immediately points to comparing data that I have collected on White adolescent samples (and other
ethnic groups) with this present Black sample. It will be insightful to compare and speculate on the important variables between the two groups in light of some theorizing that suggests that Blacks differ from Whites in the degree of emphasis placed on the self as "I," the self as "me," and the self as "we" (e.g., Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Nobles, 1973, 1972; Taylor, 1988; Taylor & Sube', 1986). However, Harrison (1985) concluded that own group preference is greater among Whites. Even though gender differences did not show up as significant to self-esteem in the present study, in considering future Black-White data this aspect may become evident. Contradictory findings on gender differences have been reported. For example, Rosenberg and Simmons' (1975/1982) large cross sectional study of 2,625 students (grades 3-12) among 25 schools found that girls were more likely than boys to have low self-esteem (modest difference of 5 percent) but higher self-consciousness (difference of 11 percent).

The results in this study are inherently bi-directional from a symbolic interaction perspective in that "the process of communication requires us to take the role of the other, to see ourselves from his standpoint, we thereby become an object of perception and reflection to ourselves" (Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975/1982, p. 243). The adolescent's perception of the parents' and peers' communication is reflective of the relationship between the interactants. Yet, this study did not go beyond this level of analysis. No in-depth discussion was addressed about the parents and peers simultaneous influence on
adolescents or other links in the interactional system. Within the symbolic interaction and systems frameworks, the reciprocal nature of interaction is indicated. Recent research on the reciprocal patterns of parent-child interactions and family communication is emerging (Demo, et al., 1987; Margolin, et al., 1988; Peterson & Rollins, 1987; see review by Stafford & Bayer, 1993). Even though this reciprocal aspect was not the focus of this research, future adolescent-parent-peer communication research should generate insights about reciprocity occurring between and among communicators and their self-esteem.

Historically speaking, African Americans in particular have strong identity with their ethnic/racial group (Cross, 1991; Hare, 1977; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; Taylor, 1988). In considering Black families as a distinct social form (Elder, 1990; Nobles, 1978; Sudarkasa, 1988), this study points to considering racial evaluations or communication about race as an additional way to understand the personal perspective. This is understandable from an historical as well as a communication perspective (e.g., Hare, 1975; McDermott, 1983). Currently, there appears to be more positive communications about culture and "Blackness" that are infiltrating mainstream culture. There is much public and private rhetoric in African American communities that espouse identification with race as a source of personal pride. Often, African-Americans, regardless of socioeconomic status, have to deal with the racial esteem issue. Often, the manner in which the issue of race is presented and lived personally and
societally impacts upon the individual's identification with the race and self-evaluations.

Knowing that the communication that is directed toward an African-American adolescent about her/his race and self is associated with self-esteem should heighten our sensitivity to in-home or in-class casual and strategic talk that essentially abuses one's personal and/or group identity. Young adolescents are at a vulnerable age of still trusting in adults to assist them while testing and exploring new boundaries. The present research indicates that children benefit in positive ways from the supportive and positive communicative environment that families create, and children's positive feelings of self-worth are linked to many other positive outcomes (e.g., Jones, 1988; Newman & Newman, 1984). Because of the potential impact that understanding predictors of self-esteem will have in various social and political arenas, the continued pursuit of research areas that have been suggested is a worthwhile endeavor.
Footnote

1. The revised consent was not used with school 1 because of the elaborate procedure that the principal, staff and students had been put through involving the initial consent. The teachers and staff were beginning to become tired of the successive attempts to encourage students to return the consent forms. The researcher felt that the teachers' feelings of resentment would be transferred to the students which in turn could certainly effect the students' perception of the study and perhaps responses to the items on the questionnaire. This threat due to ecological validity concerns whether the same findings will be obtained under other situations (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1985). Also the principal at school 1 was most comfortable with the parents' and students' signatures in advance and seemed to indicate some dissatisfaction with a revised consent.

2. In clarifying the term "superior" in the original self-esteem measure, Rosenberg states (1965, p. 31)

   High self-esteem, as reflected in our scale items, expresses the feeling that one is "good enough." The individual simply feels that he is a person of worth; he respects himself for what he is, but he does not stand in awe of himself nor does he expect others to stand in awe of him. He does not necessarily consider himself superior to others.
References


APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS GIVEN TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS
FORM I

Letter of Explanation/Consent Form
(STUDENT PARTICIPATION)

We are interested in learning about communication during the middle school years. This study will involve the student answering a paper-and-pencil questionnaire and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The student will be excused from one class period of a related arts course, such as music or physical education.

The hope is that the results of this study will give families, teachers, and others information on how to best communicate with you and other students in middle school.

Remember, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will be excused from one class period to fill out a questionnaire along with other Johnson Park students (Please see attached request).

Return the bottom portion of this form to the principal’s office as soon as possible or in 3 days. You will receive a note this week to remind you to return the form.

Thanks for your help

Mrs. Rhunette Diggs
Graduate Student

Principal Teacher OSU Faculty Adviser

Date: ______________________________

Yes, I ______________________________ agree to take part in this study.

(signature of student)

Yes, I ______________________________ give my permission for my son/daughter to take part in this study: Parent and Peer Communication Influences on Adolescent Self-Esteem.

(signature of parent/guardian)

Signed: ______________________________

(Principal Investigator or Authorized Representative)

Phone: 443-5981 or 292-4859
FORM I

Letter of Explanation/Consent Form
(STUDENT PARTICIPATION)

We are interested in learning about communication during the middle school years. This study will involve the student answering a paper-and-pencil questionnaire and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The student will be excused from one class period of a related arts course, such as music or physical education.

The hope is that the results of this study will give families, teachers, and others information on how to best communicate with you and other students in middle school.

Remember, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will be excused from one class period to fill out a questionnaire along with other Barrett Middle School students (Please see attached request).

Return the bottom portion of this form to the principal's office as soon as possible or in 3 days. You will receive a note this week to remind you to return the form.

Thanks for your help

Mrs. Rhunette Diggs
Graduate Student

Principal Teacher OSU Faculty Adviser

Date: _____________________________

Yes, I _____________________________ agree to take part in this study.

(signature of student)

Yes, I _____________________________ give my permission for my son/daughter to take part in this study: Parent and Peer Communication Influences on Adolescent Self-Esteem.

(signature of parent/guardian)

Signed:_________________________________________________
(Principal Investigator or Authorized Representative)

Phone: 443-5981 or 292-4859
REQUEST TO STUDENT AND PARENT(S)

In order to adequately complete the questionnaire at school we need the parent(s) to supply your child with the following information. This information is confidential (that is, we will not be able to associate you or your child's name with this information on the questionnaire because we will not use the child's name). However, the following questions are important to our research and we would appreciate it if you would supply your child with this information. Thank you!

Answer the following questions about your parent(s) that help with your household (for example, help buy clothes, pay rent, lunch money, etc.). Check other responses or "don't know" if these apply.

1. What is your Mother's job? 
   1b. Does not Work ( )  Don't Know ( )

2. What is the highest grade in school that your Mother completed? 
   2b. No formal school ( )  Don't Know ( )

3. What is your Father's job? 
   3b. Does not Work ( )  Don't Know ( )

4. What is the highest grade in school that your Father completed? 
   4b. No formal school ( )  Don't Know ( )

RETURN WITH YOUR CONSENT FORM
FORM II

ATTENTION—ATTENTION—ATTENTION—ATTENTION

************************************************************************************************

PARENTS AND STUDENTS, THIS IS A NEW CONSENT FORM FOR THE COMMUNICATION STUDY THAT WILL BE CONDUCTED AT BARRETT IN MAY. PLEASE IGNORE THIS CONSENT FORM IF YOU HAVE ALREADY GIVEN CONSENT FOR YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

************************************************************************************************

ATTENTION—ATTENTION—ATTENTION—ATTENTION

Letter of Explanation/Consent Form

(STUDENT PARTICIPATION)

We are interested in learning about communication during the middle school years. This study will involve answering a paper-and-pencil questionnaire and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The student will be excused from one class period of a related arts course, such as music or physical education.

The hope is that the results of this study will give families, teachers, and others information on how to best communicate with you and other students in middle school. Remember, your participation is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will fill out a questionnaire along with other Barrett students.

Return the bottom portion of this form to the principal's office as soon as possible or by May 3rd if you do not want your child to participate, otherwise your child will participate in the study during the week of May 17, 1993.

Thanks for your help

Mrs. Rhunette Diggs
Graduate Student

(Principal)

OSU Faculty Advisor

(.GO TO NEXT PAGE)

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Date: ________________

I ____________________ do NOT want to take part in this study.

(signature of student)

I ____________________ do NOT give my permission for my son/daughter to take

(signature of parent/guardian)

part in this study: Parent and Peer Communication Influences on Adolescent Self-Esteem

Signed:

(Principal Investigator or Authorized Representative)

PHONE: 443-5961 or 292-4850
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please answer the following questions and statements as completely as possible. THANK YOU!

Complete the following by writing or CIRCLE:

1. GRADE _________  AGE _________

2. SEX: Female/Girl  Male/Boy

3. Ethnic Background or Race (circle one)
   Black  White  Biracial or Mixed  Asian  Hispanic
   Other: ____________________________

4. Who do you live with most of the time? (circle one)
   Both parents  Mother only  Father only
   Foster parent  Foster parent 1 or 2
   Father & relatives  Parent & relatives
   Other (write in) ____________________________

4b. Write-in others that you live with:

   ______________________________________

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING FOR YOUR BIRTH or ADOPTED PARENTS:

5. YOUR PARENTS' relationship status, unmarried (Circle one): READ CAREFULLY!!!
   Mother: Married First time  Remarried
   Separated  Divorced  Widowed
   Never Married  Other: ____________________________

Father: Married First time  Remarried
   Separated  Divorced  Widowed
   Never Married  Other: ____________________________

CIRCLE the number that best describes YOUR FEELINGS.

   A LOT  SOMETIMES  NOT OFTEN  NEVER

   4   3   2   1

   1. How often does your mother tell you that you are good?
   2. How often does your mother tell you that you are important?
   3. How often does your mother tell you that you are friendly?
   4. How often does your mother tell you that you are kind?
   5. How often does your mother tell you that you are as good or as equal to anyone else?
   6. How often does your father tell you that you are good?
   7. How often does your father tell you that you are important?
   8. How often does your father tell you that you are friendly?
   9. How often does your father tell you that you are kind?
  10. How often does your father tell you that you are as good or as equal to anyone else?
STOP-----------------READ CAREFULLY

Directions: Think of your FRIENDS and respond to the following. Again, circle the number that best describes your FEELINGS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A LOT</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

STOP: REMEMBER TO KEEP MOTHER & FATHER THE SAME AS ABOVE

Directions: Please answer the following questions by thinking about YOUR OWN RACE (e.g., African-American, White, Asian, Hispanic, etc.). Circle the number that best describes your FEELINGS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A LOT</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NOT OFTEN</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

22. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are important? 4 3 2 1
23. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are friendly? 4 3 2 1
24. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are kind? 4 3 2 1
25. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are as good or as equal to anyone else? 4 3 2 1

Directions: Think of your FRIENDS and respond to the following. Again, circle the number that best describes your FEELINGS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A LOT</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NOT OFTEN</th>
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<td>26.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>29.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

22. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are important? 4 3 2 1
23. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are friendly? 4 3 2 1
24. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are kind? 4 3 2 1
25. How often does your father tell you that (your race) kids are as good or as equal to anyone else? 4 3 2 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY</th>
<th>PRETTY</th>
<th>NOT VERY</th>
<th>NOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. I think I am good.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I think I am important.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I think I am friendly.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I think I am kind.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I think I am as good or equal to anyone else.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Directions: Read each of the statements and draw a circle around the number that best describes what you are like.

Directions: Read each of the statements and draw a circle around the number that best describes what you FEEL your race is like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VERY</th>
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<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>HARDLY</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
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<td>41. If I have any kind of problem I can count on my mother to help out.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>42. My mother says nice things about me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. My mother teaches me things I want to learn.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. My mother makes me feel she is there if I need her.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>45. If I have any kind of problem I can count on my father to help out.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. My father says nice things about me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. My father teaches me things I want to learn.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>48. My father makes me feel he is there if I need him.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>49. If I have any kind of problem I can count on my friends to help out.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. My friends say nice things about me.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>51. My friends teach me things I want to learn.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. My friends make me feel they are there if I need them.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Please answer the following questions about your parent(s) that help with your household (for example, help buy clothes, pay rent, lunch money, etc.)

53. What is your mother's job—what does she do?

54. Circle your mother's highest education completed:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 GED
   College: 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs
   Graduate School: MA/MS PhD
   Don't Know

55. What is your father's job—what does he do?

56. Circle your father's highest education completed:
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 GED
   College: 1yr 2yrs 3yrs 4yrs
   Graduate School: MA/MS PhD
   Don't Know

THANK YOU!
APPENDIX C

FIGURES 1, 2, AND 3
Figure 1. Who Adolescents Live With
Figure 2. The Marital Status of Mothers of Adolescent Participants
Figure 3. The Marital Status of Fathers of Adolescent Participants
APPENDIX D

TABLE 8

T-TESTS BETWEEN SCHOOL 1 AND SCHOOL 2
Table 8
T-Tests between school 1 and school 2

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<thead>
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<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
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* p < .05; ** p < .001; Seliscal = self-esteem; Raciscal = racial esteem; Melsiscal = Mother's communication about own adolescent child; Festiscal = Father's communication about own adolescent child; Peaciscal = peer's communication about adolescent; M-F-Raciscal = Mother's, Father's or Peer's communication about the adolescent's race; M-F-P-eusiscal = Mother's, Father's or Peer's support toward adolescent.