PEER AGGRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIMS

A Dissertation

by

SUSAN ELAINE D'ESPOSITO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2006

Major Subject: School Psychology

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Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee,	Cynthia A. Riccio
	Collie Conoley
Committee Members,	Constance Fournier
	Leslie Morey
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ABSTRACT

Peer Aggression among Adolescents:

Characteristics of the Victims. (August 2006)

Susan Elaine D'Esposito, B.A., State University of Stony Brook

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Cynthia Riccio
Dr. Collie Conoley

Peer aggression is a significant problem among adolescents; it is relatively common and frequently experienced among adolescents. Recently, there has been growing attention to the occurrence and impact of bullying on adolescent's well being at school. There is still a lot to learn about why certain adolescents are targets for bullying. This study explores how certain personality traits, behaviors, and social status may be predictors for those who are targeted as victims of peer aggression. Students in three middle schools and one junior high school from three different school districts in Texas were asked to participate in this study. The sample consisted of 233 students. Students were both males and females who were attending 6^{th}, 7^{th}, and 8^{th} grade and were between the ages of 12 and 15. Data was aggregated for each participating student from demographic information collected from the Cover Sheet, with participant demographics, *Bullying/Victimization Scale (BVS)*, *Behavior Assessment System for Children – Self-Report (BASC-SRP)*, and *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents (Social Support – CFS)*. The data obtained supported the expectation that adolescents who presented with

symptoms of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, high external locus of control, low self-reliance, and high sense of inadequacy are more likely to become victims of peer aggression than adolescents who are more socially competent, more psychologically well-adjusted, and who have a higher internal locus of control. Additionally, adolescents who show signs of social stress may also be more likely to become victims of peer aggression. This is an important step in the needed research because the victim is often overlooked when peer aggression is occurring. Identification of potential victims and assistance with development of their social skills may aid them in avoiding acts of peer aggression.

DEDICATION

To my father, Carl M. D'Esposito,

my daughter, Casi Anne Carone, and

my sister, Mary Mascioli

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I am grateful to many people who have assisted me in the various phases of the completion of this project, as well as the completion of graduate school. First, it is extremely important to acknowledge Dr. Cynthia Riccio, my advisor and committee chair. I am sincerely grateful for her guidance, support, and critical feedback not only during this project, but throughout my graduate career. Without her, this project would have never come to fruition. She has been an outstanding mentor whom I respect and admire. I also thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Collie Conoley, Dr, Constance Fournier, and Dr. Leslie Morey, who were instrumental in helping me think critically about my research questions and design of this study.

I am eternally grateful to my mother and sisters for their never ending encouragement and support, for believing in me even when I didn't, and for always welcoming me home. Mom, the pig is finally roasted! To my nieces and nephews who, no matter how much I begged, wouldn't stop growing up while I was in graduate school, I can only hope that my drive and persistence will offer encouragement for your futures.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND AND RATIONALIZATION

Peer Aggression/Bullying

Peer aggression is widespread and possibly one of the most underreported safety problems on American school campuses (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001; Unnever & Cornell, 2003). Peer aggression is a social phenomenon involving individual and groups (Gini, 2006). Between the years 2001 and 2004, peer aggression was the fourth most common reason for calls to Kids Help Line (Martin & Gillies, 2004), Australia's 24-hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 18 (Kids Help Line, 2004), calls for peer aggression were fourth only to Parent Relationships, Peer Relationships, and Partner Relationships. Although some may believe peer aggression to be a rite of passage or harmless behavior that helps build character, it actually has long-lasting and harmful effects for both the victim and the bully (Olweus 1993). Research (e.g. Olweus 1993, 1999) suggests that peer aggression is very common in school and occurs at all grade levels. Olweus (1993, 1999) exposed the widespread nature and harm of school based peer aggression. Ongoing teasing and bullying have many negative

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This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*.

consequences for children and adolescents (Rusby, Forrester, Biglan, & Metzler 2005). Peer aggression affects a student's sense of security and victims of peer aggression suffer psychological harm long after the bullying stops. However, the current literature does not adequately explain why some children are bothered by chronic teasing while others are not. Additionally, much of the literature that exists draws largely from preconceived ideas concerning bullying rather than students' perspectives of their experiences (Horowitz et al., 2004).

The term peer aggression encompasses a wide range of aggressive acts among children and adolescents; the term bullying also can be used to describe these acts of aggression. For the purpose of this study, the terms bullying and peer aggression will be used interchangeably. Table 1 lists the definitions of terms related to this study. With each definition, the source(s) are noted as well as how these terms are operationalized within the study.

Table 1

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition	Operationalized	Citation
Bully	Someone who repeatedly attacks another who is perceived as physically or psychologically less powerful than the attacker. Includes tripping, intimidation, rumor spreading and isolation, demands for money, destruction of property, theft, destruction of work or property, name-calling, assault, sexual harassment (e.g., repeated exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, and sexual abuse); ostracism based on perceived sexual orientation; and hazing. Includes relational aggression, which is the repeated intentional systematic diminishment of another person that is designed to reduce the victim's self-perception. This study also uses the term peer aggression interchangeably with bullying.	Measured using the sum of scores from the Bullying Scale of the Bully/Victimization Scale (BVS). The higher the score the higher the bully status.	Craig, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Fried & Fried, 1996; Greene, 1988; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Olweus, 1993
Victim	One who is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions (intentionally inflicting, or attempting to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another) on the part of one or more individuals.	Measured using the sum of scores from the Victimization Status scale of the (BVS).	Olweus, 1993

Table 1 Continued

Term	Definition	Operationalized	Citation
Aggressive Victim	Tends to create tension by irritating and teasing others and are more likely to fight back when they are attacked.	Measured using the sum of scores from the Bullying scale of the BVS.	Fried & Fried, 1996; Olweus, 1999; Ladd & Ladd, 1998
Passive Victim	An individual who appears to do nothing to instigate victimization by their peers and does not attempt to defend himself or herself when attacked.	Measured using the sum of scores from the Bullying scale of the BVS.	Fried & Fried, 1996; Moeller, 2001; Olweus, 1993, 1999

Purpose of the Study

Peer relationships play a significant role in the adolescent's social development. Hymel, LeMare, Ditner, and Woody (1999) suggested that children establish how well they get along with their peers by subconsciously measuring the positive and negative social behaviors peers directed toward them. Difficulties in relating to peers can negatively influence an adolescent's social development, especially since relational aggression can be seen as an aversive experience (Lopez & DuBois, 2005).

Internal psychological characteristics of adolescent victims of peer aggression and the frequency of victimization need to be considered. The effects of frequency on an adolescent's adjustment may be moderated by existing psychological factors or characteristics. Few of these factors have been integrated into recent empirical investigations (Ladd & Ladd, 2001). Thus, peer aggression is a significant problem among adolescents; it is relatively common and frequently experienced among children and adolescents. Students in middle school and junior high school (grades 6,7 & 8) were chosen for this study because adolescence is a period of transitional stress resulting in impulsive behaviors and rapid fluctuations in emotions, which in turn results to the exposure of repeated insults and rejection by peers (Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2004; Seals & Young, 2003).

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between personality traits and behavioral characteristics with being a victim of peer

aggression. This study expected to determine if adolescents with lower self-esteem, a higher external locus of control, high levels of anxiety, and lower levels of social support were more likely to experience peer aggression than adolescents who are more socially competent, more psychologically well-adjusted, and who have a higher internal locus of control.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. Are ***intrapersonal*** characteristics associated with victimization and/or bullying? Intrapersonal characteristics, relating to the internal aspects, especially emotions, of an individual, were operationally defined as the T-scores for Anxiety, Depression, Locus of Control, Self-Esteem, and Self-Reliance, on the *Behavior Assessment System for Children – Self-Report (BASC-SRP)*. It was hypothesized that high scores (T-scores above 60) on the Anxiety, Depression, and Locus of Control scales from the BASC-SRP and low scores (T-scores below 40) on the Self-Esteem, Self-Reliance, and Sense of Inadequacy scales from the BASC-SRP would be associated with high victimization (T-scores above 55) and low bullying (T-scores below 58) from the Bully/Victimization Scale (BVS).
2. Are ***interpersonal*** characteristics associated with victimization and/or bullying? Interpersonal characteristics, concerning or involving relationships between individuals, were operationally defined as the T-scores for Interpersonal Relationships and Social Stress on the BASC-SRP, as well as scores for Social Support among Friends and Social Support among

Classmates from the Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents (Social Support – CFS). It was hypothesized that high scores on Interpersonal Relations, Social Skills (T-scores above 60), from the BASC-SRP and high scores on Social Support among Friends (scores above 2.5), Social Support among Classmates (scores above 2.5) from the Social Support – CFS and low scores on Social Stress (T-scores below 40) from the BASC-SRP would be associated with low victimization (T-scores below 56) and low bullying (T-scores below 58) from the BVS.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Incidence/Significance

Victimization due to bullying is a serious problem in our schools due in part to its high rate of occurrence and potentially devastating consequences (Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004). It is estimated that three million incidents of bullying occur each year. That breaks down into 1700 acts of physical and relational aggression each day, "…every 20 seconds a child is being harassed, taunted, assaulted, or abused" (Beane, 1998, p. 205). All students are believed to encounter some form of peer aggression while in school, either as the aggressor, the victim, or a bystander (Olweus, 1997). Carney and Merrell (2001) reported that prevalence rates for bullying are similar across cultures and diverse educational settings.

Acts of peer aggression most often occur where there is little or no adult supervision, such as in schoolyards, cafeterias, bathrooms, hallways, and stairwells (Farrington, 1993; Zeigler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). Olweus (1999) found that there is an inverse relationship between the number of supervising adults present and the number of incidents of peer aggression. Although teachers and school administrators do not observe many acts of peer aggression (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000), student witnesses appear to play some role in creating opportunities for peer aggression. Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler (1992) reported that 88 percent of students report having observed some form of

peer aggression. Research suggests only 10 to 20 percent of noninvolved students provide any real help when another student is victimized (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994; Stevens, Van Oost & De Bourdeaudhuij, 2000).

Most students do not report peer aggression to adults. Many victims and witnesses fail to tell teachers or even parents (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Smith & Brain, 2000). As a result, teachers most likely underestimate the extent of peer aggression in their schools and may identify only a portion of the victims. Studies also suggest that children do not believe that teachers will intervene when told about acts concerning peer aggression (Whitney & Smith, 1993).

Peer aggression has been found to be associated with a decrease in self-esteem, peer acceptance, academic performance, and school attendance, as well as increased depression, anxiety, negative self-concept, isolation, and withdrawal. According to Hazler and Carney (2000), approximately 25% of students report being afraid that violence in their school will increase in the next two years. The Center for Disease Control reported in 1995 that one-fifth of the United States' student population missed school due to feeling unsafe during or on the way to school (Hazler & Carney, 2000). These findings may progressively worsen over the years if positive interventions are not developed and implemented.

Extensive studies in countries such as Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand found that between 8 and 38 percent of students are bullied

with some regularity, and five to nine percent of students bully others (Rigby & Slee, 1999). Children and adolescents who are victimized at least once a week are considered chronic victims of peer aggression. These victims constitute about 8 to 20 percent of the student population (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1993; Ortega & Lera, 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Salmivalli, 1999; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). In general, 10 percent of sixth- through 10th-grade students report being victims of peer aggression (Nansel et al., 2001). In some of the studies, lack of a common definition of peer aggression potentially distorts the estimates of the problem (Catalano, Oxford, Harachi, Abbott, & Haggerty, 1999).

Miller (1994) noted that the assessment of bullying and school violence is imprecise because of limited and varying definitions. According to Olweus (1999), bullying is portrayed as aggressive behavior or intentional harm that is carried out repeatedly and over time and occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power. This is one definition that appears to be used with some consistency in the literature concerning bullying behavior. However, there are numerous definitions concerning bullying and aggressive behavior (Craig, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Olweus, 1993). Of the numerous definitions, there appears to be four features of peer aggression that seem to consistently appear in the existing research: (a) the bully intends to inflict harm or fear upon the victim; (b) aggression toward the victim occurs repeatedly; (c) bullying occurs in familiar social groups; and (d) the bully is more powerful (either real or perceived power)

than the victim (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Carney & Merrell, 2001; Craig, 1998; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Greene, 1988; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002; Moeller, 2001; Olweus, 1993; Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003).

Types of Aggression/Bullying

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1998), peer aggression entails repeated hostile acts by someone perceived as physically or psychologically more powerful. It involves repeated physical, verbal, or psychological attacks. Peer aggression includes, but is not limited to, tripping, intimidation, rumor spreading and isolation, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, destruction of another's work, assault, and name-calling. Several other school behaviors can be recognized as forms of peer aggression. The U.S. Department of Education (1998) identified behaviors such as sexual harassment (e.g., repeated exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual propositioning, and sexual abuse involving unwanted physical contact), ostracism based on perceived sexual orientation, as well as hazing (e.g., students imposing painfully embarrassing initiation rituals on other, less powerful students) as acts of peer aggression.

When children in elementary school were studied, it was found that direct bullying behaviors, or overt acts of aggression, are more frequently seen in boys and indirect bullying behaviors are usually seen more in girls (Crick, 1996). However, once entering adolescence, it appears that overt acts of aggression

tend to diminish and covert acts of peer aggression are seen in both male and female adolescents. Indirect forms of peer aggression or covert aggressive acts are equally devastating, but often considered more difficult to detect and control. Fried and Fried (1996) stated that relational aggression is an extremely difficult form of victimization for children to understand because it lacks the tangible evidence of physical or verbal abuse. Children have a difficult time articulating the suffering they experience when classmates ostracize or withhold friendship. Different behaviors have been categorized by Fried and Fried (1996) such as physical (usually seen in boys), verbal (boys and girls), emotional (girls), and sexual (girls). Girls tend to bully girls, while boys bully both boys and girls. Consistently, studies indicate that boys are more likely to bully through physically aggressive acts than girls (Olweus, 1999).

It is not considered bullying when incidents are unintentional and are usually followed by apologetic deeds. Isolated single events would not be characterized as peer aggression nor would incidents involving conflict between individuals of equal physical and/or psychological power (Moeller, 2001; Olweus, 1999). Victimization seems to occur as “children vie for positions of dominance within the social hierarchy…to maintain and achieve social prominence within and across peer groups” (Adler & Adler, 1995 p. 146).

Acts of peer aggression are diverse in nature. They can be verbal, relational, and physical. Verbal abuse is one of the most common forms of peer aggression; it is the use of words to cause harm or pain to others. Verbal abuse

is used to gain power over another person. It leaves a victim feeling isolated and exposed; it also can contain sexual innuendoes (Fried & Fried, 1996). Verbal abuse has been observed in the form of making verbal threats, name calling, teasing, and writing threatening notes (Moeller, 2001). Adolescents who engage in relational abuse use covert measures of aggression, such as social isolation, rejection, spreading rumors, and threats to disclose personal information (Moretti, Holland, & McKay, 2001).

Gender Differences in Types of Bullying

Crick, Bigbee, and Howes (1996) asked children to describe types of aggressive behavior that were observed among their peers. Physical aggression was cited as the most frequent hostile behavior among boys and relational aggression as most frequent among girls. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) challenged conclusions of past research concerning aggressive behavior in girls because the studies failed to recognize that aggressive behavior is expressed in forms other than overt or physical, such as verbal and social isolation. Crick, Casas, and Ku (1999) stated that girls are much more likely to report incidents of relational aggression than boys. It is believed that this is due to the relative importance placed on social relationships among girls as compared to boys (Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2002; Pepler, Craig, Yuile, & Connolly, 2004; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004; Tapper & Boulton, 2005).

Gender differences in aggression tend to disappear when the definition of aggression is expanded to include aggressive acts that manipulate or damage

the victim's personal relationships (Crick & Rose, 2000; Reid et al., 2004). This type of aggression is defined as relational aggression. Females may prove to be as aggressive as males when a more gender-balanced approach to the conceptualization and assessment of aggression is examined (Crick & Rose, 2000; Pepler et al. 2004; Reid et al., 2004). In other words, there are different forms of aggression, some are used by males and some by females; all types of aggression need to be studied to get a gender balanced perception of peer aggression.

Physical Aggression

Physical aggression, also termed physical abuse, is defined as a form of being harmed and controlled through physical damage or by the threat of such damage (i.e., punching, kicking, hitting, pushing and shoving, poking, strangling, suffocating, bending fingers, burning, poisoning, hair pulling, and biting; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Fried & Fried, 1996; Moeller, 2001). Physical abuse is not the most common form of peer aggression, although it appears to be the most ubiquitous due to the physical harm it causes and the need for immediate intervention. This type of victimization is most common among boys, although there has been an increase in physical aggression among school-aged girls (Olweus, 1993). Aggression in the form of assault (e.g., use of weapons, stabbing, shooting) is another form of physical abuse, but is much less common.

Emotional Abuse/Relational Aggression

Emotional abuse, also known as relational aggression, is the most difficult form of victimization to detect. This is due to its indirect style of diminishing one's self-esteem and self-confidence. Relational aggression is the methodical, intentional, and repeated diminishment of another person that is designed to reduce the victim's self-perception to where the victim considers him/herself unworthy of respect, friendship, love, and protection (Fried & Fried, 1996). Emotional abuse between children consists of not including someone in pleasurable group activities, withholding friendship, purposely secluding or avoiding any form of interaction with the victim, public humiliation, spreading rumors, and encouraging negative behavior through peer pressure or manipulation. For the purpose of this study, the terms relational aggression and emotional abuse will be used interchangeably. Relationally aggressive acts use relationships as the mechanism of harm, such as giving someone the silent treatment, removing acceptance, or friendship, or spreading rumors in an attempt to extort rejection (Crick & Rose, 2000).

Developmental Trends

Little is known about how frequent the acts of relational aggression occur at different ages. Crick, Casas, and Ku (1999) hypothesized that acts of relational aggression increase in frequency after early childhood due to increased cognitive abilities and a more complex social world. Additionally, acts of relational aggression require well-developed cognitive resources. Relationally

aggressive acts of preschoolers typically involve relatively simple and direct confrontational behaviors such as covering one's ears to signify ignoring, or not inviting someone to a birthday party. According to Crick and Rose (2000), acts of relational aggression increase in frequency after early childhood due to increased cognitive abilities and a more complex social world. Friendships become more intense and complex as childhood develops into adolescence; what follows this increased intensity is self-disclosure amongst friends. This self-disclosure serves as ammunition for relational aggression. In contrast, physical aggression tends to diminish as a child develops into an adolescent. It is assumed that this decrease is due to the fact that overt aggressive acts become less tolerable as children develop in age (Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002; Grotpeter and Crick, 1996).

In a study by Grotpeter and Crick (1996), relationally aggressive children were found to have friendships that were higher in intimacy, (i.e., more personal, intense, and familiar) than the friendships of other children. Similar to physical aggression, relational aggression is associated with social and psychological adjustment problems (e.g. internalizing and externalizing problems, peer rejection; Crick, 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; McNeilly-Choque, Hart, Robinson, Nelson, & Olsen, 1996; Prinstein, Boergers & Vernberg, 2001; Rys & Bear, 1997; Werner & Crick, 1999). Relational aggression also predicts future adjustment difficulties in boys and girls. In girls, relational aggression is a

predictor for social maladjustment that is not accounted for by physical aggression (Crick, 1996; Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002).

The Bully or Aggressor

There is extensive research about the aggressors or bullies. Research has covered who the bullies are, why they bully, their intelligence, social status, empathy, socioeconomic status, parenting factors, psychosocial factors, and what happens to them as adults (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Farrington, 1993; Smith & Brain, 2000). The bully or aggressor have traits that have been associated with loneliness, poor social and emotional adjustment, risk of drug or alcohol use, poor academic achievement, and inadequate peer relationships (Nansel et al., 2001). Adjustment problems, such as depression, loneliness, anxiety, and rejection by peers, have been associated with aggressive behavior (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Crick et al., 1999; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995) and relationally aggressive children exhibit significantly more internalizing and externalizing behaviors than do their non-aggressive peers (Crick, 1997). Moretti, Holland, and McKay (2001) found that adolescents engage in covert acts of aggression in order to prevent their foes from becoming a part of their peer group and also to increase their opponent's chance of social isolation.

Cognitive steps such as encoding, interpreting social cues, and formulating responses to these cues are believed to be a function of a child's social behaviors (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Children tend to interpret social cues based on prior experiences. They expect others to react in specific ways based

of self-schemes, rather than basing their expectations on an interpretation of the social interaction or seeking relevant cues to determine if the interactions is malevolent or benign (Moretti et al., 2001). Crick and Dodge (1994) found that deficiencies in these cognitive processing steps exist in aggressive children.

The Victim

The majority of research on peer victimization has focused on aggression and the aggressor. It has examined the development of methods for reacting to and controlling violence among children. Recent studies have detected a selective process in the manner in which these children distribute their aggression, thus suggesting that there are factors proprietary to the victim that may play a role in attracting their perpetrators (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Stoody, 2000). The reasons why a child is chosen as a victim as well as ways of preventing aggressive acts are not well researched and the research that does exist is ambiguous.

Negligible empirical research exists regarding the relationship of existing personality traits and behavioral characteristics of victims of relational aggression. Anecdotal reports indicate that victims have low self-esteem; children who appear socially incompetent and are not assertive have an increased likelihood of being victimized through relational aggression (Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002; Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993). It is believed, but not empirically studied, that having friends, especially ones who will help protect against peer aggression, may reduce the chances of victimization (Hodges,

Malone, & Perry, 1997). Junger-Tas and Van Kesteren (1999) found that only 11 percent of children who have five or more friends are victimized in school, yet 51% of children who are victims of peer aggression say they have no friends.

Victims of peer aggression suffer consequences that extend beyond embarrassment. Some victims experience psychological and physical distress. Many are frequently absent from school and have difficulty concentrating on schoolwork. Research indicates that victims have low self-esteem; their victimization can lead to depressive symptoms that can last for years after the victimization has occurred (Farrington, 1993). Rigby and Slee (1999) found that between five and ten percent of students stayed at home to avoid being victimized by peer aggression. They stated that victims who suffered from acts of peer aggression at least once a week experienced health problems, contemplated suicide more frequently, and suffered with depression, social dysfunction, anxiety, and insomnia. Farrington (1993) found that adolescent victims, once they became adults, were more likely to have children who were victims of peer aggression as well.

Most students have been victims of peer aggression at some point during their school career (Junger-Tas & Van Kesteren, 1999); chronic victims receive the impact of the harm. About six to 15 percent of school-age children in the U.S. are chronic victims of peer aggression (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Nansel et al., 2001; US Department of Education, 1999); however, as stated previously, acts of peer aggression are grossly underreported, indicating this percentage

could be significantly higher. There is little agreement in research whether some victims have poor social skills or if they are using poor coping strategies that include aggressively reacting to the bullying (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1993). Victims tend to be anxious and insecure; this possibly is the indication to others that they are easy targets (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Horowitz et al., 2004). They are also less able to control their emotions, and are more socially withdrawn. Victims may return to bullies to try to continue a perceived relationship that may initiate a new cycle of victimization. They remain victims even after switching to new classes with new students, suggesting that, without other interventions, nothing will change (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Salmivalli, 1999; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). It has been suggested that children who are bullied are consistently victimized (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Junger-Tas & Van Kesteren, 1999; Olweus, 1993). It is possible that victims have some trait that leads peers to respond consistently across settings (Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1990). Victims appear to portray symptoms of low self-esteem, feelings of loneliness, anxiety, unhappiness, and insecurity (Hodges & Perry, 1996; Olweus, 1993). They appear unwilling or unable to defend themselves.

Olweus (1993) defined the victim as “one who is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions (intentionally inflicting, or attempting to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another) on the part of one or more individuals” (p. 5). We have only limited insight into the problem of peer aggression, especially why some are chosen as victims. It is unknown the extent to which physical, mental

or speech difficulties, eyeglasses, skin color, language, height, weight, hygiene, posture, social status and dress play a role in victim selection (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1993; Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988). Some studies suggest there are individualistic characteristics (physical, behavioral, cognitive, social, and familial) that influence not only the possibility of victimization but also gage the severity of it as well (Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand, & Amatya, 1999; Coleman & Byrd, 2003; French, Jansen, & Pidada, 2002; Graham & Juvonen, 1998, 2001; Hanish, 2000; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002; Mynard, Joseph, & Alexander, 2000; Perry et al., 1988; Schwartz, McFadyen-Ketchum, Dodges, Pettit, & Bates, 1998).

Types of Victims

Two types of victims identified by Olweus (1999) include passive or submissive victims and provocative or aggressive victims. The first type, low-aggressive or passive victim, refers to an adolescent who does not appear to instigate victimization by their peers and does not attempt to defend him- or herself when being victimized (Fried & Fried, 1996). This kind of victim is usually more anxious and insecure than other children, typically physically weaker, have lower self-esteem, and a feeling of low self-worth. Passive victims appear lonely, lack close friendships, and have negative feelings towards violence (Moeller, 2001). They are often cautious, quiet, and sensitive and may react emotionally (e.g. crying) when attacked. They often see themselves as failures; they may feel stupid, unattractive and possibly ashamed (Olweus, 1993).

Aggressive, provocative victims tend to create tension by irritating and teasing others and are more likely to fight back when they are attacked. These victims can be hot-tempered, restless, argumentative, disruptive, inattentive, and physically aggressive (Fried & Fried, 1996). These victims tend to provoke bullies through their outward anxiety and aggressive behaviors (Anderson, 2005). Aggressive victims may appear to others as the bully and not the victim.

Aggressive and passive victims differ in the types of behaviors they use in peer settings and in response to peer victimization. Aggressive victims tend to overreact; they have poor self-control, and appear angry and irritable. Passive victims appear to have more internalizing behaviors; they are withdrawn, submissive, and nonassertive (Ladd & Ladd, 1998).

What We Know about the Victim

It is argued that being a victim of relational aggression has a detrimental effect on an adolescent's self-esteem, social status, academic competence, physical appearance, and ability to form close friendships (Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Ladd & Ladd, 1998; Paquette & Underwood, 1999; Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003). Frequent acts of relational aggression interfere with an adolescent's ability to adapt to their environment at school. The victim may begin to develop a sense of mistrust toward their peer group and feel socially isolated. Eventually, these feelings may lead to difficulties in concentration, and may lead to academic problems; they eventually may lead to a negative attitude toward school (Ladd & Ladd, 2001).

This negative attitude toward school makes them want to avoid school, since school is one of the major environments where the peer aggression is occurring.

Victims of relational aggression are likely to develop low self-esteem (Espelage & Holt, 2001) and negative views of the world (Egan & Perry, 1998). These children frequently become anxious, aggressive, and hostile. They suffer from constant fear and are always ready and waiting for the next attack (Garbarino, Guttmann, & Seeley, 1986). Some adolescents choose to internalize their anxieties, becoming self-destructive, while others choose to externalize their aggression to others in their environment. Victims who internalize are more likely to experience depression, suicidal thoughts, passivity, withdrawal, shyness, and low degrees of communication with others. Those who externalize tend to be impulsive and overactive; they lack self-control and tend to be violent towards other people in their environment. Many of these symptoms can be used as signs to assist in identifying adolescents who are being victimized by their peers.

Victims of chronic peer aggression have been found to exhibit serious adjustment problems (Fried & Fried, 1996; Garbarino et al., 1986; Juvonen, Nishina & Graham, 2000; Moeller, 2001; Olweus, 1993). They are more likely to develop low self-esteem, loneliness, lose confidence in themselves and others, experience continuous peer rejection, be more socially withdrawn, and exhibit more depressive and anxiety symptoms, as well as suicidal attempts. It also has been found that these disturbances continue throughout the life of these victims,

even after the aggressive acts cease. When students who have been subjected to peer aggression enter adulthood, they have been found to experience negative self-concept and exhibit more symptoms of depression and anxiety (Olweus, 1993; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001).

Peer aggression is high among elementary school children; younger children are less likely than older children to have developed the physical, cognitive, and social skills needed to protect them from peer attacks, making age an important risk factor for being victimized (Hanish, 2000). Hanish and Guerra (2002) found that second graders spend increasing amounts of time with peers, thus, begin learning to use aggressive acts to gain social power. Hanish (2000) suggested one of the reasons children are victimized is due to the perception that they are unable to defend themselves and appear to be weak or they submissively comply to their peers' demands. They exhibit socially incompetent behaviors that their peers interpret as aversive or deviant. Children who are the target of peer abuse typically show different patterns of behavior than other children, such as withdrawal and anxiety. They are likely to be disliked and rejected by their peers. It is unclear how long a victim has to endure acts of relational aggression before maladjustment to their environment occurs. Graham and Juvonen (1998, 2001) stated that children make different attributions concerning why they are targets for aggressive acts and these inferences affect the way they cope with the experience.

Adolescents who are victimized report high levels of loneliness; they tend to cope by internalizing their feelings concerning the situation. Victims who tended to cope by seeking social support were significantly less lonely than those who internalized their feelings. Victims of peer aggression appear more socially anxious, lonelier, and exhibit lower self-esteem (Graham & Juvonen, 2001) than adolescents who are not victimized. Victimization research repeatedly indicates that adolescents who are "chronically picked on, teased, intimidated, or otherwise harassed are largely rejected by their peers" (Graham & Juvonen, 2001, p 57).

Physical weakness is the only physical attribute that appears to contribute to victimization. Individuals with other physical attributes (e.g. obesity, wearing glasses, speech problems, or some form of physical disability) are found to be no more likely to be victims of aggression than their peers who do not possess these external characteristics. Olweus (1993) suggested however, that these physical characteristics may cause children to have low self-esteem and possess a demeanor that invites harassment. Horowitz et al. (2004) suggested that being different from what peers expect and value could target an adolescent for peer aggression.

Perry et al. (2001) stated, "victimized children tend to lack certain social skills and personality attributes that usually help protect children from being victimized" (p. 77). Children who are victimized less often are perceived by their peers as friendly, cooperative, skilled in sharing and joining team activities, and

having a sense of humor; children who do not possess these skills are increasingly victimized over time (Perry et al., 2001). Children with low self-esteem may experience self-defeating thoughts and debilitating emotional arousal that lead to submission. Additionally, low self-esteem could lead to the seeking out of abusive interactions that confirm their low sense of self. Therefore, low self-esteem may be a predictor of victimization (Perry et al., 2001).

What we know about victims of relational aggression is based on outcome and not what predisposed them to victimization. Adolescents who are victimized are at risk for developing potentially severe social, emotional, behavioral, and academic problems that will interfere with their educational experience (Hanish, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Olweus, 1993). Victimized adolescents can display disruptive and delinquent behaviors, inattention in the classroom, symptoms of anxiety and depression, disruptive peer relationships, reduced interest in school, and diminished academic achievement (Hanish, 2000). As stated previously, peer victimization has been linked to loneliness, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, social problems, and social maladjustment (Alsaker & Olweus, 1993; Bjkorkqvist, Elman, & Lagerspetz, 1982; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Ivarsson, Broberg, Arvidsson, & Gillberg, 2005; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Lagerspetz, Bjkorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Olweus, 1993), however, we don't know if these behaviors and characteristics are a product of the abuse they are experiencing, or if these

adolescents are already susceptible to these behaviors and characteristics. There is little understanding as to the adolescent's prior behavioral traits and the personality factors that feed into their becoming targets of relational aggression.

Summary

The existing research tells us peer relationships play a significant role in the adolescent's social development. Hymel et al. (1999) suggested that children establish how well they get along with their peers by subconsciously measuring the positive and negative social behaviors peers directed toward them. Difficulties in relating to peers can negatively influence an adolescent's social development, especially since relational aggression can be seen as an aversive experience.

This study proposes to explore how personality traits, behaviors, and social status are associated with who is targeted as victims of peer aggression. It was expected that the victims of relational and physical aggression would report having very low self-esteem and would have low scores on social support scales. They would possess internalizing traits such as depression or anxiety. Victims also were predicted to score high on the external locus of control scale; that is, they would blame their victimization on outside forces that they do not have control over.

This is an important step in the needed research because the victim is often overlooked when peer aggression is occurring. Identification of potential victims and assistance with development of their social skills may assist them in

avoiding acts of peer aggression. This is important to the field of school psychology because it may assist in identifying potential victims of peer aggression before they become victims. This study was innovative because of its focus on the victim. Many adolescents will benefit from the ability of school psychologists and other mental health professionals to identify potential victims before the aggressive acts occur and therefore interventions can take place before aggressive behaviors materialize.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Students in three middle schools and one junior high school from three different school districts in Texas were asked to participate in this study, after consent was obtained from the school districts, and approval of principals from the schools participating in the study was received. See Table 2 for additional information about the school districts. Each student was given the opportunity to assent (Appendix A) to being a part of the study after parental consent (Appendix B) was obtained. The sample of students consisted of 243 students. Due to incomplete assessments, 10 cases were eliminated from the study leaving 233 valid cases.

Students were both males (44.2%) and females (55.8%) who were attending 6th, 7th, and 8th grade and were between the ages of 12 and 15. This specific age group was selected because there are indications that peer aggression, both physical and relational, occur most frequently within this age group (Hanish, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Fabes, Martin, & Denning, 2004; Karatzias, Power, & Swanson, 2002; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2004; Perren, & Alsaker, 2006) and because adolescence is a period of transitional stress resulting in impulsive behaviors and rapid fluctuation in emotions, which in turn can result in exposure to repeated insults and rejection by peers (Seals & Young, 2003). Adolescents were enrolled in regular education (classification was based on

parent identification on the consent form). Students with a classification of special education were excluded because they may not have been able to read and complete the self-report instruments on their own without assistance, and it may have been difficult to ascertain if those in special education could accurately comprehend and successfully answer the questions on the instruments used. Additionally, students in special education may consider themselves victims of peer aggression due to their classification and not due to interpersonal or intrapersonal characteristics.

Participants included in this analysis are those who accurately completed all three instruments, the *Behavior Assessment Scale for Children - Self-Report* (BASC-SRP), the *Bullying/Victimization Scale* (BVS), and the *Close Friend Subscale of the Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents* (Social Support – CFS).

Table 2

*Demographic Information of School Districts***

	School #1	School #2	School #3 & #4*
Population by City (Census 2000)			
Estimate	7,453	36,498	73,536
% Change April 2000 – July 2003	9.5%	13.4%	7.7%
Female	50.1%	50.6%	48.9%
White	84.6%	70.1%	80.5%
Black/African American	0.3%	8.5%	5.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.7%	0.6%	0.3%
Asian	0.3%	0.3%	7.3%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	Z	Z	0.1%
Persons reporting some other race	5.1%	17.7%	4.5%
Persons reporting two or more races	1.5%	2.7%	1.9%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	13.4%	40.4%	10.0%
High school graduates	78.0%	71.3%	93.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	17.2%	13.3%	58.1%
Median household income	$39,404	$36,573	$21,180

Table 2 Continued

	School #1	School #2	School #3 & #4*
School District (www.tea.org)			
2002 Accountability Ratings	Acceptable	Acceptable	Recognized
Total Students	704	1,901	7,675
% African American	28%	15%	12%
% Hispanic	15%	22%	13%
% White	56%	63%	67%
% Other	1%	0%	9%
% Economically Disadvantaged	54.8%	45.2%	26.0%
% Special Education	15&	12%	9%
% Bilingual/ESL Education	1%	11%	5%
% Career & Technology Ed.	29%	22%	23%
% Gifted & Talented Ed.	7%	6%	13%
Attendance Rate (2001-02)	95.0%	95.8%	96.7%
Annual Dropout Rate (2001-02)	1.7%	0.7%	0.5%
Four-year Dropout Rate (Class of 2002)	9.2%	6.5%	3.8%
% Graduated (Class of 2002)	69%	89.9%	88.1%
Number Of Students Per Teacher	10.7	13.2	14.6

* Schools 3 and 4 are within the same school district
**U.S. Census Bureau (2004) and Texas Education Agency (2003).

Data was aggregated for each participating student from demographic information collected from the cover sheet (Appendix C), the BVS, the BASC-SRP, and the Harter Scales. Demographic data is being reported using means and standard deviations from SPSS 12.0. Demographic information for this sample is presented in Table 3. Identifying demographic information is important as existing literature suggests that generalizing to specific populations is dependent upon the sample (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Crick et al., 2002; Espelage & Holt, 2001; Hoover et al., 1992; Olweus, 1993, 1999; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Smith & Brain, 2000). Students self-identified their gender, age, and ethnicity. Of the participating students, 55.8% identified as female and 44.2% identified as male. Of the original 243 participants 233 (95.88%) were valid to use in the analysis. Ages of the participants ranged from twelve through fifteen years old, with a mean age of 13.3. In the sample, 63.9% were Caucasian (*n*=149), 14.6% were African American (*n*=34), 11.2% were Hispanic (*n*=26), 4.7% were Asian/Pacific Islander (*n*=11), and 5.6% were classified as Biracial or other (*n*=13). See Table 3 for further demographic information.

Table 3

Demographic Variables

Descriptor		N	Percentage
Total Sample Size		233	
Gender	Females	130	55.8
	Males	103	44.2
Age	12	38	16.3
	13	100	42.9
	14	92	39.5
	15	3	1.3
Grade	6	4	1.7
	7	105	45.1
	8	124	53.2
Ethnicity	Caucasian	149	63.9
	African American/Black	34	14.6
	Hispanic	26	11.2
	Asian/Pacific Islander	11	4.7
	Other or Biracial	13	5.6
School	1	9	3.9
	2	30	12.9
	3	83	35.6
	4	111	47.6

Procedures

After parental consent was obtained, each student was asked to sign a form giving their assent to participate in the study. As incentive to participate in the study, each student who agreed to participate had their name placed in a drawing to win one of five $20 gift cards to a local store of their choice. In order to maintain confidentiality, the student filled out a separate form with their name, mailing address, email address, and phone number to be used for the drawing.

Students who gave assent were administered the battery of instruments in a designated room within the school, separate from other classmates who were not participating in the study. These measurements were administered in small groups (between 8 and 10 students at a time), at the request of the principals, to ensure that rapport could be established, that the students could be appropriately observed by the administrator of these instruments, and that questions could be easily answered within a reasonable period of time. The students were encouraged to answer each question according to their own opinions and not the opinion of their peers. The battery of instruments was administered in the following order: (a) Cover Sheet, with participant demographics (see Appendix E), (b) *Bullying/Victimization Scale (BVS)*, (c) *Behavior Assessment System for Children – Self-Report (BASC-SRP)*, and (d) *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents (Social Support – CFS)*. The order in which the instruments were administered was uniform across all groups of students.

Measures

Student Self-Reports. Each participating student completed the *Behavior Assessment Scale for Children - Self-Report* (BASC-SRP; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992) for 12-18 year-olds. The BASC-SRP measures internalizing and externalizing behaviors such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal relations, self-esteem, social stress, locus of control, self-reliance, and sense of inadequacy. It is an established instrument with acceptable internal consistency reliability (.90), test-retest reliability, and validity (e.g., relationship among scales provided by factor analysis and a pattern of correlations of scales and composites with scores obtained on other behavior measures; Reynolds & Kamphaus 1992). The BASC-SRP contains 186 items that are endorsed either true or false.

To measure various facets of peer victimization and bullying, Reynolds (2003a), created a *Bullying/Victimization Scale* (BVS), which is designed to assess the bullying behaviors and victimization experiences in children and adolescents. Other studies (Craig, 1998; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Olweus, 1999) used similar questions that assessed bullying and victimization. Students were given questions from both the Victimization and Bully Scales. The items from the Victimization Scale were summed to yield a Victim score. The items from the Bully Scale were summed to yield a Bully score. An internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's coefficient alpha revealed satisfactory coefficients of .93 for the score on the Bully Scale and a coefficient alpha

reliability of .93 for the Victimization Scale (Reynolds, 2003b). An internal consistency analysis with the sample in this study, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, revealed similar coefficients of .94 for the score on the Bully Scale and .93 for the Victimization Scale.

The *Close Friend Subscale of the Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents* (Social Support Scales; Harter, 1985) was used to assess adolescent perceptions of social support from close friends. This measures self-perceptions in the domain of Close Friends (Harter, 1998; Prinstein et al., 2001). These Harter scales reported good internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .74-.93) as well as considerable support for their consistency (Prinstein et al., 2001). The sample in this study revealed a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .90. The Harter scales have been used in several empirical studies concerning bullying and relational aggression (Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Mynard & Joseph, 2000; Moretti et al., 2001; Neary & Joseph, 1994; Paquette & Underwood, 1999; Perry et al., 1988; Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin, 2000; Prinstein et al., 2001). In this study, the Social Support Scales are being used in conjunction with other self-report measures in order to obtain data that are comparable with research from previous studies.

Data Analysis

Determining victim/bully levels. The level of bullying will be a continuous variable based on the score obtained from the Bully Scale on the BVS. The score obtained from the Victimization scale on the BVS will determine the level

of victimization, which is also a continuous variable. The BVS is being used due to its' reliability, test-retest reliability, as well as its' content and construct validity. That is, the items on this scale relate in a significant and meaningful manner (Reynolds, 2003b). Content and construct validity are important with this measure due to the fact that adolescent self reporting on peer aggression has been found to be inconsistent. Adolescents who display high levels of aggressive behaviors tend to underestimate their own levels of aggression (Patterson, Kupersmidt, & Griesler, 1990).

Research question 1. To answer research question one (Are intrapersonal characteristics associated with victimization and/or bullying?), the T- scores for Anxiety, Depression, Locus of Control, Self-Esteem, Self-Reliance, and Sense of Inadequacy from the BASC-SRP were analyzed using Multiple Regression with the Bully Scale score from the BVS and the Victimization Scale score from the BVS as the dependant variable.

Research question 2. To address research question two, (Are interpersonal characteristics associated with victimization and/or bullying?), The T-scores for Interpersonal Relations and Social Stress from the BASC-SRP as well as scores for Social Support among Friends and Social Support among Classmates from the Social Support-CFS Scales were analyzed using Multiple Regression with the Bully Scale score from the BVS and the Victimization Scale score from the BVS as the dependant variable.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The analyses for this dissertation were conducted using SPSS 12.0. Prior to analysis, students' responses to the BASC-SRP, BVS, Social Support – CFS, and Cover Sheet with demographics were examined through various SPSS programs and Microsoft® Excel 2002 for accuracy of data entry and missing values.

Pearson correlations were computed between Bully Total, Victimization Total, and Intrapersonal Characteristics (Anxiety, Depression, Self-Esteem, Sense of Inadequacy, Locus of Control, and Self-Reliance). Bullying was moderately correlated with Victimization (r=.353, p<.01). Bullying was moderately correlated with student report Sense of Inadequacy (r=.369, p<.01), Locus of Control (r=.317, p<.01), and Victimization (r=.353, p<.01). Bullying had a small correlation with Anxiety (r=.135, p<.05), Depression (r=.202, p<.01), and a small negative correlation with Self-Reliance (r= -.161, p<.05). Victimization was moderately correlated with Anxiety (r=.301, p<.01), Depression (r=.304, p<.01), Sense of Inadequacy (r=.331, p<.01), and Locus of Control (r=.337, p<.01). Victimization had a small negative correlation with Self-Esteem (r= -.243, p<.01). See Table 4 for additional information regarding Pearson correlations.

Table 4

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Intrapersonal Characteristics from the BASC-SRP (N=233)

	Bully Total	Victimization Total	Anxiety	Depression	Self-Esteem	Sense of Inadequacy	Locus of Control	Self-Reliance
Bully Total	1	.353**	.135*	.202**	-.110	.369**	.317**	-.161*
Victimization Total	.353**	1	.301**	.304**	-.243**	.331**	.337**	-.080

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

When controlling for ethnicity (Caucasian/Non-Caucasian) Bullying was moderately correlated with Sense of Inadequacy (r=.405, *p*<.01) and Locus of Control (r=.347, *p*<.01) and had a small correlation with Anxiety (r=.235, *p*<.05) and Depression (r=.240, *p*<.05) for students who identified as Non-Caucasian. Bullying had a small correlation with Sense of Inadequacy (r=.252, *p*<.01) and Locus of Control (r=.256, *p*<.01) with students who identified as Caucasian. Victimization had a moderate correlation with Anxiety (r=.441, *p*<.01), Sense of Inadequacy (r=.354, *p*<.01), and Locus of Control (r=.410, *p*<.01), a small correlation with Depression (r=.255, *p*<.05), and a small negative correlation with Self Esteem (r=-.274, *p*<.05) for those who identified as Non-Caucasian. Victimization had a small correlation with Anxiety (r=.250, *p*<.01), a small negative correlation with Self-Esteem (r=-.230, *p*<.01), and a moderate correlation with Depression (r=.345, *p*<.01), Sense of Inadequacy (r=.343, *p*<.01), and Locus of Control (r=.308, *p*<.01) for students who identified as Caucasian (see Table 5).

When controlling for gender, Bullying was moderately correlated with Sense of Inadequacy (r=.335, *p*<.01) and Locus of Control (r=.318, *p*<.01) for students who identified as Female. Bullying had a small correlation with Anxiety (r=.218, *p*<.05), and a moderate correlation with Depression (r=.379, *p*<.01), Sense of Inadequacy (r=.419, *p*<.01), and Locus of Control (r=.318, *p*<.01) for students who identified as Male. Victimization had a moderate correlation with Anxiety (r=.305, *p*<.01), Depression (r=.313, *p*<.01), Sense of Inadequacy (r=.362, *p*<.01), and Locus of Control (r=.356, *p*<.01), and a small negative correlation with Self Esteem (r=-.243, *p*<.01) for those who identified as Female. Victimization had a small correlation with Sense of Inadequacy (r=.294, *p*<.01), a small negative correlation with Self-Esteem (r=-.260, *p*<.01), and a moderate correlation with Anxiety (r=.305, *p*<.01), Depression (r=.305, *p*<.01), and Locus of Control (r=.317, *p*<.01) for students who identified as Male (see Table 6).

Table 5

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Intrapersonal Characteristics Controlling for Caucasian/Non-Caucasian

	Anxiety	Depression	Self-Esteem	Sense of Inadequacy	Locus of Control	Self-Reliance
Caucasian (N=149)						
Bully Total	.026	.107	-.021	.252**	.256**	-.137
Victimization Total	.250**	.345**	-.230**	.343**	.308**	-.076
Non-Caucasian (N=84)						
Bully Total	.235*	.240*	-.184	.405**	.347**	-.101
Victimization Total	.411**	.255*	-.274*	.354**	.410**	-.092

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

Table 6

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Intrapersonal Characteristics Controlling for Males/Females

	Anxiety	Depression	Self-Esteem	Sense of Inadequacy	Locus of Control	Self-Reliance
Males (N=103)						
Bully Total	.218*	.379**	-.177	.419**	.318**	-.164
Victimization Total	.305**	.313**	-.243**	.362**	.356**	-.152
Females (N=133)						
Bully Total	.098	.112	-.103	.335**	.318**	-.164
Victimization Total	.305**	.313**	-.243**	.362**	.356**	-.152

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

Pearson correlations were also computed between Bully Total, Victimization Total, and Interpersonal Characteristics (Interpersonal Relations, Social Stress, Social Support Among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends). Bullying had a small correlation with Social Stress (r=.136, p<.05) and a small negative correlation Social Support among Friends (r= -.129, p<.05). Victimization had a moderate negative correlation with Interpersonal Relations (r= -.315, p<.01), and Social Support Among Classmates (r= -.333, p<.01). Victimization was moderately correlated with Social Stress (r=.444, p<.01), and had a small negative correlation with Social Support among Friends (r= -.152, p<.05). See Table 7 for additional information regarding Pearson correlations.

When controlling for ethnicity (Caucasian/Non-Caucasian), Victimization has a moderate correlation with Social Stress (r=.473, p<.01), a small negative correlation with Social Support among Friends (r=-.165, p<.05), and a moderate negative correlation with Interpersonal Relations (r=-.372, p<.01) and Social Support among Classmates (r=-.360, p<.01) for students who identified as Caucasian. Victimization had a small negative correlation with Interpersonal Relations (r=-.265, p<.05) and Social Support among Classmates (r=-.287, p<.01), and a moderate correlation with Social Stress (r=.392, p<.01) for students who identified as Non-Caucasian (see Table 8).

Table 7

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Interpersonal Characteristics from the BASC-SRP and Social Support – CFS (N=233)

	Bully Total	Victimization Total	Interpersonal Relations	Social Stress	Social Support Classmates	Social Support Friends
Bully Total	1	.353**	-.094	.136*	-.096	-.129*
Victimization Total	.353**	1	-.315**	.444**	-.333**	-.152*

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

When controlling for gender Bullying had a small correlation with Social Stress (r=.217, *p*<.05) for students who identified as Male. For students who identified as Female, Victimization had a moderate correlation with Social Stress (r=.427, *p*<.01), a moderate negative correlation with Interpersonal Relations (r=-.385, *p*<.01), and a small negative correlation with Social Support among Classmates (r=-.272, *p*<.01) and Social Support among Friends (r=-.228, *p*<.01). Victimization had a small negative correlation with Interpersonal Relations (r=-.238, *p*<.05), a moderate negative correlation with Social Support among Classmates (r=-.427, *p*<.01), and a moderate correlation with Social Stress (r=.473, *p*<.01) for students who identified as Male (see Table 9).

Table 8

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Interpersonal Characteristics Controlling for Caucasian/Non-Caucasian

	Interpersonal Relations	Social Stress	Social Support Classmates	Social Support Friends
Caucasian (N=149)				
Bully Total	-.060	.057	-.087	-.124
Victimization Total	-.372**	.473**	-.360**	-.165*
Non-Caucasian (N=84)				
Bully Total	-.076	.220*	-.126	-.133
Victimization Total	-.265*	.392**	-.287**	-.128

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

Table 9

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Interpersonal Characteristics Controlling for Male/Female

	Interpersonal Relations	Social Stress	Social Support Classmates	Social Support Friends
Female (N=130)				
Bully Total	-.033	.091	-.053	-.143
Victimization Total	-.385**	.427**	-.272**	-.228**
Male (N=103)				
Bully Total	-.145	.217*	-.152	-.084
Victimization Total	-.238*	.473**	-.427**	-.095

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

The results from the BASC-SRP include three validity indexes that help assess the quality of the subject's responses. Validity may be compromised by factors such as inattention, carelessness, answering questions with socially acceptable answers, and poor comprehension. The V-Index serves as a basic check on the validity of the BASC-SRP scores in general. The F-Index checks for a tendency to be excessively negative. The L-Index assesses the tendency to portray a very positive picture of the self "faking good". The scores from these scales were depicted as 0=Acceptable, 1=Caution, 2=Extreme Caution (see Table 10).

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of V-Index from BASC-SRP

	N	Percentage
Acceptable	224	96.1
Caution	7	3.0
Extreme Caution	2	.9

Pearson correlations were computed between Bully Total, Victimization Total, and Intrapersonal Variables (anxiety, depression, self-esteem, sense of inadequacy, locus of control, and self-reliance) for subjects that scored "Acceptable" on the V-Index of the BASC-SRP, see Table 11. Additonally, Pearson correlations were computed between Bully Total, Victimization Total, and Interpersonal Variables (Interpersonal Relations, Social Stress, Social Support Among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends) for only subjects that scored "Acceptable" on the V-Index, see Table 12.

The difference in significance when performing Pearson Correlations with all subjects versus only subjects that scored "Acceptable" on the V-Index of the BASC-SRP were minor. Therefore, in order to maintain power, further analysis will include all subjects.

Table 11

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Intrapersonal Characteristics from the BASC-SRP

V-Index = Acceptable Only (N = 224)

	Bully Total	Victimization Total	Anxiety	Depression	Self-Esteem	Sense of Inadequacy	Locus of Control	Self-Reliance
Bully Total	1	.371**	.114	.180**	-.132*	.338**	.319**	-.171*
Victimization Total	.371**	1	.297**	.328**	-.260**	.359**	.357**	-.108

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

Table 12

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for Interpersonal Characteristics from the BASC-SRP and Social Support – CFS

V-Index = Acceptable Only (N=224)

	Bully Total	Victimization Total	Interpersonal Relations	Social Stress	Social Support Classmates	Social Support Friends
Bully Total	1	.371**	-.080	.134*	-.126	-.118
Victimization Total	.371**	1	-.345**	.463**	-.359**	-.171*

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

Research Question One

Are intrapersonal characteristics associated with victimization and/or bullying? It was hypothesized that intrapersonal characteristics such as anxiety, depression, locus of control, self-esteem, sense of inadequacy, and self-reliance will be associated with high victimization and low bullying. Multiple Regression Analyses were conducted in order to determine how Victimization and Bullying would be predicted by intrapersonal characteristics.

Victimization. The results indicated that Victimization was significantly predicted by Anxiety and Sense of Inadequacy [R^2=.167, Adjusted R^2=.145, $F(6,226)=7.571$, $p<.01$]. Depression and Self-Esteem did not add significantly to the prediction of Victimization. The variables Anxiety, Sense of Inadequacy, Locus of Control, Self-Reliance, Depression, and Self-Esteem explained 16.7% of the variance (see Table 13). Using casewise diagnostics, five outliers were identified that were above three standard deviations. When the outliers were removed, the statistical conclusion remained the same; the variance accounted for changed to 20%.

Table 13

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization (N= 233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	12.377	11.543		1.072	.285
Anxiety	.187	.091	.161	2.054	.041
Depression	.029	.122	.025	.239	.811
Self-Esteem	.004	.093	.004	.048	.962
Sense of Inadequacy	.245	.104	.205	2.352	.020
Locus of Control	.168	.095	.161	1.766	.079
Self-Reliance	.149	.084	.123	1.772	.078

R^2 = .167; Adjusted R^2 = .145

Multiple Regression Analyses for Intrapersonal Characteristics associated with Victimization were then performed controlling for Ethnicity (Caucasian and Non-Caucasian), Gender, and Age/Grade. The results indicated that Victimization was significantly predicted by Sense of Inadequacy for those who identified as Caucasian [R^2=.168, Adjusted R^2=.133, F(6,142)=4.785, p<.01]. For those who did not identify as Caucasian [R^2=.265, Adjusted R^2=.207, F(6,77)=4.617, p<.01], Victimization was significantly predicted by anxiety only (see Table 14). There were no significant variables with Victimization when data was controlled for male [R^2=.168, Adjusted R^2=.116, F(6,96)=3.240, p<.01] and for female participants, [R^2=.175, Adjusted R^2=.134, F(6,123)=4.339, p<.01] (see Table 15). Since the samples were too small to control for age and grade, age and grade were included in the Multiple Regression Analysis as continuous variables. The results indicated that Victimization was significantly predicted by Anxiety and Sense of Inadequacy [R^2=.179, Adjusted R^2=.149, F(8,224)=6.095, p<.01] (see Table 16).

Table 14

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization
Controlling for Caucasian/Non-Caucasian (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Caucasian					
(Constant)	10.936	15.136		.722	.471
Anxiety	.094	.122	.074	.766	.445
Depression	.198	.163	.144	1.219	.225
Self-Esteem	-.025	.122	-.021	-.208	.835
Sense of Inadequacy	.310	.146	.208	2.118	.036
Locus of Control	.112	.120	.099	.934	.352
Self-Reliance	.136	.121	.094	1.125	.262
Non-Caucasian					
(Constant)	13.640	17.197		.793	.430
Anxiety	.328	.130	.329	2.524	.014
Depression	-.277	.178	-.308	-1.557	.123
Self-Esteem	.061	.142	.066	.431	.668
Sense of Inadequacy	.247	.147	.273	1.681	.097
Locus of Control	.300	.160	.336	1.875	.065
Self-Reliance	.088	.114	.092	.775	.441

Table 15

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization Controlling for Males/Females (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Males					
(Constant)	16.362	18.336		.892	.374
Anxiety	.204	.146	.160	1.394	.166
Depression	.125	.217	.086	.577	.565
Self-Esteem	-.083	.158	-.061	-.523	.602
Sense of Inadequacy	.208	.163	.170	1.278	.204
Locus of Control	.100	.160	.087	.625	.533
Self-Reliance	.158	.124	.129	1.279	.204
Females					
(Constant)	10.717	15.560		.689	.492
Anxiety	.183	.121	.164	1.519	.131
Depression	.013	.157	.013	.086	.932
Self-Esteem	.051	.126	.051	.403	.687
Sense of Inadequacy	.274	.145	.233	1.889	.061
Locus of Control	.174	.132	.180	1.315	.191
Self-Reliance	.122	.122	.101	1.003	.318

Table 16

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization with Grade and Age as Continuous Variables (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	28.606	16.450		1.739	.083
Grade	-2.421	1.749	-.117	-1.384	.168
Age	.216	1.271	.014	.170	.865
Anxiety	.181	.092	.156	1.979	.049
Depression	.044	.122	.038	.358	.721
Self-Esteem	-.002	.094	-.002	-.019	.985
Sense of Inadequacy	.234	.105	.196	2.238	.026
Locus of Control	.155	.096	.149	1.618	.107
Self-Reliance	.152	.084	.125	1.812	.071

Bullying. In the Multiple Regression Analysis, Bullying was significantly predicted by Sense of Inadequacy and Locus of Control, [R^2=.169, Adjusted R^2=.147, $F(6,226)=7.661$, $p<.01$]. Self-Esteem, Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Reliance did not add significantly to the prediction of Bullying (see Table 17) indicating that only students who exhibited a high Sense of Inadequacy and/or low internal Locus of Control were as likely to be identified as a bully as they were to be victimized. These variables explained 16.9% of the variance.

However, there was a negative beta weight of -.170 for Depression and -.004 for Self-Reliance, indicating that students who had higher T-scores for Depression and Self-Reliance had higher scores on the Bully scale. Using casewise diagnostics, four outliers were identified that were above three standard deviations. When the outliers were removed, the statistical conclusion remained the same and the variance changed to 16.4%.

Table 17

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying (N= 233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	25.737	10.647		2.417	.016
Anxiety	.001	.084	.001	.009	.993
Depression	-.182	.112	-.170	-1.620	.107
Self-Esteem	.069	.086	.069	.808	.420
Sense of Inadequacy	.396	.096	.359	4.120	<.001
Locus of Control	.235	.088	.244	2.677	.008
Self-Reliance	-.004	.078	-.004	-.052	.959

R^2 = .169; Adjusted R^2 = .147

Multiple Regression Analyses for Intrapersonal Characteristics associated with Bullying were then performed controlling for Ethnicity (Caucasian and Non-Caucasian), Gender, and Age/Grade. The results indicated that Bullying was significantly predicted by Sense of Inadequacy and Locus of Control for those who identified as Caucasian [R^2=.109, Adjusted R^2=.071, F(6,142)=2.898, p<.01]. For those who did not identify as Caucasian [R^2=.214, Adjusted R^2=.153, F(6,77)=4.497, p<.01], Bullying was significantly predicted by Sense of Inadequacy (see Table 18). Bullying was significantly predicted by Sense of Inadequacy when data was controlled for males only [R^2=.197, Adjusted R^2=.147, F(6,96)=3.924, p<.01]. When data was controlled for females only, Bullying was significantly predicted by Depression, Sense of Inadequacy, and Locus of Control [R^2=.198, Adjusted R^2=.158, F(6,123)=5.046, p<.01] (see Table 19). Since the samples were too small to control for age and grade, age and grade were included in the Multiple Regression Analysis as continuous variables. The results indicated that Bullying was significantly predicted by Sense of Inadequacy and Locus of Control [R^2=172, Adjusted R^2=.142, F(8,224)=5.819, p<.01] (see Table 20).

Table 18

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying
Controlling for Caucasian/Non-Caucasian (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Caucasian					
(Constant)	38.581	10.714		3.601	<.001
Anxiety	-.066	.086	-.076	-.759	.449
Depression	-.126	.115	-.134	-1.096	.275
Self-Esteem	.032	.087	.040	.373	.710
Sense of Inadequacy	.219	.104	.215	2.117	.036
Locus of Control	.204	.085	.262	2.388	.018
Self-Reliance	-.036	.086	-.036	-.419	.676
Non-Caucasian					
(Constant)	3.231	23.125		.140	.889
Anxiety	.148	.175	.115	.850	.398
Depression	-.268	.239	-.229	-1.122	.265
Self-Esteem	.173	.191	.144	.907	.367
Sense of Inadequacy	.559	.197	.476	2.837	.006
Locus of Control	.283	.215	.243	1.314	.193
Self-Reliance	.108	.153	.086	.705	.483

Table 19

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying Controlling for Males/Females (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Males					
(Constant)	19.163	17.753		1.079	.283
Anxiety	.085	.141	.067	.598	.551
Depression	.183	.210	.127	.868	.387
Self-Esteem	.011	.153	.008	.073	.942
Sense of Inadequacy	.348	.158	.289	2.211	.029
Locus of Control	.049	.155	.043	.319	.750
Self-Reliance	-.006	.120	-.005	-.052	.958
Females					
(Constant)	36.392	13.187		2.760	.007
Anxiety	-.038	.102	-.040	-.373	.710
Depression	-.356	.133	-.404	-2.683	.008
Self-Esteem	.014	.107	.017	.135	.893
Sense of Inadequacy	.354	.123	.351	2.886	.005
Locus of Control	.337	.112	.405	3.007	.003
Self-Reliance	-.013	.103	-.013	-.126	.900

Table 20

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying with Grade and Age as Continuous Variables (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	22.113	15.250		1.450	.148
Grade	1.457	1.622	.076	.899	.370
Age	-.623	1.179	-.045	-.528	.598
Anxiety	.008	.085	.007	.095	.925
Depression	-.185	.113	-.173	-1.639	.103
Self-Esteem	.076	.087	.076	.881	.380
Sense of Inadequacy	.404	.097	.367	4.172	<.001
Locus of Control	.235	.089	.245	2.648	.009
Self-Reliance	-.005	.078	-.004	-.059	.953

Research Question Two

Are interpersonal characteristics associated with victimization and/or bullying? It was hypothesized that interpersonal characteristics such as Interpersonal Relationships and Social Stress on the BASC-SRP, Social Support among Friends, and Social Support Among Classmates from the Harter Social Support Scales will be associated with low victimization and low bullying. Multiple Regression Analyses were carried out in order to determine whether interpersonal characteristics would be associated with low bullying and low victimization.

Victimization. The results indicated that Victimization was only significantly predicted by Social Stress, [R^2=.213, Adjusted R^2=.200, F(4,227)=15.394, p<.01]. Interpersonal Relationships, Social Support among Friends, and Social Support Among Classmates did not add significantly to the prediction of Victimization, indicating that only students with high Social Stress reported incidents of victimization. The variables Interpersonal Relationships and Social Stress, Social Support among Friends, and Social Support among Classmates explained 21.3% of the variance. However, there was a negative beta weight of -.070 for Interpersonal Relationships and -.099 for Social Support among Classmates indicating that students who had higher scores on the Interpersonal Relations and Social Support among Classmates scales had higher scores on the Victimization scale. Using casewise diagnostics, six outliers were identified that were above three standard deviations. When the outliers were removed, the statistical conclusion remained the same. The variance accounted for changed to 21.6%. See Table 21 for additional information on this Multiple Regression Analysis.

Table 21

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization (N= 233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	42.002	8.828		4.758	<.001
Interpersonal Relations	-.101	.115	-.070	-.881	.379
Social Stress	.388	.080	.359	4.841	<.001
Social Support Among Classmates	-1.859	1.585	-.099	-1.172	.242
Social Support among Friends	.317	1.290	.017	.246	.806

R^2=.213; Adjusted R^2=.197

Multiple Regression Analyses for Interpersonal Characteristics associated with Victimization were then performed controlling for Ethnicity (Caucasian and Non-Caucasian), Gender, and Age/Grade. The results indicated that Victimization was significantly predicted by Social Stress for those who identified as Caucasian and Non-Caucasian (Caucasian [R^2=.244, Adjusted R^2=.223, F(4,144)=11.624, p<.01]; Non-Caucasian [R^2=.172, Adjusted R^2=.129, F(4,78)=4.045, p<.01]) (see Table 22). Victimization was significantly predicted by Social Stress, Social Support among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends for those participants who identified as male. Interpersonal Relations did not add significantly to variance accounted for in Victimization for those who identified as male [R^2=.309, Adjusted R^2=.280, F(4,98)=10.934, p<.01]. Social Stress and Interpersonal Relations were significant for predicting Victimization for participants who identified as female, [R^2=.219, Adjusted R^2=.194,

$F(4,124)=8.696$, $p<.01$] (see Table 23). The results indicated that Victimization was significantly predicted by Social Stress [$R^2=.225$, Adjusted $R^2=.204$, $F(6,225)=10.894$, $p<.01$] when controlling for age and grade as continuous variables (see Table 24).

Table 22

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization Controlling for Caucasian/Non-Caucasian (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Caucasian					
(Constant)	47.649	13.112		3.634	<.001
Interpersonal Relations	-.229	.179	-.125	-1.283	.202
Social Stress	.414	.108	.358	3.826	<.001
Social Support among Classmates	-1.594	2.032	-.078	-.784	.434
Social Support among Friends	.008	1.602	.000	.005	.996
Non-Caucasian					
(Constant)	41.427	11.829		3.502	.001
Interpersonal Relations	-.035	.151	-.034	-.233	.817
Social Stress	.302	.119	.324	2.534	.013
Social Support among Classmates	-2.320	2.759	-.146	-.841	.403
Social Support among Friends	1.188	2.316	.072	.513	.610

Table 23

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization Controlling for Males/Females (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Males					
(Constant)	39.670	11.996		3.307	.001
Interpersonal Relations	.132	.157	.091	.838	.404
Social Stress	.444	.115	.378	3.880	<.001
Social Support among Classmates	-8.387	2.452	-.389	-3.420	.001
Social Support Among Friends	2.947	1.856	.157	1.587	.116
Females					
(Constant)	48.143	13.377		3.599	<.001
Interpersonal Relations	-.323	.162	-.225	-1.990	.049
Social Stress	.360	.112	.352	3.213	.002
Social Support among Classmates	2.289	2.051	.133	1.116	.267
Social Support among Friends	-1.509	1.923	-.073	-.785	.434

Table 24

Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization with Grade and Age as Continuous Variables (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	56.465	14.920		3.785	<.001
Grade	.350	1.220	.023	.287	.775
Age	-2.566	1.698	-.124	-1.511	.132
Interpersonal Relations	-.083	.115	-.057	-.718	.474
Social Stress	.381	.080	.353	4.767	<.001
Social Support among Classmates	-2.056	1.585	-.109	-1.298	.196
Social Support among Friends	.368	1.287	.020	.286	.775

Bullying. In the Multiple Regression Analysis, all Interpersonal variables (Interpersonal Relations, Social Stress, Social Support among Classmate, and Social Support among Friends) did not add significantly to the prediction of bullying behaviors [R^2=.029, Adjusted R^2=.012, $F(4,227)=1.687$, $p<.01$]. These variables explained only 2.9% of the variance (see Table 25). Four outliers were identified using casewise diagnostics that were above three standard deviations. When these outliers were removed, the statistical conclusion remained the same and the variance changed to 5.5%. Thus, Interpersonal Relationships did not add significantly to the prediction of Bullying or Victimization, and Social Stress

did not add to variance accounted for in Bullying but did add to variance accounted for in Victimization.

Table 25

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying (N= 233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	49.734	9.056		5.492	<.001
Interpersonal Relations	.007	.118	.005	.055	.956
Social Stress	.124	.082	.124	1.507	.133
Social Support Among Classmates	.400	1.626	.023	.246	.806
Social Support among Friends	-1.935	1.323	-.111	-1.462	.145

R^2=.212; Adjusted R^2=.195

Multiple Regression Analyses for Interpersonal Characteristics associated with Bullying were then performed controlling for Ethnicity (Caucasian and Non-Caucasian), Gender, and Age/Grade. When controlling for Ethnicity, the results again indicated that Interpersonal Characteristics did not add significantly to the variance accounted for in Bullying for those who identified as Caucasian or Non-Caucasian (Caucasian [R^2=.018, Adjusted R^2=-.010, F(4,144=0.646, p<.01]; Non-Caucasian [R^2=.069, Adjusted R^2=.021, F(4,78)=1.442, p<.01]). See Table 26. Additionally, Interpersonal Characteristics did not add significantly to the variance accounted for in Bullying when data was controlled for gender (Male [R^2=.051, Adjusted R^2=.013, F(4,98)=1.329, p<.01]; Female [R^2=.028, Adjusted

R^2=-.004, F(4,124)=0.878, p<.01]). See Table 27. Since the samples were too small to control for age and grade, age and grade were included in the Multiple Regression Analysis as continuous variables. The results indicated again that Interpersonal Characteristics did not add significantly to the variance accounted for in Bullying [R^2=030, Adjusted R^2=.004, F(6,225)=1.157, p<.01] when controlling for age and grade as continuous variables (see Table 28).

Table 26

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying
Controlling for Caucasian/Non-Caucasian (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Caucasian					
(Constant)	55.281	10.223		5.407	<.001
Interpersonal Relations	.021	.139	.017	.150	.881
Social Stress	.007	.084	.009	.080	.936
Social Support among Classmates	-.725	1.585	-.052	-.458	.648
Social Support among Friends	-1.510	1.249	-.110	-1.209	.229
Non-Caucasian					
(Constant)	38.665	16.311		2.371	.020
Interpersonal Relations	.158	.208	.118	.761	.449
Social Stress	.321	.165	.265	1.952	.054
Social Support among Classmates	.460	3.804	.022	.121	.904
Social Support among Friends	-3.040	3.194	-.142	-.952	.344

Table 27

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying Controlling for Males/Females (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Males					
(Constant)	47.669	13.844		3.443	.001
Interpersonal Relations	-.049	.181	-.035	-.272	.786
Social Stress	.205	.132	.177	1.554	.123
Social Support among Classmates	-1.129	2.830	-.053	-.399	.691
Social Support among Friends	.020	2.142	.001	.009	.993
Females					
(Constant)	49.053	12.830		3.823	<.001
Interpersonal Relations	.083	.156	.067	.532	.595
Social Stress	.092	.108	.105	.858	.393
Social Support among Classmates	.718	1.967	.049	.365	.716
Social Support among Friends	-2.830	1.845	-.158	-1.534	.128

Table 28

Multiple Regression Analysis for Bullying with Grade and Age as Continuous Variables (N=233)

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	52.521	15.413		3.408	.001
Grade	-.605	1.261	-.044	-.480	.632
Age	.730	1.754	.038	.416	.678
Interpersonal Relations	.002	.119	.001	.013	.990
Social Stress	.124	.083	.124	1.498	.136
Social Support among Classmates	.439	1.637	.025	.268	.789
Social Support among Friends	-1.966	1.330	-.113	-1.479	.141

Supplementary Analysis

The students in the study were classified as bullies (8.6%, *n*=20), victims (14.6%, *n*=34), bully-victim (9%, *n*=21), or neither a bully nor a victim (67.8%, *n*=158) based upon the recommended cutoff scores in the BVS manual (Reynolds, 2003). A student was classified as a bully if he or she had a T-score greater than 58 on the Bully scale and as a victim with a T-score greater than 56 on the Victimization scale. A student was classified as a bully-victim if he or she reached both criteria. A One-Way Analysis of Variance indicated that the resulting groups did not differ by age [$F(3,229)=1.151$, $p>.01$] or grade [$F(7,224)=1.919$, $p>.01$] composition. The gender and ethnic compositions of each resulting group were compared to the gender and ethnic composition of the original sample using Chi-square analyses. Results indicated no significant differences between the original sample and each group (see Table 29).

Table 29

Demographics of Bullies and Victims

	Bully		Victim		Bully/Victim		Neither	
	N=20	8.6%	N=34	14.6%	N=21	9.0%	N=158	67.8%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ethnicity								
Caucasian	8	40.0	25	73.5	8	38.1	108	68.4
Non-Caucasian	12	60.0	9	26.5	13	61.9	50	31.6
Gender								
Female	8	40.0	22	64.7	11	52.4	89	56.3
Male	12	60.0	12	35.3	10	47.6	69	43.7
Age								
12	2	10.0	7	20.6	4	19.0	25	15.8
13	7	35.0	17	50.0	10	47.6	66	41.8
14	11	55.0	10	29.4	6	28.6	65	41.1
15	z	z	z	z	1	4.8	2	1.3
Grade								
6	z	z	2	5.9	1	4.8	1	.6
7	8	40.0	19	55.9	9	42.9	69	43.7
8	12	60.0	13	38.2	11	52.4	88	55.7

Multiple Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to determine if groups differed on intrapersonal variables with gender, ethnicity, grade, and age as covariates. The results indicated that there was a significant interaction between gender and intrapersonal variables (Eta Squared effect size = .12), specifically Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Esteem [$F(6,223)=5.538$, $p=.05$]. Male students, who identified as bullies were higher on Anxiety, Depression, Self-Esteem, and Self-Reliance, but female students, who identified as bullies were higher on Locus of Control. Males who identified as victims and bully/victims were higher on Self-Reliance only, but females who identified as victims and bully/victims were higher on Anxiety, Depression, Self-Esteem, Sense of Inadequacy, and Locus of Control (see Table 30).

A follow-up post-hoc analysis using Tukey HSD indicated bullies, victims, bully/victims, neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Anxiety, Depression, Self-Esteem and Self-Reliance. Neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Locus of Control. Bully, victim, and bully/victim did not differ significantly for Locus of Control. Bully, victim, and neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Sense of Inadequacy.

A MANCOVA was conducted similarly with interpersonal variables to determine if groups differed with gender, ethnicity, grade, and age as covariates. The results indicated that there was a significant interaction between gender and interpersonal variables (Eta Squared effect size = .13), specifically Social Stress and Social Support among Friends [$F(5,223)=6.943$, $p=.05$]. Male students who identified as victims were higher on Interpersonal Relations only, but female students who identified as victims were higher on Social Stress, Social Support among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends. However, females who identified as bullies and bully/victims were higher on all four interpersonal characteristics (see Table 31).

A follow-up post-hoc analysis using Tukey HSD indicated bullies and neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Social Stress. bully, victim, both bully and victim, and neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Interpersonal Relations, Social Support among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends.

Table 30

Multivariate Analysis of Covariance for Intrapersonal Characteristics

Group		Anxiety		Depression		Self-Esteem		Sense of Inadequacy		Locus of Control		Self-Reliance	
Status	Gender	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Neither													
	Male	47.54	8.51	47.68	6.69	52.26	7.81	46.36	7.98	49.74	9.92	51.30	10.18
	Female	51.44	10.08	50.26	10.31	47.84	10.77	46.83	8.49	47.40	10.62	51.65	9.05
Bully/Victim													
	Male	52.60	8.21	53.30	7.36	44.80	11.16	56.80	8.38	58.40	6.13	50.40	9.98
	Female	58.18	4.79	55.18	8.91	46.00	9.80	58.27	9.38	58.00	9.30	44.82	10.65
Bully													
	Male	51.33	10.10	53.92	11.02	49.67	9.87	51.83	12.54	54.17	11.98	51.17	6.15
	Female	49.25	10.35	50.88	6.79	45.00	10.63	51.13	9.69	57.38	8.42	50.50	8.59
Victim													
	Male	50.33	10.08	48.58	7.98	50.67	5.35	47.83	9.54	52.50	7.10	54.33	5.47
	Female	55.14	8.05	56.73	11.78	42.18	11.35	52.68	7.92	54.95	10.90	52.68	6.55

A MANCOVA was conducted similarly with interpersonal variables to determine if groups differed with gender, ethnicity, grade, and age as covariates. The results indicated that there was a significant interaction between gender and interpersonal variables (Eta Squared effect size = .13), specifically Social Stress and Social Support among Friends [$F(5,223)=6.943$, $p=.05$]. Male students who identified as victims were higher on Interpersonal Relations only, but female students who identified as victims were higher on Social Stress, Social Support among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends. However, females who identified as bullies and bully/victims were higher on all four interpersonal characteristics (see Table 31).

A follow-up post-hoc analysis using Tukey HSD indicated bullies and neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Social Stress. Bully, Victim, Both bully and victim, and neither bully or victim did not differ significantly for Interpersonal Relations, Social Support among Classmates, and Social Support among Friends.

Table 31

Multivariate Analysis of Covariance for Interpersonal Characteristics

Group		Interpersonal Relations		Social Stress		Social Support among Classmates		Social Support among Friends		Overall Social Support	
Status	Gender	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Neither											
	Male	51.59	7.62	47.81	8.95	3.28	.48	3.35	.56	13.37	1.64
	Female	53.49	6.32	49.76	10.21	3.29	.54	3.70	.49	13.92	1.74
Bully/Victim											
	Male	47.20	10.45	55.50	10.91	2.82	.57	3.21	.50	11.40	1.32
	Female	51.00	4.47	56.27	10.08	3.20	.59	3.44	.53	12.53	2.59
Bully											
	Male	51.83	7.04	51.25	10.53	3.13	.48	2.94	.80	11.51	2.14
	Female	55.13	3.18	52.50	8.72	3.27	.51	3.83	.20	13.00	1.22
Victim											
	Male	52.83	7.35	54.42	9.35	2.99	.68	3.39	.71	12.97	2.29
	Female	48.23	11.88	59.32	9.54	2.86	.90	3.45	.64	13.11	2.19

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was designed to explore how personality traits, behaviors, and social supports are associated with who is targeted as a victim of peer aggression. The data obtained supported the expectation that adolescents with lower self-esteem, a higher external locus of control, higher levels of anxiety, and lower levels of social support are more likely to report experiencing peer aggression than adolescents who are more socially competent, more psychologically well-adjusted, and who have a higher internal locus of control.

Previous research and theories suggest that self-esteem is the prevalent predictor for victimization (Crick et al., 2002; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Ladd & Ladd, 1998; Paquette & Underwood, 1999; Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003) and social construct (i.e., an adolescent behaviors in bullying situations are influenced by what his/her group of friends would do in similar situations) predicts bullying behaviors (Crick & Rose, 2000; Gini, 2006; Prinstein et al., 2001). However, little work has examined how intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics are associated with bullying and victimization. To test the hypothesis that intrapersonal characteristics are associated with victimization, the behavioral characteristics of anxiety, depression, self-esteem, sense of inadequacy, locus of control and self-reliance were considered. These results will be discussed first. Since there were significant correlations between bullying behaviors and victimization, bullying behaviors need to be addressed as well.

Therefore, the second section will discuss how bullying behaviors are associated with intrapersonal characteristics. Interpersonal characteristics (e.g., interpersonal relationships, social stress, social support among classmates, and social support among friends) were considered as well. These results will be discussed next. Finally, the relationship between interpersonal behaviors and bullying will be discussed.

Victimization and Intrapersonal Characteristics

In this study, victimization, as measured by the BVS, significantly correlated with anxiety, depression, self-esteem, sense of inadequacy, locus of control, and self-reliance. However, contrary to the hypothesis, depression and self-esteem were not predictors of Victimization. This prediction may not have occurred due to highly correlated variables. These results are consistent with the conclusions from the study by Seals and Young (2003) indicating that low self-esteem is not a predictor for victimization yet self-esteem is correlated with victimization. In regards to depression, this study indicated that depression was not a predictor for victimization. Other studies have found that victims have more symptoms of depression than those who do not identify as victims (Craig, 1998; Hanish & Guerra, 2002); however, depression may be a function of repeated victimization and not a predictor for victimization. Thus, lower self-esteem and depression may be a reflection of an adolescent's response over time; if victimization continues for a period of time, self-esteem may decrease and depression may increase.

Some differences were found between those who identified as Caucasian and Non-Caucasian in this sample. Having a low sense of inadequacy was a predictor for victimization for those who identified as Caucasian, whereas high anxiety predicted victimization for those who identified as Non-Caucasian. This would suggest that minorities, but not Caucasians, in this sample with high anxiety may be targeted as victims of peer aggression. Alternatively, Caucasian students in this sample may not be attributing their victim status to being predisposed to anxiety and a high external locus of control. Because of the low numbers in different minority groups in this study, it was difficult to examine differences across specific ethnic groups.

Bullying and Intrapersonal Characteristics

Sense of inadequacy and a high external locus of control was a significant predictor of bullying behaviors as measured by the BVS. For males, in particular, bullying behaviors were predicted significantly by sense of inadequacy. However, for females, a high external locus of control and depression also predicted bullying behaviors. Consistent with the results of Coolidge, DenBoer, and Segal (2003), anxiety and depression were not significantly related to bullying behaviors. However, Olweus (1993) found that bullies tend to display anxious patterns, suggesting the possibility that although bullies may not be predisposed to anxiety and depression their current behaviors may be due to current symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Victimization and Interpersonal Characteristics

Social stress appeared to be the only interpersonal characteristic that significantly predicted victimization. Other Interpersonal characteristics such as social support among classmates, social support among friends, and interpersonal relations did not add to variance accounted for in predicting victimization. Although contrary to the hypothesis and indications from other studies, for males in this study, high social support among classmates emerged as an additional predictor for victimization.

The finding that social support among friends adds to the variance accounted for in victimization for male adolescents in this study may be reflective of the nature of the measure used to assess social support. The *Close Friend Subscale of the Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents* (Harter, 1985) was intended to assess perceived social support and identify forms of social support that would best predict one's global self-worth as a person. The essential items of the scale rely on the degree to which others display positive regard toward the respondent (e.g. …kids have classmates who like them the way they are, …kids have a close friend who cares about their feelings, …kids have a close friend who really understands them.). In this study, male students who identified as victims (but not female students who identified as victims) may have indicated having friends because they were aware of the social desirability of having friends, or they may have felt supported by these friends. In contrast to the findings, it stands to reason that those who are

victimized have little or no social supports in place and has been a finding in previous studies (Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002; Graham & Juvonen, 2001; Hodges et al., 1997; Junger-Tas & Van Kesteren, 1999). For females in this study, social stress was the only variable found to be a significant predictor for victimization. This is consistent with the hypothesis and findings of Schwartz et al. (1993) who indicated that having friends would reduce the chances of being victimized.

When males and females were considered together, it was found that interpersonal relations was significantly related to victimization in this study. However, interpersonal relations did not add to the prediction of victimization. The lack of association between interpersonal relationships and victimization is surprising and suggests that the adolescents who self-identified as victims in this study perceived themselves to be just as involved with other adolescents as those who reported lower levels of victimization. At the same time, their responses indicated that social stress was a significant predictor for victimization. This may reflect the differences in the types of items between the two subscales. Alternatively, this may be because adolescents who are victimized by their peers do not benefit from social interactions (i.e., derive social support from the interactions) in the same way non-victimized adolescents do. This position is consistent with other studies that indicated victimized children tend to have friends who themselves were victims of peer aggression (Hodges &

Perry, 1996; Perry et al., 2001). Due to their own victimization, they were not able to shield each other from further victimization.

Bullying and Interpersonal Characteristics

Interpersonal relations, social stress, social support among friends and social support among classmates were not significant predictors for adolescents who identified as bullies in this study. These results were consistent with the hypothesis that adolescents with high scores on the social support scales would be associated with low bullying behaviors. Since bullying is rarely done in isolation (i.e., there are usually several peer witnesses to bullying), it is possible that bullies believe that silent witnesses may be supporting their bullying behaviors. Bullies may interpret the onlookers' silence as support. In general, these results support the notion that bullies feel less isolated then victims (Veenstra et al., 2005).

Additionally, bullying was highly correlated with victimization, meaning that there is a high probability that an adolescent who identifies as a victim may also identify as a bully. This study did not control for the effects of bullying in its' victimization scores, so it is possible that reported associations between victimization and social supports are, at least partially, a function of comorbid bullying. Unnever (2005) found that aggressive victims and pure bullies did not significantly differ in how frequently they bullied other students. Further, research is clearly needed in order to ascertain the relationships between victimization

and bullying, and their association with both interpersonal and intrapersonal characteristics.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

Several caveats should be kept in mind when considering the findings of the current study. First, it is difficult to predict the existence of a behavior using the concurrent nature of the data. Examining subjects at any one point in time limits the interpretation that can be made about causality and the processes involved between victimization and behavioral characteristics. The design of this study did not attempt to address the chronic nature of peer aggression nor the long-term effects peer aggression has on behavioral, emotional, and social adjustment. In order to accurately predict the existence of interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviors, longitudinal studies should be conducted looking at behavioral characteristics that are present in preschool and then in grade school, middle school, and high school. However, this study is an important first step in identifying factors worthy of further empirical examination.

The sample used in this study consisted of three middle schools and one junior high school within a small geographic rural area. Ideally, it would be beneficial to include a diverse sample of ethnicity, socio-economic level, and geographic areas within this study. Thus, the findings in this study may not be generalizable to other settings.

This study examines peer aggression in one specific forum, the school environment and not other forums where peer aggression, especially relational

aggression, is becoming prominent. Further research should examine peer aggression among domains that are not school-related, such as email, internet chat rooms, instant messaging, and text messaging via cell phones. As technology is fast becoming an aspect of current educational trends, new methods of predicting peer aggression are needed. This study also did not look at the home or community dynamics that might mediate bully/victim status.

Lastly, the associations between victimization and intrapersonal characteristics may reflect antecedent behavioral symptoms. It is important to note that the methodology used in this study precludes the conclusion that victimization causes maladjustment. Only a longitudinal study can predict causation. It is not clear whether the significant behavioral difficulties reported by these adolescents existed prior to their experiences of bullying and victimization or were the result of bullying or being victimized. However, the result of this study stresses the importance of attending to students who present as victims of peer aggression or present with the characteristics known to predict victimization (anxiety, low self-esteem, high external locus of control, and low self-reliance) since they may be at risk for being victimized thus resulting in the possibility of future psychological difficulties.

Conclusions

School violence, particularly peer aggression, should not be an everyday occurrence in school. Exposure to peer aggression has been found to have detrimental short and long-term effects. More needs to be known about the

frequency and magnitude of this problem among adolescents, as well as its relationship to intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics. The present study was designed to examine if specific behavioral and personality characteristics can predict being a victim of peer aggression. This study found that adolescents who present with symptoms of anxiety, depression, social stress, a sense of inadequacy, an external locus of control, and low self-reliance may be at risk of becoming victims of peer aggression. Additionally, adolescents who show signs of social stress may also become victims of peer aggression. This issue concerning peer aggression is not going to disappear and more research on what predisposes students to bullying behaviors and becoming victims can help school personnel, parents, counselors, and other professionals provide safer schools and environments for children.

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APPENDIX A

ASSENT FORM FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

ASSENT FORM FOR ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION

It has been explained to me that this is a study to understand why certain adolescents are targeted for bullying. I understand that 200 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 15 years old in the Central Texas area have been selected to participate in this study.

I understand that I will be given three tests that ask about bullying and victimization, my behaviors, and my feelings concerning friendships and social relationships. I understand that it will take approximately 60 minutes to complete these tests, and they will be administered during school hours.

I understand that this assessment will be administered individually, on one occasion, during school hours, and I will not be penalized for any missed work. The tests will be given in a designated room within the school, separate from other classmates who are not participating in the study.

I understand that I can choose not to participate, and I can withdraw from the study at any time without getting into trouble. I also understand that my participation or withdrawal from this study will not affect my grades or standing at school in any way.

I understand that there will be nothing that can hurt me. However, I may experience some feelings of sadness, anxiety, or depression when answering some of these questions. If I agree to participate, my name will be entered into a drawing to win one of five $20 gift cards to Walmart. After all participants are recruited, a drawing will be held and the five winners will be notified via phone, mail, or email.

I understand that all information from the study will be kept confidential, and no names or other identifying information will appear on the questionnaires. I understand that confidentiality will be broken only as required to ensure my safety and the safety of others.

I understand that if at any time I have any questions about the study, I can contact:

Susan E. D'Esposito, Principle Investigator
(979) XXX-XXXX, SusanElaineD@hotmail.com

If, at any time, I feel uncomfortable, I can immediately notify the investigator, or I can let my teacher know. If I would like to speak with a therapist or counselor about any concerns or issues, I can contact the guidance counselor or use the following phone numbers:

Counseling and Assessment Clinic	MHMR Crisis Hotline	Texas A&M Psychology Clinic
(979) XXX-XXXX	(979) XXX-XXXX	(979) XXX-XXXX

I have read and understand the explanations provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this assent form.

_____
Please ***print*** your name

_____ _____
Please ***sign*** your name Date

_____ _____
Susan E. D'Esposito, Principal Investigator Date

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board – Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. If I have any questions, I can have an adult call Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) XXX-XXXX (mwbuckley@tamu.edu).

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION

CONSENT FORM FOR CHILD PARTICIPATION

I understand that the purpose of this study is to understand why certain adolescents are targeted for bullying. I understand that 200 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 15 years old in the Central Texas area have been selected to participate in this study.

I understand that in participating, my child will be administered three tests including the Behavior Assessment Scale for Children, the Bullying/Victimization Scale, and the Close Friend Subscale of the Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents. Completion of these scales will take approximately 60 minutes.

I understand that my child can choose not to answer any questions that make him/her feel uncomfortable at any time.

I understand that this assessment will be administered on one occasion, during school hours, and my child will not be penalized for any missed work. The tests will be administered in a designated room within the school, separate from other classmates who are not participating in the study.

I understand that this evaluation will be conducted at no charge to me or my insurance carrier.

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that he/she can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I understand that all data will be coded with no identifiable reference to my child and will be kept confidential. My child's name will not appear on the data.

I understand that no data on an individual student basis will be shared with the school district and subsequently will not be used to make any educational programming decisions regarding my child. I understand that participation in this study will have no effect on my child's grades or school program.

I understand that there are no known risks or discomforts and there are also no direct personal benefits for my child. However, if my child is a victim of bullying he/she may experience some feelings of sadness, anxiety, or depression when answering some of these questions.

I understand that if my child agrees to participate, his/her name will be entered into a drawing to win one of five $20 gift cards to Walmart. After all participants are recruited, a drawing will be held and the five winners will be notified via phone, mail, or email.

I understand that the results of testing will not be provided to parents or guardians.

I understand that this research had been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board-Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Michael W. Buckley, Director of Research Compliance, Office of Vice President for Research at (979) XXX-XXXX (mwbuckley@tamu.edu).

I also understand that this research has been approved by the Research Review Committee Chair at Xxxxxx Independent School District.

I understand that if my child or I would like to speak with a therapist or counselor about any concerns we can contact the school counselor, Mr. Xxxx Xxxxe, or one of the following resources:

The Counseling and Assessment Clinic:	(979) XXX-XXXX
MHMR Crisis Hotline:	(979) XXX-XXXX
Texas A&M Psychology Clinic:	(979) XXX-XXXX

If at any time, I have questions about this research study, I should feel free to contact:

Susan E. D'Esposito
Principle Investigator, Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology
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(979) XXX-XXXX
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I have read and understand the explanations provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I understand that by signing below I voluntarily agree for my child to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

____ I ***give*** permission for my child _____ to participate in Texas A&M University's study concerning victims of peer aggression.

____ My child is enrolled in special education classes.

____ I ***DO NOT*** give permission for my child _____ to participate in Texas A&M University's study concerning victims of peer aggression.

_____
Parent/Guardian, please ***print*** your name

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian, please ***sign*** your name Date

_____ _____
Susan E. D'Esposito, Principal Investigator Date

APPENDIX C

COVER SHEET

PEER AGGRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS:
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIMS

COVER SHEET

Gender: Male 0 Female 0

School: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____

Do you consider yourself to be…? *(Please check all that apply)*

African American/Black	0	Caucasian/White	0	Hispanic	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	American Indian	0	Other	0

Is English your primary language? Yes 0 No 0

If *NO*, what is your primary language? _____

If *NO*, do you speak and read English fluently? Yes 0 No 0

Please answer the following questions honestly; there is no right or wrong answer. Only YOU can choose the right answers for you.

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO PARENTS

PEER AGGRESSION AMONG ADOLESCENTS:
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIMS

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Recently, there has been growing attention to the occurrence and impacts of bullying on children's well being at school and there is still a lot to learn about why certain adolescents are targets for bullying. I am interested in learning more about adolescents who are bullied by others at school and what makes certain students targets for bullying. I would like to ask your child, along with approximately 200 other students between the ages of 11 and 15 years old, in the Central Texas area, to complete a set of questionnaires about bullying, behaviors, and feelings concerning friendships and social relationships.

If you agree to let your child participate, your child will be given information about the study and asked if he or she would like to participate. If your child agrees, he or she will be administered three tests:

1. **The Bullying/Victimization Scale** assesses the bullying behaviors and victimization experiences in children and adolescents.
2. **The Behavior Assessment Scale for Children** measures behaviors such as Anxiety, Depression, Interpersonal Relations, Self Esteem, Social Stress, Locus of Control, Self-Reliance, and Sense of Inadequacy.
3. **The Close Friend Subscale of the Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents** will be used to assess adolescent perceptions of social support from close friends.

Completion of these scales will take approximately 50 minutes. Your child can choose not to answer any questions that make him/her feel uncomfortable at any time. The assessment will be administered on one occasion, during school hours, and your child will not be penalized for any missed work.

Your child has a choice whether or not to participate. Participation is not required. If you decide your child may participate in the study, he/she is free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Your child may stop participation at any time during the study or you may decide to have your child stop. Participation in this study will have no effect on your child's grades or school program. The voluntary participation in this study has no known risks or discomforts and there are also no direct benefits to your child. However, if you and your child agree to participate in this study, he/she will be entered into a drawing to receive one of five $20 gift cards to Walmart. After all participants are recruited, a drawing will be held and the five winners will be notified via phone or email.

These tests will be administered at no charge to you or your insurance carrier. All the information collected during the study will be kept confidential. Your child's name will not appear on the data. The school or school board will not have access to your child's specific answers to these questionnaires. The results will be used to write one or more research papers for scholarly journals and may be reported at scientific conferences. No identifying information will be published or reported.

This research has been approved by the Research Review Committee Chair at Xxxxxx Independent School District and the Principal of Xxxxxx Middle School.

Your consent for your child to participate in this study would be greatly appreciated. I have included my supervisors' phone numbers and email addresses as well as my phone number and email address if you have any questions concerning this study and your child's participation.

Cynthia Riccio, Ph.D.
Co-Chair of Dissertation Committee
Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Psychology
Cyndi-riccio@tamu.edu

Collie Conoley, Ph.D.
Co-Chair of Dissertation Committee
Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Psychology
Collie-Conoley@tamu.edu

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with your child.

Sincerely,

_____

Susan E. D'Esposito
Principle Investigator
Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology
Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843
979-XXX-XXXX
SusanElaineD@hotmail.com

APPENDIX E

FORM FOR $20 GIFT CARD DRAWING

DRAWING FOR $20 GIFT CARD

Name: _____

School: _____

Home Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

APPENDIX F

COMPLETE CORRELATION MATRIX FOR

CRITERION AND PREDICTOR VARIABLES FOR

INTRAPERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS FROM THE BASC-SRP

*Complete Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for **Intrapersonal** Characteristics from the BASC-SRP*

		Bully Total	Victimization Total	Anxiety	Depression	Self-Esteem	Sense of Inadequacy	Locus of Control	Self-Reliance
Bully Total	Pearson	1	.353**	.135*	.202**	-.110	.369**	.317**	-.161*
	Sig. 2-tailed		<.001	.040	.002	.093	<.001	<.001	.014
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Victimization Total	Pearson	.353**	1	.301**	.304**	-.243**	.331**	.337**	-.080
	Sig. 2-tailed	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.222
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Anxiety	Pearson	.135*	.301**	1	.521**	-.584**	.392**	.495**	-.252**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.040	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Depression	Pearson	.202**	.304**	.521**	1	-.636**	.673**	.702**	-.438**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.002	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Self-Esteem	Pearson	-.110	-.243**	-.584**	-.636**	1	-.446**	-.513**	.299**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.093	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Sense of Inadequacy	Pearson	.369**	.331**	.392**	.673**	-.446**	1	.627**	-.436**
	Sig. 2-tailed	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Locus of Control	Pearson	.317**	.337**	.495**	.702**	-.513**	.627**	1	-.392**
	Sig. 2-tailed	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233
Self-Reliance	Pearson	-.161*	-.080	-.252**	-.438**	.299**	-.436**	-.392**	1
	Sig. 2-tailed	.014	.222	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	233	233	233	233	233	233	233	233

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

APPENDIX G

COMPLETE CORRELATION MATRIX FOR CRITERION AND PREDICTOR VARIABLES FOR INTERPERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS FROM THE BASC-SRP AND SOCIAL SUPPORT-CFS

Correlation Matrix for Criterion and Predictor Variables for
***Interpersonal** Characteristics from the BASC-SRP and Social Support – CFS*

		Bully Total	Victimization Total	Interpersonal Relations	Social Stress	Social Support among Classmates	Social Support among Friends
Bully Total	Pearson	1	.353**	-.094	.136*	-.096	-.129*
	Sig. 2-tailed		<.001	.154	.037	.145	.048
	N	233	233	232	233	233	233
Victimization Total	Pearson	.353**	1	-.315**	.444**	-.333**	-.152*
	Sig. 2-tailed	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	.020
	N	233	233	232	233	233	233
Interpersonal Relations	Pearson	-.094	-.315**	1	-.530**	.621**	.424**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.154	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	232	232	232	232	232	232
Social Stress	Pearson	.136*	.444**	-.530**	1	-.567**	-.269**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.037	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	233	233	232	233	233	233
Social Support among Classmates	Pearson	-.096	-.333**	.621**	-.567**	1	.485**
	Sig. 2-tailed	.145	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	233	233	232	233	233	233
Social Support among Friends	Pearson	-.129*	-.152*	.424**	-.269**	.485**	1
	Sig. 2-tailed	.048	.020	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	233	233	232	233	233	233

* $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed) ** $p \leq .01$ (2-tailed)

VITA

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Sarah A. Reed Children's Center, Erie, PA — August 2005 – July 2006

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Ph.D. in School Psychology
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B.A., Psychology
State University of New York
Stony Brook, NY
May 2001

Selected Presentations & Publications

Berry, C., **D'Esposito, S.E.,** & Pearl, M.P. (March, 2006). *Borderline personality disorder and self-mutilation among clients in a residential treatment program.* Workshop presented at Sarah A. Reed Children's Center, Erie, PA.

Berry, C., **D'Esposito, S.E.,** Pearl, M.P. & Radcliff, K.L. (February, 2006). The necessity of self-care in graduate school and internship. *The Pennsylvania Psychological, 69,* 19-20.

Berry, C., **D'Esposito, S.E.,** & Pearl, M.P. (January, 2006). *RTI vs. discrepancy model: A panel discussion.* Workshop and Panel discussion presented at NorthWest Pennsylvania Psychological Association, Erie, PA.

Williams-Nickelson, C., **D'Esposito, S.E.,** & Keita, G. (July, 2004). *Women supporting women: Mentoring between APAGS and eminent psychologists*. Workshop presented at the 2004 American Psychological Association Convention, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

Williams-Nickelson, C., **D'Esposito, S.E.,** & Goodheart, C., (August, 2003). *Women supporting women: Are students balancing the personal and the professional well?* Workshop presented at the 2003 American Psychological Association Convention, Toronto, Canada.

D'Esposito, S.E., Anhalt, K., Rollins, D., & Garcia de Alba, R. (April, 2003). *The differences in parent-child acculturation and its Influence on behavioral adjustment and academic achievement in children*. Poster presented at the 2003 annual conference for the National Association for School Psychologists, Toronto, Canada.

George, C., Garcia de Alba, R., Rae, W.A., Pena Razo, N., Ramirez, E., **D'Esposito, S.E.,** & Sullivan, J. (October, 2002). V*ariables influencing ethical decision making with adolescent clients*. Poster presented at the Kansas Conference for Clinical child Psychology, Lawrence, Kansas.