

THE RELATIONSHIP OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, STUDENT MOTIVATION, AND
PEER VICTIMIZATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

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The Relationship of Student Engagement, Student Motivation and Peer Victimization among
African American Males

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Abstract

Title of Dissertation:

THE RELATIONSHIP OF STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT, STUDENT MOTIVATION
AND PEER VICTIMIZATION AMONG
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

Dwayne E. Ham, Sr. Doctor of Education,
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The interpersonal relationship among African American males is an important factor when examining their perseverance. This research study investigated the relationship of student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization among black boys in elementary, middle and high school using Merton's analysis of deviant behaviors. The sample was taken from one high school and two elementary and middle schools in the Mid-Atlantic of the United States consisting of 191 students. The results of the study revealed that Student engagement and peer victimization are significant inverse relationships of each other and that student motivation and peer victimization are also significant inverse relationships as well. In addition, father was a significant predictor of student engagement and student motivation among African American males in high school.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God, first and foremost because without Him, none of this would be possible. My family: Nikki, our son's Dwayne, Jr. and Evan Ham for their patience and love, the reasons why I continued this journey. I also honor all my parents for their tireless guidance. Thank you Pop: Dr. Zollie Stevenson, Jr. You said keep it simple! Just get it done. In addition, I would like to remember Nancy Jean Gould, Virginia Tillmon, Grover Ham, and Eugene Ham, these individuals had a profound impact on my life and I will always love them. Lastly, and certainly not least, I would like to thank Mr. Hamlet and Mr. Spriggs for making me the young man that I am today.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background

African American males are at a significant risk in the American educational system (Hines, Harris, and Ham, 2013). The National Center for Educational Statistics (2010) suggests that African American males experience high degrees of underachievement and failure in school. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2010) reports the status of the high school dropout rate for African American males at 13%, Caucasian males at 8%, Asian males at 7% and Hispanic males at 25%. In addition, despite increases in ethnic minority male college enrollments in the last five years, the college enrollment for African American males at 28% was less than any other ethnic group except for Hispanic males at 21%, Caucasian males at 39%, and Asian males at 62%. This data demonstrates how African American males are farthest from obtaining post-secondary opportunities afforded to them once they have earned a high school diploma (Aud, et al, 2011).

From the early grades, African American male school performance is seemingly at risk (Lee, 2003). African American males tend to be overrepresented in special education classes (Bradley, et al., 2006). African American males make up 19.2% of those classified as mentally retarded, 21.9% of those classified as emotional disturbed, 15.25% as developmentally delayed and 13.27% of those with specific learning disability (Smith, 2004). In some major cities African American males make-up 30% of all special education classes, but only half of the remaining 70% ever receive a high school diploma (Smith, 2004).

Losen and Gillespie (2012) citing data from the center of Civil Rights Remedies Report (2009-2011) indicates that African American males are suspended from school more frequently

and for longer periods of time than other ethnic minority student groups. African American are suspended from school more frequently and for longer periods of time than other ethnic minority student groups. African American males represent 49.5%, Latino males at 29.6%, Caucasian at 27.3% and Asian males at 14.9% of young men suspended from school. Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2010) reports that African American males are expelled 5 times more than any other ethnic minority. African American males make up 16.6% of those students expelled, while Hispanic males consist of 3.1%. Caucasian males only comprise of 1.3% while Asian male students are not reported (NCES, 2010).

In other areas, where African American males can benefit from rigorous academic offerings and college preparedness, African American males only make up of 20.3% of gifted and talented programs, while Latino males make up 29.6%, and Caucasian males make up 38.4% (Henfield, Owens and Moore, 2008). A number of scholars have speculated on specific challenges to school success for African American male students (Polite and Davis, 1999). In particular, the interpersonal relationships with peers have been suggested as a prevailing factor that may impede the success of African American males (Major and Billson, 1992).

Statement of the Problem

Major and Billson (1992) explained the school experience for a successful African American male student stating, “To strive for academic success may result in being labeled a brainiac or even physically assaulted by his peers” (p. 47). As a result of harassment by their peers, many African American male students often experience a corresponding drop-off in their academic performance (Juvonen, Graham & Nishina, 2000). Specifically, these students often become disengaged from the learning process and experience a drop in motivation levels in

school due to the intimidation and harassment of their peers (Juvonen, Graham & Nishina, 2000). This intimidation and harassment seem to be based solely on the fact that these students are doing well in school. In this study the problem to be explored is the relationship between Student Motivation and Student Engagement in relation to African American male success as impacted by peer victimization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between Student Motivation, Student Engagement to African American male academic success as impacted by peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school students. In this study, the independent variables are Student Engagement and Student Motivation. The dependent variable is African American males and the moderating variable is peer victimization.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research Question One: Is there a relationship between Student Motivation and peer victimization among African American male elementary, middle and high school students?

Research Question Two: Is there a relationship between Student Engagement and peer victimization for African American male elementary, middle and high school students?

Research Question Three: Is Father Figure a significant predictor of Student Motivation, Student Engagement and peer victimization for African American male elementary, middle or high school students?

Research Question Four: Does there exist a grade level difference of Student Motivation and peer victimization for African American male, elementary, middle and high school students?

Research Question Five: Does there exist a grade level difference of Student Engagement and peer victimization among elementary, middle, and high school African American male students?

Hypotheses

Ho. There is no relationship between student motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle, and high school African American male students.

Ho. There is no relationship between student engagement and peer victimization among elementary middle, and high school African American male students.

Ho. Father Figure will not be a significant predictor of student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle, and high school African American male students.

Ho. There will be no grade level difference between Student Motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle, and high school African American male students.

Ho. There will be no grade level difference between peer victimization among elementary, middle, and high school African American male students.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that drives this study is oppositional identity culture developed by Ogbu and Fordham (1986). Ogbu and Fordham (1986) posit that African American males who do well in school experience a burden. This experience could possibly be in the form of negative peer interactions or bullying because it is believed by other students that doing well in school is “acting white.”

Merton's paradigm of deviant behavior (1938) defines culture as an organized set of normative values governing behavior, which is common to members of a designated society or group. The designated society may be an educational institution or school and the group could encompass the teachers, faculty and staff. During the retreatism stage, individuals such as students reject attitudes toward goals and means, and modes of adaptation. Retreaters are looking for a way to escape from everything and therefore reject goals and the means of the group. In a school, the rejection of a societal norm might be demonstrated through the rejection of engaging in school activities and motivating to do well. This academic disengagement and accepting of academic and behavior norms might be depicted as defiant behavior leading to drop out or failure in school.

Significance of the Study

In certain major urban cities, adolescent black males continue to be out performed in all academic areas by other ethnic minorities. This compels educators to spend countless time, energy and financial resources to investigate how to increase their achievement while decreasing the likelihood that these students will demonstrate issues in attendance, truancy, dropouts and suspension. The prevailing factors are engagement, motivation, and satisfaction with school among this population. The findings of this study will impact how teacher development will impact the Student Engagement and Student Motivation African American males in school.

Limitations of the Study

Research limitations are critical to any study and could be a weakness to a dissertation investigation (Creswell, 2012). Critical to this research study is the number of participants to create the necessary power needed to reject a true null hypothesis. In the past, a study conducted

by the present researcher; there were not enough respondents to discern if student motivation and student engagement were in fact inverses of peer victimization. The respondents in this study were selected from a single gender private school, and a public school. The limitation to gaining access to the local public school system is often very difficult to achieve thereby increasing the likelihood that this process may be lengthened. The lack of parental consent in the public school may limit the number of respondents who are able to complete the questionnaire. In a private school of a single-sex environment, the effectiveness by which these male are motivated or engage in academics may not be genuine given the fact there are no females in the school, which could lead to other reasons why these males may not provide a true measure of motivation, engagement and peer victimization. The schools that are selected for the study are located in an urban and suburban environment. Inner city schools and those of the suburbs often contradict those in a rural setting. This study will not be able to make overarching generalized statements for all African American males in elementary, middle and high school in a rural environment, but it can speak to issues that an urban and suburban demographic encompasses. Other limitations include race and gender. Yet, important to this study in this theoretical framework is the need to investigate the pervasive educational challenges of African American males; therefore the lack of females and other races is a limitation but not a desire given the researchers rationale for the study.

Definition of Terms

Student Motivation

According to Martin (2002) Student Motivation is defined as the student's energy and drive to learn and work effectively to achieve their full potential in school.

Student Engagement

According to Martin (2001) Student Engagement is defined as the degree of student participation in academic and non-academic school activities, identification with school and the acceptance of school values. Student Engagement, school attachment, school bonding are interchangeable with this definition.

Peer Victimization

Egan and Perry (1998) define peer victimization as the experiences among children in school who are targets of other students. Peer victimization can occur in several different forms:

Physical victimization is defined as hitting, punching, kicking or throwing objects at another person.

Verbal victimization is defined as speaking directly to an individual in a violent tone.

Relational victimization is defined as ostracizing children or other students for various reasons.

Retreatism

Retreatism accordingly to Merton (1938) defines retreatism as individuals who give up success through conventional means and traditional avenues. Person's in the retreatism stage make the conscious decision to withdraw from societal norms of seeking accomplishment. The retreator withdraws from society and may become disenchanted with cultural norms to a point where they do not engage.

Rebellion

Rebellion accordingly to Merton (1938) defines rebellion as the most threatening and dangerous reaction to discounting and rejecting societal norms to a legitimate system of success. These individuals reject any cultural ideals and propose a new means to success.

African American

According to the United State Census Bureau (2010), An African American is defined as, “a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as Black, African American or Negro, or provide written documentation such as African American, Afro American-Caribbean, Kenyan, Nigerian, Haitian or Jamaican” (p.2).

Summary

Blum and Libby (2004) believe that students who are connected to school staff and administrators will demonstrate a propensity to follow school rules and in all likelihood increase their academic output and school performance. However, there is little research that has investigated the phenomena of African American males demonstrating faculty interaction in and out of the classroom, Student Motivation, Student Engagement, and their relationship to negative peer pressure when the black male is faced with the decision to do well or be bullied simply because he completing homework, class assignments and following the rules of the school. This chapter is a review of the literature on Student Engagement, Student Motivation, and peer victimization. In order to provide context to these constructs, literature related to the concept of academic success is reviewed first.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature on Student Engagement, Student Motivation, and peer victimization. In order to provide context to these constructs, literature related to the concept of academic success is reviewed first. Nevertheless, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between Student Engagement, and Student Motivation as impacted by peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle and high school students.

Educators have spent a considerable amount of effort trying to construct the perfect environment in school that will provide the best possible pathway for students to achieve positive academic success. While it seems there is no one theory that best provides an answer to how one can make students perform better, there are several characteristics that researchers provide as a model to help students perform and learn in the classroom.

Positive student-teacher relationships reveal that teachers who demonstrate supportive roles lessened the negative effects of stress, which led to students viewing them as caring and supporting (Cohen & Willis, 1985; Steinberg et al, 1992). Thus enabling students to become motivated to learn and do their best. A simpler method of academic success is turning in homework. Cooper, Lindsey, and Nye (1998) revealed that the amount of time spent on homework was related to academic success. Students who spent more time on homework obtained higher achievement scores than those who spent less time. Moreover before one can turn in homework they must be present in school. Teasley (2004) speculated that absenteeism

and truancy are symptoms of negative cognitive behavior issues in youth. Teasley believes that a pattern of losing academic interests followed by the start of falling behind in classes puts an individual at-risk of failing. By students not having a positive relationship with teachers, completing homework regularly, and attending classes arguably can give educators reasons to believe that a pupil will not be successful in school.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement is defined as a student participating in academic and non-academic school activities, identifying with school and accepting school values (Martin, 2001). Activities associated with Student Engagement include coming to school regularly, turning in homework, participating in classroom activities, consistently completing tests and exams, respecting students and teachers, and/or participating in after school activities. While the lack of student participation by students often leads to academic failure, Black (2003) believes that the teacher has the greatest impact on keeping a student engaged in learning. Black (2003) examines the issues of disengaged students and found that teachers were doing a disservice to students when they allowed students to come in the classroom late, slouch at their desks, tune out the classroom lesson with a preference to concentrating on music in their portable CD player or simply fall asleep. While student disengagement may happen at all grade levels, researchers argue that this occurs more frequently in high school as opposed to elementary and middle school (Eccles & Wigfield, 2000). Black (2003) states that elementary school children often have difficulty learning because of poor neighborhoods and diminished involvement by their parents, such that by middle school, their interest in schoolwork declines. Furthermore, they have fallen so far behind in the earlier grades due to the lack of engagement that the possibility for dropping out of high school becomes a reality. She writes, “in the long run, students’ motivation to learn

actually diminishes and their achievement is affected by a lack of desire to learn (p.59).” Black (2003) citing Brewster and Fager (2000) argues that teachers need to develop intrinsic motivational tools like making their classrooms inviting and designing curriculum that is interesting to keep the attention of the students.

Blum and Libbey (2004) also believe that the teacher has an impact on the level of engagement of a student. They examined three concepts related to school connectedness: 1) high academic standards set forth by the teacher, 2) an environment which fosters relationships with students and school staff toward positive interactions and 3) a school environment that is safe and promotes positive academic performance. Blum and Libbey (2004) argue that students who feel connected to the school are least likely to engage in deviant or violent behavior such as abusing drugs, alcohol or experiencing suicidal thoughts or making suicide attempts. Williams and others (1999) believe that certain risk factors can lead to delinquency and substance use among adolescents. These risk factors are the lack of school attachment, school commitment, and academic skills for adolescent’s ages 12 through 16 years of age. However these are the results of those students who are discouraged from participating in school. Blum and Libbey (2004) on the other hand, argue that there are psychological adjustment problems for individuals who are disengaged from the school. These problems include social isolation, safety, and classroom management, which they note opens the possibility for teachers to ignore a student, leading other students to tease and bully.

In addition to the teacher impact, student variables may also affect Student Engagement. Caraway, Tucker, Reinke and Hall (2003) studied the effects of self-efficacy, goal orientation, and fear of failure as predictors of Student Engagement in high school. They hypothesize that self-efficacy and goal orientation will have a significant positive association with Student

Engagement as measured by grade point average (GPA), number of school absences and a low score in Student Engagement, measured by the Rochester Assessment Package for Students. The researchers also hypothesize that fear of failure will have a significant negative association with Student Engagement.

Participants in the study consisted of 123 high school students from grades 9 through 12th, ranging in ages from 13 to 19 years old. Although the majority of the participants were 9th graders, all races and ethnicities were represented comparable to the representation of the school.

Caraway et al. (2003) compiled the data by first using a demographic/academic data sheet used to obtain the gender, age and race of the adolescent. This questionnaire contained items regarding many facets of Student Engagement such as absences, homework and performances in English, math and science. Caraway and his colleagues also identified six self-report measures to evaluate what causes students to disengage from academic success. These scales were the self-efficacy scale, goal orientation, anxiety scale, general fear of failure scale, social desirability, and the engagement subscale of Rochester Assessment package for schools-student report.

Caraway et al (2003) found that the more confident adolescents became about the general level of the subject matter, the more likely they were to achieve better grades in school, and be more engaged in every aspect of school culture. They also found that goal orientation was largely influenced by the students' level of Student Engagement. Setting goals demonstrated the students' willingness to set further goals and the motivation to put forth more effort in order to achieve them and persevere when challenges arose. Lastly, these researchers also note that students who feared a sense of failure had a tendency to demonstrate behavior that leads to less

Student Engagement in school related tasks. This behavior includes procrastination, investing little time and effort into school related tasks such as studying, which led to cheating. Cheating is a violation of school rules and it is used when students are more concerned with raising their grades, rather than actually learning. However, students' perceptions about academic difficulties and what it takes to maintain a certain grade point average are how they identify with the proper methods of academic activities.

Anderman (2002) was interested in determining what psychological outcomes are associated with negative school behavior among adolescents who failed to achieve a sense of Student Engagement. It is hypothesized that perceived Student Engagement would be measured more easily when one uses attributes such as schools with specific sizes, comparing grade configurations and locations between urban, suburban and rural (Anderman, 2002). He speculated that after controlling for individual differences, a greater sense of engagement would be associated with schools that were small in size, with schools that used a kindergarten through 8th grade, and were not located in an urban region.

In a second study, Anderman (2002) speculated that relations between perceived engagement and other psychological outcomes would vary by school. As a result of his investigation, Anderman (2002) found that school size was unrelated to perceptions of engagement. In some cases a smaller school would benefit individuals because it would provide a smaller community that may produce more school connectedness, but in the present study there was no statistical significance to support this hypothesis. However, the hypothesis about school configuration as a predictor of greater engagement was partially supported. When students attended a school that encompassed a kindergarten through 8th grade, the greater the perceived

Student Engagement was reported. Thus students who reported attending a school with kindergarten through twelfth grade reported a slightly higher incidence of Student Engagement.

The research question concerning an urban region and its effect on school connectedness was supported for students reporting lower engagement scores. Student Engagement was examined as a predictor of several psychological outcomes. Student Engagement emerged as a predictor of social rejection, school problems, and grade point average (GPA). Students who are less engaged in scholarly activities will be influenced to participate in disruptive behavior often because they have no desire to participate in school activities. Student Engagement leads to academic success by students participating in school related activities such as turning in homework, asking and answering questions in class, and becoming actively involved in extra-curricula programs before and after-school. These activities allow students to participate in the school culture, connecting and belonging to an environment predicated on academic success.

Bryan, et al (2011) wanted to investigate the effects on school bonding on high school senior's academic achievement. The purpose of their study is to provide greater attention to a group of students whose efforts are to graduate and go to college or prepare for the world of work. Yet given that school officials rarely investigate the root causes of dropping out and or doing well with this population because they are almost finished with school, understanding how school bonding influences academic achievement, especially high school students is important. Using data from the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002), the researchers came up with three research questions: Research Question 1: What are the effects of student demographic variables (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status [SES], school urbanicity, and type of school), school bonding (i.e., attachment to school, attachment to teachers, school commitment, and school involvement), school-related delinquency, and prior

academic achievement on high school students' academic achievement? Research Question 2: What are the effects of student demographics and school bonding on students' academic achievement? Research Question 3: Do the effects of school bonding on academic achievement change once intervening variables (i.e., school-related delinquency and prior academic achievement) are taken into account? The sample consisted of 10,426 high school seniors who attended a United States public, private, and Catholic high school. Only 91.8% of the student respondents attended a public school, whereas 3.4% attended a private school and 4.8% were from Catholic Schools. Of the 12th graders, 50.4% were female and 49.6% were male. Of the 10,426 students, 3.7% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 12.2% were Black/African American, 13.8% were Hispanic, 4.2% were multiracial and 66.1% were White. Just over a quarter (27.6%) of the participants attended schools in an urban area. Twenty-one percent attended schools in a rural area and 51.3% attended schools in a suburban area. The researchers used a multiple regression rather than a structural equation model because previous research had not determined which of the school bonding variables have direct or indirect effects on academic achievement. SPSS 17.0 was used to adjust for potential bias associated with study's sample design effects. A simple regression revealed that school bonding variables, except for fairness were significantly related to academic achievement for 12th grade math achievement. All the school bonding variables were significantly related to school related delinquency and prior academic achievement. Twelfth grade math achievement scores as well as prior academic achievement for 10th grade math achievement measured academic achievement. Female high school seniors had significantly lower academic achievement than did male high school seniors, whereas Black/African American, Hispanic and multiracial students had lower academic achievement than did their white peers in both models. Yet, racial/ethnic effects disappeared in model 3 after

prior academic achievement was entered supporting the notion that prior academic achievement is the strongest predictor of current achievement. Blacks, Hispanics and Multiracial students who experience low academic achievement early in high school continue to experience this pattern throughout school and are possibly susceptible for dropout or other delinquent behaviors. As with other research findings, Asian/Pacific Islanders had significantly higher academic achievement than did White students in all three models even when school delinquency and prior academic achievement was considered. Students in private and Catholic schools had higher levels of academic achievement than did those in public schools. Moreover, students in urban schools had lower academic achievement than did those students in suburban schools. SES was also a significant positive predictor of high school seniors' academic achievement when controlling for all other predictors in the model.

Student Motivation

Student Motivation is defined by the internal persistence and drive a student has to persevere when faced with challenges to succeed in school (Martin, 2002). Eccles and Wigfield (2000) speculate that children engage in productive learning when they have a willingness to engage in school success. This active participation in learning is much easier in elementary school, but becomes more difficult by the time students advance to middle school. Eccles and Wigfield (2000) believe this is caused by a change in the value system that affects pre-adolescents in middle school. They argue that children will only engage in activities they feel have the greatest value or reward. These researchers suggest that persistence, performance and task choices are directly affected by the value that is assigned to the task. This value is assigned based on the experiences of others, their success and failures, and the attitudes these individuals display when the task is presented to them. Children's belief and expectations for success

become more negative as they perceive the value of the outcome decreasing (Eccles and Wigfield, 2000).

Researchers speculate that value attainment, intrinsic, utility, and cost impact the academic motivation of a student (Eccles & Wigfield, 2000; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Heflin, 2003, Wigfield & Wentzel, 2007). Attainment value is defined as the personal importance of doing well. Intrinsic value is defined as the amount of enjoyment the individual receives from performing the activity. Utility value is how well a task relates to the individual's current and future goal. Lastly, costs are usually a negative aspect in academic engagement because it amounts to how much effort the student will have to spend in order to succeed. Students often excel in classes that provide the greatest reward, and require the least amount of work.

Heflin (2003) argues that children have a choice to participate or not, and that motivation occurs based on persistence or interests in the task. In his experiences with Christian/Private school, teachers have the sole responsibility for motivating a student. Teachers need to provide a conducive environment, be concerned about skill development and take an interest in the social development of the student before portraying a negative picture about the student just because of the way he or she might dress or smell. He notes that one's self-efficacy is tested when there is doubt, which often leads to failure (Heflin, 2003). This is why teachers have the responsibility to encourage and affirm the strengths in students, but oftentimes the classroom is too large in population of students to know everyone's weaknesses. Heflin charges that when a student is met with a difficult situation and they experience some type of emotional or physiological difficulty he or she later avoids the educational experience for fear of the same situation. Additionally, the student views others who are successful and feels that if they can do it, then so

can I. This model is only beneficial if the student he or she is modeling is actually performing successfully in the classroom.

Seifert (2004) continues the discussion on student motivation based on self-efficacy, attribution, self-worth, goal theory and emotions. He notes that students who are more efficacious are more likely to be self-regulating and strategic about their goals for success, motivating themselves toward certain academic tasks (Seifert, 2004). But those students, who are not confident and perceive their academic abilities as incapable, or a failure, may avoid situations that are seen as challenging or difficult even though it will improve their school success (Seifert, 2004). One has to remember that it is the social environment through which students are comparing their abilities. During certain tasks children compare their work with others in the classroom, which motivates their decision whether or not to perform, given that he or she may not have the talent to succeed.

Ryan and Patrick (2001) investigated how students' perceptions of the social environment of the classroom relate to changes in motivation and engagement when students were transitioning from 7th to 8th grade. These researchers wanted to explore how the dimension of teacher support would promote or undermine students' motivation and engagement. They speculate that young adolescents question the value of doing their schoolwork when the social domain of other students in the classroom does not promote academic performance. However, when there is a teacher that is supportive, peer influence of students may be lessened because the teacher is showing that they care.

Ryan and Patrick (2001) conducted a study consisting of 233 students from three ethnically diverse populations in the fifth grade. Most of these students were individuals who

were eligible for free or reduced meals. Surveys were administered to students by trained research assistants in the spring of seventh grade and in the fall of the eighth grade. The library or school cafeteria was used to administer the questionnaires in 25 to 45 groups.

The researchers perceived that teacher support was important to students' promotion of mutual respect among classmates and the promotion of performance goals among classmates. As students transition from one grade to another, it is important that the teacher is perceived as one who will encourage and interact with students in the classroom in order to motivate and engage them. The study also indicates that the promotion of performance goals among classmate's results in students becoming motivated and engaging in school activities related to academic success. For when students perceived their environment as one that does not care, students engaged in more off-task behaviors and often became disruptive in the classroom (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

Freudenthaler, H.H, et al (2008) investigated the differences of how girls and boys were engaged in school based on intelligence, personality and Student Motivation. They were interested in why girls historically outperform boys in school. They reference (Gottfredson, 2002) research on academic achievement and intelligence as a strong predictor as individual characteristics for performance. They conclude that girls consistently test higher on cognitive abilities and verbal intelligence whereas boys score higher on numerical subtests. Thus the present study investigates sex differences in personality and motivational variables that predict school achievement and motivation. Freudenthaler, et al (2008) used the Five Factor Model constructed by (Digman, 1990) to construct and evaluate personality trait differences between the sexes. Participants in this study came from general, secondary and vocational schools in the Austrian school system. These students were ages 13 through 16 years of age. From the sample

of 1353 students, 552 were male and 801 were female. The students in the subsample were recruited from 55 randomly selected schools that participated voluntarily. The mean age was 13.74 with a standard deviation of .47. The majority of the respondents had parents that worked. Measures of academic achievement were self-reported of the students grades in German, English and Mathematics. Intelligence was measured by using three subscales of a German intelligence test. Motivational measures are assessed by using two items of the German self-description inventory (e.g., I am looking forward to school) answered using a four-point likert scale ranging from totally disagree to totally agree, Intercorrelations of .78 is reported for this scale. Personality measures are assessed by using the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007). The purpose of the study was to seek motivational and personality predictors of school performance and their roles in determining if there are sex differences in school achievement. Girls scored higher on personality factors related to intrinsic motivation and school anxiety, whereas boys had stronger tendencies to prefer performance-approach goals, performance-avoidance goals and work avoidance. No sex differences were found for learning goals or self-esteem. Of the personality and motivational constructs, only self-esteem contributed significantly to the prediction of school achievement in both sexes. For girls, intelligence and self-esteem, school performance was incrementally a predictor of work avoidance.

Elmore and Huebner (2010) were concerned about the relationship among demographics, parents and peer attachment, school satisfaction and student engagement of secondary school students. The purpose of this study is to discern between demographic variables and school satisfaction to elicit student engagement and to what extent adolescent school satisfaction would moderate the impact of the quality of parenting and/or peer attachments toward Student Engagement of these students. Participants in this study consisted of 587 children recruited from

five middle schools in two school districts in a southeastern U.S. city. However, given that parental consent was needed, only 19.8% of the students returned their forms. The resulting sample was composed of 200 third grade students, 180 seventh grade students, and 185 eighth grade students. There were 224 boys and 341 girls of whom 249 were African American, 14 Asian American, 244 White and 7 Hispanic. Twelve students identified themselves as American Indian and 34 students indicated as other ethnicity. There was no significant difference in levels of adolescent's reported School Satisfaction based on gender although the researchers reported that female respondents reported higher levels of School Satisfaction than did male students. There also was no difference in school satisfaction based on race or socioeconomic status. Consistent with other research was the notion that School Satisfaction and Student Engagement decreases as student academic demands increase. At the elementary school level, academic engagement is much higher than in middle or high school because teachers and parents spend more time with students preparing them for what lays ahead (Noddings, 2003).

To summarize, Student Motivation helps educators to understand the drive and desire students have once challenges and barriers are placed in their path. In some cases the barriers have been adjectives that describe the student as being lazy, uninteresting, disengaging, and defiant. However, what educators must realize is that there may be outside factors such as peer influence which may cause students to view themselves unfavorably if they engage in activities geared toward academic success.

Peer Victimization

Peer victimization is problematic in school culture because it influences academic failure. Peer victimization is defined as the experience among children in school who are the targets of

other children who are being terrorized, intimidated, or harassed for their purpose. Peer victimization can occur in several different forms, physical, verbal or relational. Hitting, punching, kicking or throwing objects at another person characterizes physical victimization. Speaking directly to an individual in a violent tone marks verbal victimization. Lastly, relational victimization occurs when an individual gossips in order to ostracize another person (Egan & Perry, 1998). Peer victimization or bullying can contribute to an environment of fear and intimidation in school, which may lead students to perceive specific areas at school unsafe. These places include classrooms, entrances, hallways or stairs, parts of the cafeteria, restrooms, and other places in the school building. Coy (2001) speculates that bullying is a behavior that is intended to harm or disturb a student repeatedly over a period of time. She proposes that bullying occurs most frequently in the school environment in a middle or junior high school (Coy, 2001). Additionally, the problem with bullying or any peer harassment in school is that it prevents students from learning in a safe environment where they can grow without fear and persecution from peers.

Hanish and Guerra (2000) explain that aggressive children may display disruptive and delinquent behaviors in the classroom, which reduces the interest of other students to attach themselves to school and academic achievement. For students who are being victimized, symptoms of depression and anxiety often follow which prohibit learning and participation in schoolwork (Graham & Juvonen, 1998). Hanish and Guerra (2000) speculate that peer victimization functions as a group, rather than a dyadic process, which only occurs for a small percentage of children. But those children who usually get victimized are those in elementary school because they are starting to spend an increasing amount of time with peers, are unable to defend themselves and usually develop a reputation among their peers as easy targets, where

they acquiesce to peers demands, and are often rejected by the peer group. However, the victimizers perceive their bullying as an effective means of achieving valued rewards such as high self-esteem, tangible resources and peer approval; devaluing their victims by assuming that they deserve to be victimized (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). The victimizer and the victim both have low self-concept of themselves and it can be speculated that the individual with the lowest self-concept becomes the student who is victimized.

Egan and Perry (1998) explored self-concept as a contributing factor that may contribute to low self-regard inviting peer victimization. They hypothesized that low self-regard promotes victimization by peers over time, and that children's level of self-regard governs the impact of behavioral vulnerability toward being victimized. Selecting 189 children of which 92 were boys and 97 were girls in the third and seventh grade researchers measured self-worth and self-perceived peer social competence to investigate the phenomena of low self-regard. A pre and posttest format was administered with the first measure being surveyed in the fall of the school year and the post test administered later in May. The first set of measures was self-concept followed by the second set in May consisting of a peer victimization scale and behavioral risk factor assessment.

It was concluded that a sense of social failure and inadequacy in one's peer group leads to an increase of peer victimization over time, for one's standing in the peer group serves to protect them from being victimized. Additionally, they found that children with low self-regard may contribute to their victimization by not asserting themselves during conflicts but by exhibiting self-depreciating behavior that bullies interpret as an invitation to be an aggressor. Low self-regard and self-esteem have been proposed as variables that have been hypothesized to promote loneliness and self-blaming of why peer victimization occurs.

Graham and Juvonen (1998) proposed that peer victimization is the role of casual beliefs about negative outcomes, which is associated with avoidability in school. They hypothesized that victims would endorse more character logical self-blaming attributions than would non-victims and that this would be related to loneliness, social anxiety, and negative self-views. Additionally, victims were also hypothesized to be less accepted and more rejected by their peers than non-victims. Using 418 sixth and seventh graders consisting of 206 boys and 212 girls attending an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse public middle school in Los Angeles, peer nominations were collected from the participants by furnishing the students with a list of names of all their classmates on a list arranged in alphabetical order and by gender. With this roster children were instructed to nominate three classmates who fit the seven proscribed categories of behavioral descriptors or peer victimization. In addition, students self-reported psychological adjustment issues such as loneliness, anxiety, victimization, self-worth, self-perceived victim status, and the humiliation of physical settings to avoid.

The results of the study conclude that middle school students who perceive themselves as victims are vulnerable to adjustment difficulties such as loneliness, social anxiety and low self-worth. The relation between self-perceived victimization and maladjustment were partly mediated by self-blaming attributions that implicate one's character. Maladjustment is often exhibited in school-aged children when they are having difficulties transitioning from one grade to another, or experience increased amounts of social anxiety and panic (Kochenderfer, Ladd, & Wardrop, 2001).

Swartz, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates (2000) examined the influence of friendship and its impact on early harsh home environment and later peer victimization. They wanted to ascertain

whether the strength between negative experiences in the home and bullying in a previous school peer group diminishes because the child now has a lot of friends.

The researchers hypothesized that victimization, as a social process will emerge over time as a product of multiple early risk and protective factors. Using two separate cohorts of 585 students, 304 boys and 281 girls, researchers asked teachers, mothers and peers to complete nomination forms. Most of the students in the first wave were from lower to middle economic class backgrounds, with approximately 26% of the children coming from disadvantaged families, families who live below the poverty line. In the first study, an ongoing multisite longitudinal investigation of children's social development and adjustment was being administered. Third and fourth grade bully and victim outcomes were to be predicted from children's preschool home environments with their dyadic friends.

Participants in the second study consisted of 387 kindergarten children enrolled in nonintervention schools from a previous study. All the students were rated by their teachers for the presence of behavior problems. In the summer before the students were to participate in the study, trained interviewers visited each child's home to complete a structured interview with the child's mother. These questions allowed the researcher to understand the child's development, social history, and family background. It was important to measure the harshness of discipline, stress and the occurrences of discipline to ascertain the origin of victimization and aggression.

The results concluded that children who experience punitive, harsh, stressful, and potentially violent home environments in the preschool years were likely to be targets of maltreatment by peers in the late years.

Additional research has been conducted on the phenomena of loneliness and its relationship to peer victimization. More recently, Ladd-Kochenderfer and Wardrop (2001) investigated children's loneliness and social satisfaction from the instability children felt as they were being victimized. Participants in their study consisted of two cohorts of 206 of which 195 were girls, and 193 were boys. These students were recruited from a longitudinal project in a midwestern public elementary school. These researchers report that peer victimization is not chronic for most young children who are targeted for high rates of peer aggression, and that children who do not experience peer victimization until second or third grade may show evidence of significant increases in maladjustment simply from the transition from one grade to another (Ladd-Kochenderfer & Wardrop, 2001). However, every child cannot simply go through life being victimized without some coping mechanisms to alleviate this harassment. Some children have found successful means to navigate these peer influences.

Ladd-Kochenderfer and Skinner (2002) also examined coping strategies as moderators to prolonged peer victimization on children's maladjustment. They hypothesized that social support seeking would emerge as unsuccessful at protecting boys (especially victims) against both intrapersonal and interpersonal maladjustment. In addition, victimized children who are able to refocus their attention on more pleasant memories or activities will be buffered from some of the negative effects associated with peer harassment. The researchers speculate that for victimized children, internalizing coping may convey signs of weakness and vulnerability that are socially frowned on by their social group, thus placing them at increased risk for peer rejection and social problems (Ladd-Kochenderfer & Skinner, 2002).

Participants in this study consisted of 356 fourth graders, ages 9 and 10. In order to gather information about the frequency of peer victimization, Ladd-Kochenderfer and Skinner

used a revised form of a peer victimization scale for children during individual interviews. In addition to collecting peer victimization scores, strategies for coping with peer victimization were obtained by using a self-report coping scale constructed by Causey and Dubow (1992). As in previous studies (Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Ladd-Kochenderfer & Skinner, 2001) loneliness, peer preferences of classmates who displayed victimizing behavior, anxiety, and social problems were collected by self-reporting measures. Loneliness was measured using the Cassidy and Asher scale of Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction (LSDQ); anxiety and depression was measured by a teacher report form (TRF) constructed by Achenbach et al (1991).

Results indicated that infrequent victimization might be associated with negative outcomes if children cope in maladaptive or norm-violating ways. For boys, social support seeking did not offer a promising avenue for reducing victimization; however, girls' risks for social problems were buffered when they asked for help and advice. Furthermore, when boys resorted to seeking social support, they tended to be lonelier. It was speculated that boys did not seek social support for their problems because males wanted to be able to convey more confidence in their own ability to successfully manage difficult peer situations, which in turn earned them more respect and friendship among their peers.

Ladd-Kochenderfer and Skinner (2002) also concluded that victimized boys who reported distancing and coping exhibited greater signs of anxiety, despite findings that revealed this coping strategy was associated with less risk for boys who were not frequently harassed. It could be surmised that victimized boys who try to convince themselves that their peer problems are no big deal or do not matter, are nonetheless aware of the likelihood of future abuse as well as their inability to prevent its occurrence. Finally researchers wrote, "even though distancing was

associated with greater risk for anxiety, this type of coping did seem to provide some protective benefit for victimized boys” (p. 274).

Earlier, Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman (1997) investigated the relative contributions of three forms of peer victimization to children’s early school adjustment: physical, relational and verbal victimization. They hypothesized that children’s peer relationships would be differentially associated with affective reactions to school, including loneliness and social dissatisfaction. Additionally, they hypothesized that the contribution of peer victimization to children’s school liking and avoidance would be unique, relative to the other forms of peer victimization and that one or more relationships of Student Engagement, School Avoidance and School Liking would emerge as a unique predictor of children’s school performance from peer victimization. They speculated that these three forms of peer relationships have been independently linked to early indicators of Student Engagement, but not evaluated collectively (Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1997). The researchers propose that friendships, as opposed to acquaintances, offer emotional provisions that empower children to cope with novel behavioral and academic challenges.

Participants in the study were part of a longitudinal project consisting of 200 children (95 females, and 105 males) from 16 full- day, kindergarten classrooms serving three Midwestern communities. The average age of the participants was five years. In their hypothesis, friendship, peer acceptance, and peer victimization were measured using self-reported measures seen in other peer victimization studies (Boulton & Underwood; 1997; Egan & Perry, 1998, and Ladd-Kochenderfer & Skinner, 2002). Friendship was measured by showing children pictures of their classmates and the children could name up to five of their peers. Peer acceptance was measured according to how much their classmates liked to play with them. Peer victimization was also

measured using a four-item, self-report scale developed by Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman (1997). Children were asked during interviews to report the extent to which they had experienced peer aggression.

In addition, school affect was measured by collecting loneliness and social satisfaction data using the Cassidy and Asher (1992) Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Questionnaire (LSDQ), previously used in many other peer victimization studies (Boulton & Underwood; 1992; Egan & Perry, 1998; Ladd-Kochenderfer & Skinner, 2002). School liking and avoidance was measured by the School Liking and School Avoidance Questionnaire (SLAQ) created by combining items from the School Sentiment Inventory (SSI) (Ladd & Price, 1987) with new items designed to assess school liking. School performance data was collected by obtaining the standardized academic readiness scale scores from the Metropolitan Readiness Tests (MRT) and teachers ratings of their children's involvement in classroom activities and school adjustment (TRSSA; see Ladd and Birch, 1997). Measures were administered in a counterbalance order, both within and across all interview sessions.

The results obtained from this investigation revealed that among young children, involvement in one form of peer relationship does not necessarily correspond to participation in another. The strongest argument for convergence in children's participation across relational victimization might be made for peer groups, their acceptance and the number of mutual friendships. Children with more mutual friendships were likely to have higher levels of group acceptance. When School Liking was measured, children who had large circles of friends reported high levels of peer acceptance and low levels of peer victimization in the classroom, which in turn allowed students to experience high amounts of school liking. Peer victimization accounted for more of the variance and was more statistically significant in terms of determining

what affects school liking as a moderator variable. Children who were victimized early in the school year were more likely to avoid school as the year progressed than children not victimized early in the school year. These children sought to avoid the context in which abusive interactions occur because such encounters undermine their sense of safety and security (Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 1997).

Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, and Perry (2003) continued the investigation on peer harassment, school connectedness and academic achievement. These researchers hypothesized that students reporting peer harassment would report lower levels of school connectedness and school achievement. The participants in this study consisted of 4,746 students from 31 public junior and senior high schools from an urban and suburban school in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The students completed a 221-item survey during the regular class period. Of the 221-item survey only five questions measured peer harassment, yet students were asked to indicate how often they were bullied, teased or intimidated.

The researchers found significant differences in harassment experiences between boys and girls across racial and ethnic groups and by grade level. However, the comparisons were small in difference in actual harassment experiences, possibly due to the different types of relational, physical, or verbal victimization. They reported that there is a need to address the widespread problem of peer harassment on a school wide level, rather than among target populations or individuals. These researchers found that most young people liked school in part because they were able to socialize with their friends, basically because it is what adolescence normally do. Consequently, students receiving mostly B's on the report card reported the least harassment on average as opposed to students who received mostly A's. Probably because the data suggest that being an A student meant you were not accepted by the peer group.

Scholars, on the assumption that there are influential factors, which affect the academic performance of students, have investigated physical, relational, and verbal victimization. School avoidance, and school adjustment have been hypothesized as outcomes from which negative peer influences have caused academic performance and school success to decline. Students who are being victimized often avoid places they feel incurs the possibility of getting harassed or avoid school altogether if they feel there is no safe place in which to hide. It is this reason that peer victimization and its relationship to academic success for African American male students needs to be investigated.

Factors Related to the Academic Success of African American students:
Student Engagement, Student Motivation and Peer Victimization

Student Engagement of African American male Students

There are a number of studies that have examined issues related to academic success for African American students. These studies have investigated factors such as student engagement, Student Motivation, peer victimization and school success. Given this research, however, there are a limited number of studies that focus specifically on how Student Engagement, Student Motivation and peer victimization impact African American male students. The following section reviews the general literature on Student Engagement, Student Motivation and peer victimization for African American students.

Voelkl (1997) believes that lack of Student Engagement leads to issues of student withdrawal including truancy, absenteeism, and drop out behavior. Furthermore, extreme behavior such as carrying weapons, selling and using drugs and juvenile delinquency may be

associated with lack of Student Engagement or identification. Identification means having a sense of belonging in school and valuing school and its related outcomes.

Voelkl was interested in examining whether African American students may be less identified with school than their white peers. He wanted to know if there is a relationship between identification and patterns of achievement and participation for white and black students. If students who disidentify from school in grade 8 experience repeated academic failure, will they habitually not participate in the classroom and thus fail to achieve? The sample for this study consisted of 1335 African American and white eighth grade youngsters in 104 urban, suburban, rural and inner-city schools across the state of Tennessee. The students were collected from a larger longitudinal study five year earlier called Project STAR. Project Star monitors the student's academic success from elementary through the middle school years. The identification with school was collected by a questionnaire comprised of 16 items to be rated by individual pupils. Items on the scale measured belongingness, feelings of value and school related outcomes.

The results of the investigation demonstrated that patterns of school achievement and participation are associated with feelings of identification. Students with higher levels of academic achievement and classroom participation reported higher degrees of identification. School behaviors and academic participation were more strongly related to identification in grade 8th than in 4th grade. Participatory behaviors were more strongly related to identification than were achievement scores. However, the predictive power of the model was very weak. Achievement and participation behaviors of 4th and 8th graders only accounted for 12% of the variance in identification with school. It is important to note that, Voelkl (1997) concluded that racial group membership is related to school identification for 8th grade students.

Finn and Rock (1997) evaluated the relationship of academic success for students at risk for school failure. They hypothesized that academic resilience is partially the explanation to which students are actively engaged in school. In this study, academic success is defined as passing grades throughout school, reasonable scores on standardized tests, and graduating from high school on time. A sample of 1803 minority students from low-income homes were classified into three groups on the basis of their grades, test scores, and persistence from grade 8 through 12. The classifications consisted of: academically successful-school completers (resilient students), school completers with poor academic performance (non-resilient completers) and noncompleters (dropouts). Groups were compared in terms of psychological characteristics and measures of “Student Engagement”. These participants were originally individuals who took part in the U.S. Department of Education’s National Educational Longitudinal study of 1988 (NELS: 88).

The investigation demonstrated that not all students deemed at risk drop out of school or even suffer from poor performance. A substantial number of African American and Hispanic students from low-income homes who received average grades and scored reasonably on tests, graduated on time.

Sirin and Sirin-Rogers (2004) were interested in exploring how individual parental levels may contribute to Student Engagement. More specifically, they were concerned with individual factors such as student engagement, educational expectations and self-esteem as variables that contribute to parental and adolescent relationships and the students desire to perform academically. They argued that those students who were more engaged in school, as evidenced by attending class on time and initiating discussions with teachers, were more likely to perform

well even though they were considered at-risk for school failure as characterized by their socioeconomic and racial background.

The researchers wanted to know how significant does each individual factor predict academic performance in middle class African American adolescents, and how well parent-adolescent relationships provide significant influence on academic performance beyond an individual's experiences. Three hundred and thirty-six African American students and their biological mothers participated in the study. Of these 336 students, 163 of the participants were boys, and 173 were girls ranging from 12 to 19 years of age. Of the biological mothers 183 were college educated and 153 had a professional degree beyond college.

Sirin and Sirin-Rogers (2004) found that when African American middle-class adolescents and their families met a certain financial level they reported having educational expectations and student engagement as the strongest relationship to academic performance. Adolescents who held well-defined educational expectations and who were engaged in their schooling also seem to do quite well academically. Self-esteem, on the other hand, did not have a strong relationship to academic performance for this group.

The results indicate that positive parent-adolescents relationships are related to better academic performance regardless of the individual factors involved. Parents' educational values do not seem to make any significant impact on the academic performance of students. The role of current Student Engagement and future school expectations was the key factor related to academic success. The academic performance of middle class adolescent African Americans cannot be explained simply by whether their parents value school but how students viewed the costs of participating and doing well academically.

Sirin and Jackson (2001) continue the investigation of Student Engagement in an attempt to understand the impact of behavioral and affective factors on the academic performance for black students. Their study wanted to further explore the phenomena that black students' self-esteem is unrelated to academic performance. Additionally, Sirin and Jackson were interested in the relationship between Student Engagement, educational expectations, and self-esteem and school achievement for African American students. They found a significant difference among male and female adolescent African American school experiences. However, they were also interested whether behavioral factors such as Student Engagement serves as a statistically significant predictor of school performance above and beyond such factors as grades, socioeconomic status and cognitive functioning.

Participants in the study were from selected from a public data set from the National Longitudinal study of Adolescent Health with a sample of 80 high schools and 52 middle schools from the United States (US). Six hundred and eighty-eight self-identified adolescent African Americans from grades 9-12 completed the in-home questionnaire. The majority of the interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. Student Engagement was measured using 13 items assessing both affect and behavioral components. School identification was measured based on belonging to school, school participation, and time in school related activities.

When the researchers examined Student Engagement as a multidimensional construct, Student Engagement predicted school achievement better than the affective component of Student Engagement. Students who actively participated in school by getting along with teachers and students as well as paying attention to school did well academically. Students' affective identification with school, connecting emotionally did not seem to contribute to school achievement in a significant way. Students' future educational expectations made a significant

impact on their school performance. Those students who expect to continue their education beyond high school tend to do better in high school than those who identified lower levels of future educational expectations.

African American girls tend to do better in school academically, participate in school related activities at higher rates and attend school more regularly than African American boys. African American boys reported higher degrees of self-esteem than their female counterparts suggesting that boys feel good about themselves overall but it does not necessarily translate into school success. Boys' school success is explained by attending school regularly and an active participation in school, which was a significant predictor of school achievement only for boys, not for girls. This conclusion does not imply that adolescent African Americans males who misidentify with school as the sole explanation of their academic performance. Additional research is needed to explore influences that prohibit black boys from achieving. While much research has studied the effects of Student Engagement on the academic success and performance of black students, student Engagement does include non-academic activities before and after school such as playing chess, belonging to step teams, and even participating in organized school sports teams.

Jordan (1999) examined the black high school students' participation in sports activities and its effect on student Engagement. The purpose of his study was to explore the effects of participation in high school sports on various student Engagement and student self-evaluation factors while holding constant important background characteristics such as socioeconomic status (SES) and gender. He also wanted to study racial and ethnic differences, explicating specific results for African American high school students, and examining the extent to which sports participation affects student achievement during high school.

Jordan hypothesized that participation in sports can benefit adolescents in at least two ways. First, sports can enhance their interests and feelings of connectedness to their schools, by virtue of intrinsic values geared toward athletic participation. Second, adolescents who are able to find structured activities within the school that capture their attention to a degree are likely to spend a certain amount of time on campus interacting with school staff, which perhaps may entice the student to buy into other school policies and values of school (Jordan, 1999).

Participants in this study were drawn from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 88) a longitudinal survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The study used the base year (Grade 8) and follow up data of 10th graders. The data revealed that most high school students do not participate in school-sponsored sports. About 21% of all 10th grade students were found to participate in football, basketball, or some other kind of team sport while only 15% were involved in individual sports such as golf, singles tennis and swimming.

For African American students, 18% reported having participated in team sports by 10th grade with nearly 10% having participated in individual sports. Another major finding was that participation in high school sports had a positive relationship with GPA, self-concept, and academic self-confidence for all students. However, these variables were examined as intermediate dependent variables that were affected by sports participation and in turn affected student achievement. Evidence showed that participation in high school sports is associated not only with higher grades, but better self-concept, and greater academic self-confidence. Across each racial and ethnic group analyzed, the effects of sports participation was a positive relationship and for 10th grade students the effects were significant at $p < .05$.

Schools should enhance extracurricular activities because it offers disengaged students another opportunity to become connected. All too often schools are trying to enhance their reading and mathematical classroom activities to engage students, and thereby increase test scores (Jordan, 1999). However, educational policy makers and practitioners should consider other aspects of school that might increase the Student Engagement factors for students who have become discouraged with school. Sports participation is another way to bond with school. Extracurricular activities in general, were found to increase high school student's personal investment in education by providing them with additional opportunities for adult interaction. This relationship allows students to bond with teachers, administration, staff and parent volunteers, which might encourage students to excel in other activities outside of school sports. This might help to reduce the alienation many students often experience because they have no connection to their school, which can be large in size and impersonal (Jordan, 1999).

Archambault, et al. (2009) investigated student engagement in high school and the relationship between cause of experiences that later lead to school dropout. Participants in the study included 13,330 students from 69 high schools in the province of Quebec Canada. From this population, 44.7% were boys and 55.3% were girls; the students were asked to complete the questionnaires for three consecutive high school years. Students were asked to report their behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement to school officials. Information on school dropout status was later obtained by sifting through official records. Boys of this study presented high risks of having low IQ's, low grades in French and Mathematics; and of being placed in special classes. These students were also four to eight times more likely to dropout than their counterparts. Students who demonstrated later onsets of disengagement showed the highest risk of dropping out than the students who showed early at-risks behavior and disengagement.

Student Motivation

Manlove (1998) examined the influence of high school dropout and school disengagement on the risk of school-age pregnancy. She wanted to understand if there was a relationship between dropping out of school and school age pregnancy, and if there was a difference by age, race and ethnicity. It was hypothesized that teens who are performing well in school and wish to continue with their education are more motivated to prevent school-aged pregnancy. In addition, she believed that those teens with low performance levels, low aspirations and who are disengaged from school are hypothesized to have low opportunity values associated with early pregnancy and childbearing.

Manlove (1998) speculated that schools with greater resources may provide teens with the skills and encouragement necessary to achieve educational advancement and to realize the high opportunity costs associated with having a teen birth. For instance, Catholic schools who report having more resources should have higher performance levels and fewer incidences of school dropouts. Moreover, students who attend schools with a high percentage of pre-teen mothers or disadvantaged students may have role models for early no-marital motherhood. Data used in this study were from NELS:88. A final sample of 8223 women included 822 teen mothers who conceived prior to the time of a second follow-up. This study had three levels of independent variables: family level, school and classroom level (teens' schools and classes), and individual measures of Student Engagement.

The study reported that 28% of teens with a school-age pregnancy dropped out prior to pregnancy and an additional 30% dropped out after pregnancy. Approximately 68% of Hispanic teens dropped out at any point and were much more likely to do so than whites at almost 60% or

black teens at 50%. Blacks were less likely than the total sample to drop out prior to pregnancy, but not different from the total sample in their likelihood of dropping out after pregnancy. In addition, teens with a school age pregnancy were less likely than other girls to come from a family that has a mother and father living in the home, irrespective of their race or ethnicity. Among black teens, only 24.5% who had a school-age pregnancy lived with both biological parents in the 8th grade, compared with 40.7% of black teens that did not have both parents. White teens that had a pregnancy were more likely to come from a rural area, less likely to grow up in the suburbs, and more likely to live in the south than white teens who did not have a school age pregnancy.

Parents of black and white girls with a school age pregnancy were less involved in their child's education than parents whose daughter did not have a pregnancy. Mothers of Hispanics and white teens with a school age pregnancy had lower aspirations for their daughters' educational future than mothers of other teens who did not become pregnant. For all racial and ethnic groups, girls who had a school age pregnancy were much less likely to attend Catholic or independent school than other students but not more likely to be in a school with a large percentage (50% of higher) of children from single-mother households. There is a need to investigate the influences of academic motivation for ethnic students without stereotyping them based on their race.

Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) were interested in how an authoritative parenting practice of school involvement and encouragement would impact the academic achievement of adolescents. This study examined if a relationship exists between school performance and parental behaviors over time, and if the type of parental involvement and encouragement actually leads to improvement and motivation in school. The researchers

sought to examine over time a relationship between parenting and school performance in a sample of high school students, and then examine the effects of the authoritative parenting on student achievement while taking into account a mediating effect of parental encouragement and educational involvement.

The researchers hypothesized that authoritative parents are more likely to be involved in school and more likely to encourage academic excellence. They sought to examine the moderating effect of authoritative parenting on the relationship between parental involvement and encouragement and the academic outcomes of students. Additionally, they hypothesize that having a non-authoritative parent heavily involved in adolescent schooling could do more harm than good because this parent would probably attend school meetings but not participate in raising the child. This parent might be present in the life of the student, but not actively present to where he or she is making a difference in their lives.

Steinberg et al (1992) investigated the impact of parenting on adolescent achievement in a large ethnically and socioeconomic heterogeneous population of students. The samples of students were drawn from nine high schools in Wisconsin and northern California. Different family structures were evident in the selection of schools such that researchers had an opportunity to seek divorced, intact, and remarried families.

Measures included an authoritative parenting questionnaire, which contains items on parenting practices corresponding to dimensions of acceptance/involvement, behavioral supervision, strictness, and psychological autonomy. The acceptance/involvement scale measures the extent to which an adolescent perceives his or her parents as loving, responsible or involved. The strictness/supervision scale assesses parental monitoring and limits setting, asking

questions of parents about the kind of freedom they allow their children. The psychological autonomy scale assessed the extent to which parents employ non-coercive, democratic discipline to encourage adolescents to express their individuality within the family. This scale asks parents and students how much their children are allowed to express their concerns to their parents when children disagree with a parent's decision. Student behaviors were evaluated using the same measures because researchers believe that parents would often over exaggerate their answers. Researchers measured academic outcomes using a self-report measure from students about their grade point average (GPA) as well as where students thought they would end up after their final years in high school. This measured educational expectancies and motivation to exceed what was expected based on the type of parental involvement.

The results of the study conclude that students who describe their parents as authoritative report better school performance and stronger Student Engagement than their peers whose parents have a non-authoritative style. The longitudinal analyses also concluded that an authoritative parent leads to school success. High school students who described their parents as authoritative improved more academically and became more engaged in school over the one year study than did students whose parents who were not authoritative. However, this was not a significant factor across students of color. Additionally, parental authoritativeness is associated with higher levels of school involvement and more motivation of academic success.

Authoritative parental involvement was operationalized as helping with course selection, and monitoring student progress. The analysis shows that these variables count for a large number of the variance for academic success, better school performance, and stronger Student Engagement and motivation of adolescents. However, when this type parental involvement was taken out of

the regression equation it was shown not to play a direct role in facilitating school performance and motivation.

Steinberg et.al (2000) African American parents scored the highest on the authoritative measure but the results of school involvement and academic encouragement did not yield high scores relative to the amount of parental engagement and positive outcomes in student achievements. Researchers conclude that academic achievement and student performance is motivated by peer influence rather than parental involvement for African Americans students. The concern about who is influencing students to persist academically, and what motivates them to pursue academic success despite any setbacks, speaks volumes to gaining the knowledge of how they value academic achievement.

Martin (2004) investigated the perceptual mapping in student motivation in the function of gender. He collected his data from a sample of 2,927 Australian high school students using his student motivation scale (SMES), which measures 10 sub variables of student motivation and engagement. Martin (2004) was concerned that there are possible differences in the motivation of students between girls and boys; so he explored this area by testing for mean-level differences. He also tested for factor variances to explore whether the motivational factor for girls was similar to that of boys, and if there were motivational profiles of boys and girls through cluster analysis using the key constructs in his student motivation and engagement scale. His scale is comprised of boosters which he believes leads to student motivation and engagement. They include, self-belief, learning focus, value of schooling, persistent, planning and study management. There are also guzzlers that reduce motivation. These include, self-sabotage, anxiety, failure avoidance, and low control. The students in this study were from 12 South Wales and Australian Capital Territory high Schools (nine government and three independent

schools). Eleven schools were located in urban areas of Sydney and Canberra and one located in a regional area of the New South Wales. The schools socioeconomic status was primarily middle to upper middle class. Approximately 57% of the students were male and 43% were female. Data was analyzed using LISREL 7.2, PRELIS and SPSS for Windows (version 11) as well as a factor analysis, tests of reliability, multivariate analysis of variance, one-way ANOVAs, and multidimensional scaling was conducted. Mean level differences in motivation were explored using MANOVA with gender as the independent variable across all boosters and guzzlers as the dependent variable. A conservative Bonferroni correction was used to minimize the risk of a type I error set at .005. The data demonstrated that there are a number of small gender differences in motivation. Girls were more inclined than boys to adopt the learning and mastery focus, plan their schoolwork, study effectively and persist in the face of challenges. Girls however, demonstrated significantly higher amounts of anxiety. Boys were more inclined to self-sabotage their academic work. Self-belief was one of the critical boosters to develop in students because this demonstrated a profound predictor of achievement and enjoyment at school. Developing the student's self-belief involves structuring learning so as to maximize his or her opportunities for success.

Peer Victimization

Hanish and Guerra (2000) were the first to examine this phenomenon using Hispanic and African American groups of students in an urban environment. Their results and conclusions created the conversations about the plight of the African Americans in their finding. Nonetheless, most researchers include Hispanics, Asians and African Americans in their abstract of the study, but neglect the importance for providing a discussion or conclusion about these diaspora.

Storch, Nock, Barlas, and Masia-Warner (2003) examined the relationship of overt and relational victimization to depressive symptoms, fear of negative evaluation, social avoidance, and loneliness in a sample of Hispanic and African American children. The purpose of their study was to address the limitations in measuring social-psychological adjustment in Hispanics and African Americans and to examine the relationship of overt and relational victimization to social psychological adjustment in a sample of urban elementary school children. They wanted to examine the relationship between peer victimization and social psychological adjustment. Additionally, they wanted to evaluate whether relational victimization would account for a unique variance after controlling for overt victimization. They also wanted to determine whether there was an interaction between overt and relational aggression to children who were both overtly and relationally victimized would report greater social psychological maladjustment. Finally, they wanted to examine whether prosocial behaviors from peers would moderate the relation between victimization and maladjustment.

Storch et al (2003) hypothesized that overt and relational victimization would predict social psychological maladjustment in Hispanic and African American elementary school children. Participants in the study consisted of 205 children in the fifth and sixth grades of an urban elementary school. One hundred ten students were females. Children ranged in age from 10-13 years. It was noted that the children in the study lived in a neighborhood with a relatively high exposure to violence and crime. Of the children sampled, 77.6% were identified as Hispanic American, 15% were African American, 4.4% were Asian, and 2.9% were Caucasian. Only children in English speaking classes were included in the present study to ensure reading proficiency.

Storch, et al. (2003) consistent with past research, utilized the Social Experience Questionnaire (SEQ; Crick Drotmeter, 1996) to evaluate the self-reported measures of victimization and positive peer treatment in which children indicated the frequency of 15 different peer interactions on a five point scale. The results of the study found that overt victimization is significantly related to each indicator of social-psychological adjustment. Boys reported experiencing significantly more overt victimization than girls and but no gender differences existed in relational victimization. These findings suggest that peer victimization may be more frequent and perhaps more salient in the lives of Hispanic and African American children attending urban elementary schools. The children in the study lived in an urban, inner city neighborhood where exposure to violence and crime are higher than average. Such experiences may be associated with increased victimization by family members in the community.

Additionally, the experience of overt victimization was associated with all measures of distress examined in the study, and these relations were generally characterized by a medium to large effect size. Frequency analysis revealed that for girls' relational victimization and measures of social psychological adjustment are more evident than for boys. After controlling for overt victimization, relational victimization was associated with depression, fear of negative evaluation, and social avoidance of general situations. This finding suggests that negative peer experiences may be internalized resulting in more depression and rumination about others' evaluation. In addition, the attempts to cope with aggressors by victims may cause them to avoid social interactions that are conducive to being victimized (after school clubs, school activities).

Relational victimization only contributed to predicting depressive symptoms, fear of negative evaluation, social avoidance, or general situations for girls, which is consistent with

previous research on relational victimization. Storch, et al. (2003) also found relational victimization to be a significant predictor of loneliness and social avoidance in both boys and girls. It is possible that relational victimization may be differently associated with social psychological adjustment in Hispanic and African Americans as compared to Caucasian boys. The analysis examined the relationship between the interaction with overt and relational victimization and social psychological maladjustment found with one exception, no significant indicators. Prosocial peer support was statistically moderating the association between relation victimization and loneliness for children with high levels of peer support. For children with low levels of peer support, relational victimization was positively correlated with loneliness. Overall, these results suggest that prosocial support for peers may have limited utility as a moderator of depression or social anxiety that is linked to peer victimization.

Hanish and Guerra (2000) examined aggression and withdrawal as predictors of peer victimization. Peer rejection will be evaluated as a mediator or moderator. Predictors of peer victimization were examined in an ethnically diverse sample of elementary school-aged boys and girls from schools located in urban and inner city settings. These children attended schools located in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, violence, crime, and other social problems.

The schools were defined as high disadvantaged and moderate disadvantaged based on the overall levels of self-reported violence exposure, crime rates, and socioeconomic indicators such as free and reduced meals (FARM). Hanish and Guerra (2000) were interested in finding out whether aggression and withdrawal predict current and future peer victimization among urban children. These relations are moderated by school setting, ethnicity, grade, and gender. Peer rejection does function as a mediator or a moderator of these predictive relations.

Hanish and Guerra hypothesized that aggression would be related to both concurrent and subsequent victimization and that this relation would not vary by school setting, ethnicity, grade, or gender. They proposed that withdrawal would predict concurrent and subsequent victimization for older but not for younger children and that this relation might reverse for children attending title I schools. Next, they proposed that peer rejection would mediate rather than moderate the aggression-victimization relation. Finally, they expected that rejection would moderate the withdrawal-victimization relation for children from high-disadvantaged schools, with non-rejected and withdrawal children at lowest risk for victimization.

Participants were ethnically diverse consisting 42% Hispanic, 40% African American, and 18% White. These students were part of an initial three cohorts of the Metropolitan area child study (MACS), a larger longitudinal developmental and prevention study which draws from 14 urban elementary schools. These schools contained at 61% rate of children on free lunch defined as high disadvantaged, and 34% coined as moderate disadvantaged. Each cohort of students were measured using a time one and time two pre and posttest method. Children in first, second and fourth during time one were measured, and children in third, fourth and sixth grades in time two. Peer ratings were used to assess victimization and rejection. Their findings support a relation between aggressive behavior and victimization by peers. This relationship maintained across school context, ethnicity, age, and gender, and was mediated by rejection.

Bellmore-Witkow, Graham and Juvonen (2004) wanted to examine how ethnicity and classroom social disorder influenced the association between peer victimization and social psychological adjustment. They proposed that the role of ethnic majority-minority status would moderate the association between victimization and adjustment, that classroom-level social disorder would be moderated between victimization and adjustment based on the amount of

social disorder that is normal in the classroom or school. The more classroom social disorder experienced, the more loneliness and social anxiety among classroom members. Lastly, another goal was to examine the social context that moderated the influence of peer victimization on psychological adjustment using ethnic minority-majority status and the amount of classroom disorder.

Participants in the study consisted of 1,630 6th grade students of which 746 were boys, and 884, were girls. Forty-six percent of the students were Latino, 29% African American, 9% Asian and 9 % White. Students and teachers completed written questionnaires during a single testing session in a classroom setting. All of the participating schools organized their sixth grade students into teams; this made it easy for students to answer questions during the peer nomination procedure because everyone got to know each other well. Measures consisted of a peer-reported victimization scale whereby students were asked to nominate students who were harassing them. The number of nominations each child received across items was summed and the values standardized within a classroom to control for differences in class size. Nominations on the three types of victimization showed a strong correlation of .70 and physical and verbal victimization correlated at .47. Cronbach alpha for the entire three measures was .80.

Bellmore, et al. (2004) revealed from that peer-reported victimization predicts stronger feelings of both loneliness and social anxiety. Individual characteristics interacted with social context to predict adjustment. Those who were perceived as victims and shared the classroom with many same-ethnicity peers reported feeling more loneliness and social anxiety.

Victimization was a stronger predictor of social anxiety when adolescents were in classrooms characterized by low social disorder. Even a positive classroom characteristic such as orderliness can be a risk factor for some youth depending on the match between person and

school context. Also, classroom level variables were found to have an effect only on the association between victimization and social anxiety and not between victimization and loneliness.

This research still does not address any differences in ethnicities (African American, White or Hispanic) for researchers thought it would be inappropriate to say that one culture is more prone to act toward peer victimization and social anxiety than another for fear of perpetuating stereotypes.

Hanish and Guerra (2000) examined the prevalence, stability and correlates of peer victimization in a sample of African American, Hispanic, and White urban elementary school-aged children. A total of 1956 children attending one of 14 public elementary schools located in one large and one mid-size, Midwestern city participated in this study. These researchers wanted to examine the prevalence of peer victimization and demographic differences in an urban and inner city neighborhood. The children in their study lived in urban and inner city neighborhoods where the reported overall rates of violence and exposure to violence was higher than any other areas in their community.

Hanish and Guerra (2000) expected that peer victimization would be a harassment that tends to occur in same-sex violence rather than mixed-sex, peer interactions. Moreover, it is assumed by the researchers that boys are more likely than girls to be more aggressive in their violence. Hanish and Guerra expect that African Americans and Hispanic children would be victimized by peers at a higher rate than White children and their relations would be moderated by the social context, i.e. (SES, FARM, neighborhood, and family support). When there is a larger group of one's own culture in a school, researchers hypothesized that students will interact

and follow a culture of school acceptance relative to that which is acceptable by their group's self-image. Meaning, if there is a large group of African American males who view academic success as detrimental to the social acceptance of the group, then those African American males who want to be apart of the group will fail in order to be accepted. Researchers then wanted to examine the stability of peer victimization for members of all different ethnic groups.

Participants in this study were 1,956 children attending any one of 14 elementary schools located in one large and one mid-sized Midwestern city. The sample was drawn from an initial sample of a large Metropolitan Area Child Study. Assessments were initially conducted when children were first graders (35%), second graders (31%) and fourth graders (33%). Children were followed up two years later, as third graders, fourth graders and sixth graders.

Peer sociometric ratings were used to obtain measures of peer victimization using the peer nomination method described by Eron and his colleagues (1984). Victimization data was collected during the late spring semesters of each academic year at Time one (1991) and Time two (1993) to ensure that children and teachers would have substantial time to get to know one another. Peer victimization involving verbal or physical harassment by peers was experienced by most of the children in the sample. Yet this victimization occurred with such frequency, severity and salience for 16% of the children in Time one. Only 7% of the children in Time two reported that they were perceived by their classmates as highly victimized. The children in the urban poor neighborhoods risk for adjustment problems were elevated due to numerous stressors. Gender differences were consistent with those of previous research studies (Boulton & Underwood, 1992).

Furthermore it was found that boys were more likely to be victimized repeatedly over time. The risk of peer victimization was consistently low and unchanging for Hispanic children at all grade levels. For African American and White children victimization risk was significantly higher for second graders than for first graders. In the third grade African American children's peer victimization score remained relatively high as second grade and fourth grade levels for White children. Peer victimization was prevalent in the first grade but dropped off in the fourth grade for African American children. For African American children, overall risk of victimization was moderately high, but contrary to expectation, it was no higher than that experienced by White children. White children were significantly at greater risk of being victimized in predominately non-white schools than at predominately white schools. Moreover African American children in the first grade experienced victimization at a low frequency.

Hispanic children experienced peer victimization very differently. They experienced lower rates of victimization than either African American or White children, which was maintained across age groups and school ethnic compositions. African American, Hispanic and White children experience victimization differently based on their culture, a culture that deals with violence possibly depending more on socioeconomic factors, parental involvement and class rather than race. It is important that these distinctions be considered when developing an appropriate intervention-when it maximally meets the needs of all targeted children.

Hudley, Graham and Taylor, (2007) were interested in the overt aggressive behavior, off-task and classroom disruption in elementary students. Furthermore, they sought to understand why middle school students rated themselves highly aggressive by their peers who were, in-turn characterized by their teachers as poorly motivated and lacking an interest in school. The researchers have two distinct assumptions: Children who display aggressive retaliation can learn

to recognize accidental causation and when negative outcomes are accidental, which are relatively non-hostile), angry aggressive responses are less likely to occur. The researchers used elementary school children because they claim that the cognitive development of aggression starts early on and depleting their desire for aggressive responses is crucial so that it is not carried throughout the lifespan. Therefore, working with children before the critical period of adolescence would yield the best opportunity to combat a lifelong pattern that is exacerbated at the adolescent stage of development. Participants in the study included African American male elementary school students in grades three to five. Participants demonstrating aggressive and non-aggressive behavior were selected using a combination of teacher and peer ratings provided the researchers with 66 students. The boys were randomly assigned to either the intervention (n=31) or no-treatment comparison group (n=35). Intervention groups of six boys met after school for one hour; three days a week for 12 weeks. Two African American female graduate students served as group leaders. Pre and Post assessments were issued to gather information about students' attitudes toward aggression. Scenarios in which a peer transgressed and offered one of three account types were used to assess how participants honored the accounts of their peers. The researchers findings concluded that intervention students more often honored the accounts of hypothetical peers who offered an apology or offered an excuse, but they did not increase their willingness to forgive the peer. For the comparison group of boys, they found no difference from pre to posttest. Teacher ratings of negative social behavior did not differ for either group. In the achievement domain, only intervention participants' ratings of external and uncontrollable causes for recalled failure declined significantly at posttest, and all participants tended to give high ratings to internal causes for failure, lack of effort and lack of ability as external factors for failure. Teacher ratings of cooperation and motivation increase significantly only for boys

receiving the intervention; where in ratings of persistence increased for intervention boys and declined for comparison boys. The researcher concluded that more serious behaviors are only stalled and that the 8 year old disengaged pupil does not have to become the adolescent that is not concerned about education. However, the challenge is that non-hostile intent is an ambiguous situation that needs direct interventions at an early age. Boys in the intervention group were taught goal setting tasks, which provided a skill to control for causes of failure, which dispelled negative and overt aggressive behavior. The way in which this goal-setting task was created was through a significant implementation of academic work that provides success and interests in these African American boys.

Theoretical Framework

For some African American males in school, the desire to do well rests with the extent to which of these African American students invest in education and the value placed on hard work and long-term outcomes. Ogbu (1978) believed that when these students decide not to perform in the classroom systematically, they are creating an oppositional culture whereby demolishing the notion that performing in the classroom is accepted among their peers. Ogbu and Fordham (1986) postulated that the notion of an oppositional culture is comprised of a group identity in the form of “acting white.” This collective identity made it easier for African American males to perceive the failures of performing in the classroom as normal rather than feel degradation by the mere fact that they were less educated in the American educational system.

Akom (2003) reexamines the notion of oppositional culture as a form of resistance among African American students and the ideology that these are students who desire to disengage from school solely because it is deemed a group identity for “acting white.” Ogbu’s (1978) tenant is that individuals from an oppressed group demonstrate the propensity to resist

positive educational goals. According to this argument, students who are Native Americans, African Americans and Hispanic will withdraw from academic pursuits because they believe that racial discrimination and prejudice will limit their access to high paying jobs and success. Yet, on the other hand, individuals from the dominant group who migrated to the United States on their own, called voluntary minorities, maintain optimism about their cultures chances for educational attainment and occupational success (Ogbu, 1978). Fordham and Ogbu (1968) posited that involuntary minorities respond to assimilating to schooling as an unfavorable condition toward the dominant group for which they have little to no desire to complete. This lack of “assimilating” into the schooling process creates the culture of failure that each student pays with a unique psychological wage referred to as the “burden of acting white;” resisting against school and the societal norm. Akom (2003) believes that for an African American community that is cultural heterogeneous, contains poor minorities, and chooses a street orientation that is filled with violence may not solely be characterized as those who see education as an assimilation into the dominant group. For some, it is a means of social mobility that gives these students a chance to rise out of poverty and seek success. While it may be less likely in some neighborhoods to capture strategies for social mobility because they have experienced discrimination and group disadvantages leading to psychological methods to invoke blaming and resistance, the lack of effort toward educational opportunities may be a condition of previous failures by past generations.

Harris (2006) conducted a study to determine if an oppositional culture truly exists among involuntary minorities relative to whites (Caucasians). She hypothesized that African American children will perceive fewer returns to education and more limited opportunities of upward mobility than white children. She also hypothesized that African American children will

exhibit greater resistance to schooling than whites. Using the Maryland adolescence development questionnaire in context student (1991), Harris concluded that there are alternative interpretations for the lack of engagement in school by some African American, particularly for those in elementary school. The notion that there is an oppositional culture may hold true for adolescents because they are aware of a lack of opportunities given their age; however, younger children still hold their teacher and the educational system in high regards unless they have academic challenges early on in school. Tyson (2002) believed that early academic challenges often creates the negative schooling attitudes and behaviors by some African Americans creating a mask of feelings such as fear, hurt or embarrassment resulting from poor school performance and effecting school behaviors. Carter (2005) believed that as failures and setbacks begin to mount these students desires to participate in school grow worrier and thus an oppositional culture begins. Thus when a group of people find it difficult to obtain a critical goal in their lives, it is possible to negate this process as a crime against their culture and discount it.

Cullen and Tinto (1975) using Merton's analysis of school deviance supports the claim that social environmental influences often regulate strain in how people react to the pressure to succeed. They believed the pressures to deviate occur when students are deprived of legitimate means to obtain a goal. This goal is tied to their rate of failure which increases over time and becomes a psychological drain which creates the disbelief that their circumstances can change. Within these pressures of social strain encompasses five areas of sociological methods of adaptation that these students would undergo which is: conforming, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion. Andersen and Taylor (2009) briefly define each term: conforming are students who believe in the established cultural goals of the society as well as normative means for attainment. Ritualism are students who do not believe in the established rules and policies but

they do believe in and abide by the means for getting to their desired goal. Innovators are those students that accept the goal to do well in school but reject the conventional method to achieving this goal such as following school rules, completing homework assignments and testing well. Retreatism is students who reject the desire to do well in school and replacing the desired outcome that most students aspire to achieve by creating their own goal. Lastly, rebels are students who reject both established goals and the accepted means for obtaining those goals. The students substitute new goals and new means of obtaining them. However, for the purpose of this research study, retreatism, and rebellion will be the focus. In this investigation, it is important to ascertain if ambivalence is still abound in elementary when it comes to academic performance comparative to middle and high school students where their adolescent behaviors understand the legitimacy of doing well and the obstacles that can occur.

Summary

The pervasive challenge in understanding academic success and peer victimization for adolescent African American males is the lack of literature pertaining to the relationship of these constructs. Many researchers have studied the effects of peer victimization and the psychological adjustment of academic success in children, but rarely have scholars studied the impact peer victimization has on the academic success of African American males. In the past, peer victimization has been examined in Whites and most recently in the Latino community. However, African American children, particularly boys, are often left out of research initiatives.

With respect to Student Engagement and motivation there exists literature predicting the failure of academic success due to performance, parental involvement, social anxiety, self-esteem and other psychological deficiencies but little is known about the effect of peers on the

academic success of African American students. It is for this reason that an investigation on the relationship of academic success and peer victimization for African American male students is needed. There have been many scholars who have speculated that there are peer influences that affect the academic success of African American males, but little research has investigated the phenomena.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is comprised of the methodological procedures to investigate, collect, describe, and provide a written account concerning the examination of constructs in this meta-analysis of African American success. The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between Student Motivation, Student Engagement to African American male academic success as impacted by peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle and high school students.

Research Design

The research methodology for this study involves an investigation using a meta-analysis to clarify the relationship of Student Engagement, Student Motivation and peer victimization. A meta-analysis is a method that focuses on contrasting and combining results of different studies to identify patterns among studies and their results, or relationships that might become evident during the investigation analysis (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2011). In the pilot study, the investigator was able to collect data using a stratified random sample, which yielded one hundred

and thirty-two respondents comprised on African American males in middle and high school. Yet this population was not large enough to sustain an adequate amount of $p = 1-\alpha$ given that a small effect size of .3 contains a minimum of 176 respondents, to a medium effect size of 216 needing 84 more respondents.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research Question One: Is there a relationship between Student Motivation and peer victimization for African American male elementary, middle and high school students?

Research Question Two: Is there a relationship between Student Engagement and peer victimization for African American male elementary, middle and high school students?

Research Question Three: Is Father Figure a significant predictor of Student Motivation, Student Engagement and peer victimization for elementary, middle or high school students?

Research Question Four: Does there exist a grade level difference of Student Motivation and peer victimization for African American male, elementary, middle and high school students?

Research Question Five: Does there exist a grade level difference of Student Engagement and peer victimization among elementary, middle and high school African American male students?

Hypotheses

H_{01} . There is no relationship between student motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle and high school African American male students.

Ho₂. There is no relationship between student engagement and peer victimization among elementary middle and high school African American male students.

Ho₃. Father Figure will not be a significant predictor of student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle and high school African American male students.

Ho₄. There will be no grade level difference between Student Motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle and high school African American male students.

Ho₅. There will be no grade level difference between peer victimization among elementary, middle and high school African American male students.

Population and Sample

For the purpose of this dissertation proposal a stratified random sample of African American males in elementary, middle and high school was investigated in two different schools in the mid-Atlantic. After the internal review board at Bowie State University provided the investigator with permission to proceed and collect data, African American males in fifth, sixth seventh grade and eighth was be solicited from the school districts via the public school's assessment and evaluation office and heads of school to ascertain their permission. Additionally, data from the pilot study in 2008, was used to complete the necessary integration for this meta-analysis to comply an appropriate standard effect size to reject a true null hypothesis.

Instrumentation

The Multidimensional Peer Victimization (MPV) scale was used to measure different forms of peer victimization. The scale was a self-report measuring for children ages 11 through

16 years of age developed by (Mynard & Joseph, 2000). The measure consisted of 16 items examining attacks on property, social manipulation also known as relational victimization, verbal and physical victimization. Each question was measured on a 5 point scale with responses labeled “never”, “rarely”, “sometimes”, “very often” , “always”. The point system for this measure ranges from 0-5. Children were asked to place a check on one of five columns for each of the 16 questions. This scale has a reported Cronbach alpha of .73 to .82.

Student Motivation and Student Engagement (SMES) scale was used to measure both motivation and engagement in school. The questionnaire is a self-report scale for ages 7 through 16 (Martin, 2001). The measure consists of 44 items investigating the constructs of Student Motivation, which include: persistence, self-belief, self-sabotage, anxiety, uncertain control, and failure avoidance. The subscale of Student Engagement consists of constructs measuring: valuing school, disengagement, learning focus, study management and planning. Each question is measured on a 5point likert scale with end points labeled strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (5). Students are asked to circle the answer that best describes how they feel about school. The Student Motivation and engagement scale provides a Cronbach Alpha ranging from .76 to .82. A copy of this scale is provided in appendix B.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected by disseminating two survey questionnaires and a demographic questionnaire to all students only after the IRB and parental consent has been provided. In some cases, passive consent may be given to the investigator by the heads of school. At no time did students provide their names, address or any other identifying information except their age, grade

point average, and whether they have been retained in school. Each student was identified by a number for data collection purposes only. When the instruments were returned to the investigator, the statistical package for social scientist (SPSS 22.0) was used to manage, disaggregate and analyze the data.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were computed for all instruments, including means, standard deviations and alpha coefficients. In order to investigate the questions: Is there a relationship between student engagement and peer victimization among African American male elementary, middle and high school students? And is there a relationship between Student Motivation and peer victimization among African American male elementary, middle and high school students a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed.

The question as to whether there exists a grade level difference between Student Motivation and peer victimization and Student Engagement and peer victimization among African American male students in elementary, middle and high school students was computed with an analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Finally, in order to answer the question and investigate whether father-figure is a significant predictor of Student Motivation, Student Engagement and peer victimization among African American male elementary, middle and high school students, a multiple regression was computed.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The Student Motivation and Engagement scale (SMES) first originated as an Australian research tool, created by Andrew Martin (2001) which reports a cronbach alpha ranging from .76 to .82. This scale was utilized using aborigine respondents there an alpha coefficient was computed in order to validate the instrument using African American males in elementary, middle and high school.

The Multidimensional Peer Victimization scale (MPV) created by Mynard and Joseph, 2000, reports a cronbach alpha for this scale ranges between .73 and .85 indicating good reliability. Additionally, there is little data that reports the cronbach alpha for this scale investigating African American children; therefore, an alpha coefficient was computed for this population.

Summary

The purpose of this investigation was to discern whether there are interpersonal relationships that prohibit African American male students in elementary, middle and high school from being successful. There has been very little research which has examined these phenomena across the educational lifespan. It is important to discern, when do academic disengagement begin and what are some factors which keep these students from performing well in the classroom. The ultimate goal, as an educational leader at both the school and district level is to prepare the students for post-secondary opportunities starting in elementary and continuing through middle to graduate from high school in a fashion that provides them with the best possible scenario to be adequately trained to succeed (Hines, et al, 2013)

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study investigated the relationship of Student Engagement, Student Motivation and peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis and answers the questions of the research hypothesis. Demographic data and the results from the statistical analysis that were conducted are presented.

Descriptive Statistics

The resulting sample size comprised of 191 African American male students in elementary, middle, and high school. There were 30 elementary school students accounting for 15.7% of the participants. Seventy-nine of the African American students were in middle school accounting for 40.8% of the participants and 83 of the students were enrolled in high school accounting for 43.5% of the participants in the sample. The mean age for the sample of elementary school African American male students is 4.933, ($SD = 3.514$). The mean age for the sample of middle school African American students is 5.638, ($SD=.654$). Finally, the mean age for the high school African American male students is 2.33, ($SD = .935$). The total number of students who reported repeating a grade is 66, which accounts for 34.7% of the 191 respondents. The number of elementary students reporting that they repeated a grade was 17. The mean number of elementary school students who reported repeating a grade was 1.413, ($SD=.50123$). The number of middle school students who reported having repeated a grade was 25. The mean number of middle school students who reported repeating a grade was 1.67, ($SD=.469$). The number of high school students reporting that they have repeated a grade was 24. The mean number of high school students who reported repeating a grade was 1.7108, ($SD=.456$).

The Student Motivation and Engagement scale consists of 44 items ($\alpha = .73$ to $.82$) with 11 subscales. The Student Motivation and Engagement scale was found to be highly reliable for African American males in elementary, middle and high school (44 items; $\alpha = .87$)

The Multidimensional Peer Victimization questionnaire consists of 16 items ($\alpha = .73$ to $.85$) with four subscales. For the purpose of this study, the coefficient alpha was computed investigating African American male students in elementary, middle and high school. The Multidimensional peer victimization scale was found to be highly reliable (16 items; $\alpha = .86$).

Research Question One

Does a relationship exist between Student Motivation and Peer Victimization among African American male students in elementary, middle, and high school students?

Statistical Analysis

A correlational analysis was used to answer this question. A Pearson Product Correction r was used to establish a relationship between Student Motivation and peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle and high school which can be found in Tables I, II and III.

Table I. Correlation Coefficients among African American males in Elementary School (N=30)

	Student Motivation	Peer Victimization
Student Motivation	1	-.520**
Peer Victimization	-.520**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 Level (2 tailed).

Table II. Correlation Coefficients among African American males in Middle School (N=78)

	Student Motivation	Peer Victimization
Student Motivation	1	-.198
Peer Victimization	-.198	1

** Correlation is non-significant at the 0.05 Level (2 tailed).

Table III. Correlation Coefficient among African American males in High School (N=83)

	Student Motivation	Peer Victimization
Student Motivation	1	.038
Peer Victimization	.038	1

**Correlation is non-significant at the 0.05 Level (2 tailed).

Findings

The analysis yielded a Pearson's r of $-.520$ ($p < .003$), a significant relationship between student motivation and peer victimization for elementary African American males was found at the .01 level. Next, the analysis for middle school and their relationship between student motivation and peer victimization yielded a Pearson's r of $-.198$ ($p < .083$). A significant relationship between student motivation and peer victimization for middle school was not found. Finally, the analysis for high school students and their relationship between student motivation and peer victimization yielded a Pearson's r of $.083$ ($p < .732$). A significant relationship between student motivation and peer victimization for high school was not found.

Therefore the null hypothesis for research question one which states that: There will be no relationship between student motivation and peer victimization among African American male students in elementary, middle, and high school is partially rejected.

Elementary: The null hypothesis failed to be rejected

Middle: The null hypothesis was rejected

High School: The null hypothesis was rejected

Research Question Two

Does a relationship exist between student engagement and peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school students?

Statistical Analysis

A correlational analysis was used to answer this question. A Pearson Product Correction r was used to establish a relationship between student engagement and peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school which can found in Tables IV, V and VI.

Table IV. Correlation Coefficients among African American males in Elementary (N=30)

	Student Engagement	Peer Victimization
Student Engagement	1	.351
Peer Victimization	.351	1

**Correlation is non-significant at the 0.05 Level (2 tailed)

Table V. Correlation Coefficients among African American males in middle School (N=78)

	Student Engagement	Peer Victimization
Student Engagement	1	-.320**
Peer Victimization	-.320**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 Level (2 tailed)

Table VI. Correlation Coefficients among African American male in High School (N=83)

	Student Engagement	Peer Victimization
Student Engagement	1	.088
Peer Victimization	.088	1

** Correlation is non-significant at the 0.01 Level (2 tailed)

Findings

The analysis yielded a Pearson’s r of .351 ($p < .057$), a significant relationship between Student Engagement and peer victimization was not found for African American males in elementary. Next for middle school students, the analysis yielded a Pearson’s r of -.320 ($p < .004$), a significant relationship between Student Engagement and peer victimization was found for African American males in middle school. Finally, for high school students, the analysis yielded a Pearson’s r of .088 ($p < .428$), a significant relationship between student engagement and peer victimization was not found.

Hypothesis

Therefore the null hypothesis for research question two which states that: There will be no relationship between student engagement and peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school is partially rejected.

Elementary School: The null hypothesis is rejected.

Middle School: The null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

High School: The null hypothesis is rejected.

Research Question Three

Is Father Figure a significant predictor of Student Motivation, Student Engagement and peer victimization for elementary, middle or high school students?

Statistical analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if Father-figure significantly predicts student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization which can be found in Tables VII and VIII.

Table VII. Regression Summary for Father-Figure variables and their predictability of Student Engagement for Elementary, Middle and High School Students

Predictor	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
	SB	β	SB	β	SB	β
Father	3.064	-.143	3.463	-.052	2.344	.31**
R Δ	.229		.091		.164	
N=	30		78		83	

Significance $p < .01$ **

Table VIII. Regression Summary for Father-Figure variables and their predictability of Student Motivation for Elementary, Middle and High School Students

Predictor	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
	SB	β	SB	β	SB	β
Father	4.642	.098	3.572	.036	2.797	.431**
RD	.077		.031		.229	
N	30		78		83	

Significance $p < .01$ **

Findings

The results of the regression indicate that Father significantly predicts the student engagement scores among high school students, $R^2 = .164$, $\beta = .31$, $F(2.097)$ $df = (7, 75)$, ($p < .007$). Father figure significantly predicts the student motivation scores among high school students, $R^2 = .122$, $\beta = .28$, $F(1.763)$ $df = (6, 76)$, ($p < .013$). Father figure also significantly predicts the student motivation scores across elementary, middle and high school, $R^2 = .049$, $\beta = .196$, $F(1.588)$ $df = (6, 184)$, ($p < .010$). However, father-figure was not a significant predictor of student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization for elementary and middle school, nor was it a significant predictor of peer victimization among high school students.

Research Question Four

Does there exist a grade level difference of student motivation and peer victimization for African American male, elementary, middle, and high school students?

Statistical Analysis

An analysis of variance was used to determine if group differences existed among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school between student motivation and peer victimization which can be found in Tables IX and XI.

Table IX. One Way ANOVA with Multiple Comparisons Post Hoc Least Significant Difference (LSD) for Academic Level, Elementary, Middle and High School

School Motivation	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Elementary School		.000**	.000**
Middle School	.000**		.155
High School	.000**	.155	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level

Findings

A one- way analysis of variance reporting an F 11.354 ($df = 2, 188$)($p < .000$) was obtained for student motivation and an F 5.393 ($df = 2, 188$)($p < .005$) was obtained for peer victimization. A significant grade level difference is found among middle school and elementary school ($p < .000$), high school and elementary school ($p < .000$) but not high school and middle school ($p < .155$) for student motivation. A significant grade level difference is found for middle school and high school ($p < .011$) and elementary school and high school ($p < .005$) but not elementary school and middle school ($p < .348$) for peer victimization.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for research question three states that: There will be no significant relationship between student motivation and peer victimization for elementary, middle, and high school. The null hypothesis is partially rejected.

Research Question Five

Does there exist a grade level difference of student engagement and peer victimization for African American male, elementary, middle, and high school students?

Statistical Analysis

A One way analysis of variance was used to determine if group differences existed among African American males in elementary, middle, and high school between student motivation and peer victimization Tables X, and XI.

Table X. One Way ANOVA with Multiple Comparisons Post Hoc Least Significant Difference (LSD) for Academic Level, Elementary, Middle and High School

School Engagement

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Elementary School		.000**	.000**
Middle School	.000**		.010**
High School	.000**	.010**	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level

Table XI. One Way ANOVA with Multiple Comparisons Post Hoc Least significant Difference (LSD) for Academic Level, Elementary, Middle and High School

Peer Victimization

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Elementary School		.348	.005**
Middle School	.348		.011**
High School	.005**	.011**	

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 Level, 0.01 level

Findings

A one way analysis of variance reporting an $F 32.594$ ($df = 2, 188$)($p < .000$) was obtained for Student Engagement. Peer victimization remained constant reporting an $F 5.393$ ($df=2,188$)($p < .005$). For the construct of student engagement a significant grade level difference was found among middle school and high school ($p < .010$), middle and elementary school ($p < .000$) and high school and elementary school ($p < .000$).

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for research question three states that: There will be no significant grade level difference between student engagement and peer victimization for elementary, middle and high school. This hypothesis failed to be rejected.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION and SUMMARY

This study investigated the existence and strength of the relationship between student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization in African American males in elementary, middle, and high school students. Additionally, the study investigated the significance of father as a predictor of student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization across all academic levels, and if there would be a grade level effect among student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization for all respondents.

A total of 191 African American males comprising, of 30 elementary students, 83 middle school students and 78 high school students, completed three questionnaires for this investigation. The respondents completed a demographic questionnaire, the student motivation and engagement scale (SMES) and a multidimensional peer victimization measure (MPV).

Descriptive statistics and inferential measures were calculated using a statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) version 22.0. Means and standard deviations were computed for age, grade of the respondent as well as if they had ever repeated a grade which can be found in Table XII. In addition, alpha coefficients were computed to ascertain the internal consistency of the student motivation and engagement scale (SMES) and the multidimensional peer victimization (MPV) questionnaires due to their usage with aborigine and white students.

A one-way analysis of variance using multiple comparisons/post hoc least significant difference test (LSD) was selected in order to measure and evaluate the grade level effect and significance among elementary, middle and high school students for student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization. This statistical test revealed a significant grade level difference among middle school and elementary, as well as high school and elementary for

student motivation, yet there was no significant grade level difference or effect detected between middle school and high school. As for the construct of student engagement, a significant grade level effect was found between all grade levels. As for peer victimization, a grade level effect was revealed between middle school and high school, but not elementary and middle school.

Next, Pearson correlations were computed between academic levels on the student motivation, student engagement and peer victimization measure. Moreover, a test of difference between correlations from independent samples was completed using Fisher's Z transformation between the two highest correlated levels of middle and high school. After completing the test of differences between correlations of middle school and high school, these two scores were found to be significant with a $z = -2.623$, which is less than -1.96 . Additionally, the study was able to detect relationships among academic levels and constructs of student motivation, student engagement and peer victimization in African American males in elementary, middle, and high school.

Finally, a model for explaining and understanding how a father is able to be a significant predictor of academic success among African American males in elementary, middle and high school was calculated using a multiple regression with predictors such as: Father, stepfather, brother, uncle, grandfather and male cousin. All of these variables were entered into the equation at one time. In order to ascertain this information, students self-identified who lived with them at home from the demographic questionnaire.

Research Question 1

This study examined the relationship of student motivation and peer victimization among elementary, middle and high school. The study was able to detect an inverse relationship for

elementary school students at the $p < .01$ level. The inverse relationship supports the notion that as student motivation increases, negative interpersonal relationships decrease, such as peer victimization. Eisenberg, Perry and Neumark-Sztainer(2003) supports the findings as they suggest that students who are connected to school and performing well in the classroom avoid situations or students who are not a part of the positive school climate and are distractions from their ultimate goal to get good grades and compete.

Eccles and Wigfield (2000) presumed that children who value educational success were more likely to do well simply because it provided them with a certain level of enjoyment and gratification, so much so that any deterrence from actively participating in school is non-existent. The success of this student is tied to future goals and aspirations. However, the challenge arises when students are not doing well and their future endeavors are not evident nor supported by their ability to succeed in the classroom. Early failures of African American male students in elementary can compound his self-belief where lack of success could possibly lead to future negative feelings and interactions among teachers and the school climate or culture which was created to provide the highest possible environment to help him perform in the classroom. Merton's (1938) analysis of deviant behavior speaks to this phenomenon whereas students who feel anxious about their school performance and ability sabotage themselves and refuse to persevere despite their ability to do so given previous experiences in school. Major and Billson's (1994) notion that African American males who are doing well, are likely to experience negative interpersonal relationships was not supported by this research. They concluded that as African American males start to do well in school, turn in homework, and engage in positive academic attributes, other African American males will victimize them.

Research Question 2

This study examined the relationship of student engagement and peer victimization of African American males in elementary, middle and high school. The study was able to detect a significant relationship between student engagement and peer victimization among African American males in middle school. Voelkl (1997) believed that students who are not connected to school and refused to demonstrate appropriate behaviors in school were more likely to experience absenteeism, truancy, and other negative issues related to failure. Based on this research study, African American males who experienced consistent amounts of drawbacks; teachers who are viewed as uncaring, and other staff members who do not understand their lack of persistence, retreated to behaviors that provided them with the greatest measure of success. Skinner (2009) supports the notion that students with positive experiences and beliefs about school are less likely to be absent and dropout from school. However, the challenge is that for middle school students, unlike elementary, peer influences are much greater and have a larger impact on their lives. For many adolescents, Steinberg et al. (1992) believe that student engagement in middle school is driven by peer influences rather than parental involvement for African American students. Ryan and Patrick (2001) note that adolescents often question the value of their schoolwork when other students in the classroom are not actively participating. When students perceive their classmates do not care about the quality of their performance, it is more likely that students will engage in off-task behaviors that may become the norm and disruptive incidences will spread making learning impossible to manage.

Research Question 3

This study investigated father as a predictor of student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization among African American males in elementary, middle and high school. The findings of this regression when including all levels of education predicted that father is a significant predictor of student engagement; however, when the levels were separated, only high school was a significant predictor above and beyond any other male figure. Buchanon and Bream (2002) state that during the high school years fathers can enhance the academic motivation and engagement of students. A father's participation in school related activities such as meeting with teachers, checking homework, and helping their boys study provides a consistent expectation that school is important. Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2011) reports that certain parenting styles depicted in fathers are seen as authoritative which often tends to provide boys with success in positive psychosocial activities and higher educational aspirations. This direct effect from the father, supporting their children in high school lends itself to African American males understanding the need to be career and college ready.

Mackey and Mackey (2012) also support the notion that a father increases the academic achievement of students by his mere presence in the home. The results of their study concluded that children were more prone to finish high school, pursue and complete undergraduate and advanced degree when dad was in the home.

Research Question 4 and 5

This study examined elementary, middle, and high school students and their effect among student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization. The findings of this study concluded that there is a grade level difference for African American male students transitioning

from elementary to middle school and a difference in elementary to high school; yet there was no significant effect found for students enrolled in middle school to high school as it relates to student motivation. Additionally, a significant effect was obtained for student engagement among elementary, middle, and high school students. Currently there is no research that investigated the notion of comparing elementary, middle and high school student's effect of student engagement and motivation. Martin (2009) attempted to investigate this relationship but during the study, his middle school students were unable to complete his study. Zook and Replinski (2009) noted grade level differences of academic motivation between middle school and high school, wherein high school students had greater levels of motivation than middle students. Nuijens, Mroak, Zhe and Elizabeth (2000) and Dehas, Willems and Holbein (2005) support the notion that grade level differences occur between middle and high school. Concerns with middle and high school differ from their influences during the psychosocial levels of development.

Erikson's (1968) stage of psychosocial development considers the perspective of students in grades six through twelve. These individuals must feel a sense of early accomplishments in school. Their distaste for school can be attributed to feelings of inferiority from teachers' perceptions of them and other staff members because they were unable to perform at a level that receives positive recognition from school officials. When students such as African American males experience inferiority, doubt and failure rather than success in school, they are more likely to devalue achievement because the school has no place in their life. The focus is less on learning because learning is synonymous to a greater chance of failure than success so African American males create an environment or culture that is safe and makes them appear strong: their path to success might collide with the school.

Based on this research study it is hypothesized that African American males who are thirteen through eighteen years of age, a sense of identity is developed through early successes yet carried through as these students try to create a strong sense of self and manhood preparing for life beyond the classroom. The inability to achieve this plateau will leave these students confused about their role in life and access to the American Dream.

Merton's analysis of Deviant Behavior

Merton's (1938) theory of Deviant Behavior is confirmed in this study as the findings among the significant correlation coefficient demonstrated an inverse relationship among student engagement, student motivation and peer victimization. Merton postulated that there are certain social conditions that increase the opportunity for individuals to behave in a certain way. For the purpose of this study, rebellion and retreatism was used. Students in the rebellion stage, refuses to participate in classwork, discussions, and tasks, behaving in a way that disrupts others substituting tasks and activities for which they feel successful. The inverse relationship of student engagement and peer victimization supports the notion of rebellion among African American males in middle school based on the significant correlation coefficients. The student engagement construct consisted of self-sabotage and disengagement which are maladaptive behaviors that occur when student engagement decreases and peer victimization of interpersonal relationships increases. African American males who experienced a decrease in student engagement, experienced or participated in disruptive and harsh behaviors took away from academic achievement. It is their disbelief of success, which increases the likelihood of self-sabotaging their chances for doing well.

Retreatism is realized in this study based on the inverse relationship of student motivation and peer victimization of interpersonal relationships. Retreatism involves rejecting both culturally and socially legitimate means of achieving. Based on the research it is hypothesized that when a student withdraws from school, he can become truant, absent, active with in or out of school suspension or simply dropout if not given the opportunity for success. African American males who experience decreases in motivation do so based on their thoughts of anxiety, self-doubt, lack of a learning focus and avoid school as they have no drive to persist in school. The challenge is that boys usually do not seek social support from the teaching staff because doing so can often demonstrate a sign of weakness among peers (Skinner, 2002).

Implications for Educators

The challenges for school districts are to fund social justice and access for all students with proven policies that drive student performance. Collaboration with a university or college foundation whose charge is to collect data and create tools to support African American males and other disproportionate students of color who are failing in school is one avenue to combat these issues. However, to make the biggest impact for social justice and equity for African American males, teachers have to be confronted about their perceptions and attitudes.

Teachers have the responsibility to develop a strong educational relationship with students that provides them with early success so that every child can trust that they can achieve in the classroom (Obidah, 2004). There are challenges with some students, that much is certain however teachers should not demonstrate an uncaring attitude which will only create animosity among this population of students and perhaps their parents. Teachers should be culturally responsive to students' emotional and social learning especially in an environment that depicts

institutional poverty, deficits in school readiness and parents who appear to lack the skills to advocate for their children. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) believed that teachers need to integrate the background of students in their delivery of the classroom content. The acceptance of the African American males values, beliefs and attitudes in the pedagogy of the teacher will make it easier for the teacher to engage the student, having the males feel connected and appreciated for their experiences; having something to offer in the classroom. Gay (2000) teachers who are able to incorporate some of the life experiences of these young men are able to challenging their thoughts, creating critical inquiry which drives, and motivates them to participate in class. Nonetheless, a strong leader is needed to create a culture that supports these African American males in school.

District leaders have the responsibility to ensure that social justice and equity is depicted across all the schools that are under their leadership. Their job is to understand the political and social climate of African American males who do not persist. A strong building leader will devise a mission and vision that is aligned to the district goals but tailored to meet the needs of his or her building. This mission and vision are the goals and objectives of the schools strategic plan to support students academically and behaviorally. Leithwood (1998) states that school leaders who create opportunities for students to learn; instructional strategies that support differentiated instruction, such as centers and guided reading and math make facilitating practices that speak to an individualized culture for struggling students to help them stay interested in school.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study namely the number of respondents that answered the questions. When equating the standard effect size for this study, 176 students were thought to have been enough in order to reject a true null hypothesis; however, given the nature of the research questions investigating elementary, middle, and high school; differentiating the three areas of education. One hundred and seventy six was not enough, and the results would have been much different if the number of respondents in elementary were equal to middle school and high school. There are a number of constructs in the student engagement and student motivation questionnaire that were thought to be significant using a factor analysis among Aborigine students, yet given the number of respondents; a factor analysis was not possible for this population of African American males. Additionally, a path analysis would have helped to ascertain which constructs are direct or indirect effects of interpersonal relationships given their significant inverse relationships. Grade point averages in previous studies were used to discern the academic progress of students yet because elementary students do not receive grades on the same measurement as middle school students, there was no way to enter this into a regression equation.

Conclusion

Researchers have often speculated about the academic success of African American males and their fear of doing well in school (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Majors and Billson, 1992; Kao and Tienda, 1995). These fears are often exacerbated by interpersonal relationships with harassing behavior from peers, which causes some students to disengage from performing well in the classroom. Although this research study did not support the notion that individuals

who are doing well will be victimized by their counterpart, one measure deserves some discussion. Students who are engaged and are motivated are less likely to be involved in disruptive behaviors of others when they are connected to the school and are being successful in their academic goals. Additionally, Father was found to be a significant predictor of student engagement and student motivation of high school African American males. Given these results, more research needs to be investigated concerning the expectations and perceptions of fathers on the academic success of African American males from high school to college. The fact that there is a significant predictor of student engagement and motivation for these students lends itself to the notion that the father is supporting the students' desire to be career and college ready. It can be deducted that for black boys, dad has high expectations for his son just as most, but given the perplexity of the historical era we now face as a culture, education maybe the method for some to get out of the circumstances we find ourselves present. Also, the fact that as student engagement and student motivation are a significant inverse relationship of peer victimization with respect to Merton's Analysis of Deviance, as researchers we find it more challenging to use this information to drive teacher pedagogy. Teachers have the responsibility to give every black boy in their classroom an honest chance early on so that successes can be built upon despite their deficiencies in a particular academic area. Reading material that is noted for keeping the attention of our most challenging male readers and a competition in any subject will drive their desire to be the best.

Appendix A

Parent Consent Form

Dear Parents,

I am a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership department at Bowie State University. I am writing to ask your help with an important study that I am conducting to complete my degree. The academic success of young African American males is of great importance to me. Their success requires an understanding and knowledge of the kinds of school activities they deem interesting and important. Also, it is important to ascertain if there are peer influences that might influence their participation in school related activities.

I am requesting permission for your son to participate in a survey that will explore factors related to success for African American males in elementary, middle and high school. Your son will be asked to complete a survey composed of 44 items directed at how a student feels about participating in school related activities. He will also be asked to complete a 16 item questionnaire that asks about whether he has experienced any bullying by other students while at school. Additionally, he will be asked to complete a 5 item demographic questionnaire concerning grade retention, school grades received, and what relative lives with your son.

In order to protect the confidentiality of your son, only his teacher will know that he has participated in the study. The researcher will have no knowledge or identifying information as to who has participated. Additionally, the survey results will not include individual or school names or other personally identifiable information.

If you wish to allow your son to participate in the study, please complete the information below. If you have any questions you may contact: Institutional Review Board Office, Bowie State University, Center for Business and Graduate Studies, Suite 1312 Bowie State University, Bowie, MD 20715, 301 860-3410, 301 860-3414 Attn: Dr. Cosmas U. Nwokefor, Chair IRB

Child's Name (Print)

I give my son permission to participate in this study that examines the participation of school related activities and any experience of bullying.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Appendix B

Student Motivation and Engagement Scale

Below are a series of statements about your participation in school activities. Read each item and circle the number that describes how you feel about each statement. Please circle one number for each statement that indicates whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree.

Strongly Disagree 5	Somewhat Disagree 4	Neutral 3	Somewhat Agree 2	Strongly Agree 1
---------------------	---------------------	-----------	------------------	------------------

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. If I cannot understand my schoolwork at first, I keep going over it until I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I feel very pleased with myself when I really understand what I am taught at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. When I study, I usually study in places where I can concentrate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I am able to use some of the things I learned at school in other parts of my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Sometimes I do not try hard at assignments so I have an excuse if I do not do well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. When I do not do well at school I am often unsure how to avoid that happening again. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I feel very pleased with myself when I do well at school by working hard. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Each week I am trying less and less | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. If my homework is difficult, I keep working at it trying to figure it out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. When exams and assignments are coming up, I worry a lot. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Often the main reason I work at school is because I do not want people to think I am dumb | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. When I get a good grade, I am often not sure how I am going to get that mark again. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. If I try hard, I believe I can do my schoolwork well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Learning at school is important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I do not really care about school anymore. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. When I get a bad grade I am often unsure how I am going to avoid getting this grade again. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. When I study, I usually organize my study area to help me study the best. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I am often unsure how I can avoid doing poorly at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I worry about failing exams and assignments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Often the main reason I work at school is because I do not want | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

people to think bad things about me.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21. I get it clear in my head what I am going to do when I sit down to study. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. I have given up being involved in things at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. If I do not give up, I believe I can do difficult schoolwork. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. I sometimes do not study very hard before exams so I have an excuse if I do not do well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. I feel very pleased with myself when what I have learned at school gives me a better idea of how something works. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. I feel very pleased with myself when I learn new things at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Before I start an assignment, I plan out how I am going to do it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. When I am taught something that does not make sense, I spend time trying to understand it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. I have pretty my given up being interested in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. I try to plan things out before I start working on my homework or assignments. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Often the main reason I work at school is because I do not want to disappoint my parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. When I study, I usually try to find a place when I can study well. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. If I have enough time, I believe I can do well in my schoolwork. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. What I learn at school will be useful one day. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. I sometimes do things other than study the night before an exam. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. I will keep working at difficult schoolwork until I think I have worked it out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. When I do tests or exams I do not feel very good. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. Often the main reason I work at school is because I do not want my teacher to think less of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. I usually stick to a study timetable or study plan. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. If I work hard enough, I believe I can get on top of my schoolwork. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. It is important to understand what I am taught at school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. I sometimes put assignments and study aside until the last moment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. In terms of school work, I would call myself a worrier. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. When I study, I usually study at times when I can concentrate best. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Appendix C

Peer Relationship Questionnaire

Below is a list of behaviors that some students do to other students. How often during the school year has another student done these things to you? Please circle one number for each statement that indicates whether you never, rarely, sometimes, very often or have always had these experiences. Please circle one

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Very Often 4	Always 5				
1. Punch me.				1	2	3	4	5
2. Tried to get me into trouble with my friends.				1	2	3	4	5
3. Called me names.				1	2	3	4	5
4. Took something of mine without permission.				1	2	3	4	5
5. Kicked me.				1	2	3	4	5
6. Tried to make my friends turn against me.				1	2	3	4	5
7. Made fun of me because of my appearance.				1	2	3	4	5
8. Tried to break something of mine.				1	2	3	4	5
9. Hurt me physically in some way.				1	2	3	4	5
10. Refused to talk to me.				1	2	3	4	5
11. Made fun of me for no reason.				1	2	3	4	5
12. Stole something from me.				1	2	3	4	5
13. Beat me up.				1	2	3	4	5
14. Made other people not talk to me.				1	2	3	4	5
15. Swore or cursed at me.				1	2	3	4	5
16. Damaged some property of mine on purpose.				1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D
Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old are you? _____

2. What grade are you in? _____

3. What is your grade point average (GPA)? _____

For the following questions check yes or no: (√)

4. Have you ever repeated a grade? () yes or () no

5. Who lives with you at your house?

	Yes	No
Mother	()	()
Father	()	()
Stepmother	()	()
Stepfather	()	()
Brother	()	()
Sister	()	()
Aunt	()	()
Uncle	()	()
Grandmother	()	()
Grandfather	()	()
Male cousin	()	()
Female cousin	()	()
Other people	()	()

Table XII

Means and Standard Deviations for School Motivation and Engagement Scale (SMES)

School Motivation and Engagement Scale	N	Mean	SD
1. If I can't understand my schoolwork at first, I keep going over it until I do.	191	3.020	1.281
2. I feel very pleased with myself when I really understand what I'm taught at school.	191	3.549	1.467
3. When I study, I usually study in places where I can concentrate.	191	3.199	1.458
4. I am able to use some of the things I learn at school in other parts of my life.	191	3.115	1.409
5. Sometimes, I don't try hard at assignments so I have an excuse if I don't do so well.	191	2.764	1.369
6. When I don't do so well at school I'm often unsure how to avoid that from happening again.	190	2.794	1.303
7. I feel very pleased with myself when I do well at school by working hard.	191	3.544	1.608
8. Each week I'm trying less and less.	191	2.586	1.515
9. If my homework is difficult, I keep working at it trying to figure it out.	190	2.968	1.280
10. When exams and assignments are coming up, I worry a lot	190	2.952	1.404
11. Often the main reason I work at school is because I don't want people to think I'm dumb.	191	2.638	1.451
12. When I get a good mark, I'm often not sure how I'm going to get that mark again.	191	2.664	1.294
13. If I try hard, I believe I can do my homework well.	191	3.460	1.585
14. Learning at school is important.	191	3.413	1.629
15. I don't really care about school anymore.	191	2.764	1.519
16. When I get a bad mark I'm often unsure how I'm going to avoid that mark again.	190	2.936	1.335
17. When I study, I usually organize my study area to help me study best.	191	2.717	1.350
18. I'm often unsure how I can avoid doing poorly at school.	191	2.680	1.292
19. I worry about failing exams and assignments.	190	3.305	1.403
20. Often the main reason I work at school is because I don't want people to think bad things about me.	191	2.549	1.424
21. I get it clear in my head what I'm going to do when I sit down to study.	191	2.937	1.292
22. I've pretty much given up being involved in things at school.	191	2.853	1.486
23. If I don't give up, I believe I can do difficult schoolwork.	190	3.100	1.386

Table XII. Continued

Means and Standard Deviations for School Motivation and Engagement Scale (SMES)

	N	Mean	SD
24. I sometimes don't study very hard before exams so I have an excuse if I don't do so well	191	2.821	1.428
25. I feel very pleased with myself when what I learn at school gives me a better idea of how Something works.	191	3.230	1.341
26. I feel very pleased with myself when I learn new things at school.	190	3.231	1.443
27. Before I start an assignment, I plan out how I am going to do it.	189	3.037	1.208
28. When I'm taught something and it does not make sense, I spend time trying to understand it.	189	2.957	1.188
29. I've pretty much given up being interested in school.	190	2.600	1.398
30. I try to plan things out before I start working on my homework assignments	190	2.821	1.199
31. Often the main reason I work at school is because I don't want to disappoint my parents.	191	3.272	1.356
32. When I study, I usually try to find a place where I can study well.	191	2.947	1.259
33. If I have enough time, I believe I can do well in my schoolwork.	191	3.267	1.416
34. What I learn at school will be useful one day.	191	3.136	1.487
35. I sometimes do things other than study the night before an exam so I have an excuse if I don't do so well.	191	3.109	1.307
36. I'll keep working at difficult schoolwork until I think I've worked it out.	191	3.000	1.243
37. When I do tests or exams I don't feel very good.	191	3.068	1.334
38. Often the main reason I work at school is because I don't want my teacher to think less of me	191	2.705	1.409
39. I usually stick to a study timetable or study plan.	191	2.575	1.311
40. If I work hard enough, I believe I can get on top of my schoolwork.	190	3.231	1.490
41. It's important to understand what I'm taught at school.	191	3.115	1.485
42. I sometimes put assignments and study off until the last moment so I have an excuse if I don't do so well.	191	3.219	1.287
43. I'd call myself a worrier.	191	2.994	1.275
44. When I study, I usually study at times when I can concentrate best.	191	2.947	1.371

Table XII Continued

Means and Standard Deviation for the Multidimensional Peer Victimization Scale (MPVS)

Multidimensional Peer Victimization Scale (MPVS)	N	Mean	SD
1. Punch Me	191	1.743	.9471
2. Tried to get me into trouble with my friends.	190	2.031	1.083
3. Called me names	191	2.460	1.255
4. Took something of mine without my permission.	190	2.100	1.152
5. Kicked me.	191	1.565	.9865
6. Tried to make my friends turn against me.	191	1.842	1.145
7. Made fun of me because of my appearance.	191	1.926	1.185
8. Tried to break something of mine.	190	1.542	.9060
9. Hurt me physically in some way.	191	1.534	.9047
10. Refused to talk to me.	191	1.973	1.180
11. Made fun of me for no reason.	191	2.073	1.233
12. Stole something from me.	191	1.780	1.106
13. Beat me up.	191	1.308	.7972
14. Made other people not talk to me.	191	1.675	1.065
15. Swore at me/cursed at me.	191	2.659	1.408
16. Deliberately damaged some property of mine.	191	1.602	1.004

Table XIII.

Means and Standard Deviations for Grade Point Average (GPA), Repeated a Grade and Age for Elementary, Middle and High School.

Elementary School Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grade Point Average (GPA)	1.480	1.388
Repeated a Grade (Grade)	1.413	.5012
How old are you (Age)	4.933	3.542
What is your grade	3.000	0.000
Middle School Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.431	.7036
Repeated a Grade (Grade)	1.679	.4696
How old are you (Age)	2.333	.9351
What is your grade	1.000	.0000
High School Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.500	.7796
Repeated a Grade (Grade)	1.710	.4561
How old are you (Age)	5.638	.6547
What is your grade	2.000	.0000

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