

Eastern Illinois University
The Keep

Masters Theses

Student Theses & Publications

1-1-2004

Effects Of Bullying On Student Attendance

Michelle Clark

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Clark, Michelle, "Effects Of Bullying On Student Attendance" (2004). *Masters Theses*. 1239.
<http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/1239>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

*******US Copyright Notice*******

No further reproduction or distribution of this copy is permitted by electronic transmission or any other means.

The user should review the copyright notice on the following scanned image(s) contained in the original work from which this electronic copy was made.

Section 108: United States Copyright Law

The copyright law of the United States [Title 17, United States Code] governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the reproduction is not to be used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research. If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that use may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law. No further reproduction and distribution of this copy is permitted by transmission or any other means.

THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates (who have written formal theses)

SUBJECT: Permission to Reproduce Theses

The University Library is receiving a number of request from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow these to be copied.

PLEASE SIGN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

Michelle Clark

11-19-04

Author's Signature

Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University **NOT** allow my thesis to be reproduced because:

Author's Signature

Date

This form must be submitted in duplicate.

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE

BY

MICHELLE CLARK

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS
2004

I HERBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS
BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

12/1/04
DATE

12/1/04
DATE

12/1/04
DATE

12-1-04
DATE

[Signature]
COMMITTEE MEMBER

[Signature]
COMMITTEE MEMBER

[Signature]
THESIS DIRECTOR

[Signature]
DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL HEAD

Running head: Bullying

The Effect of Bullying on Student Attendance

Michelle Clark

Eastern Illinois University

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been completed because of the endless support and guidance of many people. With a great amount of support, guidance, patience and the contribution of knowledge from these people, I have been able to successfully conduct this study and contribute the knowledge that I have acquired to the rest of the education profession. I greatly appreciate everything these people have done to help me achieve this personal and professional goal.

My appreciation goes to my fellow co-workers and administrators at Crestwood School. Thank you for being so encouraging and supportive during my research process. I consider you not just my co-workers but also my friends. Thank you.

I extend my most sincere appreciation to Dr. Marilyn Lisowski, for always believing in my ability to persevere. Her explanatory teaching style made the research process enjoyable and opened my eyes to many new possibilities. With her support I was confident I could complete my thesis. Thank you.

I want to thank Dr. Gail Lockart for being my advisor and helping me successfully complete my master's degree. I would not be finishing today if it weren't for her assisting me in getting my plan of study in order and approved. Dr. Lockart has so much to offer her students, having her, as an instructor was valuable. Thank you.

I also want to extend my gratitude to the many educators that I have been given the opportunity to work with at Eastern Illinois University. My graduate experience has been nothing but rewarding.

Thank you to Dr. Judy Barbour for being my thesis advisor and for all her help and support. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Fewell for being on my thesis committee.

Special appreciation goes to my family and loved ones for being patient with me during my years in graduate school. It would have never been possible without your help. You have been very supportive, loving, and understanding, and are truly appreciated.

Abstract

School should be a safe place away from home. If the basic needs of students are not met due to the actions of others, then they are being cheated out of the education they deserve. A correlational study was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between student attendance patterns and bullying behaviors. The subjects of the study were students (N=159) in grades kindergarten, third grade, and sixth grade. All students were given an attitudinal survey to determine which students felt they were being bullied. This instrument was administered during the final quarter of the school year. Students completed the survey during homeroom period of the school day. The data obtained from the Clark Bullying Survey was then cross-referenced with individual student attendance records to determine if children who feel they are bullied have a higher rate of absenteeism. It is suggested that a grant be written to fully finance an anti-bullying program to be implemented into every classroom to help make students aware of the repercussions of bullying.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
INTRODUCTION	
Importance of Study.....	1
Statement of Problem.....	1
Hypothesis.....	1
Definition of Terms.....	1
Assumptions.....	2
Delimitations.....	3
Limitations.....	4
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
Bullying.....	4
Student Attendance.....	8
Bullying and Student Attendance.....	11
Summary of Literature Review.....	12
RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES	
Overall Design.....	13
Population.....	13
Instrumentation.....	14
Clark Bullying Survey.....	15
Data Analysis.....	16

STUDY FINDINGS

Quantitative Analysis

Crestwood School Attendance Records.....	17
Clark Bullying Survey.....	17
Average Number of Days Absent.....	18

HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis.....	19
-----------------	----

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Summary.....	20
Major Conclusions.....	20
Recommendations for Further Research.....	20
Recommendations for Further Practice.....	21

REFERENCES.....	23
-----------------	----

APPENDICES

A. CLARK BULLYING SURVEY.....	25
B. SAMPLE OF SURVEY ANSWER SHEET.....	26
C. SAMPLE OF CRESTWOOD SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE RECORDS.....	27
D. AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT TABLE.....	28
E. GRAPH OF AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT.....	29
F. PERMISSION FORM.....	30

LIST OF TABLES

#	Table	Page
1.	Appendix D- Average Number of Days Absent Table.....	27
2.	Appendix E- Graph of Average Number of Days Absent.....	28

Introduction

Importance of the study

In the morning when the alarm clock rings, some students are hesitant to get out of bed. This is not because they are still tired and want to sleep in, but because they do not feel safe when entering their schoolroom doors. Instead of encountering a time of friendship, discovery, and learning, these children are faced with physical and emotional distress. During class these students are unable to focus on class work because they are so consumed by their fears of what might occur during passing period or recess.

School should be a safe place away from home. When students are being bullied at school their sense of security is threatened. In order for learning to occur, the basic needs of a student must be met, including safety. If the basic needs of students are not met due to the actions of others, then they are being cheated out of the education they deserve. Therefore, further study looking at the effects of bullying and the repercussions students face is needed.

Statement of the problem

Bullying is a common problem in public schools everywhere. Do students who are bullied have higher rates of absenteeism?

Hypothesis

There is an observable difference in attendance patterns of bullied and non-bullied students. Therefore student attendance is related to feelings of being bullied.

Definition of terms

- Absenteeism- refers to the percent or number of days a student does not attend school.

- Abuse- refers to the verbal and physical acts of harassment.
- Assistant Bullies- refers to two or more students who are bullying a peer at the same time.
- Attendance Rate- refers to the number of days a student is physically present at school.
- Bullying- refers to the daily physical or emotional threat by students seeking to dominate over other peers.
- Clark Bullying Survey- refers to an instrument that attempts to determine whether a student is a victim of bullying.
- Co-educational Systems- refers to a school system that educates both genders.
- Distress- refers to the emotional or physical discomfort persons may encounter when they are victims of bullying.
- Homeroom Teacher- refers to the teacher of the 1st period class.
- Open-Forum- refers to a discussion or debate that is open to public participation.
- Protocol- refers to the adhering to a given set of test administrating rules.
- Reinforcer Bully- refers to a bystander who encourages a bullying situation.
- Self-Esteem- refers to the emotional perception a student has of him/herself.
- Truancy- refers to the act of missing school without permission.

Assumptions

The following assumptions will underlie this study:

1. Bullying is a problem in most school districts and is worthy of study.
2. The Clark Bullying survey is a reliable and valid instrument, used to determine which students are experiencing feelings of being bullied.

3. Students completed the survey to the best of their ability.
4. A trained teacher administered the survey conscientiously and according to protocol.
5. The survey was given during the final quarter of the school year.
6. All kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students completed the survey.
7. All surveys are anonymous and confidential.
8. Participants completed the survey in their homeroom class.
9. Each participant's number of school days missed was recorded at the top of his or her answer document.
10. All school records used within the study were current and valid.

Delimitations

The following delimitations underlie this study:

1. The study was limited to students in kindergarten, third, and sixth grade at Crestwood School.
2. The student attendance data was limited to one school year.
3. Time limit for the testing was limited to the tests' given time frame.
4. Data obtained on bullying was limited to student responses to the Clark Bullying Survey.
5. Administrators of the testing were limited to kindergarten, third, and sixth grade homeroom teachers.
6. The study was limited to one administration of the Clark Bullying Survey.
7. The administration of the Clark Bullying Survey was limited to the final quarter of the school year.

8. The study was limited to the effects of bullying on student attendance.
9. The study was limited to three experimental groups.
10. The study was limited to not only physical acts of bullying but also emotional.
11. Indications of bullying were limited to students who were victims of at least five of the ten bullying scenarios on the Clark Bullying Survey.

Limitations

The following limitations of this study include:

1. The use of kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students, thereby preventing generalizability to secondary grade levels, such as ninth and tenth.
2. The use of students from the Midwest limits the generalizability to other geographical areas such as the Northeast.
3. The focus of the study is on attendance, thereby preventing the generalizability to self-esteem.
4. The use of a survey limits the generalizability to other means of gathering data, such as observation.

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews literature related to bullying and its effect on student attendance. The information is divided into three basic areas: bullying, student attendance, and the effects of bullying on student attendance.

Bullying

Nabuzoka (2003) conducted a comparative study to compare bullying behaviors of English and Zambian students. English elementary students (N=522) and Zambian elementary students (N=248) completed a forty-item checklist that asked if behaviors

occurred and how often they occurred in a one-week period. Results indicated that more English children reported bullying incidents than did Zambian students, as did more males than females.

Bulach, Fulbright and Williams (2002) completed a study that looked at the gender differences in bullying behavior and the types of bullying that students perform. The participants in the study consisted of sixth through eighth grade students (N=745) in an urban middle school. A 59-item survey was given to all participants. As a result of the study males were found to be both verbally and physically abused more often than females. Other findings indicated that females had more positive relationships with their teachers and peers than did the male participants.

A qualitative study was conducted by Casey-Cannon, Hayward and Gowen (2001) to look at the psychological consequences of peer victimization among adolescent girls in middle school. In a Northern California public middle school, girls (N=26) were randomly selected to participate in the study. Due to various reasons, only a part of the originally selected girls (N=20) participated. The study was continued from a larger study done one year earlier. The previous study surveyed seventh-grade female students (N=157) from the same school system. The participants (N=20) were involved in a qualitative interview dealing with victimization experiences. The study found that it is common for girls to encounter events of relational and overt victimization. The study also found that the victims usually remain silent about the details and their associated feelings of the events.

A qualitative study was done by Khosropour and Walsh (2001) to determine if the Expect Respect curriculum had an effect on the conceptualization of bullying. In Austin,

Texas elementary schools (N=4) fifth grade students (N=40) participated in the study. Two of the schools incorporated the Expect Respect curriculum into classrooms while the remaining two schools did not. The study found a wider variety of interpretations on bullying than expected. Students that were included in the Expect Respect curriculum became better informed of the instances of bullying and were more likely to think bullying could be prevented.

Lipson (2001) implemented a study to investigate the experiences of sexual harassment in middle school students. Participants were eighth through eleventh grade public school students (N=2064) from various national locations. The subjects were given self-administered questionnaires during English classes or were surveyed online. Findings indicated that there was significant fear of being hurt or bullied at school and that sexual harassment was currently widespread. Results also showed that the students were experiencing harassment through speech as well as actions and fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that they had personally harassed fellow students.

A study to determine the effect gender has on young adolescent teasing and bullying behaviors was conducted by Gropper and Froschl (1999). K-3 public school children (N=3) in each classroom (N=25) participated in the study. The schools were located in both urban and suburban communities and consisted of children that were racially, ethnically, and economically diverse. Observations and individual interviews were conducted. Gender and nature of behavior by the initiator and recipient were observed along with their responses to the presence of teachers and adults. The study found from observations that boys were three times more likely to be initiators. Both genders were equally likely to be recipients of bullying. Physical behaviors were more

likely to be used over verbal behavior for both initiating genders. In response to a male initiator, females were more likely to respond verbally where males responded physically. During the observation adults were always present but the study found that there was consistently little intervention taken. During the interviews the researchers found that the participants expressed a desire for adult intervention when bullying behavior took place.

A comparison study by Myron-Wilson (1999) investigated the commonalities in parenting styles and bullying behaviors. Students (N=196) and parents (N=39) from schools (N=4) participated in the study. Participants were asked to evaluate each classmate by selecting the role their peers (N=6) played in each given behaviors (N=20). Bully, reinforcer, assistant, defender, outsider and victim were the six roles the participants had to choose from. Participants were also given a questionnaire that assessed their interpretation of their parents' parenting style. The parents were also surveyed on the amount of warmth and restrictiveness they used in their homes. The results indicated that 27 students were thought of as bullies, 15 reinforcers, 12 assistants, 86 defenders and 35 victims. Reinforcer bullies scored low on parental warmth, assistant bullies scored high on parental neglect and victims and reinforcer bullies scored high on having punitive parents. The parents were found to perceive themselves as significantly warmer than their children did. The parents of outsiders thought of themselves as being more nurturing while parents of victims saw themselves as being more restrictive.

A study was conducted by Leckie (1998), which examined the repercussions of indirect bullying behaviors in females and its correlation to peer relationships. Australian girls (N=987) in sixth grade to tenth grade from Australian independent and Catholic

schools (N=7) were used in Leckie's study. Five of the schools were all girl populations with the remaining two being co-educational systems. The participants were administered surveys consisting of both self-reported and peer nominated instruments. The results indicated that the females demonstrated a full understanding of the definition of bullying. The study also found that the females were more likely to participate in psychological and occasional verbal bullying, but never physical. The final result of the study showed that as females age their view of indirect bullying behaviors changed.

A study to investigate personal student victimization as a result of bullying was completed by Nolin and Others (1995). Participants were sixth through twelfth grade students (N=6,504). Data were gathered by means of the 1993 National Household Education Surveys (NHES). The results indicated that while 56 percent of the respondents had witnessed occurrences of bullying, violence or crime, 71 percent were aware of such happenings being perpetrated in their schools. Of the respondents, 25 percent were concerned about becoming victims while 12 percent reported that they already had been victimized. Senior high school students were less likely to worry about becoming victims than the younger students. Children who attended private schools were less likely to be victimized. Females reported fewer victimizations than did males.

Student Attendance

A study to determine the effect of a six-month dropout prevention program was completed by Munoz (2002). The students from an alternative program offered by a large nontraditional urban school district participated in the study. Two groups were randomly selected to participate. The initial step was to evaluate the overall school attendance before the program was incorporated. The researcher withdrew a random

sampling from both the treatment and comparison groups to evaluate based on their changes in attendance percent rates. The groups then were used to compare the students based on those who did and did not dropout. The data were evaluated by a cost-effective analysis. The results were supportive of the theory that dropout prevention intervention would help decrease the dropout rate.

Munoz (2001) studied the effect of a truancy project developed by the Truancy Court Division in one Kentucky County. The project focused on the processes used when high-risk students were truant. Schools that had not met the targeted district attendance goals were required to participate in the project. All elementary students (N=111) were considered, but only the students (N=45) that had been absent 15-25 days, and had parents that agreed to discuss their family issues in an open forum, were actually participants in the study. Variations of program activities were used to try to reach each student's needs. Data were collected three different times throughout the study based on the students' characteristics and attendance. Teachers completed surveys based on program issues and parents on program satisfaction. The findings indicated that the program was running as planned, parents and teachers were satisfied with the program, and the number of student absences was decreasing.

A study to determine the effectiveness of a Positive Outreach Program (POP) was completed by Munoz (2001). The school principals referred participants for the study. Mainly black male students (N>180) that were poor participated in the study. Evaluations were done based on personal characteristics, non-academic areas, and behavior changes after following the completion of POP. Teachers also filled out a checklist based on each student's behavior. Results showed that the participating

student's attendance rate improved and the behavior ratings completed by their teachers decreased dramatically.

A comparative study by Strickland (1998) examined the relationship between student attendance and grade point average (GPA) among students in grade 11. Students (N=32) were randomly selected from a Chicago public school during two consecutive school years. Student attendance records and GPAs were evaluated at the beginning of the first school year and at the conclusion of the following year. After being analyzed, the data concluded that attendance had a positive influence on student GPA.

A study to determine the effects of attendance and truancy on students' test taking performance and the effects of truancy on children and teachers was completed by Malcolm and others (1996). Over nine months, data were collected through interviews with head teachers of primary schools (N=7) and secondary schools (N=7), primary teachers (N=14) and secondary teachers (N=28). Questionnaires were given to primary students (N=299) and secondary students (N=76). Researchers conducted follow-up interviews with secondary students (N=8) and phone interviews with parents (N=18). It was concluded that absences were more likely to be "explained" than "unexplained". All absences had an effect on student achievement. Students in secondary schools reported truancy because of boredom and a desire to be earning money through employment.

A study by the Ohio State Department of Education (1992) investigated the attendance patterns of three different Kindergarten schedules: half day, alternate day and full day and how the preschool attendance correlated to further school performance. This was a three-part study. The first section concerned a survey questioning beliefs and attitudes about kindergarten and preschool given to teachers, administrators, and parents

throughout the state of Ohio, which was started in May 1986. In the summer of 1986 section two of the study analyzed the cumulative records of elementary school students (N=8290). The final section of the study was a prospective longitudinal study of two groups of elementary school children (N=6000). Results indicated that children who attended preschool had a higher rate of success in later school achievement.

A study by Goodwin (1989) investigated the effects of full day kindergarten (FDK) versus half-day kindergarten (HDK) on student attendance and achievement. Data were gathered using citywide test scores and the two groups were compared according to scores and percentile levels. Data used were from the 1987-1988 school year. Groups consisted of FDK students (N=4596) and HDK students (N=9146). Results indicated that FDK students scored higher in the academic areas of reading and mathematics.

Englander (1986) implemented a study to determine the costs of truancy for a school system. The expenses were measured in terms of self-esteem of the children. The Indiana Student Scale, which measures self-esteem, was administered to high school students who were truant (N=52) and students who were not truant (N=54). Findings indicated that students who were truant had lower levels of self-esteem than did the students that were not truant.

Effects of Bullying on Student Attendance

Smith and Madsen (1996) conducted a two-part study to show the extent and severity of bullying. In the first part of the study a questionnaire was given to all students in the Sheffield, England schools (N=24). The results suggested that bullying is a problem that should be taken seriously and can affect future adult relationships. The second part of the study used an experimental group consisting of the students in the

Sheffield, England schools (N=23). Each school had intervention methods incorporated into their school curriculum. The study found that there was a dramatic reduction in the amount of bullying; teachers concluded that there was an increase in student attendance and the study was also supportive of other areas of the students' lives.

Summary of the Literature Review

The studies in the first section compared the types of bullying behavior, effects of direct and indirect bullying, and the psychological repercussions of bullying on both male and females. Most studies found that females were less likely to report bullying incidents, had more positive relationships with teachers and peers, and were equally likely to be victims of bullying, as were males. The studies found males were more likely to be initiators of bullying, and to respond physically to bullying incidents where females were more likely to respond verbally.

The studies in the second section focused on student attendance. Three of the researchers set out to find the effectiveness of truancy programs on student attendance. All the results were supportive of the theory that dropout prevention intervention would help decrease the drop out rate. Other studies examined the relationship between student attendance and academic achievement. The results indicated that student attendance was directly related to academic success. A final study determined the expense of truancy measured in terms of self-esteem of the children. The results found that students who were truant had lower levels of self-esteem than did the students who were not truant.

Due to the extremely limited amount of research involving the relationship between bullying and student attendance, there was no way of drawing a clear conclusion whether or not bullying had a negative effect on student attendance. However, one

research report did indicate that there was a dramatic reduction in the amount of bullying after intervention methods for bullying were introduced into the school curriculum. Teachers also concluded that there was an increase in student attendance.

Research Design and Procedures

Procedures involved in this study are reviewed in this chapter, which is organized in three sections. The sections are overall design, population, and instrumentation.

Overall Design

The research was designed according to concepts derived from the review of the literature. A quantitative assessment was conducted to determine if there is a relationship between student attendance patterns and bullying behaviors. The subjects of the study were students (N=132) in grades kindergarten, third grade, and sixth grade. All students were given an attitudinal survey to determine which students feel they are being bullied. This instrument was administered during the final quarter of the school year. Students completed the survey during homeroom period of the school day. The data obtained from the Clark Bullying Survey was then cross-referenced with individual student attendance records to determine if children who feel they are bullied have a higher rate of absenteeism.

Population

The population of this study consisted of students in a small rural Paris school district located in east central Illinois with a diverse socioeconomic enrollment. Students (N=132) in kindergarten, third grade, and sixth grade, were given an attitudinal survey to assess whether or not the student felt they had been bullied. All participants (N=132) returned a signed permission form (Appendix F) to their homeroom teacher before taking

the survey. This instrument was administered during the final quarter of the school year. The survey was completed during homeroom period. This study was conducted to determine if there is a relationship between student attendance patterns and bullying behaviors.

Instrumentation

Data on all students (N=132) of kindergarten, third, and sixth grades at Crestwood Elementary School were obtained from the Clark Bullying Survey and the school's individual students' attendance record. During the fourth quarter of the school year, a meeting was held with all homeroom teachers that would be administering the Clark Bullying Survey. Procedures for administering the survey were explained to all teachers involved. Administrators read the survey aloud to all the kindergarten participants, whereas the third and sixth grade participants read the survey on their own.

The Clark Bullying Survey was designed based on the problems of bullying. Questions focused on the various types of bullying behaviors. By granting anonymity and/or confidentiality, honest responses were encouraged. The yes-no questions on the Clark Bullying Survey were used to pinpoint the students who felt they were being bullied. An effort was made to keep the survey simple, brief, and easy to answer since it would be given to kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students. A pilot test was administered to fifth grade students (N=16) to check for reliability and validity of the survey. Before starting the Clark Bullying Survey administrators were given a number to record on each participant's answer document. The number recorded represented the number of school days missed to date, for the 2003-2004 school year. The attendance data were obtained from the school records. The Clark Bullying Survey and the school

attendance records were used to determine if victims of bullying have a higher rate of absenteeism. Following are the details of the Clark Bullying Survey. Please see Appendix A and B for the actual survey and answer sheet.

An important part of utilizing any data-gathering instrument is an examination of the reliability and validity of those instruments. The precautions taken to ensure reliability and validity were as follows: questions were created based on an extensive review of the literature in the areas of bullying and student attendance, pilot tests were conducted to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of each item, the survey was conducted in a manner to ensure confidentiality, and care was taken to make the survey short and easy to complete. It was hoped that these measures would provide meaningful results.

Clark Bullying Survey

The Clark Bullying survey consisted of ten questions. All ten questions required a yes or no response. The survey items addressed the following issues: (a) physical bullying behaviors; (b) emotional bullying behaviors; (c) repercussions of bullying behaviors.

The three major areas pertaining to the students attitudes' toward bullying are listed below, and the individual survey items addressing those areas are listed under each:

(a) Physical bullying behaviors

1. Has another student ever pushed you around or hit you at school?
2. Do students ever take your belongings and not return them when you ask them to?

(b) Emotional bullying behaviors

3. Do you feel mistreated at school by other students?
4. Has a student or group of students ever teased you about your looks, height, weight, or grades?
5. Do you feel like students pick on you for no reason?
6. Have you ever had your feelings hurt by another student due to something they said or did to you?
7. Have you ever had another student make fun of you just to make others laugh?

(c) Repercussions of bullying behaviors

8. Have you ever missed school to avoid a student or group of students?
9. Do you feel as if certain students or groups of students are bullying you at school?
10. Have you ever felt scared to come to school because of a student or a group of students?

Data Analysis

The data collected by the two instruments used in this study were analyzed and compared. The Crestwood School attendance records were used to determine the total number of school days missed by each student in kindergarten, third, and sixth grades. Students were given an answer sheet to use when answering the questions from the Clark Bullying Survey. Prior to the survey, teachers documented the number of days absent on each student's answer sheet. Names were not used on the answer sheet to insure confidentiality. The Clark Bullying Survey was given to determine which students felt they were being bullied. Any student who answered yes to five or more of the questions,

or answered yes to number nine on the survey were categorized as a bullied student. All surveys were then sorted into groups titled bullied and non-bullied students. The average number of days missed for each group at each grade level was then calculated. The averages were then compared to determine if students that felt bullied missed more school days than students that did not feel bullied.

Study Findings

The findings of this study are recorded in this chapter. This chapter is divided into two sections: quantitative analysis and hypothesis.

Quantitative Analysis

Crestwood School Attendance Records

The Crestwood School attendance records were used to determine the total number of school days missed by each participant in the study. Students that had not attended Crestwood School all year long were omitted from the study. Students that had missed five or more consecutive days of school due to illness were also omitted from the study. Before administering the Clark Bullying Survey, teachers recorded the total number of days missed on each student's answer sheet. A sample of Crestwood School's attendance records is shown in Appendix C.

Clark Bullying Survey

This section of the paper will examine the quantitative responses of the student participants of this study. Each student completed the Clark Bullying Survey. The survey questions pertained to the various types of bullying situations that they may have encountered at school and school attendance. The Clark Bullying Survey that the participants were to complete is shown in Appendix A.

Students were each given an individual answer sheet with only their current number of days missed for that school year recorded at the top. All surveys were anonymous. Students were asked to read and answer "yes" or "no" to the ten questions on the survey. Any student who answered yes to five or more of the questions, or answered yes to question nine "Do you feel as if certain students or groups of students are bullying you at school?" was categorized as being bullied. All others students were categorized as not being bullied. Twenty-six kindergarten students felt they were bullied, where only 21 students did not. There were 20 students in the third grade that felt bullied and 21 students who did not. In the sixth grade 15 students reported feeling bullied and 29 students reported not feeling bullied. A sample answer sheet can be found in Appendix B.

Average Number of Days Absent

Table 1 (see Appendix D) reports the average number of days missed by the students that reported feeling bullied and those that did not feel bullied. The table is broken down by grade level: kindergarten, 3rd grade and 6th grade. Taking the total number of days missed in each group and dividing it by the number of students in the group found the average number of days missed by each group. Kindergarten students who felt they were bullied were absent an average of 8.23 days. Kindergarten students that did not feel bullied were absent an average of 5.88 days. Third grade students who felt they were bullied were absent an average of 7.63 days, where as students who did not feel bullied missed 6.19 days on average. On average 7.83 days were missed by students who reported feeling bullied in the Sixth grade, but only an average of 6.29 days were missed by the students who did not feel bullied. The tables in Appendix E show a visual

comparison of the average number of days missed by bullied and non-bullied students. At all three grade levels, students who reported feeling bullied had a higher rate of absenteeism than those who did not feel bullied.

Hypothesis

Data resulting from the analysis of the study were employed in the acceptance or the rejection of the hypothesis. There was an observable difference in the average number of days absent between the bullied group and the non-bullied group.

The Crestwood School attendance records were used to determine the total number of days missed for each student in kindergarten, third, and sixth grade. The data collected from these records were recorded on each participant's answer sheet prior to taking the Clark Bullying Survey. The Clark Bullying Survey was used to identify the students who felt that they were victims of bullying behaviors. Students answered "yes" or "no" to a series of ten questions. Students were then grouped into two groups, bullied or non-bullied, based on their responses to the survey. The average number of days absent was then calculated by dividing the total number of days missed by the number of participants in each group. The average was found for each group at all three grade levels.

When the data from these instruments were compared, noticeable differences were found in the average number of days absent for each group. Students who reported feeling bullied, at all three grade levels, had higher averages of absenteeism than those students who did not feel bullied. The hypothesis is therefore accepted and recommendations for further research are given later to validate the findings of this study.

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

In this chapter a summary of this study is provided and conclusions are drawn.

Recommendations for further study and practices are then made.

Summary

This study was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between student attendance patterns and bullying behaviors. The findings indicate that a relationship did exist.

Major Conclusions

The findings of this study allow the following conclusions to be drawn:

1. Students who feel bullied miss more days of school than those students who do not feel bullied.
2. Bullying has a negative effect on student attendance.

Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for future research are suggested:

1. A statistical analysis should be conducted to examine the relationship between bullying and student self esteem.
2. A quantitative assessment should be conducted to examine the relationship between attendance and academic success.
3. A survey of high school students should be conducted to determine the percentage of students who have been in a bullying situation.
4. A survey should be done to determine what percentage of elementary teachers feel there is a bullying problem in their classrooms.

5. A longitudinal study should be conducted over a 5-year period to determine the long-term effects of bullying on attendance.
6. A comparison study should be conducted to compare the number of bullying cases in urban and rural school districts.
7. It is suggested that further research be conducted concerning the effects of parental attitudes on bullying behaviors.
8. It is suggested that further research be conducted concerning the effects of community involvement on bullying behaviors.
9. A causal comparison study should be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs on bullying behaviors of students from rural areas versus urban areas.
10. A survey of kindergarten, third, and sixth grade students should be conducted to determine if anti-bullying programs have a positive effect on student attendance.
11. A status survey should be conducted to see if there have been increases in the number of reported bullying cases over the past two decades.
12. The observed differences revealed in this study should be assessed for statistical significance using a t-test.

Recommendations for future practice

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further practice are suggested:

1. It is suggested that a grant be written to fully finance an anti-bullying program to be implemented into every classroom to help make students aware of the repercussions of bullying.

2. It is suggested that the district require substitute teachers to attend a training session on bullying prior to working in the classroom.
3. It is suggested that the district hire an additional counselor whose primary responsibility is to counsel students who are bullies or victims of bullying.
4. It is suggested that the district provide release time on a monthly basis for teachers of the same grade level to discuss bullying problems they have observed during school.
5. It is suggested that an in-service day be devoted to appropriate training before an anti-bullying program is implemented into the school.
6. It is suggested that the Parent Teacher Organization conduct an informative meeting for interested parents, which focuses on bullying.
7. It is suggested that the district provide stipends of \$50 per session to teachers attending additional workshop training on bullying.
8. It is suggested that the counseling department offer a mentoring program for students that have been identified as a bully or a victim of bullying.
9. It is suggested that all homeroom teachers refer students who have missed ten or more days within the first two quarters of the school year to the counseling department for evaluation.
10. It is suggested that the district provide release time on a quarterly basis for teachers to do observations of other teachers using anti-bullying programs both in district and out of district.

REFERENCES

- Bulach, C. R., Fulbright J. P. & Williams, R. (2002). *Bullying behavior at the middle school level: Are there gender differences?* (Eric Reproduction Service ED 465147).
- Casey-Cannon, S., Hayward, C. & Gowen, K. (2001). Middle-School girls' reports of peer victimization: Concerns, consequences, and implications. *Professional School Counseling*, 5(2), 138-147.
- Englander, M. E. (1986). *Truancy/Self-Esteem*. (Eric Reproduction Service ED269666).
- Goodwin, J. (1989). *An analysis of attendance and achievement for full-day and half-day kindergarten, 1987-1988. Report No. 8911*. (Eric Reproduction Service ED308939).
- Gropper, N. & Froschl, M. (1999). *The role of gender in young children's teasing and bullying behavior*. (Eric Reproduction Service ED431162).
- Khosropour, S. C. & Walsh, J. (2001). *The effectiveness of a violence prevention program: Did it influence how children conceptualize bullying?* (Eric Reproduction Service ED453475).
- Leckie, B. (1998). *Girls, bullying behaviors and peer relationships: The double edged sword of exclusion and rejection*. (Eric Reproduction Service ED460450).
- Lipson, J. E. (2001). *Hostile hallways: Bullying, teasing, and sexual harassment in school*. (Eric Reproduction Service ED 454132).
- Malcolm, H. & Others (1996). *Understanding truancy: Links between attendance, truancy and performance*. (Eric Reproduction Service ED393184).
- Munoz, M. A. (2002). *Facing the challenges of at-risk students in urban school districts:*

- The impact of an attendance and dropout prevention program in a non-traditional school.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED463364).
- Munoz, M. A. (2001). *Supporting at-risk elementary students: The impact of the positive outreach program.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED457258).
- Munoz, M. A. (2001). *Whatever it takes: The impact of a truancy program on attendance.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED457259).
- Myron-Wilson, R. (1999). *Parental style: And how it may influence a child's role in bullying.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED429731).
- Nabuzoka, D. (2003). Experiences of bullying-related behaviors by English and Zambian pupils: A comparative study. *Educational Research*, 45(1), 95-109.
- Nolin, M. J. & Others. (1995). *Student victimization at school. Statistics in brief.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED388439).
- Ohio State Dept. of Ed. (1992). *The effects of preschool attendance and kindergarten schedule: Kindergarten through grade four. A longitudinal research study.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED400038).
- Smith, P. K. & Madsen, K. C. (1996). *Action against bullying.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED400969).
- Strickland, V. P. (1998). *Attendance and grade point average: A study.* (Eric Reproduction Service ED423224).

Appendix A

Clark Bullying Survey

Clark Survey

The purpose of this survey is to look at student attitudes.

1. Has a student or group of students ever teased you about your looks, height, weight, or grades?
2. Do you feel like students pick on you for no reason?
3. Have you ever had your feeling hurt by another student due to something they said or did to you?
4. Has another student ever pushed you around or hit you at school?
5. Have you ever had another student make fun of you just to make others laugh?
6. Do you feel mistreated at school by other students?
7. Have you ever missed school to avoid a student or group of students?
8. Do students ever take your belongings and not return them when you ask them to?
9. Do you feel as if certain students or groups of students are bullying you at school?
10. Have you ever felt scared to come to school because of a student or a group of students?

Appendix B

Sample of Survey Answer Sheet

Clark Answer Sheet

Student number 2

Circle your answer to each corresponding question:

- | | | |
|-----|-----|----|
| 1. | YES | NO |
| 2. | YES | NO |
| 3. | YES | NO |
| 4. | YES | NO |
| 5. | YES | NO |
| 6. | YES | NO |
| 7. | YES | NO |
| 8. | YES | NO |
| 9. | YES | NO |
| 10. | YES | NO |

Appendix C

Sample of Crestwood School's Attendance Records

ATTENDANCE TOTALS REPORT

03/15/04 05/25/04

School Year: 03-04

Page: 1

05/26/04

Crestwood School

6CL - CLARK

Student Name	Yog	ID #	Session	Present	Tot Abs	Unex Abs	Tar	Dis	Nonmember
██████████, ABBY S.	2006	M69	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, WHITNEY	2006	M1	48.000	47.000	1.000	0.000			
██████████, KAITLYN	2006	M31	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, ALLANA M.	2006	M103	48.000	47.000	1.000	0.000			
██████████, JENNA M.	2006	M33	48.000	41.500	6.500	0.000			
██████████, COREY M.	2006	M5	48.000	47.000	1.000	0.000			
██████████, NATHANIEL J.	2006	M6	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, GAVIN C.	2006	M50	48.000	46.500	1.500	0.000			
██████████, MARISSA L.	2006	M22	48.000	47.500	0.500	0.000			
██████████, MATTHEW N.	2006	M10	48.000	47.000	1.000	0.000			
██████████, KELLY J.	2006	M38	48.000	47.500	0.500	0.000			
██████████, ADAM N.	2006	M39	48.000	45.000	3.000	0.000			
██████████, ROSS	2006	M26	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, ALLISON	2006	M40	48.000	46.000	2.000	0.000			
██████████, JACOB A.	2006	M54	48.000	47.000	1.000	0.000			
██████████, TAYLOR K.	2006	M84	48.000	45.000	3.000	0.000			
██████████, CHRISTOPHER	2006	M27	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, CODY N.	2006	M92	48.000	41.000	7.000	0.000			
██████████, AARON B.	2006	M43	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, KIRSTIN C.	2006	M56	48.000	47.000	1.000	0.000			
██████████, RAYMOND E.	2006	M119	48.000	48.000	0.000	0.000			
██████████, KODY L.	2006	M99	48.000	42.500	5.500	0.000			
██████████, NICHOLAS	2006	M57	48.000	46.000	2.000	0.000			
		Group Total:		1064.500	39.500	0.000			
		Grand Total:		1064.500	39.500	0.000			

Appendix D

Average Number of Days Absent Table

Average Number of Days Absent (by grade & group)***Kindergarten***

<u>Number of Students who feel bullied</u> 26 students	<u>Total Number of days Absent</u> 214 days	<u>Average Number of Days Absent</u> 8.23 days
---	--	---

<u>Number of Students who don't feel bullied</u> 21 students	<u>Total Number of Days Absent</u> 123.5 days	<u>Average Number of Days Absent</u> 5.88 days
---	--	---

3rd Grade

<u>Number of Students who feel bullied</u> 20 students	<u>Total Number of days Absent</u> 152.5 days	<u>Average Number of Days Absent</u> 7.63 days
---	--	---

<u>Number of Students who don't feel bullied</u> 21 students	<u>Total Number of Days Absent</u> 130 days	<u>Average Number of Days Absent</u> 6.19 days
---	--	---

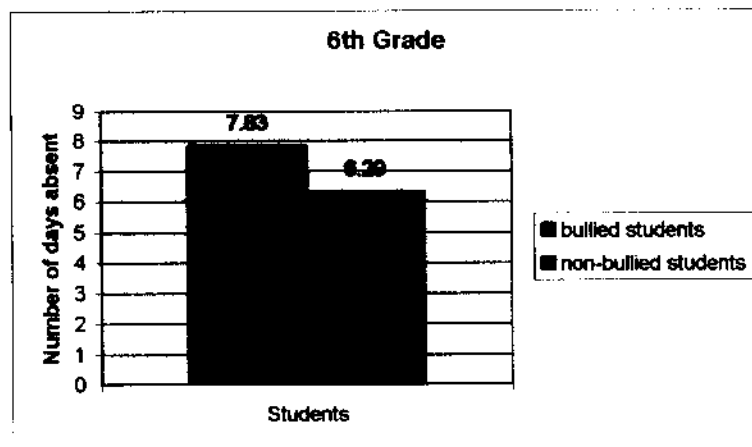
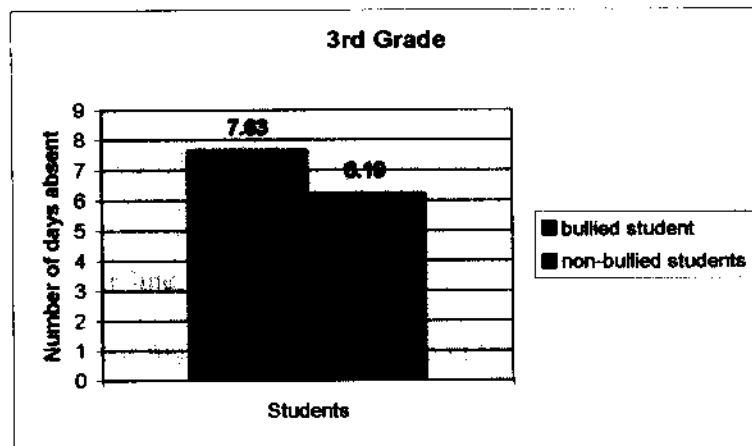
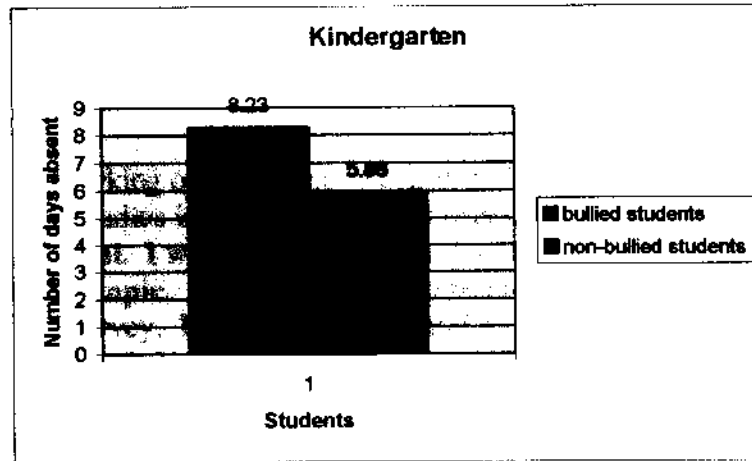
6th Grade

<u>Number of Students who feel bullied</u> 15 students	<u>Total Number of days Absent</u> 117.5 days	<u>Average Number of Days Absent</u> 7.83 days
---	--	---

<u>Number of Students who don't feel bullied</u> 29 students	<u>Total Number of Days Absent</u> 182.5 days	<u>Average Number of Days Absent</u> 6.29 days
---	--	---

Appendix E

Graph of Average Number of Days Absent



Appendix F

Permission Form

April 13, 2004

Dear Parents,

Currently I am working on my master's degree at Eastern Illinois University. The final requirement of my studies is to present a thesis paper. **My thesis is focusing on student attitudes at school. I would like to conduct a survey in your child's classroom based on this topic.** I would greatly appreciate your permission to allow your child to be a part of the survey. Please have your child return this form to his/her homeroom teacher by May 5, 2004. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Michelle Clark
Crestwood Junior High

Please mark the appropriate line.

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in the student attitude survey.

_____ I do not wish for my child to participate in the student attitude survey.

Student Name

Parent Signature

