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HOW ADOLESCENT BOYS WHO PLAY TRAVEL HOCKEY PERCEIVE THEIR  
EXPERIENCES INFLUENCING SELF-ESTEEM

by

Clayton Callow

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Faculty of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Education at the  
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Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to determine how boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing self-esteem. This study used three boy's adolescent aged minor hockey travel teams to identify experiences that influenced their levels of self-esteem. Primary sources included a review of relevant self-esteem literature, the responses to Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC), and interview responses from research participants. The SPPC and the interview process identified several areas where their experiences affected their self-esteem. Social acceptance, athletic competence, coaching, parents, and team try-outs were the significant factors identified by the travel hockey players as affected by their hockey experiences.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all minor hockey players and volunteers, and to my parents who spent countless hours in hockey rinks all across Ontario.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and express my thanks to Dr. Vern Stenlund for getting me started in what seemed at the time, an insurmountable undertaking. Dr. Stenlund was instrumental in keeping the project going and pushing me in the right direction. Your flexibility in letting others guide me through the process provided opportunities that may have been impossible otherwise.

Thanks to Dr. Ian Crawford for so willingly taking on the role of second reader. His support and dedication to learning has played a significant role in my development as a student and educator.

Even though Dr. Holman was an outside reader for this project, her enthusiasm and interest in sport and self-esteem continuously picked me up and carried me over any road blocks that occurred along the way. She continually supported my ideas, offering constructive solutions and keeping me on the path to completion. Dr. Holman was always there for me during my H.K years, and continued this dedication while working with me on my thesis. Thanks for all you do, for all you've done, and for making me believe that success is measured one step at a time.

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I would also like to thank my parents for getting me involved in sport and supporting me with whatever successes and failures that I endured. It was through your guidance and patience that I have become the person I am today.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### General Statement of the Problem

It has been well-established that the adolescent years are characterized by multiple social, biological, and cognitive transitions, but they are sometimes also characterized by an escalating risk for compromised psychosocial well-being. Eccles, Wigfield, Harold and Blumenfeld (1993) and Simmons and Blyth (1987) identified changing environments and the renegotiation of self as a result of puberty as major factors that contributed to an adolescent's development.

Most child development experts agree that high self-esteem is one of the most important developments in childhood. Researchers generally categorize self-esteem within the emotional/social domain of development (Lishner & Myers, 1997). This domain includes feelings, beliefs, temperament, relationships with others, self-concept, gender identity, and moral development. Young people's levels of social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development interact with environmental experiences and messages, such as sport, to shape self-esteem.

Highly organized sport for adolescent athletes exists all over the world. These activities have been widely supported by adults based on the assumption that there are a multitude of positive effects associated with participation. There are gross and fine motoric benefits as an outcome of the child learning to utilize one's body in the skillful ways demanded by a sport activity and becoming successful at it. Also, there are a number of positive outcomes anticipated in the cognitive, affective, and social domains.

For example, it is assumed that the athlete will benefit from the environment, social interaction, and mental and physical exertion while having fun. Creating the ultimate sport setting in which millions of young athletes participate with others is the utmost goal of program coordinators and coaches. However, many of these adult organizers live vicariously through the participants and lose track of who is to benefit from the game. This can result in athletes leaving the sport prematurely and sometimes sports altogether (Gould & Eklund, 1996).

Harter (1987) suggests that self-esteem is influenced by perceptions of competence or adequacy in achievement domains that are perceived to be important. If an individual perceives he or she is competent in a particular domain, he or she will experience increased self-esteem, if the individual values competence in that particular domain. The following scenario illustrates how self-esteem can have domain-specific self conceptions.

Johnny, a 14 year old hockey player in a local minor hockey league, often shows apathy during practices and competitions, which is characterized by a haphazard show of effort, an unhappy demeanor and low performance levels. Michael portrays a stark contrast to his teammate. Michael looks forward to participation, puts forth a high level of intensity during play, performs to his potential and displays pride and pleasure in his accomplishments. According to Harter (1987), Johnny perceives a low sense of physical capability possibly due to domain-specific self-conceptions or perceived social regard affecting his self-esteem, while Michael possesses a high level of competence perceptions. These differing self-perceptions may result in variations in motivation, performance, emotional reactions and especially self-esteem in a sport participation

environment (Weiss & Ebbeck, 1996).

A concern of most agencies in the recreation sector is the competition in their sports programs and its impact on the adolescent, especially in self-esteem development (Iso-Ahola, 1986). The reasons why adolescents participate in sports programs and how it may affect one's self-esteem are issues of current interest among researchers.

Researchers should gain more insight into the performance, level of intensity, and persistence of children within the athletic realm by understanding what self-esteem means to children. With this knowledge, researchers can begin to maximize the retention level of children's involvement in sport (Duda, 1987; Raugh & Wall, 1987).

For many adolescents, sport is used as a venue for establishing friendships and, for a small number, career paths. This is a difficult period of transition for adolescents who; assume a greater amount of responsibility, deal with peer pressures, accept academic success or failure, and continue family relationships, while trying to maintain a sense of self and self-esteem. Stoller (2000) found that adolescence can have such a dramatic impact on self-esteem that by puberty, many adolescents can become unhappy with themselves. It is understandable that some fail to develop a sense of belonging or fulfillment in sport and eventually suffer from low levels of self-esteem (Cuzzocrea, 2002).

This research study will attempt to determine the influence, if any, of boys' travel level minor hockey participation on self-esteem in early adolescence. Using an exploratory approach, the researcher will tap domain-specific judgments of competence or adequacy in five separate domains, as well as global perception of one's worth as a person. These domains include Scholastic Competence, Athletic Competence, Physical

Appearance, Social Acceptance, and Behavioral Conduct. By incorporating a qualitative approach, evidence can be gathered as to the meaning that the adolescent constructs while in a travel hockey environment. This study may provide the *inside view* of what is occurring and how it is influencing the adolescents' self-esteem promoting changes in a travel team program.

### Hockey Culture in Canada

Ice Hockey was not invented, nor did it start on a certain day of a particular year. It originated circa 1800 in Windsor, Nova Scotia, where the boys of Canada's first college, *King's College School*, established in 1788, adapted the exciting field game of *Hurley* to the local skating ponds originating in a new winter game, *Ice Hurley*. Over a period of decades, Ice Hurley gradually developed into *Ice Hockey* (Vaughan, 1999).

Soon after the boys of King's College School adapted Hurley to the ice, the soldiers at Fort Edward, in Windsor, took up the new game. The game was brought to Halifax, gaining momentum as a sport being played on many Dartmouth Lakes, and frozen inlets of Halifax Harbour (chronicled in the newspapers of Nova Scotia - see Vaughan, 1999).

The early development of the sport has directly influenced the culture of Canadians and has been a topic of interest and debate since its debut. The following excerpts from the *Globe and Mail* by journalists MacGregor and Lum will demonstrate the fusion of hockey into Canadian culture.

The sport began its influence as early as 1939, when Lester Pearson told a London, Ontario audience that hockey had, over the years, "become almost as much of a

national symbol as the maple leaf or the beaver” (MacGregor & Lum, April 10, 2004, p 3)

The 1972 Summit Series, which featured a nine game series involving Canada vs. Russia was *billed* a victory for Canadian diplomacy when Paul Henderson scored the goal that won them the series. This is perhaps one of the most recognizable moments in Canadian hockey history.

In the 1980s, serious novels were written with hockey themes, as well as movies and songs about the game. By the late 1980s it became acceptable to write doctoral dissertations on famous people, and academic writing in sport, especially hockey.

Canadians filled local pubs and streets as 10 million fans tuned in to watch the men’s hockey team win Olympic gold in Salt Lake City in 2002, while more than six million watched the women’s gold victory three days earlier.

During November of 2004, the National Hockey League (NHL) staged the *Heritage Classic* in Edmonton, where 57 167 spectators risked minus 20 Celsius temperatures to watch hockey legends such as Wayne Gretzky, and then pitched in between periods to shovel the snow off the outdoor rink.

Canada is a country so attuned to hockey that last spring Ford, in conjunction with Wayne Gretzky, ran a television spot honking horns to the tune of *Hockey Night in Canada’s* theme song. No explanation was required.

In his final days in office, Prime Minister Jean Chretien boasted to his ministers that he considered himself much like the great Maurice *Rocket* Richard, the late Montreal Canadian hockey superstar. Chretien stated, “He was maybe not the most elegant player on the ice, but he had the instinct for the net” (MacGregor & Lum, April 10, 2004, p 4). No translation was needed.



These few instances where hockey and Canadian culture were synonymous with Canadian identity have been depicted with many examples that perhaps have been recognizable even if one is not a hockey fan. Canadian hockey culture displays its prominence throughout all of Canada and can reach even the smallest of children. It was important to identify what hockey means to Canada before the researcher explores how hockey can influence an adolescent's self-esteem.

### Research Question

A number of researchers have focused on the relationship between sport and self-esteem (Bird & Cripe, 1986; Hines & Groves, 1989). The current research will attempt to answer what children perceive as important when playing travel sport. This study may also lead to changes in how hockey is played and for whom. For the purpose of this study, the following research question will be examined.

Research Question. How do boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing self-esteem?

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research the following terms are defined as follows:

Adolescent: A research participant between the ages of 13 and 15. This age group was used due to the convenience of the Minor Hockey setting.

Children: Used interchangeably with adolescent.

Competition: Participation in competitive sport is defined as athletic involvement where the child attends scheduled competitions and organized practices under the supervision of an assigned or qualified adult leader.

Elite: Athletes who compete at the highest available level for his or her age category in scheduled competitions and organized practices under the supervision of an assigned or qualified adult leader.

Extracurricular activities: Any activity associated with activities outside the normal course of regularly scheduled classes.

Global self-esteem: See self-worth.

Minor Hockey: A system consisting of various levels of play that maintains a schedule and organized categories of players up to the age of 19.

Organized team sport: An activity in which an individual participates with others in a league. It places a value on winning and losing and is associated with competition.

Participant: Any individual involved in a game that has a win/loss outcome.

Self-concept: The set of attributes, abilities, attitudes, and values that an individual believes defines who he or she is. Harter (1999) defines self-concept as the perceptions that individuals have of themselves in particular domains (e.g., Scholastic Competence, Behavioral Conduct, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, and Physical Appearance).

Self-esteem: See self-worth.

Self-worth: Harter (1999) defines self-worth as the overall acceptance one has of oneself represented by a profile of perceptions across domains (see self-concept). Harter believes that overall self-worth is influenced not only by how individuals objectively describe their competence in each domain, but also how they subjectively evaluate their competence in that domain (e.g., how satisfied they are with their performance), and by how important they consider it to be successful in that domain.

Travel Hockey: An organized team within Minor Hockey that is considered to contain a

talented range of players who play similar aged teams from across Canada and the U.S.

Youth: see adolescent.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Sport Participation and Self-Esteem

The literature addressing the relationship between sport participation and self-esteem is limited to the age group and domain. Despite minimal research on the topic, many studies point to a positive relation between sport participation and self-esteem. An early study carried out by Coopersmith (1967) referred to self-esteem as an individual's evaluation of self. "It was based on an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicated the extent to which one believed oneself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy" (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 9). According to Purkey, Cage, and Graves (1973) self-esteem was a personal judgement of *worthiness* that was expressed in the attitudes the individual held. The researchers found that positive self-esteem was a precursor to positive growth and development, and children who doubted their ability became their own worst enemies. The more doubt a child had about completing an assigned task or performing an athletic skill, the lower the child's self-esteem.

In other research conducted by Coopersmith (1981), Harter (1986), and Rosenberg (1986), self-esteem involved an individual's assessment of his or her own worth. High self-esteem individuals viewed themselves favorably and were satisfied with themselves, and low self-esteem individuals tended to lack self-respect and felt inadequate. Wylie (1979) and Harter (1986) discovered that self-esteem was context-free and subsequently viewed as a more global construct than domain-specific self-conceptions. In 1987, Harter concluded that self-esteem was not merely an aggregate of domain-specific self-

conceptions but was an independent construct. Waite, Gansneder, and Rotella (1990) found that self-esteem development was a function of particular influencing factors that helped define what did and did not constitute self-esteem. The formation of self-esteem was contingent upon domain-specific self-conceptions while global, positive self-regard constructs such as self-acceptance were unconditional and not influenced by perceptions of competence or adequacy.

Rosenberg (1979) argued that people evaluated their self-worth by comparing themselves to others. According to Sarokan (1986), the self-esteem of an individual was a very complex construct that was affected by many factors or combinations of factors. Self-esteem had become a very important consideration because of its impact on the personal and academic success of an individual. The researcher found that many assessment programs now included the improvement of self-esteem as a goal to be measured and improved upon. Verkuyten (1988) stated that self-esteem was influenced by factors other than the judgement of others. Specifically, the researcher conducted an interview with 104 Dutch adolescents and 142 ethnic minority students residing in the Netherlands. Adolescents were asked to complete a Dutch adaptation of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and to then rate how kind/nice they thought they looked in the eyes of eight different persons: their mother, father, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers, neighbors, and people in the street. There were virtually no differences on mean scores between immigrant and Dutch children on any of the ratings, but Dutch adolescents showed marginally higher self-esteem scores. For example, Dutch adolescents' self-esteem was positively correlated with family members; perceived judgments but not with perceptions of friends and teachers, and, with the exception of siblings, was not related to

the perceptions of family members. These findings provide evidence that more than one domain may affect how an adolescent perceives self-esteem in a sport environment.

Biddle (1993) and Steitz and Owen (1992) suggested that children's self-esteem benefits significantly from sport participation and exercise. Other researchers (Leff & Hoyle, 1995; McElroy, 1982) supported this finding, indicating that when young males and females have parental support in conjunction with their participation in sports, as opposed to parental pressure, the chances for increased self-esteem were even greater. Pascarella and Smart (1991) found that men of African-American and Caucasian backgrounds who had participated in intercollegiate athletics had higher self-esteem up to nine years after initial enrollment in college than their non-athletic colleagues. These researchers also found that male athletes had more satisfaction with college and social life and displayed greater interpersonal and leadership skills.

Research by Wilkins, Boland, and Albinson (1991) indicated that sport participation of undergraduate athletes had a positive effect on the participants' self-esteem, when compared to their non-athletic counterparts. In other bivariate studies, athletes consistently showed more positive psychological well-being and appraisals of self (Del Rey & Sheppard, 1981; Delaney & Lee, 1995; Rao & Overman, 1986; Taylor, 1995), with some results suggesting that sports participation was potentially therapeutic and a method for raising self-esteem in physically disabled individuals (Valliant, Bezzubik, Dabley, & Asu, 1985). Vilhjamsson and Thorlindsson (1992) studied 1200 Icelandic adolescents and found that sport participation was negatively correlated with anxiety and depression. The researchers concluded that the psychological benefits of sport were best explained by the physical benefits of sport, suggesting a biological basis

for psychological disposition.

The one common developmental dimension mentioned in most agency program statements was the negative impact of competition upon self-esteem (Hines & Groves, 1989). Many of these studies could be critiqued for their failure to assess self-esteem as a multidimensional construct. Spreitzer (1994) and Marsh and Jackson (1986) found no relation between sport participation and self-esteem. The researchers attributed their null results to an error in conceptualization of the sport participation-self-esteem relationship and an error in the operationalization of self-esteem. Marsh concluded that self-esteem was best characterized as a multidimensional construct which comprised specific components relevant to particular contexts, rather than a global, undifferentiated measure of self-worth. Harter (1999) concurred on the fact that self-esteem was a multidimensional construct. This suggested that multiple dimensions should be incorporated in studies of sport participation and self-esteem.

#### Adolescent Domains Related to Sport Participation and Self-Esteem

The following sections will examine the roles of several different domains from a multi-dimensional perspective with respect to their role in the sport participation-self-esteem relationship. A discussion of the role of various domains (e.g. sport, extracurricular activities, school and academics, peers, family, and coaching) in self-esteem development will be discussed in order to demonstrate a possible relation between boys' travel minor hockey participation and self-esteem.

## Sport

Sport has long been an important part of the culture in Canada, with children's sport considered by some to be a foundation for the development of sound social and personal adjustment, good self-concept, and other personality characteristics (Ash, 1978; Maul & Thomas, 1975; Pease & Anderson, 1986). The history of youth sport programs and their popularity was reflected in the development of organized programs such as Baseball Canada and the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (Weinburg, May, 1981). According to Hines and Groves (1989), the amount of research conducted in this area was small compared to what is needed to develop better programs offering sport activities for youth.

Coopersmith (1967) and Read (1968) stated that males who experienced success in athletics tended to enjoy higher levels of self-esteem than those who usually experienced losing. Hines And Groves (1989) cited the 1985 National Youth Sports Coaches Association which reported that there were approximately 25 million children in the United States who participated in youth sport leagues. The most recent Canadian data was from 1998-1999 by the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY): Participation in activities published in The Daily: Statistics Canada (May 30, 2001). The NLSCY collected data from 23 000 children and showed an estimated 87% of Canadian children aged 4 to 15 participated in organized activities outside of school, leaving approximately 13% of children who rarely or never participated. This data also indicated that children who participated in organized activities outside of school such as sports, music, the arts or clubs tended to have higher self-esteem, interact better with friends and perform somewhat better in school. The study found young people aged 12 to



15, who rarely or never participated in organized sports were more likely to report having lower self-esteem and difficulties with friends. These findings were based on a first analysis of new data for children aged 4 to 15 in 1998-1999, as well as an analysis of longitudinal data, spanning four years for young people who were between ages 12 and 15 in 1998-1999. Hockey Canada, which is the sole governing body for amateur hockey in Canada, has indicated that 4.5 million Canadians are involved in hockey as coaches, players, officials, administrators or direct volunteers. This total does not include spectators, parents and occasional volunteers. Research has shown that hockey was the activity of choice for over 2 million Canadians with 508 000 players registered with Hockey Canada for the 1998-1999 season. The 2002-2003 registration numbers reached 538 000 indicating a continued growth in the sport, particularly amongst female players (About Hockey Canada, retrieved August 3, 2004). With the evidence demonstrating increased levels of hockey participation, researchers are now focusing on the level of competition in leagues and how it impacts upon the self-esteem of adolescent children (Bird & Cripe, 1986; Iso-Ahola, 1986).

In studies conducted by Coopersmith (1967) and Scanlan (1978) sports competition was found to be an important area for children in which motor competence was publicly demonstrated and socially evaluated. Social evaluation was gained from adults who were very important to the child, such as coaches and parents, and through players' ability comparisons with teammates and opponents (Lundgren & Schwab, 1977; McGuire & Cook, 1984; Scanlan, 1978).

In a study of competitive and noncompetitive programs in physical education, Read (1968) found that male research participants who were constant winners had

significantly higher self-esteem than those who lost more than they won. The child who was positively oriented and had a sense of belonging, worth, and competence possessed a strong foundation for self-esteem enhancement (Pangrazi, 1982).

Alderman and Wood (1976) found valuable information which could provide coaches and parents with the most important reasons given by children for their participation in youth sports. Young children, adolescents, and champion athletes all participated in sport for a number of different reasons. These reasons were dependent upon the specific meanings that the individuals attached to the activities in which they participated. For example, a child may place a lower value on the importance of winning in a gym class game of dodgeball compared to winning on a competitive hockey team.

Edeburn and Landry (1976) showed that self-concepts of children were directly related to the self-concept of the instructor. For example, if the instructor believed that he or she could be successful, then most children also held that inherent belief. Similar research which investigated the reasons for participation and motivation in youth sports conducted by Sapp and Haubenstricker (1978) and Gill, Gross, and Huddleston (1983), indicated youngsters competed in sports to have fun, improve their sports skills, to become physically fit, to make new friends and to participate. Although achievement and status were mentioned as additional reasons for participation, they were not a high priority for the children surveyed in the researchers' studies.

Iso-Ahola (1977) found that a win-loss record was an important factor in the formation of self-concept. Players who lost consistently believed they were lower in ability, and that luck was an important factor in winning. Iso-Ahola (1977) and Fielstein et al. (1985) further supported the idea that children with high and low self-esteem

differed in how they attributed both success and failure. The researchers included social and athletic situations and assessed whether there were differences between children with high and low self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem attributed their success to factors such as good luck, rather than ability. High self-esteem children took credit for their success and blamed bad luck or lack of effort on their failures (Iso-Ahola, 1977).

In research conducted by Roberts, Kleiber, and Duda (1981), fourth and fifth grade participants in organized sport reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem than non-participants. Richman and Rehberg (1986) investigated Karate students and found that the novice group was significantly lower in self-esteem than three groups with higher skill levels.

Kalliopuska (1987) focused on dancers and found that there was an evident influence on mental health and self-image. Athletic involvement affected one's self-concept, self-esteem and self-appraisal. In later research, Kalliopuska (1989) determined that the benefits of participating in ballet significantly increased self-esteem compared with those who did not participate.

Hines and Groves (1989) found children who had more successful experiences were significantly higher in their self-evaluation than were those with less successful experiences. Fielstein et al. (1985) found that children with low self-esteem were more likely to dismiss the personal relevance of success, while at the same time blame their failures on personal inadequacies. Duda (1987) found that actual success did not alter their self-view, whereas actual failure served to reinforce it, affecting self-esteem negatively. A study conducted by Delaney and Lee (1995) found high physically active adolescents scored higher in levels of self-esteem supporting Pease and Anderson's

(1986) notion that children's sport can be considered a base for the development of well-founded adjustment skills and good self-concept.

Hellstedt (1988) found that most children benefitted from participation in competitive sports. They had fun, met friends, and learned skills that would help them throughout life. According to Passer (1984) high stress levels of young athletes indicated that children worried about how their parents, coaches, peers, and teammates would evaluate their performance. Children who received negative verbal and nonverbal messages could develop low self-esteem. Some children dropped out of sports altogether because they felt incompetent and had developed an adverse self-image. Addeo and Greene (1994) found self-esteem was associated with happiness, success, and high achievement, whereas low self-esteem was associated with depression, anxiety, and underachievement. What was uncertain was whether higher self-esteem results were due to success, or success resulted in higher self-esteem.

In a study involving youth basketball players, Brustad (1988) used perceived competence, the importance to the individual of being a good basketball player, and the perceived importance to the team of being a good basketball player. The researcher examined the influence of self-esteem, along with other intrapersonal and socialization factors, on affect experienced in sport. Results revealed that self-esteem significantly and negatively predicted competitive trait anxiety pertaining to boys and girls participating in a youth basketball league. The study did not find self-esteem to be predictive of levels of enjoyment. Ebbeck and Stuart (1993) used similar predictors and found that perceived football competence was the strongest predictor of self-esteem.

Weiss, Ebbeck, McAuley, and Wiese (1990) studied the relationship between

children's self-esteem and attributions for performance in both physical and social achievement domains in a summer sports program. Findings indicated that for physical competence, children high in self-esteem made attributions that were more internal, stable, and higher in personal control than did low self-esteem children. Similarly social competence, children high in self-esteem made attributions that were more internal, stable, and higher in personal and lower in external control than did children low in self-esteem.

In addition to providing simple fun and exercise, sport may also help to promote healthy psychological development (Weiss & Bredemeier, 1983; Shaw, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1995). Some researchers argue that sport participation could provide character building opportunities (Biddle, 1993; Harry, 1995; Melnick, Sabo, & Vanfossen, 1992), but the psychological and social effects and outcomes of sport participation may be very different for males than for females.

Some investigators have suggested that sport participation is reliably associated with higher self-esteem for both male and female participants (Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Rao & Overman, 1986; Steitz & Owen, 1992; Taylor, 1995; Wilkins, Boland, & Albinson, 1991). Others argue that sport participation is a weak predictor of self-esteem (Jackson & Marsh, 1986; Marsh & Jackson, 1986; Spreitzer, 1994).

Harnisch and Kavussanu (2000) studied goal-orientations and self-esteem and found that self-esteem could be negatively affected if the participant perceived they were below the average competence in a sport. Kleiber (1983) also found that the drop in the level of self-esteem was due to the child developing feelings of inadequacy. Harnisch and Kavussanu also believed that competency was an important aspect of developing

high self-esteem. The researchers' study suggested that low levels of competency consequently resulted in lower levels of self-esteem.

Richman and Shaffer (2000) examined a sample of female college freshman and found high school sport participation to be a positive predictor of self-esteem, body image, physical competence, academic competence, and masculine traits. The researchers concluded that the relation between high school sport participation only had a positive effect on self-esteem to the extent that it had a positive effect on specific components of self-theory, and that the relation could be negative if sport did not positively affect physical competence. This study provided a broad examination of the relation between early sport participation and later psychological well-being and some clues as to the protective function of sport.

### Extracurricular Activities

Many researchers found that extracurricular activities provide adolescents with an effective use of their leisure time which precluded anti-social behavior. It allowed them to meet others with similar interests, and contributed to their mental and physical well-being. Other research had been mixed as to whether extracurricular activities had a positive effect on self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) and Yarworth and Gauthier (1978) concluded that self-esteem was a predictor of participation in extracurricular activities, and that athletes who exhibited positive self-esteem were likely to participate in extracurricular activities. Snyder and Kivlin (1975) found that athletes had more of a positive self-image than non-athletes when they participated in athletics. Morgan's (1981) study showed that individuals who exhibited high levels of self-esteem, had a

higher rate of participation. Pangrazi (1982) stated that while physical activities offered students an environment to assist them in developing a positive self-concept, high self-esteem students had no greater involvement in extracurricular activities than students of low self-esteem.

Karlin and Berger (1971) found that the implementation of extracurricular activities added to the school environment which built relationships between teachers and students, developed the talents of these students, and allowed student recognition for their achievements, all of which helped the positive development of self-worth.

According to Mazzarella (1978), the self-esteem of students surveyed improved after participating in the production of a drama play. Similar findings involving elementary students who were enrolled in an extracurricular dance program at their school had experienced an enhanced level of self-esteem (Poll, 1979). Regan (1983) supported Mazzarella's research by finding that when individuals participated in drama as an extracurricular activity, increased levels of self-esteem resulted. Linder (1981) wanted to test the relationship between the level of self-esteem and an extracurricular arts program using both elementary and high school students from grades 7 through 12. The researcher found no statistically significant increases in self-esteem across grades or between genders even though the tenth grade reported the highest levels of increased self-esteem. These findings were supported by Brandt (1990) who suggested that involvement in this sort of activity was crucial to the development of healthy self-esteem. Although extracurricular activities all point to enhanced levels of positive self-esteem building, Conrard and Asher (2000) found that creative drama had no effect on self-esteem at the elementary school level.

Jaffe and Manzer (1992) cited that both boys and girls listed improved self-confidence and self-esteem as potential benefits of extracurricular physical activity. The findings revealed a strong relationship in higher levels of self-esteem among girls who devoted more time to physical activity. In a study conducted by Holland and Andre (1994), it was found that both male and female athletes benefited from higher levels of self-esteem than individuals who did not participate in extracurricular athletics.

Barber, Eccles, and Stone (2001) categorized different types of extracurricular activities generally offered within a high school setting and examined the advantages and disadvantages of each. The categories included prosocial activities (e.g. volunteer service), team sports, performing arts, and school involvement (e.g. student government). The researchers found many positive aspects related to participation in extracurricular activities which suggested that it would have a positive and lasting effect shaping the course of the students' adult lives as well.

### Peer Acceptance and Academic Success

Much past and current research regarding self-esteem has focused on the relationship between school achievements and the self-concept of students at all ages. The participation in athletics fostered a higher level of self-esteem, which led to more ambitious academic goals as concluded in an early study by Rehberg (1969). The researcher found that the more positive the adolescent's self-esteem, the more likely the individual would set high academic and career standards for oneself.

The extent that the self-esteem of an adolescent is a function of the internalized appraisals of significant others, and to the extent that competence in sports elicits



positive appraisals from significant others, to that extent participation in sports may well serve to enhance the self-esteem of the participant adolescent and therefore raise his scholastic performance and educational expectations. (p. 78)

It has been found that self-esteem is a predictor of academic achievement (Purkey, 1970; Schnee, 1972; Unsworth, 1990). In research conducted by Coopersmith (1967) 102 fifth and sixth graders whose experiences were mostly successful tended to express confidence and assurance in both their behavior and perception. Coopersmith concluded that positive self-esteem was vital to the development and adjustment of children.

In a study of inner-city elementary children, Frerichs (1971) concluded that although there was no connection between I.Q. levels and self-esteem, there was evidence of a relationship between teacher assigned marks and self-esteem. According to Jones (1973), children who reported high levels of self-esteem were more likely to attribute success to their own ability, in relation to children of low self-esteem who were more likely to attribute their failure to lack of ability. In a study by Piers (1977), it was found that high self-esteem children were more likely than low self-esteem children to attribute success (on an Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire) to one's ability, but there was no difference between students who did poorly on the test.

Ames (1978) studied how self-concept as a dispositional trait influenced children's academic achievement attributions and reinforced behaviors in the social context of a competing or a non-competing other. The study found that high self-concept children attributed success outcomes more to their high ability and engaged in more positive self-reinforcement following success than did low self-concept children. The affective significance of achievement outcomes was accentuated in a competitive setting

for high but not low self-concept children. The consequences of failing in a competitive situation was more ego (the belief that winning is the primary goal) threatening for males than for females.

Sarokan (1986) concluded that self-esteem is an important issue in educational research because of its impact on the personal and academic success of students. The findings are evident as many assessment programs now include the improvement of student self-esteem as a goal to be measured and improved upon in many educational environments. Sarokan firmly believed that one of the most significant by-products of improved student self-esteem seemed to be improved academic achievement.

Peer acceptance and academic success are two contributors to self-esteem that may be relevant to the sport-self-esteem relations. Harter (1990) concluded from research studies that adolescents rely on what they perceive others think of them when making self-assessments. Adolescents' self-esteem may be dependent upon one's status amongst peers. It was also found that adolescents had higher self-esteem when they had better peer relationships and higher academic competence.

Melnick, Sabo, and Vanfossen (1992) examined the impact of sport participation on peer acceptance in a longitudinal analysis based on data from over 14 000 youths. They found that the athletic participants enjoyed enhanced popularity among their peers, and for non-white participants, high school sport involvement was found to be an important social resource. Kane (1988) added to Melnick et al.'s study by finding that the relation between sport participation and peer acceptance was moderated by the type of sport in which the athlete had participated. Gender-appropriate sports such as figure skating and ballet garnered high status, whereas gender-inappropriate sports such as

hockey and football were low-ranking.

Similar to peer acceptance, Harter (1986) found academic competence had been shown to have a strong association with self-esteem. Robison-Awana, Kehle, and Jenson (1986) carried out a study on seventh-grade students and found girls who were classified as *above average* academically had higher self-esteem than girls from lower academic ranks. The researchers found the boys to possess overall higher self-esteem than girls whether above or below the academic average. Rotheram (1987) and Alsakar (1989) also found similar results, indicating support for a positive correlation between academic competence and global self-esteem.

It is still unclear whether sport participation enhances or diminishes academic competence. However, Richman and Shaffer (2000) have found evidence to suggest that participating in sports in high school may be predictive of greater perceived academic competence in college females.

### Peers

Peer relationships that individuals forged during their adolescent years was another factor in the development of self-esteem. An early study by Douvan and Gold (1966) stated that the interpersonal skills of girls matured more rapidly than boys and they were able to develop a more meaningful relationship with their peers. Research by Brookover, Erickson, and Joiner (1967) illustrated that the relationship between the perceived judgement of others and self-esteem became increasingly important as students advanced in high school. Further research postulated that peer relationships were only a factor in the level of female self-esteem (O'Donnell, 1976). Burke and Weir (1978)

believed that this was explained by the fact that girls were closer to a larger number of friends than boys during adolescence. Self-esteem in adolescent males was placed on personal evaluation of academics rather than on issues such as popularity or peer relationships (Walker & Greene, 1986). These ideas have been suggested to help explain why peer relationships were significant in the case of females and not males (Cuzzocrea, 2002).

It has been illustrated that children tend to choose peers who reflect a comparable level of self-esteem when entering a competitive situation (Vance & Richmond, 1975; Wilson & Brenner, 1971). Sigall and Gould (1977) have reported that low self-esteem research participants exerted greater effort when the authority figure was understanding, whereas high self-esteem individuals responded better to a more demanding situation.

Weiss and Bredemeire (1983) have argued that athletic activities provided social networks, teamwork, and character development for men and women. Others discovered that athletic involvement resulted in higher levels of self-esteem among adolescent males and females (Rao & Overman, 1986; Taylor, 1995; Wilkins, Boland, & Albinson, 1991), but it was noted that participation in sports has been proven to be a weak predictor of global self-esteem (Jackson & Marsh, 1986; Spreitzer, 1994). Studies that focused on the psychological effects of sports participation have shown that male athletes derived positive short-term and long-term effects with regard to their level of self-esteem (Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Spreitzer, 1994; Vilhjamsson & Thorlindsson, 1992).

Faunce (1984) was concerned with the role that social status played in the development of student self-esteem. The basic premise of the study was that a student's social status within a high school was less important than being reminded of that status by

one's peers. Some students were found to place a greater value on how they performed in a sport setting, while others were more concerned with their academia. If sport success was of high value to an individual, then a student who performed poorly in athletics would receive negative evaluation by comparing their performance to others affecting the individual's level of self-esteem. Results also revealed high status students suffered the greatest loss of self-esteem, especially if the negative evaluations were recurring and involved people with whom the person most often associated. Another important finding indicated that low status athletes coped with negative evaluation by withdrawing from the activity that did not garner success. When you are successful at doing something, one is more apt to continue in the endeavor that makes one successful (Faunce, 1984).

In studies conducted by Harter (1990), peer acceptance was found to play a role in the adolescent self-concept to the extent that adolescents tended to rely on what they perceived others thought of them when making self-assessments. Adolescents' self-esteem may be dependent upon their perceived acceptance by others. Harter noted however, that peers could affect self-esteem in a multitude of ways. Thorne and Michaelieu (1996) moderated a longitudinal study of adolescents' memories and self-esteem and found that memories about helping female friends were associated with high and increasing levels of self-esteem for females. Conversely, chronically low self-esteem in females was associated with memories about failing to get approval from friends. For males, a memory about successfully asserting oneself with male friends was associated with high and increasing levels of self-esteem. The researchers believed that the results indicated high self-esteem to be associated with being a leader among peers and that this leadership developed differently in male friendship groups than in female groups. In a

few females, it manifested through supportive behaviors, whereas in males, it manifested through assertive behaviors. Block and Robins (1993) in a similar study found that girls were likely to internalize their emotions whereas boys were likely to externalize, and that boys also enjoyed higher self-esteem than girls through adolescence. It is not surprising that peers play a major role, given that adolescents are establishing increased autonomy with parents and are forming independent relationships outside the home. Harter (1999) concluded that although perceptions of one's status among peers were clearly an important factor in self-evaluations, one cannot disregard the role that gender-related issues can play in peer relationships. These studies have indicated that males and females achieve popularity with peers for different reasons leading most researchers to conclude that the findings from these studies have implied that peers play an important role in the self-construction process (Richman, 2001).

### Family

Research has shown that the level of self-esteem among adolescents is impacted greatly by the relationships forged within a social context. Family is a major factor affecting the development of self, with parents playing a major role. Mothers' communications with and perceptions of the adolescent are not just major contributors to the level of an adolescent's self-esteem, but mothers can affect the process of self-development as well (Richman, 2001). Using data from both parents and children, Killeen and Forehand (1998) found that there was a clear transaction between parents' and children's attitudes, perceptions, and behavior, and that this process shaped the adolescent's view of self. The researchers concluded that the behaviors of parents and

adolescents combined to produce self-esteem from a transactional self-development process.

Earlier research conducted by Jacquish and Savin-Williams (1981) found that the home environment was a place where some adolescents' self-esteem was at its lowest. The researchers' conclusions indicated that adolescent self-esteem could not be predicted by the type of activity in which one was engaged nor was it predicted by the people by whom one was surrounded. These differences in boys' and girls' self-esteem were the result of girls who reported feeling lower self-esteem than boys at home and school; in other settings, such as sport, boys and girls reported relatively equal levels of self-esteem. This supported the notion that gender differences in adolescent self-esteem could be assigned to factors which were environmental or ecological, not necessarily biological or intrapersonal, and that the long and short term stability of self-esteem could be influenced by the home and other environments.

Other aspects of family life also have an effect on the adolescent's developing sense of self. Fiese (1992) found relationships between and among individuals within the family influenced adolescent psychosocial development. When high agreement between parents and the adolescent on the significance and occurrence of family rituals occurred, the more positive global self-esteem and greater identity integration in the adolescent.

Walker and Greene (1986) have confirmed in several empirical investigations that parental support, encouragement, and affection were positively related to the child's self-esteem. Studies showed that the level of self-esteem among adolescents was impacted by the relationships built within a social context. The relationship between parents and their children was a major factor in the development of self-esteem. Walker and Greene

believed that although adolescence has generally been viewed as a period where individuals seek autonomy from their parents and family, the relationships between adolescents and their parents could also be a significant predictor of self-esteem. Even when adolescents became less dependent upon their parents as they grew older, the impact that these relationships had on self-esteem did not diminish.

Hellstedt (1988) found sports could help strengthen and preserve the family, promote individual growth and development, and provide a fun outlet for everyone who participated. Sensible parenting and well-informed sports organizations were needed to ensure positive outcomes. In a related study, Foon (1989) found that sports participation was positively related to high self-esteem when affiliation with school and family were cited.

Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997) studied whether self-esteem changed from ninth to twelfth grade and whether there were gender differences in self-esteem and in its pattern of change among high school students. The results revealed a significant main effect for gender but not for grade, and there was no significant interaction between gender and grade. Male self-esteem was consistently higher than female self-esteem throughout high school. These findings were consistent with other research on gender differences which have found that adolescent males have higher self-esteem than do females when in a supportive family environment (Brack, Orr, & Ingersoll, 1988; Cairns et al., 1990; Eccles et al., 1989; Labouvie, Pandina, White, & Johnson, 1990; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975; Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman, & Midgley, 1991).



### Coaching

In an experimental study, Smith, Smoll, and Curtis (1979) randomly assigned 31 Little League baseball coaches to either a training group or non-training group at the start of the season. Trained coaches were instructed in the use of positive coaching behaviors such as providing encouragement and proper instruction. After controlling for player self-esteem scores that were obtained a year earlier, post-season measures of self-esteem indicated those players who played under the trained coaches felt significantly better about themselves compared to those individuals who played under the non-trained coaches. After controlling for preseason levels of self-esteem, post-season self-esteem scores were not significantly different whether players participated under the trained or non-trained coaches. Low self-esteem children experienced significantly higher levels of self-esteem under the trained coaches at the end of the season compared with low self-esteem children who played under the non-trained coaches.

Weinberg (1981, May) found that it was the responsibility of each coach to incorporate the individual needs of the athletes into a coaching style that would help make the athletic experience a positive one for each child. Pangrazi (1982) and Addeo and Greene (1994), concluded that coaches have the opportunity to develop healthy self-concepts. Each of these studies found athletes were vulnerable to the influence of the coach which was a result of appearance, fitness, and skill level of the individual. Smith and Smoll (1982) found that young athletes whose coaches used positive encouragement had a higher self-esteem at the end of the season than did children who had less supportive coaches.

In Sander's (1981) study, self-esteem was argued to be unimportant in individuals

who achieved success in athletic competition, and that positive coaching styles had a more profound impact on self-esteem than the success experienced in competition. Research conducted by Hines and Groves (1989) substantiated the importance of competition and participation because of fun but, in addition, indicated that the coach's assessments of ability and intention of the participant were also extremely important factors in the development of self-esteem. The coaches seemed to perceive the individuals in the program on one or two dimensions and did not recognize other factors, such as; to have fun, meet new friends, or individual reasons for participation. Hines and Groves believed that there needs to be intensive training for coaches on how to develop positive self-esteem and how to deal with the range of participation styles to keep sport focused on the children.

### Conclusion

The empirical interest in self-esteem cited in the literature review is encouraging. The study of self-esteem development in the adolescent sport setting has proven to be both feasible and relevant. It is hoped that future investigation will include measures with a multi-dimensional approach to self-system so that research in this area will continue to be beneficial (Weiss & Ebbeck, 1996).

### Significance of the Study

This study has implications on both a macro and micro level relative to aspects of self-esteem and levels of participation within competitive minor hockey. Information emanating from this research may have an effect (such as participation levels) on the

outcomes of the adolescent's life vis-a-vis participation in hockey, and team sport in general.

It is important to find the reasons behind the decisions children make to become involved and remain or withdraw from travel hockey. Researchers may be able to identify areas of concern for parents, coaches and participant athletes in relation to aspects of self-esteem and involvement in hockey.

Findings from this study may assist in reshaping the structure of minor hockey systems in a positive fashion. It may lead to suggestions and recommendations on how the game should be played or coached at the travel level and what rules may be implemented or altered to better suit the adolescent player.

This study may be useful to local communities which determine and ultimately fund athletic programs in general. Some communities may recognize the importance of overall hockey programming and make it a priority to keep these programs running while continuing to develop new areas of competitive sport. These activities can be costly to local municipalities with regard to fiscal outlays and volunteer time, and some municipalities may need to be convinced of the value of such activities.

Specific groups of people may benefit from the findings of the proposed study. First, coaches may benefit. It may help them to identify areas within their own coaching that need improvement which may benefit the participating athlete. Results may support change for the development of a new coaching curriculum and may lead to standardized methodologies of coaching for this level and age of participant.

Second, findings may provide parents with a rationale for including or excluding their children in a competitive team environment. Much has been written in the popular

press over recent years with respect to the *ugly* side of travel hockey. These findings may support or be in opposition to many of these popularly held beliefs. By studying the problems associated within this area of participation, parents may at least be able to make informed judgments as to the viability of travel hockey for their children.

Lastly, and most importantly, the group to benefit from this research the most may be the athletes. Through this research they may develop the potential for finding solutions with respect to problems associated with low self-esteem and the type of competitive environment in which athletes participate. It is important that researchers work to develop solutions to these problems because of the impact youth adolescents have on all of society.

### CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study was designed following an exploratory method of conducting research. It is only one of several approaches to qualitative inquiry (Gall, Borg, And Gall, 1996). It was determined to be appropriate for this particular study due to the limited range of research in this area.

Qualitative research is multi-method in its focus, involving a naturalistic, interpretive approach to the data generated from research participants. The focus of qualitative research is the natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In this study three travel hockey teams were used as the setting and the hockey arena was used as the general environment. Given three teams from the Minor Hockey Association, it was decided that exploration of a small sample of hockey teams ages 13-15 could provide a clearer picture of the reasons why children participate in travel hockey and the associated factors that affect one's self-esteem.

The following are generally accepted characteristics of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998):

*There is an overarching interest in understanding the meaning people have constructed.*

Qualitative research attempts to understand how people make sense of their world and the experiences that they have in it. In this study the semi-structured interview questions will be used to determine what motivates the athletes' involvement in travel hockey.

*There is an inductive approach to knowledge generation.*

Understandings and observations build theory and discover previously unnoticed tendencies. In this study an informal interview style was used and data analyzed to make inductive interpretations.

*The researcher focuses on gaining an insider's perspective.*

Key to qualitative research is gaining the perspective of the participants in the study. In this study, a survey instrument and an interview were used to explore the perspective of hockey players on their self-esteem.

*Meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions.*

A researcher's professional experience will help him make conceptual and theoretical sense of the research participants' perceptions. In this study meaning was mediated through the playing and coaching experiences that the researcher has had with hockey.

*The interview and survey are the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.*

In this study a survey and semi-structured interview were used to encourage a wider range of feedback from the research participants.

*The end product is narrative and descriptive.*

The qualitative study is descriptive, expressed in words, pictures and verbal dialogue.

Context, participants, activities of interest, as well as direct quotations from the participants are often included. This study included narrative and written responses and levels of interest and actual verbal responses from the participants.

This research project is a descriptive study of three boys travel hockey teams. The purpose was to provide an analysis of how playing travel team hockey may influence an adolescent's self-esteem. Selected hockey teams were studied to determine how, if it all, an individual's or the groups' self-esteem was affected by the program (Gall, Borg, and

Gall, 1996). By focusing on a small sample of teams, extraneous variables such as variation in coaching styles, that may influence an individual or a team perspective were controlled.

Descriptive evidence was gathered that was otherwise impossible to collect in a strictly quantitative study. With close contact, the group interactions and dynamics within the team could be identified. Using a semi-structured and informal interview approach, it was possible to create a setting where the research participants felt comfortable when providing verbal exchanges.

#### Research participants

The research participants for this study consisted of 41 hockey players aged 13 to 15 from three male travel hockey teams in a Minor Hockey Association located in Southwestern Ontario. Minor Hockey systems have different season lengths, coaching structures, practice facilities, ice-time, and even hockey schedules. A pre-requisite for involvement in the study was the ability to read and write in English.

#### Instrumentation

In this study the focus is on how boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing their self-esteem.

The researcher initially administered Harter's (1985) 36 item Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC). The SPPC is a revision of the Perceived Competence Scale for Children (Harter, 1979, 1982). The SPPC was designed to assess children's domain-specific judgments of their competence, as well as a global perception of their worth or

esteem as a person. The revised scale included physical appearance and behavioral conduct in addition to the three existing competence domains of scholastic competence, social acceptance, and athletic competence, with global self-worth being considered as an overall assessment of a child's self-worth or self-esteem.

The SPPC has six sub-scales containing six items, totaling 36 items. An additional sample item is included for practice but is not scored.

Within each subscale, three of the items are worded such that the first part of the statement reflects high competence or adequacy, and three items are worded such that the first part of the statement reflects low competence or adequacy. The six subscale items are presented in the following order for the first six items of the scale, and then continue to repeat themselves in that order throughout the instrument: (1) Scholastic Competence, (2) Social Acceptance, (3) Athletic Competence, (4) Physical Appearance, (5) Behavioral Conduct, and (6) Global Self-Worth (Harter, 1985 p 7).

Harter mentions that permission is given to copy this instrument for use on page seven in the *Manual for the Self-Perception Profile for Children* (Harter, 1985).

Following the completion of the SPPC, a semi-structured and informal interview was conducted (see Appendix B) to illicit open ended answers in an individual interview setting. The specific questions were derived from Harter's six domains to aid in further understanding of the boys' perceived competence or adequacy.

The interview questions were designed to provide additional information regarding rationales for participating in travel hockey. An informal interview format was used as a way to allow for probes of any additional reasons why the youth participants were involved in travel level hockey. One travel hockey player at a time was interviewed to promote a more comfortable environment for the participants.



### Design and Procedures

This study was designed to explore how youth hockey players perceived their experiences on their self-esteem. The study was conducted using a descriptive research design that included a survey and interview. The SPPC was used to determine the child's self-perception in each of Harter's five specific domains, as well as global self-esteem. The semi-structured and informal interview was used to illicit open ended responses to questions designed from Harter's SPPC. In both cases, the researcher read the instructions that were required to be followed for the SPPC (see Appendix C) and the interview (see Appendix D). The information from the interview was used to provide qualitative information of the research participant's perceived competence or adequacy in relation to Harter's SPPC and consequently determined if the experiences of boys' travel level hockey influenced self-esteem.

To proceed with this research, permission was initially sought from the President of the local Minor Hockey Association (see Appendix E). Approval from the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board was subsequently secured (see Appendix F). Additional letters conveying information and requesting consent were personally delivered to the selected coach of each team (see Appendix G). For purposes of this study a letter of assent (see Appendix H) was given to the participants prior to conducting the research. A letter of information to the parent/guardian outlining the proposed study that the participant was involved in was given (see Appendix I) along with the standard letter of consent to participate in the research provided by the Research Ethics Board (see Appendix J). When possible, the necessary forms were collected on site prior to beginning the research.

Once the Minor Hockey Association and the individual hockey coach granted permission, information regarding the number of male children was obtained. The researcher assigned one of the participants to collect any remaining consent forms from individuals. The consent form contained a detailed synopsis of the research and an outline of the rights of participants to allow the children and parents/guardians to read and familiarize themselves with the proposed research. The children were informed that consent forms were to be signed and returned to the assigned individual on or by October 31, 2004. The researcher then scheduled a form pick-up time with the participating teams, on or before October 31, 2004, to gather the completed consent forms. Consent forms were collected and accepted the day the research took place.

The research participants were initially asked to complete Harter's SPPC survey in an isolated room in the arena after practice. The researcher read the instructions for completing the 15 minute survey and monitored the initial stages to ensure that it was being completed correctly by the participants, by only checking one box per item. The participants were encouraged to keep their answers confidential. They were also encouraged to read each question carefully and to take additional time to complete the survey. Following the completion and collection of the SPPC by an assigned participant, the first randomly selected research participant was asked to remain to take part in the approximate 10 minute individual interview process. The other research participants stayed in the dressing room or were re-located to another room within the arena where some leisure activities were provided while they waited to be interviewed. Prior to beginning the individual interview, the participants were provided with their completed copy of Harter's SPPC survey. The researcher read the interview instructions that were

followed before beginning the interview. Upon completion, the SPPC was placed into an envelope by the research participant while the data recorded from the interview was sealed in a marked envelope by the researcher.

The children were reminded of giving assent prior to beginning the SPPC and the interview process. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw participation at any time before or during the study. Once the surveys were submitted and the interviews completed, the data was used in the research. Those who chose to participate were asked to respond to all of the questions and were reminded that the information from the survey and interview would remain confidential. The data was then analyzed from Harter's SPPC and the interview.

### Data Analysis

Analysis of the data answered the research question: How do boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing self-esteem? Since this was a relatively small group, individual mean scores were obtained and later used to descriptively define a given research participants profile. The competence in the domains deemed important by the research participant were determined by the comparison of mean scores with other research participants. This was acquired by sequentially analyzing specific items from each domain in Harter's 36 item SPPC. Each domain consisted of six questions that were organized onto a spreadsheet. The categories were Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, Behavioral Conduct, and Global Self-Worth. An average mean score was obtained from each participant in each category as well as an overall mean score in the same category

for all of the players. The data was descriptively analyzed by comparing individual mean scores alone and in conjunction with the group mean score for that particular category.

The 10 minute interview was designed according to Harter's domains and the questions were also sequentially analyzed by grouping the dominant answers from the players. Using a large table, the questions were initially individually summarized and then grouped within the same question by identifying similar phrases and statements. The responses were then referenced with other questions from the interview to find comparisons and differences. This identified additional information that could not come from Harter's instrument alone. The responses to the interview were then compared with both individual and group responses to Harter's survey. Some responses from the interview matched specific domains from Harter's SPPC that were identified as contributing to an adolescent self-esteem in a boys' travel team environment. Specific quotes were also used from the participants to support the research findings. Literature from Journal articles were used where applicable to further strengthen the validity of the results.

### Limitations of the Design

There were limitations to the design of this study that must be noted. The data retrieved from this study was not reflective of boys travel hockey across Canada, because the study used a sample size of 41 adolescent hockey participants from three minor hockey teams located in Southwestern Ontario. Due to the small sample size, it was impossible to extrapolate, limiting my ability to generalize to a population. Each of the teams that participated in the study were limited to one Minor Hockey Association.

Different coaching styles also limited the consistency of the responses between teams.

A sample of convenience was utilized threatening the validity of the research. Athletes were selected from one Minor Hockey Association. In addition, all of the research participants who granted permission were targeted, instead of focusing on a small random group of hockey players from each of the teams within the hockey organization. The study did not provide a random sample of athletes, instead only three boys travel hockey teams were chosen to participate.

Another possible threat was the seating and a hurried response when other research participants on the team had already completed the survey. The researcher was not able to give the interview or survey depending on environmental circumstances (some arenas required teams to vacate the dressing rooms within 20-25 minutes after completing a game or practice) and an alternate environment may have influenced the results when one was provided.

The attitudes of the research participants responding to the interview and survey may have threatened the validity of the study. Some participants did not take the exercise seriously, while others were not motivated to devote the time necessary to answer the questions accurately. Although information was presented to ensure the participants understood the questions posed, there was a concern that some children may have had difficulty answering some of the questions. In addition, the research participants were under the age of eighteen and required a parent's consent before being allowed to participate in the study. Some adolescents were not responsible enough to have the consent form signed and returned to the assigned collector. This resulted in an over-representation of the athletes and impacted the results of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify how adolescent boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing self-esteem. Data for analysis was collected by administering Harter's SPPC and by conducting individual interviews with 41 adolescent travel hockey players. The following provides the results and discussion from the data.

Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) was used to examine domain specific judgments of competence in five domains; Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, Behavioral Conduct, as well as Global Self-Worth. Harter's instrument allows participants to identify one's feelings of worth by targeting domain specific constructs rather than inferring responses from a sum of a wide range of questions (e.g., Coopersmith's self-esteem measure). Although Harter's SPPC is a quantitative instrument, for the purpose of this research study the mean results were used in a clearly descriptive manner.

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Average Mean Score</b>
<b>Scholastic Competence</b>	2.89
<b>Social Acceptance</b>	3.41
<b>Athletic Competence</b>	3.35
<b>Physical Appearance</b>	3.10
<b>Behavioral Conduct</b>	2.94
<b>Global Self-Worth</b>	3.33

Table 4. Mean Scores from Harter's SPPC

For the purpose of this analysis, mean scores between 3.0 and 4.0 are considered to be reflective of an individual's experiences contributing to a higher level of self-esteem. Research participants who have a mean score below 3.0 are considered to have

had their experiences negatively affect their self-esteem. Any individual with a score below 2.0 is considered at risk in terms of how their experiences influenced their self-esteem. Describing the data obtained from the SPPC will follow a domain specific progression, with each of Harter's six domains being described in sequence.

Scholastic Competence had the lowest research participant mean score (2.9) of any domain. This supports the research that athletes have somewhat lower levels of self-esteem when it comes to achieving academic success in school. Robison-Awana, Kehle, and Jenson (1986) carried out a study on seventh-grade students and found boys to possess overall higher self-esteem than girls whether above or below the academic average, suggesting that academic success was of less importance to boys. For this group of travel hockey players, a mean score of 2.9 suggests that scholastic achievement is marginally lowering self-esteem. However, 18 of the 41 research participants believed Scholastic Competence contributed to a higher level of self-esteem and two participants found success at school to be very rewarding (4.0). In contrast, 23 participants rated Scholastic Competence below 3.0. Two players had a mean score below 2.0, indicating that school contributed to lowered levels of self-esteem. These findings indicate that the players in this particular study value the importance of their academic success.

Social Acceptance had the highest research participant mean score (3.41) of any other domain. Harter (1990) concluded from research studies that adolescents rely on what they perceive others think of them when making self-assessments. Adolescents' self-esteem may be dependent upon one's status amongst peers. It was also found that adolescents had higher self-esteem when they had better peer relationships and higher academic competence. Harter (1999) concluded that perceptions of one's status among

peers was an important factor in an individual's self-esteem. A mean score of 3.41 may indicate that athletic endeavors can provide a successful outlet to socialize with adolescents with similar interests, building higher levels of self-esteem. Thirty-four of the 41 research participants believed that Social Acceptance played a role in increasing their levels of self-esteem, and four participants found social interaction to be very rewarding. In contrast, only seven participants rated Social Acceptance below 3.0, feeling that socializing with others lowered their self-esteem. This may indicate that even though the individual is part of the group, he may not feel accepted. One research participant said, "Sometimes it feels like I'm just standing there, and when I say something it's like ... nobody heard me."

The research participants identified themselves with a social group either at school or when playing sports when answering Harter's Social Competence domain. Several participants also mentioned many different groups of varying talents indicating that self-esteem was being influenced by a variety of external experiences.

Athletic Competence had the second highest research participant mean score (3.35) of any other domain. This supports research indicating that individuals who play sports, particularly males, have a higher level of athletic competence than those who do not play sports. Studies that focused on the psychological effects of sports participation have shown that male athletes derived positive short-term and long-term effects with regard to their level of self-esteem (Pascarella & Smart, 1991; Spreitzer, 1994; Vilhjamsson & Thorlindsson, 1992). A mean score of 3.35 suggests that perceived athletic competence for this group of travel hockey players is high. Thirty-one of the 41 research participants indicated Athletic Competence to play a role in maintaining and



increasing their levels of self-esteem, and five found athletics to be very important. In contrast, 10 participants rated Athletic Competence below 3.0, indicating that not being good at sports could contribute to lowered levels of self-esteem. One player had a mean score rating below 2.0, indicating that athletics was negatively affecting self-esteem.

The majority of the research participants identified themselves with an athletic group or social group that was related to athletics when answering Harter's Athletic Competence domain.

Physical Appearance had the fourth highest research participant mean score (3.10) of any other domain. This finding corresponds with the conclusions reached from the interview. One player said, "I'm 13 years old. The way I look can sometimes mean the difference between getting invited to a party or staying at home with my parents. Guys don't like to admit it, but we spend a lot of time worrying about how we look." A mean score of 3.10 indicates that how one looks or is perceived by others has an impact on one's level of self-esteem. Twenty-five of the 41 research participants believed physical appearance contributes to higher levels of self-esteem, while three participants believed it to be very important. In contrast, 16 participants rated physical appearance below 3.0, indicating that how they looked lowered their self-esteem levels as a person. Three players had a mean score below 2.0, signifying that physical appearance has a large impact on an adolescent's lowered levels of self-esteem.

The Physical Appearance domain also had a variety of responses when participants were asked which groups they were thinking about when answering the survey. Many of the players cited many different groups as a key to maintaining a good sense of self. Some also mentioned athletic groups, while even fewer indicated popular

groups as a source of identity when answering questions from this domain.

Behavioral Conduct had the second lowest research participant mean score (2.94) of any other domain. This suggests that individuals who participate in sport are not concerned about how others will react if they do not choose to follow the rules. A mean score of 2.94 suggests that poor behavior has a minimal impact on lowering their levels of self-esteem. However, 23 of the 41 research participants did believe that how one behaved did increase their level of self-esteem. The more one followed the rules, the more likely he was to experience higher levels of self-esteem. For example, if the player was praised for back-checking, or for making a good pass, an increase of self-esteem may result. "If you want to win and you want to be successful on your team, it is best that you follow the rules. The coach has them in place for a reason." In contrast, 18 participants rated Behavioral Conduct below 3.0, indicating that whether you did the right things or the wrong things, one's level of self-esteem was only slightly affected. One player responded, "It doesn't really matter if I have a good game by staying out of the box, or a bad one, the coach always gives me the same amount of ice-time." Two players had a mean score below 2.0, indicating that poor behavioral conduct had an impact on lowering self-esteem.

In terms of Behavioral Conduct, research participants identified themselves in a group that followed the rules or did not follow the rules. They indicated that it depended on the type of group with which they were hanging out with at the time that determined their behavioral conduct. In this case, all participants indicated an athletic group when answering questions from the Behavioral Conduct domain.

Global Self-Worth had the third highest research participant mean score (3.33) of

any other domain. This supports the research indicating that athletes who participate in sport may have a higher self-esteem. Specifically, Harter (1985) found the degree to which one is successful in domains deemed important, and one's perceptions of the attitudes which others hold toward the self, strongly influence the level of one's global self-worth. A mean score of 3.33 suggests a relatively high level of self-esteem. Thirty-two of the 41 research participants believed how they were perceived by others in each domain to be an important contributor to increasing their levels of self-esteem. In contrast, nine participants had a Global Self-Worth mean score below 3.0, suggesting that the perceptions of others and their experiences with others decreased their levels of self-esteem.

The overall mean score for all individuals in each category was 3.2, indicating that as a group, all domains contributed somewhat to heightened levels of self-esteem.

It is important to note that Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, and Global Self-Worth were extremely close to one another and had the highest mean scores (all averaging above 3.0) of the six domains. This suggests that the travel hockey players believed these four domains increased self-esteem. In contrast, Scholastic Competence and Behavioral Conduct were both below a mean score of 3.0 indicating that these two domains lowered self-esteem.

The survey revealed four particular travel hockey players who were at opposite ends of the spectrum. One participant had the lowest overall mean score (2.1) out of the 41 research participants. For this participant, Scholastic Competence had an average mean score of 1.8, indicating that this player felt that school had a large impact on his self-esteem. Athletic Competence and Physical Appearance tied for the lowest mean

score of 1.7, further demonstrating that this individual's experiences in these areas had a dramatic impact on his level of self-esteem. Social Acceptance and Global Self-Worth both had a mean score of 2.3. With this travel hockey player it was difficult ascertaining what experiences were the most significant determinant of his self-esteem. However, it is clear to the researcher that each domain put considerable strain on lowering his levels of self-esteem. The Behavioral Conduct domain had a mean score of 2.7, which was much higher than the other five domains. Perhaps this individual believed that his behavior provided an opportunity to meet expectations. It was an element within his control that could increase his self-esteem. All of these findings indicate that this research participant lacked confidence and was uncomfortable when placed in several of these domains resulting in having a dramatic impact on lowering self-esteem. The interview for this participant support these findings from the SPPC in that he acknowledged that school and his teammates were the most probable environment and group to influence his self-esteem.

This research participant had the second lowest mean score (2.3) out of the 41 travel hockey players. This individual had a mean score of 3.0 in the domain of Social Acceptance, indicating that he felt he belongs in a group setting where others were accepting of him. His self-esteem was positively affected by this experience influence. Scholastic Competence (2.5), Athletic Competence (2.2), and Global Self-Worth (2.3) all hovered around the same mean score, indicating that each held a similar moderate effect on his self-esteem. Since this research participant valued being socially accepted by others, he deemed Physical Appearance (1.8) to be a critical influence when it came to his levels of self-esteem. Even though he had more confidence in his social skills, his

Physical Appearance mean scores indicated diminished levels of self-esteem. Behavioral Conduct also had a mean score of 1.8, signifying that how he acted when in the presence of others significantly changed his level of self-esteem, especially when social acceptance was looming. His interview supports his value of wanting to be socially accepted by others. "It doesn't matter really what sport I play, I'm only doing it to get and stay involved with others my own age. Maybe then I can become more accepted and be able to hang out with them."

The next two research participants had an overall mean score of 3.8 indicating to the researcher that they both placed a high value on these domains and how they affected their self-esteem. The first hockey player had a mean score of 4.0 in Global Self-Worth, indicating that he felt competent in all domains impacting on his overall self-esteem. The other five domains ranged from 3.7 to 3.8, providing further evidence that this individual had very high self-esteem. These results are supported from his interview where he indicated that a variety of different groups were the most important to him when he evaluated his self-esteem. This also indicates that this individual may have a positive outlook on life, is competent at almost anything he tries, and has a level of self-esteem unattainable by many.

This research participant also had a mean score of 4.0 in Global Self-Worth. He also had a mean score of 4.0 in Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, and Athletic Competence. Even though Physical Appearance (3.5), and Behavioral Conduct (3.3) were somewhat lower than the other domains, these categories still reflected high self-esteem. Placing the highest values on Scholastic Competence, Athletic Competence, and Social Acceptance indicates that this individual believed school and a team setting may

have provided the best opportunities for increasing and maintaining high levels of self-esteem while in a social setting. This was supported in the interview where the individual felt that school and teammates were the most significant factors when shaping his self-esteem. "I really don't mind school all that much, I know it is important, but it also allows me to get and stay involved with others. Whether I am a peer tutor or a leader on a sports team, it makes me feel good about myself. When I play hockey, I get a chance to be myself knowing that others on the team will support me. It provides a fun environment for me where I can be with kids with similar interests."

When participants were asked who got them started in hockey, their father was identified as the primary influence. The players' experiences were being directly affected by a parental figure. In all cases, the players believed that their father, although harsh at times, gave them the necessary push and determination when it came to being successful at hockey. The participants did not feel that their self-esteem was being lowered in any way, viewing dad as a positive element in the travel hockey experience. Many of the research participants believed that their father was their primary hockey provider because in Canada, hockey has traditionally been a close link for fathers and sons. Yet other players believed their fathers were involved simply due to a parental division of labor. For example, if participants had more siblings where both parents were together, the father would be responsible for traditional *boy sports* (hockey, baseball, lacrosse) and the mother would be responsible for traditional *girl sports* (figure skating, softball, dance). In one case, the player mentioned it was a convenience issue. Whoever was available to take him to practices and games did so. It just happened to work out that it was his dad most of the time. Many of the participants also mentioned the strong support from within

the family. The parents were always visible at most practices and games. This supports the research of Walker and Greene (1986) indicating that parental support, encouragement, and affection were positively related to the child's self-esteem. Studies showed that the level of self-esteem among adolescents was impacted by the relationships built within a social context. This relationship between parents and their children was a major factor in the development of their self-esteem. Other answers included mom and dad, as well as uncle and cousin, again indicating that family is involved at some level in the adolescent's life. Two participants mentioned that they began to play because their father signed them up and they learned to love it. One research participant however, cited watching hockey on television as the reason for getting interested and eventually playing the sport. This dynamic suggests a possible link between the media and sport and poses an interesting question for future research studies.

One of the significant factors that could be overlooked was the age level at which these individuals began playing hockey. Five years of age is relatively young for someone to begin playing hockey (this did not include the time in which these players began skating). In either case, the younger an individual begins, the more experiences he will have. The individual can begin shaping his views and identifying what factors he sees as important in the hockey environment. The influence of sport in the development of self-esteem is being nurtured the moment this youngster ties up his skates.

Many of the respondents believed that they began at such an early age due to opportunity and encouragement at home. Hellstedt (1988) found sports could help strengthen and preserve the family, promote individual growth and development, and provide a fun outlet for everyone who participated. In a related study, Foon (1989) found

that sports participation was positively related to self-esteem when affiliated with the family. Two participants did not start playing hockey until the age of 11 and 13 respectively. One indicated that he did not get interested in the sport until he began watching it on television. That was the only reason he gave for starting at such a late age.

When the players were asked why they decided to play hockey, three answers emerged. The first reason was for the fun of it; the second most popular response was to make new friends; and the third reason was because others encouraged them and said they had a natural ability for the sport. Research which investigated the reasons for participation and motivation in youth sports conducted by Sapp and Haubenstricker (1978) and Gill, Gross, and Huddleston (1983) support these findings indicating that youngsters competed in sports to have fun, improve their sports skills, to become physically fit, to make new friends and to participate. Although achievement and status were mentioned as additional reasons for participation, they were not a high priority for the children surveyed in the researchers' study (Gill, Gross, Huddleson). Other popular responses included that they enjoyed watching the sport live and on television whenever possible. Some indicated that it was a Canadian game and they felt almost a sense of duty to play.

The research participants believed that hockey was the best sport because it was the most fun, fast paced activity that could keep them in shape. Several indicated that they found girls were more attracted to them than others at their school because the girls knew they played hockey. The Social Acceptance and Physical Appearance domains also supported these responses by the players. Both averaged above 3.0 on Harter's SPPC. Some indicated that hockey and its busy schedule kept them out of trouble and in one



case helped the child develop a sense of prioritizing activities. This individual indicated that it helped him in school to get and stay organized. Behavioral Conduct was the second lowest mean score of all the domains supporting the fact that only two participants mentioned hockey as a means of keeping them out of trouble. One player responded, "If I didn't have hockey, I would be getting into all kinds of trouble with my other group of friends."

Having fun and being able to socialize with other adolescents their same age had a significant impact in raising their self-esteem levels. This was also evident in Harter's SPPC where Social Acceptance had the highest overall mean score of any other domain. It could be argued that travel hockey provided an environment where players had some degree of control over what and how their experiences influenced self-esteem. For example, once the team was picked they knew who their teammates were, what role they played, their schedule, coach, and when the year ended. This provided an environment where players could be themselves, giving them some control on how they perceived their experiences.

One of the surprising findings in this study had only four of the 41 research participants mention a professional hockey career. Though they were involved at a higher level of hockey in the minor system, they did not put a lot of hope into making the NHL. Instead, many viewed hockey as an opportunity to do something they liked with people whose company they enjoyed. Once again, these players choose the experiences that would shape their self-esteem. Some participants mentioned that they only kept playing the sport because the girls liked it, they belonged to a group of players with the same ideals, and it helped with their social lives on and off the ice. This supports Pangrazi's

(1982) research indicating that a child who is positively oriented and has a sense of belonging, worth, and competence possesses a strong foundation for self-esteem enhancement. Delaney and Lee (1995) found high physically active adolescents scored higher in levels of self-esteem supporting Pease and Anderson's (1986) notion that children's sport can be considered a base for the development of well-founded adjustment skills and *good self-concept*. Supporting Harter's SPPC in the Social Acceptance domain, several research participants believed playing travel hockey increased their opportunities to make new friends when traveling and playing against other teams. "I love the travel aspect of minor hockey. I get to go places, stay overnight in hotels and meet lots of people my age. I especially like the opportunities we get to board with other players from another team." In studies conducted by Coopersmith (1967) and Scanlan (1978) sports competition was found to be an important area for children in which motor competence was publicly demonstrated and socially evaluated. Social evaluation was gained from adults who were very important to the child, such as coaches and parents, and through players' ability comparisons with teammates and opponents (Lundgren & Schwab, 1977; McGuire & Cook, 1984; Scanlan, 1978).

When the participants were asked how they got to be good at hockey three key responses kept resurfacing. Practice was the most significant reason for the players performing at their current levels. Natural ability was another reason why the athletes believed to be so successful at the sport. Self-discipline was another factor that several players identified as a major reason for their current talent level. Practice and coaching may have been a synonymous term when speaking with the players. However, two participants mentioned that the sport schedule interfered with other endeavors feeling that

practices could be revised to accommodate other adolescent needs. They felt that even though they enjoyed playing the sport, they didn't particularly like how the schedule was set-up. One participant further explained that game nights were during the week-ends, when other friends were having parties and other social activities. "It's not that I don't like all the practices and games, it's just that Minor Hockey should be more accommodating."

The research participants felt that practice was the most significant contributor to helping them be successful in sport. The coach continually surfaced as the underlying element in their success. Many of the participants believed that having a good coach (one who was fair, consistent, and respectful) helped to shape how they viewed themselves as a player. When the coach congratulated them on scoring a goal, making a nice play, or working hard, the player would feel good about what he had accomplished. However, if the player experienced being yelled at, not having a regular shift, or even laughed at for making a mistake, the player felt upset. "I'm really fortunate to be able to play for this coach this year. He may come across mean at times, but he shows us respect by allowing us to make mistakes and giving us opportunities to fix them. He values what we bring to this team, giving some of us a desire to improve." Weinberg (1981, May) found that it was the responsibility of each coach to incorporate the individual needs of the athletes into a coaching style that would help make the athletic experience a positive one for each child. Smith and Smoll (1982) found that young athletes whose coaches used positive encouragement had a higher self-esteem at the end of the season than did children who had less supportive coaches. Participants who mentioned the coach as an underlying factor in their success, also mentioned the importance of him being a role model,

someone who they could look up to as a player. How coaches were picked was an important decision, especially when it came to how it would affect their experiences in the sport. As many research participants stated, the coach had a direct impact on what type of experience they had while playing, which affected their level of self-esteem.

Three research participants mentioned that their dad had pushed them to the level that they are now. When asked if this was a good or bad thing, all three responded positively, indicating that it improved their work ethic in sports and life in general. Walker and Greene (1986) believed that although adolescence has generally been viewed as a period where individuals seek autonomy from their parents and family, the relationships between adolescents and their parents could also be a significant predictor of self-esteem. When adolescents became less dependent upon their parents as they grew older, the impact that these relationships had on self-esteem did not diminish. Other researchers (Leff & Hoyle, 1995; McElroy, 1982) supported this finding, indicating that when young males and females have parental support in conjunction with their participation in sports, as opposed to parental pressure, the chances for increased self-esteem were greater.

Having fun, being part of a team, socializing, and forging friendships were the most important factors when the participants were asked what they liked about playing hockey. Hellstedt (1988) found that most children benefited from participation in competitive sports. They had fun, met friends, and learned skills that would help them throughout life. Winning, scoring goals, and physical contact were all secondary, which contradicted the research findings of Iso-Ahola (1977) who stated that a win-loss record was an important factor in the formation of self-concept.

One respondent asked a rhetorical question, “If the game is for fun, then why do we keep score at such a young age?” This question supports the research of Coopersmith (1967) and Read (1968) whose results indicated that males who experienced success in athletics tended to enjoy higher levels of self-esteem than those who usually experienced losing.

The research participants had several opinions on what they liked the least about playing hockey. Some indicated that the expense of the equipment was a bit of a problem from year to year indicating that social class may be a factor in travel hockey. Two of the participants did not like how some players would take the game too seriously and create a negative atmosphere during practices and games. Others indicated that the coaches’ behaviors on the bench and during practices could also be improved at times. When I probed these individuals, they explained that the coach was a role model for the players and needs to display a professional demeanor when coaching during practices and games. Others felt that the fans, including the parents sometimes got overly involved in the action of the game when they should be exhibiting restraint. During games, illegal hits and perceived unfair referees were dislikes indicated by the players. Several of the participants also felt that opposing players would get away with breaking the rules, while the referee continued to be overly harsh by calling repeated penalties on them. This supports the behavioral mean scores from Harter’s SPPC, indicating that negative behavior on and off the ice, significantly lowered the perceived competence levels of the participants. The players’ athletic competence may also be adversely affected by their perceptions during the course of the game.

All of the players would have been extremely upset if they were unable to play

hockey again. Some participants indicated that they would find an alternative way to get involved in the sport at any cost. This indicates that hockey is something that they value. It makes them feel good about themselves, increasing self-esteem.

Several responses were given when they were asked what they would change if they were President of Minor Hockey. Many of the participants indicated that they would change how teams are picked at the beginning of the year. The participants felt that it was unfair that they had to try-out for a triple 'A' team and get cut before they could try-out for a lower level team. The participants felt it was demeaning to be cut in order to try-out for a different level. The consensus from the interviews suggests that another, more appropriate system needs to be implemented. Several participants indicated that this negatively influenced their experiences in the Minor Hockey system as well as how they performed as a player. Something must be done to protect their levels of self-esteem. Getting cut contributes to lowered self-esteem.

The majority of the respondents believed that they would make rule changes such as no red line. This line prevents players from passing the puck more than two lines. When this occurs, it is considered to be an off-side. An off-side occurs when the puck is passed through more than two consecutive lines in the neutral zone or an offensive player crosses the opponents' blue-line before the puck. Respondents believed that these rules slowed the game down, limiting the amount of time to play the game.

According to Purkey, Cage, and Graves (1973) self-esteem was a personal judgment of *worthiness* that was expressed in the attitudes the individual held. The researchers' found that positive self-esteem was a precursor to positive growth and development, and children who doubted their ability became their own worst enemies.

The more doubt a child had about completing an assigned task or performing an athletic skill, the lower the child's self-esteem. This also supported the mean scores for Athletic Competence and Social Acceptance in Harter's SPPC. The athletes need to perform and be accepted by others was paramount to maintaining or increasing their levels of self-esteem.

Still, several players mentioned the importance of changing several of the key rules in minor hockey. For example, two players wanted to reduce or eliminate the fighting rule, which is a five minute penalty and a game misconduct, and increase penalty minutes for players who checked from behind. Many participants felt that a five minute penalty was too harsh for something that they considered to be part of the game. Other participants wanted to ensure fair ice-time and the length of the games. Referees and their ability to control the game equally for both sides was again a major concern for the players. This leaves the researcher to conclude that either the parents or the coach may be skewing this attitude of fair and unfair referees.

Only one participant differentiated between houseleague and travel, indicating that if you want to have fun, play houseleague. Several of the research participants believed that the game was fine just the way it is, and to change it could have a negative impact on how the game is played. When asked what they meant by this, one indicated that major rule changes could take the fun out of the sport and possibly further tighten the restrictions that are already in place. Less playing time, shortened game lengths, and an increase in penalties were the common concerns. This supports the literature that suggests youth just want to play and have fun and not be bound by competitive rules (Gill, Gross, & Huddleston; Hellstedt, 1988).

The last question provided the players with an opportunity to determine what made them the way they were when it came to playing hockey. Many participants cited their dad, their friends, and their ability to play as the major factors. Still, others believed that being part of the team and learning with their peers and through their coaches made them a better player and a better person. In Sander's (1981) study, self-esteem was found to be unimportant in individuals who achieved success in athletic competition. Instead, positive coaching styles had a more profound impact on self-esteem than the success experienced in competition. Research conducted by Hines and Groves (1989) substantiated the importance of competition and participation because of fun but, in addition, indicated that the coach's assessments of ability and intentions of the participant were also extremely important factors in the development of self-esteem.

Parents and spectators also surfaced as a problem area in how the players' experiences were influenced. Although Minor Hockey does have a current program in place, many players still believed that educating the parents and spectators as to what constitutes a positive, supportive environment in which practices and games were held is critical. The environment was significant as to how these hockey players viewed their experiences. For example, one player briefly discussed how his parents would yell at the referee, his coach, and sometimes him from the stands. As a result, the player was not enjoying the sport lowering his self-esteem. "I try to talk to my parents about not yelling from the stands, how it embarrasses me. They say O.K., but the next game they are at it again."

Above anything else, the players enjoyed having fun, being part of a team, socializing, and forging friendships. They felt that these were the most important reasons



for playing travel hockey.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

#### Summary and Conclusions

This study has attempted to identify the experiences that influence adolescent self-esteem in a travel hockey environment.

Forty-one players between the ages of 13 and 15 who played travel hockey were participants in this study. Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children was used to examine domain specific judgments of competence in five domains; Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, Behavioral Conduct, as well as Global Self-Worth. A semi-structured and informal interview was also conducted with the players. The data from Harter's SPPC was coded using the *Manual for the Self-Perception Profile for Children*. Mean scores were taken and descriptively analyzed for each domain. The responses to the interview questions were also coded according to themes, taking all responses into consideration.

Harter's SPPC instrument was useful when analyzing the mean scores descriptively. The interview process provided elaboration on the SPPC responses while allowing the researcher to identify other areas influencing self-esteem.

The interview process complimented the SPPC in that it also identified several key areas where experiences were directly affecting the participants' levels of self-esteem. Since this was qualitative data, it was impossible to identify which factor played a more significant role over others. However, it was possible to identify areas in the travel hockey system that could be improved upon, and in some cases maintained for the benefit

of those using the system.

The SPPC identified social acceptance (3.41) as the domain with the highest self-esteem score. Athletic competence (3.35) and physical appearance (3.10) were second and third. These findings were supported and further validated from the responses given during the interview process.

The areas identified by the travel hockey players that affected how they perceived their experiences were: their family, the age at which they started playing, the media, having fun, socializing, being part of a team, and the coach.

The players believed that the hockey environment had the potential to create positive effects on their levels of self-esteem, but the experiences in which they played the game could be improved. This suggests that there were also moments when the hockey environment had the potential to have a negative influence on self-esteem. The system in which teams are picked, the types of volunteers, and the schedules for when games are played were concerns of several of the participants.

The family was an important contributor to how the players perceived their experiences influencing self-esteem. Although it was difficult to determine how much impact the family had, it was essential to acknowledge that the family was the support system from which the player developed his beliefs and value system. It is important that Minor Hockey recognize that each player has their own unique identity. A system to develop their coaches and volunteers to be able to recognize and appreciate these differences should be a priority.

The average age of players in this sample to begin playing hockey was five. This was a meaningful finding because it showed the long term commitment an individual puts

fourth within a particular hockey system. Both players and families of players commit considerable time and money over many years in order to compete in Minor Hockey systems. Minor Hockey needs to recognize this and appreciate the important role that coaches, administrators, and all Minor Hockey volunteers will play in the shaping of their participants' lives.

The media was another important contributor to how players viewed the game. Although this was not a focus of this study, it is worth noting that the media directly impacts adolescent self-esteem. The newspaper and radio play an integral part. Perhaps Minor Hockey could develop a more inclusive system when identifying successes and failures in the newspaper and on the local news. Players, coaches, and teams appreciate being recognized for their accomplishments.

Players choose having fun, socializing, and being part of the team as the most important factors for playing the game. They did not identify the National Hockey League as the main reason for playing. Even though these athletes were participating at a travel level of play, most felt that hockey was just another aspect of their lives, one that they might possibly outgrow. Based on these findings, it appears that children want to play for the fun of the game, and many participants do not want anything else from it. As a parent or coach, it is important not to lose sight of who is playing the game, and the reasons why they are playing it. It is, after all, just a game!

Participating in sport at any level has the potential to impart and reinforce valuable life skills for our youth. The coach and volunteers help to guide the players in the right direction. They learn how to work together even if they don't like one another, to problem solve in the most intense situations and how to cope with successes and

failures in a positive fashion. The Minor Hockey system is developing and shaping individuals' values and beliefs, just as their family and friends do. This is an important role that must be taken seriously.

Minor Hockey has made great strides in assuring they have the best possible coach for the positions available at the initial stages of the season. Currently, coaches must be certified and hold the proper accreditation before securing a position behind the bench. In addition to this certification, the researcher suggests some form of ongoing evaluation throughout the course of the season. The coach has the greatest direct impact on the players levels of self-esteem and it is important that he is a role model that the players look up to.

Several of the players stressed the need to change the try-out system for minor hockey. They felt it was demeaning, knowing that they would have to first be cut from a triple A team before being able to try-out and play for a lower level team. This had a direct negative impact on their self-esteem. For a system that requires a registration fee, more should be done to identify ways in which try-outs could be carried out to enhance a players self-esteem. For example, have individuals begin try-outs from a lower level team and offer those who show a higher caliber of talent, the opportunity to try-out for a higher level. Although this suggestion may not eliminate negative self-esteem, it will give players a choice, instead of dictating their choices.

Volunteers are an integral part of the Minor Hockey system, and without them hockey organizations would be unable to function. Although there are initial safe guards already in place for identifying appropriate volunteers, Minor Hockey should develop some type of seasonal evaluation program to ensure everything is running smoothly.

Perhaps a committee could be developed to perform a simple check on volunteers and provide that volunteer with feedback. People always appreciate being told when they are doing a good job, and if they are not, Minor Hockey has a duty to its players to tell the volunteers.

The schedules for when games were played was a concern from several of the participants. They felt that the schedule was not attuned to their adolescent needs. They wanted more games during the week and less activities on their week-end which would lead to more balance in their social lives. Although this was a need that players wanted addressed, the reality is that Minor Hockey is already dealing with limited ice-time and implementing such a change would be difficult. Perhaps one suggestion could be to re-prioritize ice-time schedules. Assuming that Minor Hockey books ice-time in blocks, the coaches could be given the number of practices and game days prior to the beginning of the season. This would allow for some flexibility in total scheduling. Some restraints would have to be initiated to ensure that a Novice or Atom team would not end up with an unreasonably late ice-time slot.

In this study, I have attempted to illustrate how boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing self-esteem. The factors affecting the self-esteem of these three adolescent travel hockey teams presents a unique case. The results from this study can assist those practitioners who are interested in applying this study to other sport domains. It is my hope that those who are involved in some aspect of the minor hockey system take notice that they can make a difference by shaping the experiences that influence the self-esteem of those who play hockey.

### Recommendations for Future Research

This research will hopefully increase awareness of how an adolescents' experience directly affects their levels of self-esteem. More research is needed to gain further understanding about factors that influence an athlete's self-esteem in sport. This knowledge would assist in the development of a healthy sporting experience, with self-esteem considered an important and integral component of that experience.

The nature of this study revealed many exploratory domains and resulted in several new questions which remain unanswered. One participant mentioned the media as a major influence on his decision to play organized sport, and a future study investigating the influence of media on self-esteem could prove valuable. Perhaps another domain could be added to Harter's SPPC to measure what effect the media has on an adolescent's self-esteem.

Another potential area for study is the current process to identify potential problem areas in the recruitment and hiring of coaches. The hiring and retention of coaches and how it affects a child's self-esteem may yield some important information.

Another issue that arose during the course of the study was the division of socio economic class, race, and ethnicity. Although this was not a focus of the study, research in this area could be valuable given the multi-cultural nature of our society. Questions need to be researched regarding potential self-esteem implications for different ethnicity's, races, and socio economic classes of participants.

How games are played and points are kept, the behavior of the spectators during the course of a game, and how the players, coaches, and fans react to the officiating during a match may also have a direct influence on how a players self-esteem is affected.

The research in this area is limited at best and could prove to be fertile ground for future researchers.

Future studies could be longitudinal in nature, focusing on participants in different settings, other sports, and gender. Using a participant-*as*-observer technique with the case study method could provide some team specific findings.

In the field of self-esteem and sport, continuous efforts should be made to test and develop theoretical models that understand self-esteem related specifically to sport. As was found in this research, qualitative research is particularly helpful in theoretical development as it offers better chances to understand the underlying meaning of what is studied. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods may be the most effective way to gain a more complete understanding of the experiences that influence the levels of self-esteem in an athlete.



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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## SELF-PERCEPTION PROFILE FOR CHILDREN (SPPC)

## What I Am Like

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Group \_\_\_\_\_

Boy or Girl (circle which)

## SAMPLE SENTENCE

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me
(a)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids would rather play outdoors in their spare time	BUT	Other kids would rather watch T.V.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids feel that they are very <i>good</i> at their school work	BUT	Other kids worry about whether they can do the school work assigned to them.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids find it <i>hard</i> to make friends	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty easy to make friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids do very <i>well</i> at all kinds of sports	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> feel that they are very good when it comes to sports.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are <i>happy</i> with the way they look	BUT	Other kids are <i>not</i> happy with the way they look.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids often do <i>not</i> like the way they <i>behave</i>	BUT	Other kids usually <i>like</i> the way they behave.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are often <i>unhappy</i> with themselves	BUT	Other kids are pretty <i>pleased</i> with themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids feel like they are <i>just as smart</i> as other kids their age	BUT	Other kids aren't so sure and <i>wonder</i> if they are as smart.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids have <i>alot</i> of friends	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> have very many friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids wish they could be alot better at sports	BUT	Other kids feel they are good enough at sports.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are <i>happy</i> with their height and weight	BUT	Other kids wish their height or weight were <i>different</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids usually do the <i>right</i> thing	BUT	Other kids often <i>don't</i> do the right thing.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <i>don't</i> like the way they are leading their life	BUT	Other kids <i>do</i> like the way they are leading their life.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are pretty <i>slow</i> in finlshing their school work	BUT	Other kids can do their school work <i>quickly</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids would like to have alot more friends	BUT	Other kids have as many friends as they want.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids think they could do well at just about any new sports activity they haven't tried before	BUT	Other kids are afraid they might <i>not</i> do well at sports they haven't ever tried.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids wish their body was <i>different</i>	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> their body the way it is.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids usually <i>act</i> the way they know they are <i>supposed</i> to	BUT	Other kids often <i>don't</i> act the way they are supposed to.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are <i>happy</i> with themselves as a person	BUT	Other kids are often <i>not</i> happy with themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids often <i>forget</i> what they learn	BUT	Other kids can remember things <i>easily</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are always doing things with <i>alot</i> of kids	BUT	Other kids usually do things <i>by themselves</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me	
21.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids feel that they are <i>better</i> than others their age at sports	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> feel they can play as well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids wish their physical appearance (how they look) was <i>different</i>	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> their physical appearance the way it is.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids usually get in <i>trouble</i> because of things they do	BUT	Other kids usually <i>don't</i> do things that get them in trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <i>like</i> the kind of <i>person</i> they are	BUT	Other kids often wish they were someone else.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids do <i>very well</i> at their classwork	BUT	Other kids <i>don't</i> do very well at their classwork.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids wish that more people their age liked them	BUT	Other kids feel that most people their age <i>do</i> like them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In games and sports some kids usually <i>watch</i> instead of play	BUT	Other kids usually <i>play</i> rather than just watch.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids wish something about their face or hair looked <i>different</i>	BUT	Other kids <i>like</i> their face and hair the way they are.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids do things they know they <i>shouldn't</i> do	BUT	Other kids <i>hardly ever</i> do things they know they shouldn't do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are very <i>happy</i> being the way they are	BUT	Other kids wish they were <i>different</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids have <i>trouble</i> figuring out the answers in school	BUT	Other kids almost <i>always</i> can figure out the answers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids are <i>popular</i> with others their age	BUT	Other kids are <i>not</i> very popular.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Really True for me	Sort of True for me			Sort of True for me	Really True for me	
33.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <i>don't</i> do well at new outdoor games	BUT	Other kids are <i>good</i> at new games right away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids think that they are good looking	BUT	Other kids think that they are not very good looking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids behave themselves very well	BUT	Other kids often find it hard to behave themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some kids <i>are</i> not very happy with the way they do alot of things	BUT	Other kids think the way they do things is <i>fine</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Susan Harter, Ph.D., University of Denver, 1985

## APPENDIX B

## INTERVIEW

I would like to remind you that there are no wrong answers and everything will remain confidential, meaning that as the researcher I will not allow your answers to be viewed by anyone else, that includes your parents and your coach. I also strongly encourage you to keep your responses between you and I.

- (1) Who got you started in hockey?
- (2) What age did you start playing hockey?
- (3) Why did you decide to play hockey?
- (4) Why do you continue to play hockey instead of another sport?
- (5) How did you get to be as good as you are at hockey?
- (6) **Probing questions (Use only if needed)** It is because you enjoy it? To become a professional hockey player in the National Hockey League (NHL)? It is because you friends play?
- (7) What are the two things you like most about playing hockey?
- (8) What are the two things you like least about playing hockey?
- (9) How would you feel if you could never play hockey again?
- (10) What are two things you would change if you were the president of Minor Hockey?
- (11) What are two things you would keep the same if you were the president of Minor Hockey?
- (12) What do you think made you the way you are when it comes to playing hockey? Is it because of personal effort: natural ability; the actions of significant others (best friend, teammates, coach, parents); or you are not sure why you feel the way you do?
- (13) **Probing questions (Use only if needed)** Why do you think you answered the way you did. For example, do you think playing hockey helps you do well in the classroom? Why or why not?
- (14) Who were you comparing yourself too, what group of kids, when you were thinking about what you were like when you answered the following questions from the survey that you just completed: (Some initial examples may be required. In (6) for example, you may want to extrapolate by asking if the child was comparing himself to students in his class, another class, school, from a sports team etc;)
- (15) Some kids do very well at their class work BUT other kids don't do very well at their class work (SCHOLASTIC COMPETENCE: Item 25 on SPPC).
- (16) Some kids feel that they are very good at their school work BUT other kids

worry about whether they can do the school work assigned to them (SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE: Item 8 on SPPC).

- (17) Some kids do very well at all kinds of sports BUT other kids don't feel that they are very good when it comes to sports (ATHLETIC COMPETENCE: Item 3 on SPPC).
- (18) Some kids think that they are good looking BUT other kids think that they are not very good looking (PHYSICAL APPEARANCE: Item 34 on SPPC).
- (19) Some kids usually act the way they know they are supposed to BUT other kids often don't act the way they are supposed to (BEHAVIORAL CONDUCT: Item 17 on SPPC).
- (20) Some kids are very happy being the way they are BUT other kids wish they were different (GLOBAL SELF-WORTH: Item 30 on SPPC).

In the next part of the interview process, I want to give you a chance to look over the questions that you have answered. You can not change any of your answers, but rather you are looking for one or more answers that you may want to add to. For example, if you answered Really True for Me to item 36 on the SPPC: Some kids are not very happy with the way they do a lot of things, if possible, I would like you to tell me why you feel that way.

At this time, I am going to leave any part of the survey and questions that were just asked open to discussion. If you would like to add anything to what has already been discussed or even something that hasn't been discussed, this is the time to do it. I would like to remind you that the purpose of this study is about how playing hockey makes you feel about yourself.

This is the conclusion of the interview. I would like to thank you for your time. If you would like to receive a copy of this study when the results have been completed, please let me know now so I can make the proper arrangements.

## APPENDIX C

## INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT: SPPC

Please read to the research participants prior to beginning the SPPC.

We have some sentences here and, as you can see from the top of our sheet where it says :What I am like,” we are interested in what each of you is like, what kind of a person you are like. This is a survey, **not** a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Since kids are very different from one another, each of you will be putting down something different. First let me explain how these questions work. There is a sample question at the top, marked (a). I’ll read it out loud and you follow along with me. (Examiner reads sample question.) This question talks about two kinds of kids, and we want to know which kids are most like you.

(1)So, what I want you to decide first is whether you are more like the kids on the left side who would rather play outdoors, or whether you are more like the kids on the right side who would rather watch T.V. Don’t mark anything yet, but first decide which kind of kid is *most like you*, and go to that side of the sentence.

(2)Now, the *second* thing I want you to think about, now that you have decided which kind of kids are most like you, is to decide whether that is only *sort of true for you*, or *really true for you*. If it’s only sort of true, then put an X in the box under sort of true; if it’s really true for you, then put an X in that box, under really true.

(3)For each sentence you only check *one* box. Sometimes it will be on one side of the page, another time it will be on the other side of the page, but you can only check one box for each sentence. You *don’t* check both sides, just the one side most like you.

(4)O.K., that one was just for practice. Now we have some more sentences which you are going to read to yourself. For each one, just check one box, the one the goes with what is true for you, what you are most like.

Harter, 1985, p. 11



## APPENDIX D

## INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT: INTERVIEW

Please read to the research participants prior to beginning the Interview.

(1)As a researcher I am interested in the reasons why you choose to participate in travel hockey. This is not a test nor will the results of this session be disclosed to anyone else. This session is being recorded for my research purposes only and will not be played for anyone else, nor will it be used in subsequent research.

(2)It is O.K. to say what is on you mind. As a researcher, I do not place judgement on your answers, rather I choose to use your answers to better the environment in which you participate.

(3)Your name was put on a piece of paper and put into a hat. There is no other reason, other than randomness for your turn taking place right now.

(4)I encourage you to participate in the questions being asked. If you do not feel comfortable answering a question, you do not have to. Again, you will not be punished for not answering a question.

(5)After I have completed asking the questions, please expand or add to anything that you feel is relevant to our discussion.

(6)This session is confidential. Let me also remind you that you do not have to answer the questions if you do not feel comfortable. Let's begin.

## APPENDIX E

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO  
WINDSOR MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

June 16, 2004

MX. XXXXXXX XXXXXXX  
President of the Windsor Minor Hockey Association  
XXX XXXXXXX XXXXXXX  
Windsor, ON XXX XXX  
(519) XXX-XXXX

Dear MX. XXXXXXX

As a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, I am writing this letter to request permission from the President of the Windsor Minor Hockey Association to conduct a research study that will fulfill the thesis requirements for the degree, Master of Education.

Approval to proceed has been granted by the Ethics Committee at the University of Windsor. Your permission to contact a coach in your Minor Hockey Association would be greatly appreciated. The information for this research study will be obtained using a questionnaire and interview format to be completed by the hockey player. In order to participate in the study the athletes will need to obtain permission from a parent/legal guardian and sign a letter of assent agreeing to participate in the study. The study has been categorized as minimal risk and the confidentiality of the athletes is assured. Copies of the research proposal, questionnaire, and interview are enclosed for your review.

Participation in this study will be completely voluntary. Those individuals who decide to participate will have the option of withdrawing at any time before or during the study without any repercussions. There are no known risks associated with the research. The results of the study will be made available upon request.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please contact either my supervisor for this project, Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address [XXXXX@XXXXXX](mailto:XXXXX@XXXXXX).

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Clayton Callow

## APPENDIX F

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD,  
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

September 14 ,2004

Dr. XXXXX XXXXX  
Chair of the Ethics Committee  
University of Windsor  
Windsor, Ontario

Dear Dr. XXXXXXXX:

As a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, I am writing this letter to request the permission of the Ethics Committee to conduct a research study that will fulfill the thesis requirements for the degree, Master of Education.

This study will examine how playing travel hockey influences perceived self-esteem in boys. This study will survey male adolescents aged 13-15 participating in the Windsor Minor Hockey League system. Research participants will be given one questionnaire (Self-Perception Profile for Children) and asked to participate in a follow-up interview.

There are no known risks associated with this study and all information will be kept confidential. Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please contact either my supervisor for this project, Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address XXXXX@XXXXXX.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Clayton Callow

## APPENDIX G

## LETTER OF PERMISSION TO THE COACH

June 16, 2004

MX. XXXXX XXXXXXXX  
Coach of XXXXXXX XXXXX XXXXXXX  
Windsor, ON  
XXX XXX

Dear MX. XXXXX:

As a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, I am writing this letter to request the permission of the coach to conduct a research study that will fulfill the thesis requirements for the degree, Master of Education.

This study will examine how playing travel hockey influences perceived self-esteem in boys. This study will survey male adolescents aged 13-15 participating in the Windsor Minor Hockey League system. Research participants will be given one questionnaire (Self-Perception Profile for Children) and asked to participate in a follow-up interview.

There are no known risks associated with this study and all information will be kept confidential. Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Should you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please contact either my supervisor for this project, Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address XXXXX@XXXXXX.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Clayton Callow

## APPENDIX H

## LETTER OF ASSENT TO THE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPANT

Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Minor Hockey Association \_\_\_\_\_

**HOW ADOLESCENT BOYS WHO PLAY TRAVEL HOCKEY PERCEIVE  
 THEIR EXPERIENCES INFLUENCING SELF-ESTEEM**

My supervisor for this project, Dr. Vern Stenlund, and myself, Clayton Callow are interested in learning about self-esteem and travel hockey. We are asking you and a lot of other children to work with me to find out about it.

If you agree to do this, I will ask you to answer a questionnaire and later to participate with your friends in an interview.

This is not a test like you usually have in school. You won't be graded on anything you do and the results will not affect your ice-time or other activities.

Your coaches, teachers, and parents and the other children will not know how you respond to the questionnaire. It will be just between you and me and my supervisor, Dr. Vern Stenlund.

Of course, you don't have to do this if you don't want to, even if your parents gave their permission. If you don't want to do this or your parents asked you not to do this, just tell me and you can leave the room. It is O.K. with me if you don't want to be in the study.

I am here to help better the environment in which you play travel hockey and any concerns regarding your safety are of utmost importance. If you tell me something that may have or will put you in danger, you must understand that I will disclose this information to your parents, or to the Children's Aid Society.

Do you have any questions?

Again, this study will not affect your ice-time, grades, or other activities even if you chose not to be in the study. If you agree to do this, I would like you to sign this paper. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_

The study on adolescent self-esteem and boys travel hockey has been explained to me and my questions answered. I would like to take part in the study.

---

(research participant signature)

## APPENDIX I

## LETTER OF INFORMATION

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**HOW ADOLESCENT BOYS WHO PLAY TRAVEL HOCKEY PERCEIVE  
THEIR EXPERIENCES INFLUENCING SELF-ESTEEM**

As the parent/ guardian, you are asked to give your son permission to participate in a research study conducted by Clayton Callow, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The supervisor for this project is Dr. Vern Stenlund from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results of this study will lead to fulfilling requirements for the degree, Master of Education.

If you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please feel free to contact either my supervisor Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address XXXXXX@XXXXXX.

## · PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to examine how playing travel hockey influences perceived self-esteem in boys.

## · PROCEDURES

If you allow your son to volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask your son to do the following things:

1. The researcher will initially administer a questionnaire (Self-Perception Profile for Children) and an individual interview from a pre-determined time in a designated room at the arena.
2. The total length of time to complete the questionnaire and interview will be approximately 30 minutes. The participant will only fill-out one questionnaire. Research participants will not be contacted for follow-up sessions related to the aforementioned study.
3. Research findings will be made available to research participants upon request by contacting either my supervisor, Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address XXXXXX@XXXXXX.

## · POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences in filling out the questionnaire.

There are no physical or psychological risks that might cause the researcher to terminate

the study.

· **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is anticipated that all participants in this study may be better able to think about their level of self-esteem when it comes to travel hockey. Coaches, parents, athletes, and the Minor Hockey Association may be better able to make adjustments, if any, to provide a positive environment for the sport. Finally, the results of this research may improve the game of hockey by focusing on competitive concerns and perhaps providing a variety of workshops for coaches, parents, and players to instill positive game values relating to self-esteem influences.

· **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The research participants of this study will receive no payment.

· **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any and all information that is obtained within this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your written permission. The instrument will be distinguished by clearly identifying male on the questionnaire. The papers will be collected by an assigned individual who will place them into a sealed envelope to secure the information for the use of analyzing data. The questionnaire will be retained until Dec. 31, 2005. All records will be shredded at the end of the study.

· **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

As the parent/ guardian of your son, you can choose if he can participate in this study. If you volunteer your son to be in this study, he may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing his data from the study. You may also refuse to have him answer any questions you don't want him to answer and still have him remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your son from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. As the researcher, I am here to help better the environment in which your son plays travel hockey and any concerns regarding his safety are of utmost importance. If he tells me something that includes any actual abuse or suspicion of abuse, you must understand that I will disclose this information to the Children's Aid Society.

· **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

If you are interested in obtaining the results of this study, please tell me directly so I can make the necessary arrangements for doing so. Otherwise, the results will be made available through the President and Vice-President of the Windsor Minor Hockey Association when the study has been concluded.

· **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your son's participation without penalty. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the

University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your son's rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Co-ordinator  
University of Windsor  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B3P4

Telephone: 519-XXX-XXXX, # XXXX  
E-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

---

Signature of Investigator

---

Date



## APPENDIX J

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**HOW ADOLESCENT BOYS WHO PLAY TRAVEL HOCKEY PERCEIVE  
THEIR EXPERIENCES INFLUENCING SELF-ESTEEM**

As the parent/ guardian, you are asked to give your son permission to participate in a research study conducted by Clayton Callow, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The supervisor for this project is Dr. Vern Stenlund from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. The results of this study will lead to fulfilling requirements for the degree, Master of Education.

If you have any questions or concerns with respect to the intended research, please feel free to contact either my supervisor Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address XXXXXX@XXXXXX.

## · PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to examine how playing travel hockey influences perceived self-esteem in boys.

## · PROCEDURES

If you allow your son to volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask your son to do the following things:

1. The researcher will initially administer a questionnaire (Self-Perception Profile for Children) and an individual interview from a pre-determined schedule in a designated room at the arena.
2. The total length of time to complete the questionnaire and interview will be approximately 30 minutes. The participant will only fill-out one questionnaire. Research participants will not be contacted for follow-up sessions related to the aforementioned study.
3. Research findings will be made available to research participants upon request by contacting either my supervisor, Dr. XXXX XXXXXXXXX at (519) XXX-XXXX Ext. XXXX or myself at (519) XXX-XXXX or at my email address XXXXXX@XXXXXX.

## · POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences in filling out the questionnaire. There are no physical or psychological risks that might cause the researcher to terminate the study.

· **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences in filling out the questionnaire.

There are no physical or psychological risks that might cause the researcher to terminate the study.

· **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is anticipated that all participants in this study may be better able to think about their level of self-esteem when it comes to travel hockey. Coaches, parents, athletes, and the Minor Hockey Association may be better able to make adjustments, if any, to provide a positive environment for the sport. Finally, the results of this research may improve the game of hockey by focusing on competitive concerns and perhaps providing a variety of workshops for coaches, parents, and players to instill positive game values relating to self-esteem influences.

· **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The research participants of this study will receive no payment.

· **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any and all information that is obtained within this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your written permission. The instrument will be distinguished by clearly identifying male on the questionnaire. The papers will be collected by an assigned individual who will place them into a sealed envelope to secure the information for the use of analyzing data. The questionnaire will be retained until Dec. 31, 2005. All records will be shredded at the end of the study.

· **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

As the parent/ guardian of your son, you can choose if he can participate in this study. If you volunteer your son to be in this study, he may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing his data from the study. You may also refuse to have him answer any questions you don't want him to answer and still have him remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your son from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. As the researcher, I am here to help better the environment in which your son plays travel hockey and any concerns regarding his safety are of utmost importance. If he tells me something that includes any actual abuse or suspicion of abuse, you must understand that I will disclose this information to the Children's Aid Society.

· **RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

If you are interested in obtaining the results of this study, please tell me directly so I can make the necessary arrangements for doing so. Otherwise, the results will be made available through the President and Vice-President of the Windsor Minor Hockey

Association when the study has been concluded.

#### RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your son's participation without penalty. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your son's rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Co-ordinator  
University of Windsor  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B3P4

Telephone: 519-XXX-XXXX, # XXXX  
E-mail: [ethics@uwindsor.ca](mailto:ethics@uwindsor.ca)

#### • SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT/ LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study "how adolescent boys who play travel hockey perceive their experiences influencing self-esteem" as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to allow my son to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Research participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/ Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### • SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

In my judgement, the parent/ guardian of the research participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent to have his/ her son participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## VITA AUCTORIS

Clayton Callow was born in 1976 in Chatham, Ontario. He graduated from Blenheim District High School in 1995. From there he went on to the University of Windsor Ontario where he obtained an Honours B. HK in 1999. In 2000, he completed his Junior/Intermediate degree in Education from the University of Windsor. That summer, he attained his senior qualifications in Physical Education at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario.

In the fall of 2000, he became a teacher, receiving his first job as a grade 4-6 Physical Education Specialist in East York at Chester Elementary. He returned to Windsor in 2001, got married, and continues to teach in Windsor at Gordon McGregor Public School for the past five years.

In the winter of 2003 he attained his Physical Education Specialist from the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor.

He is currently a candidate for the Master's degree in Education Administration at the University of Windsor and hopes to graduate in Winter 2005.