The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Impostor Phenomenon of Female Teachers for Kindergarten through Grade 12

Sheila F. Matthews
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dissertations

Part of the Educational Psychology Commons, Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons, and the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation-Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON OF FEMALE TEACHERS FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12

by

Sheila F. Matthews

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Counselor Education
and Counseling Psychology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 2001
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND IMPOSTOR
PHENOMENON OF FEMALE TEACHERS FOR
KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12

Sheila F. Matthews, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 2001

Some researchers have recognized the importance of understanding women’s experiences. Some psychosocial characteristics, such as low levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and low success expectations have been identified as barriers for women’s career development (Betz, 1994). Because many women have continued to select careers that are considered as female-dominated (e.g., teaching) and because psychosocial characteristics and experiences of teachers such as self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon can have an influence on their students’ self-esteem, this researcher believed that this is an important topic for continued research. Although these two concepts, self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, have been documented as two unrelated experiences (Clance, 1985), it does not seem a wise course of action to abandon further research in examining a possible relationship between them.

The primary purpose of the present study was to examine the psychosocial characteristics of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of a particular group of women. All of these women were school teachers, kindergarten through grade 12. The information gathered was used to determine the relationship between these two variables: self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. There was also an attempt to
determine if there was a difference between White and Black female teachers regarding self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Some selected demographics were used to determine if there were other personal variables that may help predict levels of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon.

There was evidence that although there was indication that senior high school teachers have problems with self-esteem, female teachers, kindergarten through grade 12, experience minor problems with self-esteem. In reviewing the difference between the Black and White teachers’ self-esteem, there was no significant difference between their mean scores. The evidence also demonstrates that teachers, kindergarten through grade 12, both Black and White, experience a moderate level of the impostor phenomenon. The findings for relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon are inconsistent with some researchers who report that there is no relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. The implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for further research are made.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Oveda S. (Parker) Fowler. Although she is not physically here to share in my success, I know that she is very proud of me and is watching from Heaven with a smile. Your soft-spoken voice, gentle touch, and beautiful smile taught me so much about faith, love, and life. As you loved me, your lessons of faith were lessons of life. *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you (Matthew 17:20).*

I also dedicate this dissertation to my sister, Brenda J. Parker. You never said good-bye without clearly expressing your love for me. I see your smile and can hear you also express how proud you are of me. Two other members of my family that I dedicate this dissertation to are my niece, Sonita Parker, and my nephew, Tyrone Parker.

Mommy, Brenda, Sonita, and Tyrone, I love you all, I miss you, and you will always be a part of me.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to acknowledge and give God the praise for all that I have accomplished. He has given me the strength to persevere.

Over the years there have been many individuals who have inspired me while reaching this point of my education and completing this dissertation. I would like to express my gratitude to these individuals.

Many of my family, friends, and colleagues at various times and places have been extremely supportive during this process. I want to thank my husband Michael and my two daughters, Nakia and Mika, for so much love, encouragement, and patience. You always let me know that you were there for me from beginning to end, and for that I will be forever grateful. A big thank you goes to my brothers and sisters, Grover (Cliff), Larry, Oveda (Carol), Arletha, Dennis (Denny), Darrow (White), Michael (Dobaby), and Toni. You all let me know in your own way (and I could elaborate on them if I had the space), that you believed in me, and your love, encouragement, and laughter certainly played an important part in my success. Another thank you goes to Diane, my dear friend. I thank you for your friendship, support, and encouragement. I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge a few more important people in my life. I must thank my mother-in-law, Ozell; my stepdaughter, Rita; and my husband’s brothers and sisters, Tommy, Aubrey, Dudley, Cheryl, and Barbara, for their support and encouragement.
Acknowledgments—Continued

There have been many others that fit the categories of family, friends, and colleagues that I would love to thank, but because of space, it is difficult to list you all by name. However, I hope that you know who you are, and know that I do thank you for your support and encouragement.

Much gratitude also goes to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Donna Talbot, for her knowledge and skills that she shared with me throughout this project. Her expertise in this area was obvious as she guided me through this entire project. I also would like to thank my committee members, Dr. John Geisler and Dr. M. Arthur Garmon, for their time, support, and valuable suggestions regarding my dissertation. I would also like to express my appreciation to Mike Walsh and Jeffrey Greene for their assistance and expertise in statistics. A special thanks also goes to Hope Smith for formatting this dissertation.

As I was dreaming new dreams, learning new things, and accepting new challenges, I was always aware that I was never along.

Thank you.

Sheila F. Matthews
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................................................................ ii
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................... 1
   The Background of the Problem ............................................................ 1
   Definitions of Terms ............................................................................... 12
   Overview .................................................................................................. 14

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .................................................... 15
   Career Issues ............................................................................................ 15
   Black Women’s Career Experiences ...................................................... 19
   Self-Esteem .............................................................................................. 26
   The Impostor Phenomenon ..................................................................... 30
   Women in Teaching Professions ........................................................... 34
   Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Impostor Phenomenon .......... 36
   Summary .................................................................................................. 37

III. METHODOLOGY ......................................................................................... 39
   Population and Sample ............................................................................ 40
   Data Collection Procedures .................................................................... 41
   Research Questions .................................................................................. 44

iv
CHAPTER

Instrumentation ........................................................................................................... 45

The Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) .................................................................................. 46

The Impostor Test (IT) ............................................................................................... 49

Demographic Questionnaire ...................................................................................... 54

Research Design ........................................................................................................ 54

Data Analysis ............................................................................................................. 55

Limitations ................................................................................................................ 57

IV. RESULTS .................................................................................................................. 58

Sample ......................................................................................................................... 58

Survey Data and Analyses ......................................................................................... 60

Self-Esteem, Impostor Phenomenon, and Selected Demographic Results ................. 64

Summary ..................................................................................................................... 72

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS .................................................... 74

Summary of the Study ................................................................................................. 74

Description ................................................................................................................ 74

Relevant Research ...................................................................................................... 75

Methodology ............................................................................................................... 76

Statistical Analyses .................................................................................................... 76

Summary of the Findings ............................................................................................. 77
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Preliminary Analyses ................................................................. 77
Discussion of the Findings .......................................................... 78
Conclusions ................................................................................. 79
Limitations ................................................................................... 82
Implications ................................................................................ 83
Directions for Future Research .................................................... 83

APPENDICES

A. Script for Participant Invitation and Explanation of Study ............. 87
B. Representatives' Script for Participant Invitation and Explanation of Study ................................................ 89
C. Demographic Questionnaire ...................................................... 91
D. Survey Packet Cover Letter ...................................................... 94
E. Participant Follow-up Letter ...................................................... 96
F. Humans Subjects Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval .... 98

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................. 100
LIST OF TABLES

1. Self-Esteem Scores by School Level ............................................................ 65
2. Impostor Phenomenon Scores by School Level .......................................... 65
3. One-way Analysis of Variance Summary of School Levels
   Differences on Self-Esteem ......................................................................... 67
4. Self-Esteem Scores by Race .......................................................................... 68
5. $t$ Test of Mean Scores on Index of Self-Esteem for
   Black and White Teacher .............................................................................. 68
6. One-way Analysis of Variance Summary of Differences
   of Impostor Phenomenon and School Levels.............................................. 69
7. Impostor Phenomenon Scores by Race........................................................ 70
8. $t$ Test of Mean Scores on the Impostor Test for
   Black and White Teachers ........................................................................... 70
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Background of the Problem

During the past 10 years scholars have conducted studies to learn more about the psychosocial experiences of women. However, the amount of information available is still limited, and therefore, to clearly understand women’s self-esteem and experiences of the impostor phenomenon, there is a need to go back to the 1970s and 1980s for information. The characteristic of separating knowledge and psychological experiences by gender, as well as race, is an associated complicating factor in effectively attempting to understand the experiences of women and possibly more specifically Black women. Some researchers have supported comparing the experiential differences between men and women, while others, such as some of those associated with the feminist movement perspective, have discouraged such research (Hirschy, 1999). There has been a reluctance to study the experiences of women. When viewed from the mental health standpoint of supporting and encouraging women of all races, this could have a restrictive effect on the developmental potential of women, individually and collectively. It is believed that studies of this nature could consequently impede the growth and development of the mental health movement as a whole. It is the hesitancy, resistance, and reluctance to
perceive that women's experiences are different than men's that often creates a barrier to understanding women's experiences.

Some researchers have recognized the importance of understanding women's experiences. Some psychosocial characteristics such as low levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and low success expectations have been identified as barriers for women's career development (Betz, 1994). Because many women have continued to select careers that are considered as female-dominated (e.g., teaching) and because psychosocial characteristics and experiences of teachers such as self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon can have an influence on their student's self-esteem, this researcher believed that this is an important topic for continued research. Although these two concepts, self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, have been documented as two unrelated experiences (Clance, 1985), it does not seem a wise course of action to abandon further research in examining a possible relationship between them.

From the literature that has focused on women's experiences, three distinct, yet closely interrelated areas have been identified: (1) the emphasis placed on how women are perceived differently than men, (2) women's experiences of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon, and (3) how these experiences (self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon) are related. Although this study is not concerned with the difference between women's and men's experiences, for a clearer perspective of what may influence women's self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, there was a short review of literature that reported on how women are perceived differently than
men. The researcher believed that a brief review of the literature could provide an opportunity to examine more closely women's self-esteem and experiences of the impostor phenomenon, and whether or not there is a difference between these two variables.

According to some researchers, messages from significant others and media stories have taught women the importance of assuming primary responsibility for child rearing, and to defer to the career priorities of their husbands or male significant others (Boyd, 1993). So what makes the messages sent to girls different from those sent to boys? Some understanding of these differences may come from an understanding of the dynamics of the feminist movement.

In Acker, Barry, and Esseveld's (1983) definition of feminism, women have been exploited, devalued, and oppressed. They believe that these issues have been ignored and/or justified by dominant White males. Women have been restricted to face particular social circumstances that have been considered an injustice of current U.S. society (Dewees, 2001). Kemp (1994) has also reported that in their educational as well as their professional environments, women have believed that their voices have not been heard. This may have been partly due to the assumption that the intuitive knowledge that has been associated more with women is more primitive than the objective modes of knowing that has been associated with men. It has also been assumed, according to Kemp, that women tend to respond with "emotions" while men respond with abstract "thinking." With the Western tradition of dividing human nature into dual but parallel streams, attributes traditionally
associated with the masculine are valued, studied, and articulated, while those
associated with the feminine tend to place women in a secondary status. Kaufman's
(1989) explanation of how women continue to be at a secondary status is similar to
Kemp's perspective on women. Kaufman stated:

The prestige professions are defined primarily in terms of men and the lives
they lead. The processes that maintain this male model are usually well
beyond a woman's control, however committed or dedicated she may be. No
matter what her personal characteristics, a woman is often assigned the
stereotypical characteristics of her sex, and despite her efforts to transcend
these stereotypes, certain structural features of the professions work against
her upward mobility. (p. 341)

Because of the socialization process, conditions of status, personal
characteristics, and other life events (i.e., widowhood, poor health, and single
parenthood), women are placed at a disadvantage. This process of socialization
results in distinctive psychological characteristics and behavioral responses that have
been associated with sex-related personal characteristics. These perspectives have
been the guiding principles for both men and women.

Although people are not always conscious of taking in other's perspectives,
repeated exposure to the same negative messages, can turn into beliefs. These
beliefs are unconsciously stored away until a situation or event occurs, whether
career or personally related, and the hidden message is pushed into the current stage
of reality (Boyd, 1993). The movement occurs when a decision is being made such
as furthering one's education, selecting a career path, or entering into a personal
relationship. The personal belief system that is used to follow through with such a
decision is often influenced by one's level of self-esteem and/or experience of the impostor phenomenon.

Because psychosocial characteristics of self-esteem and experiences of the impostor phenomenon are both considered as universal concepts, it is believed that everyone is born with them or with the potential of developing them. Images that are developed from these concepts and messages often influence other life experiences such as career opportunities and social inclusion, and therefore, may influence levels of self-esteem and experiences of the impostor phenomenon.

A concept that has been used to understand the difference between men and women's career opportunities has been referred to as gender-equity. Gender-equity in the area of career opportunities has been a significant and ongoing problem in the U.S. In studying gender inequality in the attainment of professional and technical occupations, Almquist (1989) refers to gender inequality as the differences between women and men in access to rewards, resources, positions, rights and privileges. Although gains have been made in employment equity, many women feel a need for further social, career and economic progress (Dinbaldo, 1994).

The inequality in the areas of social inclusion, career, and economic status may be influenced by a number of difficulties that affect the psychological well-being of women. In addition to the influence of psychosocial characteristics such as self-esteem (Kunz & Kalil, 1999) and the impostor phenomenon (Clance, 1985), the lack of positive role models and mentors (Ewing, Richardson, James-Myers, & Russell, 1996) may be factors that reinforce gender inequality.
It has been noted that concentration on issues that seem to influence gender inequality have increased because of the changing work and family roles of American women (Napholz, 1995). Because greater numbers of women have entered the work force, it has become increasingly important to understand the psychological well-being among these women (Napholz, 1995). Entering the work force can be considered a psychological benefit for women as well as a psychological liability. Napholz (1995) reported that psychological benefits of employment are more likely to be experienced by women who regard their work as a meaningful self-fulfilling activity. In contrast, working can be a psychological liability for women who experience low levels of self-esteem and/or high levels of impostor phenomenon because of low earnings, low-status occupations, and other barriers to personal happiness and success.

With respect to issues related to employment situations, as well as personal and social life events, the more information that is available about the effects of female psychological well-being, the more effective practitioners will be when working with female clients. Providing counseling professionals with more theoretical information about the dynamics of the psychological well-being of female clients may encourage more women to pursue career goals that they are capable of meeting. The professional must also be familiar with the effects of women's psychological issues such as low self-esteem and/or the experiences of high impostor phenomenon that can contribute to unnecessary depression and other experiences.
that could become barriers to career, social and other personal needs (Clance & O’Toole, 1987; Sanford & Donovan, 1984).

The research studies conducted by Sanford and Donovan (1984), although seemingly outdated for the present study, provided some of the few empirical studies on self-esteem of women. They stressed that understanding the psychological well being of women is necessary when encouraging and supporting the advancement of women. Regarding the dynamics that have influenced the psychological well-being of women, Sanford and Donovan noted that although there has been a major increase in the number of women who have entered the work force, most of them are working in low paying and low prestige jobs rather than careers offering higher pay and prestige. These are a few of the factors that can influence women’s self-esteem levels. Although more recent studies have acknowledged an increase in the number of women obtaining executive positions as well as an increase in salaries, these salaries were still only two thirds of what their male peers earned (Reynolds, 1994). Regardless of this change, many women continue to pursue careers in less prestigious, traditional female fields.

Why many women have continued to pursue careers in less prestigious and traditional fields is a question that may be supported in the studies of the impostor phenomenon. The impostor phenomenon is an internal experience of "phoniness" common among high achieving women who are unable to experience the personal gratification of success (Clance, 1985). The most relevant empirical research on impostor phenomenon (Clance, 1985; Clance & Imes, 1978; Clance & O’Toole,
1987) may also appear to be outdated for the present study; however, they were included because the concept of the impostor phenomenon is unexplored, and the literature available is limited. These author's report studies of internal barriers of empowerment and achievement. Some of the participants in these studies were career women in traditional female fields.

Several other researchers have explored the various reasons why about half of all women tend to seek careers in traditional female fields (Leet & Driggers, 1990). In 1987, the percentages of women in comparison to men in female-dominated careers (i.e., social workers, teachers, nurses, and librarians) were between 65.6% and 95.1% (Kaufman, 1989). Whether it is due to societal expectations or personal expectations, women have continued to expect less success in fields traditionally closed to them (Brown, Eisenberg, & Sawilowsky, 1997). Brown, Eisenberg, and Sawilowsky's study supported the idea that success expectations play a role in the career pursuits of women. Both Leet and Driggers' study, and the Brown et al. studies, suggest that expectations of success may be influenced by levels of self-esteem and/or experiences of the impostor phenomenon. Although nearly 10 million women have entered predominantly male fields (Kaufman, 1989), it is possible that many of these women still experience low self-esteem and/or high impostor phenomenon that may continue to influence their self-perceptions and expectations (Hodson & Sullivan, 1990). This may also influence further career change or advancement.
As previously stated, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of women entering fields that were traditionally closed to them because they were considered male fields (e.g., medicine, business, and engineering) (Kaufman, 1989). However, in an empirical study conducted by Lightbody, Siann, Tait, and Walsh (1997), it was concluded that even though there has been an increase in women entering traditional male fields, women continue to choose courses which lead to careers with higher levels of social involvement. In their study of 671 female college students who were enrolled in male dominated courses, more women continued to avoid technological courses. They also found that the female students who avoided technological courses did so because they preferred courses that led to work that allowed a higher level of social contact. There has been an effort to identify variables that may contribute to female students avoiding technological courses. It appears that these students tend to pursue courses that allow for high levels of social contact. There has also been an attempt to gain an understanding of how women perceive themselves, their personal expectations and their choice to pursue careers in traditionally female fields. Related to these issues, some researchers have studied various factors, including psychosocial characteristics such as self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon (Langford & Clance, 1993; Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992; Reitzes, Mutran, & Fernandez, 1994).

The primary purpose of the present study was to examine the psychosocial characteristics of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of a particular group of women. All of these women were school teachers, kindergarten through grade 12.
The information gathered was used to determine the relationship between these two variables; self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. There was also an attempt to determine if there was a difference between White and Black female teachers regarding self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Some selected demographics were used to determine if there were other personal variables that may help predict levels of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon.

Women in the profession of teaching were specifically selected because teaching is one of the occupations consistently identified as predominately female. Other reasons these teachers were selected to be participants in the study included: the convenience of working with a homogeneous group (career wise), the lack of information on the topic of women, and self-esteem, as well as women's experience with the impostor phenomenon. Another reason for the interest in studying this topic was raised in a study by Scott (1999). She stated that

because school can be a significant determinant of a student's sense of self, it is essential that school personnel not only understand the fluctuating nature of self-esteem, but also how their own self-esteem, and how they model this through their actions and behaviors, might influence students. (p.367)

This statement seemed to indicate that teachers' self-esteem directly impacts their students' self-esteem. If this is true, the importance of understanding teacher's self-esteem seems evident. The selected teachers were employed full-time in schools in a mid-size metropolitan area, teaching in elementary, junior, and senior high schools. This research attempted to determine if there was a relationship between levels of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon of the teachers. Because the subjects in the study were employed in three different school levels, the researcher
also explored the relationship between the two variables (self-esteem and impostor phenomenon) and the school level (K–6, elementary; 7–9, junior high; 10–12, senior high) at which the teachers were employed. Another factor under investigation was the difference between the Black teachers’ and the White teachers’ scores on both the Index of Self-esteem (ISE) and the Impostor Test (IT).

It has been clearly documented that the experience of Black American women is unique (Marger, 1994). Swinton (1992) reported that Blacks are underrepresented in jobs at the top of the occupational hierarchy. The lack of role models and mentors, as well as the general oppressive nature of society, have had an influence on the psychological well-being of Black women (Ewing, Richardson, James-Myers, & Russell, 1996). Very few Black women have top-level executive positions or other positions of power in their place of employment. “Even those Blacks who have achieved middle-management positions are often assigned to race-related areas or to special marketing (that is minority) groups” (Marger, 1994, p. 265). Being Black has made what moves they have been able to make into power positions arduous events. In her study of Black women rising up the power ladder in their careers, Reid-Merritt (1996) stated that

the key to their achievements seems to lie in their ability to assess reality, accurately recall how and why they sought their positions and recognize the significance of their achievement. They never forget, not for a single moment, that they are Black and female. (p. 151)

Few researchers have examined the crucial and complex role of self-esteem in the lives of women and the link between career choice, employment opportunities,
and other experiences of women. Even fewer have examined women's experience of
the impostor phenomenon on these same issues.

The following questions were addressed during this study:

1. Is there a relationship between the levels of self-esteem and impostor
phenomenon of female teachers?

2. Is there a difference between the self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of
Black and White female teachers?

3. Can some of the selected demographic variables predict levels of self-
esteeom and the impostor phenomenon?

To provide a clear understanding of the two primary variables of this study,
self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, a definition of both is given.

Definitions of Terms

Self-esteem. Although the term self-esteem generally refers to beliefs about
self-worth, various approaches have been taken to develop a specific definition. In
Branden's (1994) effort to define the specifics of self-esteem, he stated that

self-esteem is: (1) confidence in our ability to think, confidence in our ability
to cope with the basic challenges of life; and (2) confidence in our right to be
successful and happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to
assert our needs and wants, achieve our values, and enjoy the fruits of our
efforts. (p. 4)

According to Jackson (1984), because self-esteem has subjective
characteristics and is ever-changing, it should be defined by the meanings of human
experience rather than as a causal structure.
Yalom (1995) described self-esteem as people's internalized perceptions of others' attitudes. Additionally, people tend to rely upon these internalized evaluations in measuring their own self-worth. He also believes that public esteem (the group's evaluation), and self-esteem are highly interdependent and therefore, how a person evaluates their own self-worth is influenced by the evaluation provided by the groups to which they belong.

In general, self-esteem is how people see, evaluate, and feel about themselves. It is the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and be worthy of happiness. It is also a central construct in clinical, developmental, personality, social, and psychological functioning. Self-esteem can be contingent, which refers to feelings that result from social comparison or how people "measure up" relative to others.

Impostor Phenomenon. The impostor phenomenon has been defined as an experience of intellectually gifted and talented individuals who have a need to attribute their success to an external variable rather than their own competence (Clance & O'Toole, 1987). As stated earlier, Clance (1985) further defined it as an internal experience of "phoniness" common among high achieving women who are unable to experience the personal gratification of success. People generally experience a need to negate their abilities by attributing their successes to factors beyond their control, such as overly positive evaluation of work by others, or the results of hard work which they are not convinced they can repeat in the future.
The impostor phenomenon has been defined as an experience of intellectually gifted and talented individuals who have a need to attribute their success to an external variable rather than their own competence (Clance & Imes, 1978; Clance & O’Toole, 1987). These people may discount their abilities by believing that people who praise them are actually responding positively only to personal characteristics such as their charm, sensitivity, or other interpersonal skills.

Overview

The dissertation is divided into five chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) Review of Related Literature, (3) Methodology, (4) Results, and (5) Summary and Conclusions. The objective of Chapter I was to present an introduction to the importance of understanding the psychological well-being among women. More specifically, it introduced the significance of exploring the existence and levels of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Chapter II reviews the current and related literature pertinent to the study. The chapter covers some literature about women and career issues as well as the impact and experience of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Women in the teaching profession is also a primary focus of the literature review. This chapter concludes with definitions of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Chapter III covers the procedures and methodology used to obtain the data, and Chapter IV presents an analysis of the data collected. The conclusion, summary, and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The present literature review examined the literature on women’s experiences, self-esteem, and the impostor phenomenon that are applicable to the present study. Other topical areas that were reviewed in support of the study included: (a) career issues, (b) Black women’s career experiences, (c) relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon, and (d) women in the teaching professions. To better understand why the possibility of a relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon was considered as an important area to study, the definitions of these two areas were closely examined.

Career Issues

Special interest groups and funding for research on women and careers were quite extensive in the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1990s the literature on women and careers was more limited with most of the focus on specific disciplines (e.g., math, science, and engineering). These disciplines were primarily directed toward male-dominated careers.

According to Lips (1989), many of the women not included in these male-dominated disciplines were thought to be members of families that emphasized women’s responsibility to domestic work. She reported that many of these young
women were reluctant to plan for demanding careers, especially those careers that were not female-dominated. This idea was reinforced by society's attitude that women belonged at home, and until 1979, opinion leaders failed to acknowledge the fact that many mothers were a part of the labor force (Norgren, 1989). Because "the most concrete and visible social attributes have earliest and deepest importance for individuals" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 202), some of the women who joined the labor force continued to be influenced by family experiences. Establishing a public and social identity over the private, personal one, was identified as a primary influence of the family. Because of the family and social influence, women have been expected to maintain the role of family nurturer in many cultural groups, while men have been expected to maintain the role as head of the household which includes the responsibility of economic provider (Devore & Schlesinger, 1996).

As some women explored the idea of career and success, they found this concept less gratifying because of the family and social influences that emphasized the conflict between female values of nurturing and male values of personal gain and ambition (Sanford & Donovan, 1984). Needless to say, family and social influence were not the only barriers for women seeking a career. As more women entered the labor force, reports continued to reveal a high degree of occupational segregation and gender inequality (Blau & Winkler, 1989). When employed in male-dominated fields women were often required to perform menial jobs (Sanford & Donovan, 1984).
Being minimized in the work force, many of these same women devalued themselves as others devalued them. These negative experiences and the increase of women entering the paid work force warranted media and government attention (Sanford & Donovan, 1984). Exploring the differences between men and women in the work force has led to a greater understanding of how opportunities or lack of opportunities have influenced or wounded women's self-esteem (Sanford & Donovan, 1984).

Acknowledging that in recent years, there have been more opportunities in the work force for women, Hankin (1996) reported that some women have continued to restrict themselves to the same job categories as those chosen in the 1950s. Hankin (1996) also reported that in fields traditionally categorized as female, such as education, the higher ranks of school principals and superintendents have continued to be held by men. Although there have been some changes in social influence, attitudes have not changed appreciably.

In examining the history of women and careers, it was apparent that careers were divided by gender dominance (female careers and male careers). Some of the careers considered predominately female careers included librarian, nursing, and teaching (Kaufman, 1989). Although some of the female-dominated occupations require advanced education and specific credentials, they often lack the authority and autonomy that are characteristic of male-dominated professions (Kaufman, 1989). Of the studies that have attempted to contrast the experiences of men and women in careers, the majority have generally focused on the external factors
related to career experiences such as racism and discrimination (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989; Sue & Sue, 1990). Other ways in which women's occupational experiences differ from men's include the following: lower pay, subordination and dependence on the goodwill of male supervisors, and concentration on occupations considered appropriate for women with limited opportunities for advancement (Martin, 1989).

When employees (men or women) are given an opportunity for advancement, the new positions are often accompanied by prestige and status. Because professions considered to be prestigious are primarily sex-typed, the expectations and recognition for women working in the same job with the same level of competence is perceived differently (Kaufman, 1989). When men enter professions that have been determined to be female-dominated professions, they tend to obtain the positions of authority and power (Kaufman, 1989). When women obtain positions of authority and power in careers that were considered appropriate for men, many of them spend time overcoming the barriers of verbal put-downs (Ossana et al., 1992). When many of these women obtain the same positions of authority and power as men, they are perceived as less competent than their male counterparts, earn unequal pay, and their particular job is not perceived to be as prestigious (Blau & Winkler, 1989; Kaufman, 1989).
Black Women's Career Experiences

Rather than being confronted with verbal and nonverbal putdowns or barriers to career advancement, some Black women continue to choose careers that are traditionally female dominated. These jobs generally involve direct human services. Many of these women believe that care and empowerment of others should be the primary issue to consider when selecting a job or career (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Lightbody et al., 1997; Sanford & Donovan, 1984).

The study of women's career experiences has also brought about an opportunity to examine the contrast in the experiences of Black and White women. The psychological and career literature has supported the idea that there are some important distinctions between Black and White women in the areas of personal experiences as well as career and academic self-efficacy (Carr & Mednick, 1988; Pyant & Yanico, 1991). Because of different life experiences, it has been inferred that Black women's levels of self-esteem and possibly the impostor phenomenon may be different than White women's experiences (Sanford & Donovan, 1984). Some of these differences may be associated with unique historical circumstances such as the legacy of slavery (Cheatham, 1990; Feagin, 1991; Smith, 1983), as well as developmental experiences (Almquist, 1989).

While few studies on careers have included the experiences of women, even fewer have explored the experiences of Black women (Hackett & Byars, 1996; Smith, Burlew, & Lundgren, 1991). Although Black women have improved in career status, they continue to be overrepresented at the lower rung of the career
ladder (Blau & Winkler, 1989). This does not mean that there has not been an effort to progress. For some Black women, obtaining a college education has been a factor in increasing opportunities and career status. However, they often become aware that having a college education is not the only requirement for climbing the career ladder.

It has also become apparent that not all Black women who enter college anticipate climbing the career ladder. Early studies have shown that Black women, just as women in general, have experienced anxiety about their competence when entering college, and therefore have set lower education and career goals than men (Fleming, 1984). However, the percentages of women entering bachelors’ and masters’ degree programs are equal to or more than men (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1996). Because of this initial experience of anxiety, they also tend to begin their college educations with a high level of fear of success (Fleming, 1984). Although it has been reported that Black women have progressed exceptionally well academically, history has played a major role in their personal, educational, and professional development. According to Fleming (1984), “because of their early histories as women, Black women may not want to use all of their talents” (p. 146). Because of the potential impact on relationships with men, some Black women have chosen not to disclose or demonstrate their talents or full potential (Fleming, 1984); however, some reports have stated that Black women aspire for male-dominated careers more than White women (Murrell, Frieze, & Frost, 1991). In many instances
when Black women aspire to male-dominated professions, their choice has often been influenced by the potential economic benefits (Hackett & Byars, 1996).

When attempting to pursue careers in male-dominated professions, many Black women are faced with discrimination barriers. Two types of employment discrimination experienced by minorities include: (1) access, which limits a person's ability to enter specific jobs and careers; and (2) treatment, which limits rewards and other opportunities legitimately deserved on the basis of job-related criteria (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990; Spaights & Whitaker, 1995). It is believed that Black women have to work harder to obtain the same career payoffs as White women (Hackett & Byars, 1996). Spaights and Whitaker (1995) argue that regardless of the meaningful participation of Black women in the labor force, racial and sexual discrimination still abounds in today's labor market.

As for the differences between Black and White women, the experiences of growing-up and preparing for the world of work has been confounded by the issue of gender (Almquist, 1989). Because of the double jeopardy of racism and sexism experienced by Black women, the obstacles have been perceived differently from those of White women (Beale, 1970). In the case of Black women, individuals experiencing obstacles may also be the ones constructing them. The way that individuals look at themselves can be an obstacle to success and other personal experiences. In their studies on possible "selves," Markus and Nurius (1986) suggested that "future selves" are influenced by sociocultural and historical experiences. As some Black women entered the professional world and began to
examine their future, these perspectives were often accompanied by perspectives of their history. In their study of the history of Black women, Hine and Thompson (1998) concluded:

Black women are in a different situation. Their history and their position in the Black family and the Black community makes them different. When ambitious, educated Black women step into the mainstream, they take along with them sons or nephews who are being shot at in the neighborhoods. They stir up the waters when they turn to beckon a fellow church member who is caring for her drug-addicted daughter's child. They bring a history so different from any that America has ever dealt with in her senators and CEOs that it is impossible to ignore. (p. 314)

Various personal situations and individual experiences of minority women have often been overlooked (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). By the 1970s and early 1980s, more than at any time in history, Black women were earning college and advanced degrees and having opportunities to enter the professional world (Reid-Merritt, 1996). Many of these Black women entered into the professional world aware of the influence history had on their success (Reid-Merritt, 1996).

As they attempt to enter the professional world, other obstacles that Black women have faced are demeaning messages. These messages have often been barriers to opportunity and success, and therefore, factors for lowering self-esteem. As mentioned earlier, two factors that have often been major issues of degradation for Black women have been their race and gender. The experiences of racism and discrimination have influenced many Black women's career interests and goals because they perceive these experiences as barriers and have expectations of negative outcomes (Brown, 1995; Hackett & Byars, 1996). According to Sanford and Donovan (1984), although all women face the gender issue, which has often had
a bearing on their level of self-esteem, "women of color also face added obstacles White women don't have to contend with" (p. 272).

Other differences that may or may not be considered barriers to opportunity and success have been identified by Hackett and Byars (1996). They noted that Black women, compared to White women, are more likely to engage in auxiliary learning experiences related to academic and career self-efficacy. They also provided evidence that Black mothers, more often than White mothers, find modeling as being relevant in the learning experiences and career development of their daughters. Considering the form of role models or the lack of modeling available, Hackett and Byars' (1996) study supported the concept that the life experiences of Black women (e.g., educational level) has had a profound influence on the achievements and self-estees of their daughters. Observing negative attitudes that the mother and other family members may hold toward teachers and other societal institutions may undermine Black daughters' efforts to achieve (Hackett & Byars, 1996). Therefore, role models may be recruited from outside the family. Because there have been few competent Black female models in various careers, young Black girls' opportunities to learn and formulate ambitious and realistic educational and career goals has been limited (Hackett & Byars, 1996). They further stated that career choice behaviors may be influenced by race and ethnicity which may influence career efficacy beliefs and interests. With relatively few models available, there has still been evidence that career choices and opportunities for career advancement have improved for Black women. Although identified as an important factor, especially regarding
advancement of women in careers, it is still relatively rare for Black women, as well as White women, to find authorities of their own sex as models (Belenky et al., 1997).

As previously indicated, Black women enter into their professions with few role models available. They also bring perceptions of their history with them. However, the individual internal factors that have been generally influenced by history and present life situations may be invisible, and therefore, disregarded by others. Considering the complex situations that have been a natural part of many Black women's experiences, it is conceivable that internal issues such as self-esteem, racial identity, and the impostor phenomenon could be significant influential factors in present and future experiences of professional Black women. As professional Black women anticipated progressing from entry level positions to positions of mid-management, breaking through the "glass ceiling" is not considered as a common career experience (Simpson, 1996).

With a lack of role models, Black women have entered their professions with a history of discrimination and of being persuaded to work in areas that were nurturing to others and primarily female-dominated. A lack of role models and a history that minimized worth and potential may have also influenced personal issues such as self-esteem, racial identity, and impostor phenomenon, and therefore, the career experiences of professional Black women. Because of the civil rights movement and affirmative action policies, it has often been assumed that employment opportunities for Black women have improved significantly. Thomas
and Alderfer (1989) found that the percentage of Blacks in positions such as executives, administrators and managers was 4.7%. It was reported that Black women were earning only 65 cents for every dollar men made (Reynolds, 1994).

Considering the various obstacles that have been prevalent for Black women, their emergence into the professional world has stimulated an interest in the existence and maintenance of internal factors that may influence the transition and transformation of Black women in professional positions. Studies have provided information that supported the notion that hiring Black women is an advantage for corporate America because of the “two-for” concept. Rather than being a double jeopardy, hiring a woman, who also happens to be Black, can be an advantage rather than a liability (Reid-Merritt, 1996; Thomas & Alderfer, 1989).

Whether or not these women have been denied opportunities to experience their full potential or obtain positions of authority and power, it seems likely that their levels of self-esteem and/or impostor phenomenon could impact their experiences. Employment opportunities for both Black and White women have improved, which provides more opportunities for them to present themselves with more pride and confidence in public (Hankin, 1996); however, it does not necessarily represent the image they have of themselves in the privacy of their own minds (Sanford & Donovan, 1984). The messages that they continue to give themselves and what they believe of their own potential may still be representative of a low self-esteem or high impostor phenomenon.
Self-Esteem

After reviewing the literature relating to women's career experiences, there was particular attention placed on the concepts of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. The literature indicated that psychosocial characteristics such as self-esteem (Kunz & Kalil, 1999) and the impostor phenomenon (Clance, 1985) have become important issues with women who have career interests.

The topic of self-esteem has been approached from varying theoretical viewpoints. Rogers (1951) and Maslow (1954) support the importance of self-esteem with respect to theories of motivation and personality, the nature of subjective experience, and individuals' acceptance of their experiences. These works have been included in this study because it documents some of the beginning efforts of researchers who investigated the effects of self-esteem. Sanford and Donovan (1985) and Branden (1994) maintain that self-esteem is imperative and individuals with high levels of self-esteem are generally happier and adjust to environmental demands more effectively than individuals with low levels of self-esteem.

Self-esteem was identified more specifically by Rogers (1959) in his theory of personality as he described the "self" as the core of personality. When measuring self-esteem, it is crucial to remember that everyone has a degree of self-esteem, as well as the capacity to increase or decrease that particular level of self-esteem (Branden, 1998). The level of self-esteem in adults has generally emerged from a foundation interpreted and established through childhood experiences (Branden, 1998).
Self-esteem has been considered to be a viable factor in human development at all ages (Greenier, Kerns, & Waschull, 1995); however, research in the area of self-esteem has primarily been conducted with children and adolescents (Branden, 1994). There has been limited research on the self-esteem of adults, and more specifically of women (Bower, 1993; Sanford & Donovan, 1984). Although there has been limited research on adult self-esteem, it has been reported that the level of self-esteem can affect virtually everything attempted in life (Branden, 1994; Sanford & Donovan, 1984).

As self-esteem emerges from early childhood experiences, it becomes "an experience in which an individual successfully applies ideology and idealizations in order to bring about an actual or symbolic resolution of a central conflict" (Jackson, 1984, p. 128). Being that it is a part of everyone's personal system, concerns for self-esteem have been found in virtually every social situation (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986). Presented with a central conflict, an individual with low self-esteem generally has a negative self-evaluation and feelings of incompetence, insignificance, and inadequacy; therefore, opportunities to succeed are limited (Daly & Burton, 1983). Through their research, Sanford and Donovan (1984) found a direct relationship between low levels of self-esteem and lack of opportunities to succeed. Mathur (1996) suggested that self-esteem is a universally dominant motive that must evolve for one to participate in challenging roles.

Women have not been afforded the skills and opportunities required in the world of work and therefore have been confined to lower levels of skills and jobs at
the lower levels of the occupational hierarchy (Davis, 1996). These ideas are supported by the women who believe that in society's eyes, men hold the power and have the ultimate authority (Belenky et al., 1997). Career related characteristics of a contrasting nature include the expressive, affiliative and emotional traits of women with the instrumental, logical, and goal-oriented traits of men (Pearson, 1993). Supporting their feminine characteristics, women's self-worth is enhanced by their ability to please their mothers, husbands, and others they perceive as being important (Greenwood-Audant, 1989).

In their study examining similar and different paths to self-esteem with middle-aged working men and women, a commitment to the role of worker appeared to have a strong effect on self-esteem (Reitzes et al., 1994). Commitment to the role of worker may depend on the worker's career status. During their study of women and self-esteem, Sanford and Donovan (1984) found that low pay, discriminatory treatment and sexual harassment were common issues when women talked about their work experiences. Their experiences of personal expectations have been influenced by how they expect others to treat and react to them. This experience is generally guaranteed by other's behaviors which have in turn drawn people of similar levels of self-esteem together and into careers that have met personal comfort (Branden, 1998).

Although significant others may influence performance, an individual's natural behavioral experiences basically represent their level of self-esteem (Branden, 1998). As more women find joining the labor force satisfying, many
perceive it to be an outlet for their desire to nurture and help others. It has also been noted that a high level of self-esteem makes the effort of achievement easier and more likely (Branden, 1998). Because they tend to feel less competent and lack confidence, individuals with a low level of self-esteem tend to set lower goals for themselves (Greenwood-Audant, 1989). A low level of self-esteem can make experiences of career planning more difficult for women than it is for men (Ossana et al., 1992).

Although opportunities to pursue careers in nontraditional fields have increased, both men and women continue to concentrate in gender biased fields (Blau & Winkler, 1989). Branden (1998) stated that the level of self-esteem is profoundly significant in every aspect of an individual’s life including the career, social and personal areas. How people see, evaluate, and feel about themselves are three additional components of self-esteem (Branden, 1998).

In evaluating themselves, women, more often than men, will see themselves in terms of their relationships and connections to others, rather than as individuals (Belenky et al., 1997). Some studies have associated the level of self-esteem with how people feel about themselves in regard to masculinity and femininity. It was reported that higher self-esteem is identified more with the former and lower self-esteem with the latter (Burnett, Anderson, & Heppner, 1995).

The inability to assess gender roles, and the possibility of cultural biased attitudes towards masculinity, have been two issues that have had an impact on self-esteem (Burnett et al., 1995). Some studies have taken the gender approach by
supporting the idea that in regard to mental processes, “thinking” has been attributed primarily to men because they have the ability to be abstract and impersonal, while the term “emotional” has been attributed primarily to women because they deal more with personal and interpersonal processing (Belenky et al., 1997).

In reality, “self-esteem is a vitally important psychological need,” (Branden, 1998, p. 26) and is developed and grounded over time through appropriate operation of the mind. The experience of personal judgment has a profound effect on all levels of self including: thinking processes, emotions, desires, values, and goals (Branden, 1998).

Peoples’ choices to confront or evade issues whether or not it is in their best interests is also influenced by the level of self-esteem (Branden, 1998). However, there are times when it appears difficult to evade issues that may influence self-esteem such as issues related to discrimination. It was predicted that by the year 2000, 80% of married women were expected to be in the workforce, and many of these women will also be the family’s principal caretaker (Oberndorf, 1992).

The Impostor Phenomenon

While working in clinical settings such as individual psychotherapy and theme-centered interactional groups, Clance and Imes (1978) realized that many of their female clients who had earned degrees and/or professional recognition were not experiencing an internal sense of their success. Through treatment, it became...
apparent that some of the negative effects with experiencing the impostor phenomenon included more than the inability to enjoy their successes; because of the anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of failure, many of these women turned down opportunities for career advancement (Clance & O’Toole, 1987).

Also in the clinical setting, it was discovered that the impostors’ first reactions to their experiences is generally not to reveal their feelings. During therapeutic intervention, women experiencing the impostor phenomenon often focused on family or other relationship issues rather than focusing on achievement-related issues (Clance & O’Toole, 1987). For the women whose impostor experiences are related to family issues, their experiences are generally reinforced because of the lack of opportunity to express themselves honestly (Langford & Clance, 1993). When they attempted to share feelings of fears and doubts to family and friends their messages were often discounted (Clance & O’Toole, 1987).

The development and maintenance of the impostor phenomenon has been attributed to the history of family dynamics as well as to societal expectations of women (Clance & Imes, 1978). What the impostor perceives as family and societal expectations are important factors in their experiences. Beginning in childhood, women are not encouraged or supported at the same level as men (Clance & O’Toole, 1987). The lack of encouragement during the early developmental years has often influenced the sense of insecurity experienced in adulthood (Langford & Clance, 1993). A major fear for women impostors is that others will discover that they are not as competent as others perceive them to be (Clance & O’Toole, 1987).
Early symptoms of women that are later diagnosed with the impostor phenomenon include feeling overwhelmed or basically dissatisfied with themselves (Imes & Clance, 1984). Self-dissatisfaction often influences women’s personal and professional relationships (Imes & Clance, 1984). As many of these women focus on their self-dissatisfaction, they will often turn down opportunities for career advancement (Clance & O’Toole, 1987). Because they often perceive power as something that can be used destructively by people in authority, some women that experience the impostor phenomenon avoid opportunities to obtain positions of power because it could affect their relationships with others (Imes & Clance, 1984). Because maintaining relationships are important for these women, they often avoid positions of power.

Another anxiety that is inherit with women’s experiences of the impostor phenomenon comes from the fear that they will one day fail the test or that someone significant will eventually find out that they are impostors and not worthy of the acknowledgment they have received (Clance & Imes, 1978). Because of the symptoms they experience (which includes generalized anxiety, lack of self-confidence, depression, and frustration), they question their ability to succeed and feel a need to identify an external factor for their success (Clance & Imes, 1978). In their study, they found that many of these women who have achieved career and academic excellence were being hindered by an internal experience of intellectual phoniness.
Even though these women set high standards for themselves, they tend to disown or lack a realistic sense of their capabilities, intelligence, and creativity (Imes & Clance, 1984). As they attempt to meet the high standards they have set for themselves, the anxiety of being “found out” becomes more intense (Imes & Clance, 1984). Regardless of how much these women have achieved, they do not experience internal feelings of success (Clance & Imes, 1978). It is not uncommon for women employed in positions for which they have more than the required education to also experience the impostor phenomenon. When these women are placed in educational or work environments where they perceive the others to be “truly” competent, they feel that they are inferior or misplaced (Clance & O’Toole, 1987). These women consistently believe that they are not gifted and/or intelligent and that anyone who believes they are is being fooled.

While studying the characteristics of women experiencing the impostor phenomenon, Clance and Imes (1978) discovered that the sense of insecurity and other impostor experiences have also been barriers to the progress of women or factors relating to women not working to their full potential. Because they are high achievers, they receive compliments for their work. Regardless of the compliments that accompany their achievements, their primary focus is on the belief that they have fooled others again. As they move on, a new task renews the fear that accompanied all previous accomplishments (Imes & Clance, 1984). Another barrier for women with impostor feelings is their attempts to be both perfect and also set extremely high standards of performance for themselves (Imes & Clance, 1984).
Although women that experience the impostor phenomenon work very hard at avoiding mistakes or failures, they are also adamant about rejecting compliments (Clance & O’Toole, 1987). In contrast to rejecting compliments from others, impostors are in need of praise from others (Langford & Clance, 1993). The motivation of the impostor to look intelligent through her achievements comes from a need to impress others (Langford & Clance, 1993). The need to impress others creates a high vulnerability to criticism in the impostor (Langford & Clance, 1993). This incongruence is a central component of the impostor experience (Langford & Clance, 1993). There is a need for compliments, yet the compliments are not accepted by the impostor. Low self-confidence is an attribute impostors use to describe themselves (Langford & Clance, 1993). Because of their introverted personality type (as defined by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), impostors tend to hide important aspects of their personalities from the world (Langford & Clance, 1993).

Women in Teaching Professions

Teaching has consistently been identified as a female-dominated occupation. During the 1930s, it was advantageous to recruit women into the teaching and nursing fields not only because they were willing to work for low wages but because the fields did not challenge the cultural ideal of women’s “natural” place (Kaufman, 1989). Being considered an occupation of nurturing and caring for others, teaching has historically been a typical occupation for middle-class women, both Black and
White (Hine & Thompson, 1998). During the Civil War, Black women believed teaching was the "salvation of the race" as they taught former slaves to prepare them for their new life of freedom (Hine & Thompson, 1998). The motivation for many White teachers, even if they had the opportunity to enter other careers, came from the desire to nurture and help others and to have direct human contact (Lightbody et al., 1997; Sanford & Donovan, 1984).

Although the motivation and inspiration for many of the women who pursued careers in teaching came from the desire to nurture and help others, it appears that the experience of teaching may have had an influence on their self-esteem and/or impostor phenomenon experience. One of the experiences of teaching that may have an influence on their self-esteem and/or impostor phenomenon was teacher empowerment. In her study of teacher empowerment, Short (1994) identified six empowerment dimensions: (1) involvement in decision making, (2) teacher impact, (3) teacher status, (4) autonomy, (5) opportunities for professional development, and (6) teacher self-efficacy. In this study, Short also emphasized the need to acknowledge the importance of teachers' self-efficacy which she defined as the "teachers' perceptions that they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect change in student learning" (p. 489). Teachers who believed feedback from colleagues and recognition for their accomplishments were minimal, experienced a sense of uncertainty about their competence. Those teachers were left vulnerable to self-doubt and a decrease in self-esteem. Previous research has identified some of the
experiences that may have an effect on teacher's self-esteem and impostor phenomenon experiences. As women continued to choose careers in education, they also continued to obtain and maintain career positions that were less prestigious than men such as principal or superintendent (Kaufman, 1989).

Further research in this area may also provide information regarding the influence that teachers' levels of self-esteem and/or impostor phenomenon experiences may have on the students in their classrooms.

Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Impostor Phenomenon

The literature investigating the relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon is limited. However, Langford and Clance (1993) reported that women identified as impostors are not automatically considered to have low self-esteem.

A similar characteristic of women with low self-esteem and high impostor phenomenon is the dependency on others for a sense of self-worth (Langford & Clance, 1993). Many impostors tend to have negative feelings about themselves similar to people with low self-esteem; however, the two conditions are different in that self-esteem concerns a broader domain of attitudes and feelings about the self (Langford & Clance, 1993).

Although limited information was found which investigated the relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, a very early study conducted by Roth and Meyersburg (1963) presented a strong case for the relationship between
low self-esteem and nonachievement. In her studies of individuals experiencing the impostor phenomenon, Harvey (1981) found a positive correlation between impostor feelings and self-esteem; however, it is apparent that they both have an impact on the experiences and successes of women.

Summary

Early studies attempted to identify variables that influenced women's experiences in careers without specifically isolating or describing factors that influenced the psychological well-being of these women. Researchers were aware that as more women entered the work force they were faced with a high degree of occupational segregation and gender inequality (Blau & Winkler, 1989). They were also aware that many women continued to pursue careers in female dominated occupations primarily because they involved direct human contact and helping others (Belenky et al., 1997). Regardless of the increased participation of Black women in the labor force, they still had to face more barriers than White women, including racial as well as sexual discrimination (Spaights & Whitaker, 1995). Because early research in the area of self-esteem was primarily conducted with children and adolescents (Branden, 1994), limited literature was available on women's self-esteem. As researchers began to investigate the self-esteem of women, it became apparent that high self-esteem was imperative for adjusting to environmental demands (Branden, 1994). The literature also suggested that the level of women's self-esteem also affects their career choices, planning, and successes.
(Ossana et al., 1992). Although the literature on the impostor phenomenon was limited, researchers have discovered that similar to the effects of low self-esteem, impostor experiences have also been a barrier to the success of women.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the levels of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of female teachers. The selected teachers were employed in a mid-sized metropolitan area, and teaching in elementary, junior, and senior high schools. An effort was made to determine: (a) if there is a relationship between the levels of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of the teachers, and (b) if there is a difference between Black and White female teachers on these phenomena.

While the primary concentration of the study concerns self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon experienced by female teachers, there was also hope that the research would provide a clearer understanding of how the level of both might influence the career experiences women have and why many continue to choose predominately female careers such as teaching. This study was intended to serve as a catalyst for further research on women's career choices, the impact of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, women in the teaching field, and the difference between the experiences of Black and White women.

The instruments selected for the study included the Index of Self-esteem (ISE) (Hudson, 1977), and the Impostor Test (IT) (Clance, 1985). The participants were also asked to complete a demographic questionnaire to determine if there are
certain factors that may appear to be predictors of levels of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was female public school teachers. The teachers selected for the study were located in one school district in one Midwestern state. As reported by that community's Chamber of Commerce in 1999, the community is considered to be a mid-sized metropolitan area with a population of approximately 54,000. An increasingly large proportion of the population (15%) was 65 years old or older. In 1990, the population of Black residents was approximately 9,000 and approximately 43,000 residents were White. The minority population of the community increased between 1980 and 1990; however, the actual increases were relatively small compared to the community's overall population. The change in percentage of Black residents was +8%, while the percentage of White residents was −8%. Although the specific data for the State level were not provided, it was reported that the educational attainment of the population has been as high as the state level with 78.6% of the residents being high school graduates and 23% of the residents having a bachelor's or higher degree. The community has a diversified employment base. While widely known as an industry and manufacturing community, there was a projection for a 32% increase in the services sector between the years 1994 and 2015. The median income per capita for the community was approximately $13,000, which was an increase of 104% from 1980. Although the
income for the residents of the community has increased at a faster rate than the state, the level of median income was lower than the state median. To keep the location of the community anonymous, the citation for the previous data does not include the name of the community cited.

The participants of the study were full-time female teachers of grades kindergarten through 12 who had at least 1 full year of teaching experience. Substitute teachers, special support teachers (e.g., LD, EI, and other special education), and resource teachers (e.g., special reading/remedial, speech, and bilingual), did not participate in the study.

There are approximately 566 teachers, including full-time regular classroom teachers and special support teachers in the district. Of these 566 teachers, approximately 413 meet the classification of full-time regular classroom teachers. Approximately 69% ($N = 285$) of these teachers were women. These women are distributed throughout 22 school buildings.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher or a representative of the researcher visited each of the participating schools to discuss the research project and answer questions from potential participants (see Appendix A). The representative was trained to present material according to a script (see Appendix B). Permission to enter the schools and seek cooperation from the participants was obtained from the appropriate administrative personnel as well as a representative of the teacher's union. (Both

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
letters of approval were received; however, they are not included as appendices because of the agreement with the administrative personnel, teacher's union representative, and the researcher to keep the school district anonymous. These letters will be kept on file.) Identifying information has been removed for the purpose of confidentiality as agreed upon by the researcher, school administrator, and union representative.

Some of the schools provided the researcher with the opportunity to speak directly with the participants either at a prescheduled meeting or a specially-called meeting. The researcher then asked the school secretaries to place the surveys in the full-time, female teachers' mailboxes (excluding resource room teachers and other special teachers).

A survey packet including the ISE, IT, and a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) were distributed to all the identified female teachers in the designated school district. A cover letter briefly describing the study, giving the title and significance of the study, and asking for their cooperation and assistance was included (see Appendix D). Surveys were coded for matching purposes only. The total number of subjects available to participate in the study was approximately 283. The survey packets were placed in the potential participants' school mailboxes. A collection box labeled "Matthews' Study" was left in the main office or in the teachers' lounge for the participants to return the completed surveys. The researcher or representative requested that the surveys be completed within 2 weeks of delivering the packets. Packets were collected from the drop boxes by the researcher
at the end of the first and second weeks. Two weeks after the initial packets were distributed, follow-up letters were placed in the mailboxes of all potential participants (see Appendix E). If they had not already done so, the participants had 2 weeks to complete and return the survey packets to the drop box. Two weeks after the follow-up letters had been placed in the participants' mailboxes and the surveys had been collected, the data were tabulated.

Because some schools were having concurrent meetings, the principal or another representative at the school offered to represent the researcher by reading a prepared letter of the presentation to the participants. Although the script and protocol outlined in the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board proposal was made clear, the researcher cannot guarantee that the representatives followed the protocol. For example, in two of the schools, rather than following the protocol as requested by the researcher, the surveys were placed in an inconspicuous location rather than distributed to the teachers' mailboxes. The teachers were informed of the surveys and told that if they were interested, they could pick up a packet from the office. These were the only schools in which none of the surveys were completed. Because of the inconsistency of administration and lack of participation, these schools were removed from the study, resulting in a sample from 20 schools.

Of the 20 schools, 244 surveys were distributed. With 27% (65) from the elementary schools, 8% (21) from the junior high schools, and 5% (13) from the senior high school, an overall return rate of the surveys, 40% (99) were completed and returned. As the researcher was visiting with the schools to discuss the surveys,
she was informed that there may be a low return rate because the teachers were involved in two other data gathering projects; one was mandatory and quite extensive.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What is the level of self-esteem of female teachers employed in three different school levels (Grades K–6, elementary; Grades 7–9, junior high; Grades 10–12, senior high)?

2. Are there differences based on the school levels in which they teach?

3. What is the level of self-esteem of Black female teachers?

4. What is the level of self-esteem of White female teachers?

5. Is there a difference between the mean scores of Black and White teachers' self-esteem?

6. What is the mean score of impostor phenomenon experienced by female teachers employed in elementary, junior, and senior high schools?

7. Are there differences based on the school grade level in which they teach?

8. What is the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by Black teachers?

9. What is the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by White teachers?
10. Is there a difference between the mean impostor phenomenon scores as reported by Black and White teachers?

11. Is there a relationship between the following demographic variables and self-esteem: (a) age, (b) the educational level completed, (c) the level of education obtained by parents or guardians, (d) school level, (e) years of teaching full-time, and (f) ethnic/racial identification.

12. Is there a relationship between the following demographic variables and impostor phenomenon: (a) age, (b) highest educational level completed, (c) highest level of education obtained by parents or guardian, (d) grade level currently working in, (e) number of years of full-time teaching, and (f) ethnic/racial identification.

13. What is the correlation between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon?

14. What is the correlation between differences on the ISE and IT for the two racial groups (Black teachers and White teachers)?

Instrumentation

Because there are very few instruments available that measure adult self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, it was a challenge selecting instruments that would be appropriate for this study. Instruments to measure self-esteem and impostor phenomenon were selected which demonstrated more evidence of validity and reliability than other tests purporting to measure both of these variables. Both of these instruments, the ISE and the IT, are self-rating scales.
The Index of Self-Esteem (ISE)

The motivation for the development of the ISE came from therapists concerned with the opportunity to document the success of their treatment efforts. Because the client problems of nonbehavioral therapists are defined in more abstract terms, they have been more difficult to measure. In an effort to successfully overcome the measurement problems in non-behavioral treatment settings, Hudson (1977) designed a measurement scale especially for use in clinical settings that would monitor and evaluate the magnitude or intensity of clients' problems through regular or periodic administration of the same scale to the same clients.

Hudson developed the ISE as a short-form scale to be used by clinical workers and researchers for measuring self-esteem problems. The instrument was designed for use in repeated administrations at regular intervals in order that therapists might continually monitor and evaluate the clients' responses to treatment. The ISE has been found to be a highly reliable and valid measure of self-esteem.

This instrument measures the degree or magnitude of positive feelings that people have about themselves. The results reflect how individuals' feelings and their adequacy of social interactions impinge on their self-evaluation. An evaluative component of self-concept, the ISE is a 25-item scale. Because it is a self-administered instrument, there was an attempt to reduce any response set by respondents by developing response items which are structured as both positive and
negative statements. Participants should be able to complete the instrument within 7 minutes.

Scoring the ISE can be done by hand and requires approximately 3 minutes to complete. All positively worded items must first be reverse-scored (an item scored as 1 will be re-scored as 5; a 2 will be re-scored as 4; a 4 will be re-scored as 2, a 5 will be re-scored as 1, and a score of 3 will be left unchanged). All negatively worded items are left unchanged. The item scores are summed and a constant of 25 is subtracted. With a scoring range from 0 to 100, a high score indicates the presence of problems, and a low score indicates the absence of problems with self-esteem.

Studies were conducted by Hudson and Proctor (1976) to determine the reliability and validity of the ISE. These studies involved 132 individuals who were identified as professionals or students in training for a profession.

**The ISE Reliability**

Split-half and test-retest methods were used to determine the reliability of the ISE. To produce six different estimates of test-retest split-half reliability coefficients, all odd-numbered items were summed and a constant of 13 was subtracted, and all even-numbered items were summed with a constant of 12 subtracted which obtained an odd-half test score (OT) and an even-half test score (ET) for each person in the sample. Using the same procedure for the retest data, an odd-half retest score (OR) and an even-half retest score (ER) were computed for
each person. The split-half reliability coefficients ranged from a low of .825 to a high of .908 with a mean of .855. The Spearman-Brown formula was used to compensate for the fact that the split-half method reduces the length of a scale to half its original length. Six new estimates of the ISE reliability were obtained, which ranged from a low of .891 to a high of .952 with a mean of .921.

By correlating the total score from the first administration with the total score from the second administration, the test-retest reliability coefficient was .922. This mean correlation was very similar to the mean corrected split-half reliability coefficient of .921 (Hudson, 1977, 1982).

The ISE Validity

To determine the validity of the ISE, a study to assess whether the scale would successfully distinguish between individuals and groups who were known or believed to be having problems with self-esteem and those who were not was conducted. Individuals described their level of self-esteem as high, moderate, or low, and were placed in groups defined by their response. A one-way ANOVA was conducted with ISE score as the dependent variable and the group membership as defined by response to high, moderate or low sense of self-esteem, as the independent variable. The mean scores of the three groups were compared—high esteem group (16.9), moderate (26.6), and low (48.5), demonstrating that the differences among the mean scores were highly significant ($p \leq .001$). A high discriminate validity was supported by an intraclass correlation of .519.
In investigating the construct validity of the ISE, five different scales were used to discriminate between the three self-esteem criterion groups: (Index of Self Esteem (ISE), Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS), Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS), Generalized Contentment Scale (GCS), and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (LW). In using the five scales, a discriminant function was found to be highly significant \( p < .0005 \), and the standardized weights were: ISE, \(-.80\); ISS, \(-.06\); IMS, \(-.14\); LW, \(-.02\); and GCS, \(.01\). The ISE scale was the only one that made an important contribution to the discrimination between the three criterion groups. The simple Pearson correlations among the five scales using test and retest data was also used as a final test of the construct validity of the ISE (Hudson, 1977).

**The Impostor Test (IT)**

In a clinical setting, Matthews and Clance (1985) examined factors which influenced the emergence of the Impostor Phenomenon (IP). From their experience, they reported that the successes that were unexpected or unanticipated by their clients were associated with impostor type feelings. This brought about a need to identify a scale that would accurately measure IP.

Since the formulation of the concept of IP, three scales have been developed to measure it: The Harvey Impostor Phenomenon Scale (HIPS), Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS), and the Perceived Fraudulence Scale (PFS) (Chrisman, Pieper, Clance, Holland, & Glickauf-Hughes, 1995). The Harvey Impostor
Phenomenon Scale (HIPS) developed in 1981 was one of the first to measure IP. Because researchers believed the HIPS might be perceived as negative by respondents and inhibit accurate self-reporting, the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (IT) was developed (Clance, 1985). Items on the IT were worded to consistently acknowledge the success of the individual in order to minimize social desirability effects and to encourage a feeling of safety and acceptance in the respondent. Developed by Clance in 1985, this instrument assesses dimensions thought to be related to the impostor phenomenon (IP) including: (a) fear of evaluation, (b) fear of not being able to repeat success, and (c) fear of being less capable than others. It is a 20-item scale using a Likert scale format with a 5-point response range. Respondents indicate their degree of agreement with each item ranging from “Not at All True” (1) to “Very True” (5).

Scoring the IT can be done by hand by adding the responses to each statement. It should take approximately 2 minutes to complete. It is recommended that a cut-off score of 60 be used to identify impostor sufferers. With a scoring range from 0 to 100, a score of 40 or less indicates few impostor characteristics; between 41 and 60, moderate impostor characteristics; between 61 and 80, the individual experiences impostor feelings frequently; and higher than 80 indicates intense impostor experiences (Clance, 1985).
The IP Scale Reliability

To test the reliability of Clance’s Impostor Phenomenon Scale, Holmes, Kertay, Adamson, Holland, and Clance (1993) compared the scores of independently identified impostors and nonimpostors on two instruments designed to measure the IP: HIPS and Clance’s IP Scale. Utilizing both clinical and nonclinical samples of independently identified impostors and nonimpostors, both instruments were administered. There were 62 subjects in the study; 32 comprised a clinical sample and 30 comprised a nonclinical sample. Both samples were divided into two groups, an impostor group and a nonimpostor group.

After completing a personal information questionnaire, 50% of the subjects were presented Clance's scale and the other 50% were presented Harvey’s scale. The compiled scores on Clance’s IP Scale ranged from 28 to 97, and the scores on Harvey’s HIPS Scale ranged from 18 to 89. A high level of internal consistency obtaining coefficient alpha values ranging from .84 to .96 was found for both scales. An ANCOVA analysis indicated that Harvey’s scale, using Clance’s scale as a covariate, did not yield a significant result; however, the ANCOVA for Clance’s scale was significant.

Clance’s IP scale differentiates between both clinically and nonclinically identified impostors and nonimpostors. In comparing the scores of independently identified impostors and nonimpostors on Clance’s IP Scale and Harvey’s HIPS, Holmes et al. (1993) determined that Clance’s scale may be the more sensitive and
reliable instrument. Using the recommended cut-off score of 60, Clance's scale will more reliably separate impostors from nonimpostors.

Although the instrument was designed to acknowledge the success of individuals, it also measures dimensions of fear of evaluation, feeling less capable than peers, and fear that success cannot be repeated (Chrisman et al., 1995; Holmes et al., 1993).

The IP Score Validity

Because some researchers have questioned the IP as a separate psychological phenomenon and have proposed the use of the term "perceived fraudulence," a study was conducted to investigate the construct validity of the IP (Chrisman et al., 1995). Because there was evidence that the Perceived Fraudulence Scale (PFS) had construct, convergent and discriminant validity, the IT and PFS were compared (Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991).

To examine the validity of Clance's IP Scale, Chrisman et al. (1995) compared it to a minimum of two measures of the following constructs: (a) depression, (b) self-esteem, (c) self-monitoring, and (d) social anxiety. The scales measuring each of the constructs were first correlated with each other. The magnitudes of the correlations between the scales and the CIPS were compared to the magnitudes of the correlations among the scales. The CIPS was also factor analyzed using principal components analysis. The results demonstrated that the CIPS and PFS share a strong conceptual relation and that they are highly correlated.
with one another with good internal consistency. Because it is a shorter instrument and administration is easier, the CIPS was noted to be the instrument of choice for both clinical and research purposes.

The factor structure of Clance's IP Scale was also used to explore the construct validity. The extent to which the IP can be discriminated from depression, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and social anxiety was also examined. The CIPS was correlated with a minimum of two measures of each construct and the measures of each construct were correlated with one another. The strengths of the correlations were compared (Chrisman et al., 1995). As a result, the CIPS was correlated with all measures of the of depression \( p \leq .01 \) Depressive Experiences Questionnaire \( (r = .62) \); negatively correlated with self-esteem \( p \leq .01 \) the Self-Esteem Scale \( r = -.54 \) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale \( r = -.60 \); significantly correlated with social anxiety \( p \leq .01 \) the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale \( r = .54 \) and the Social Recognition Scale \( r = .27 \). The CIPS was essentially unrelated to the construct of self-monitoring.

The discriminant validity analyses indicated that although the IP as measured by Clance's IP Scale is related to other negative affectivity such as depression, self-esteem, self-monitoring, and social anxiety, it is substantially discriminable from each of them (Chrisman et al., 1995).
Demographic Questionnaire

The researcher-developed demographic questionnaire contains 10 questions regarding the participant’s personal and professional characteristics. Closed-ended questions were used in the instrument to simplify the process of classifying the respondent’s information on specific topics. The questionnaire was developed so the respondent could easily answer the questions without using a large amount of time. Although selected items (highest educational level completed, parents’ or guardians’ highest level of education, school level currently working in, number of years teaching full-time, and ethnic/racial identification) were used with the data analysis, the demographic questionnaire was primarily for descriptive purposes.

Research Design

This study involved self-reported data collection from three sources: the ISE, the IT, and a demographic questionnaire. Data from the three data sources were collected and compared across school grade levels (elementary, junior, and senior high), and two racial groups (Black and White), on levels of self-esteem and levels of impostor phenomenon. All data collected were anonymous.

Because the study involved human subjects, approval of the study methodology and related instrumentation was obtained from the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at Western Michigan University (see Appendix F). To protect the anonymity of the participants and the school district, approval letters
from a representative of the school administration and a representative of the teacher's union are not included in the project; however, they will be kept on file.

Data Analysis

Descriptive information was provided for all variables. After the scores were tabulated for the self-esteem scores for each grade level (elementary, junior high, and senior high), a one-way analysis of variance was used to determine if there were differences among the three grade levels.

Two additional statistics were conducted with the self-esteem scores. To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the self-esteem scores for Black female teachers and White female teachers, a correlation was calculated. A t test was utilized to determine the significance of difference between the mean scores of the groups.

To determine the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by female teachers of elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels, scores from the IT were tabulated. A one-way analysis of variance was used to determine if there were differences among the three grade levels.

Two additional statistical analyses were conducted with the impostor scores. To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the impostor scores for Black female teachers and White female teachers, a correlation was calculated. A t test was utilized to determine the significance of difference between the mean scores of the groups.
To determine if any of the demographic variables collected are predictors of level of self-esteem, a multiple correlation was computed. The independent variables included the selected demographic variables previously identified. A multiple correlation was computed to determine if any of the demographic variables collected were predictors of the level of impostor phenomenon. The independent variables were selected demographic variables and the impostor phenomenon was the dependent variable.

The final analysis was to determine if there was a relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon. An overall correlation was reported for both groups. A simple correlation analysis between the test results of the ISE and the IT for each of the three school levels (elementary, junior, and senior high) was conducted. Correlations were reported for each of the three levels and the differences among the levels were determined. An overall correlation was reported for the self-esteem and impostor phenomenon scores of Black female teachers and White female teachers. While working with the 22 schools, it became apparent that there were very few Black teachers in some of the schools that were eligible to participate in the study. Because of the possibility of identifying these participants, correlational differences across races for each of the three school levels was not determined. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.
Limitations

This study was meant to be an exploratory investigation of the self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of female public school teachers. Because of the subjective nature of concepts of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon, it was sometimes difficult to provide clear definitions and obtain valid measurements. This study attempted to provide a clear definition of each concept referenced in the research.

Because the subjects were not randomly chosen from the population of all females, the generalizability was limited. The study was also limited geographically in that it focused on teachers within one region. Finally, because of the nature of the study, and the fact that it was not an experimental design, a cause and effect relationship cannot be determined.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter will include information regarding the distribution of the surveys, the survey data analysis, and characteristics of the participants in the study. It will conclude with a summary of the implications developed from the results of the study.

Briefly stated, the study was designed to provide information concerning the relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon of female teachers in kindergarten through grade 12. Chapters I and II provided an introduction to the study and a review of the related literature. Chapter III presented the procedure and methodology used to collect the data for this study. This chapter is designed so that a profile of the participants’ self-esteem and impostor phenomenon is described. The format of the chapter is structured so that the reader can also have an understanding of the difference between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of Black and White female teachers.

Sample

Because of the diversity of the staff employed in the educational institutions in this study (e.g., some of the teachers were special resource teachers, substitute teachers, and special reading or speech teachers), the criteria established for eligible
participants were clearly defined. To participate in the study, the individuals had to be full-time, regular classroom, female teachers who had been teaching for at least 1 year. This criteria eliminated teachers who were classified as substitute teachers and special resource room teachers such as reading or speech teachers. The teachers were from one school district that consisted of 22 different school buildings. The school district has three different school levels including elementary, junior high, and senior high.

The participants were primarily White teachers (83%) with bachelors’ and masters’ degrees. Other demographics that were used to describe the participants included their race and teaching experience, as well as their parent’s or guardian’s level of education. The range of education obtained by these teachers’ parents/guardians was from less than high school to a doctoral degree. Eight percent of the parents/guardians had less than a high school education. Fifty-three percent of them had a high school education. One percent had obtained a bachelor’s degree. Twenty-four percent of them obtained masters’ degrees. Twelve percent of the parents/guardians obtained specialists degrees, and 2% obtained doctoral degrees. As for the teachers, 49% of them had bachelors’ degrees, and 51% had obtained masters’ degrees. Nineteen percent of the participants identified themselves as representing a racial/ethnic group other than White. For the purposes of this study, only Black Americans, the largest of these categories, representing 11% of the total sample was used in analyses. The number of years teaching of all the participants ranged from 1
year to 32 years. The mean number of years of teaching experience was 14.34

Survey Data and Analyses

Each distribution packet contained three different surveys: The Index of
Self-Esteem (ISE), the Impostor Test (IT), and a demographic questionnaire. The
ISE measures the degree or magnitude of positive feelings that people have about
themselves. The results reflect how individuals’ feelings about themselves and their
competence of social interactions impinge on their self-evaluation. The ISE is a 25-
item questionnaire designed to measure one’s degree of healthy self-esteem as well
as the severity of self-esteem problems. Because it is a self-administered instrument,
there was an attempt to reduce any response set by respondents by developing
response items which are structured as both positive and negative statements.
Participants should have been able to complete the instrument within 7 minutes.

Developed by Clance in 1985, the IT assesses dimensions thought to be
related to the impostor phenomenon (IP) including: (a) fear of evaluation, (b) fear of
not being able to repeat success, and (c) fear of being less capable than others. It is a
20-item scale using a Likert scale format with a 5-point response range.
Respondents indicate their degree of agreement with each item ranging from “Not at
All True” (1) to “Very True” (5).

The researcher-developed demographic questionnaire contained 10 questions
regarding the participant’s personal and professional characteristics. Closed-ended
questions were used in the instrument to simplify the process of classifying the respondent’s information on specific topics. The questionnaire was developed so the respondent could easily answer the questions without using a large amount of time. Although selected items (highest educational level completed, parents’ or guardians’ highest level of education, school level currently working in, number of years teaching full-time, and ethnic/racial identification) were used as variables in the data analysis, the demographic questionnaire was primarily for descriptive purposes.

All participants completed the three surveys. Fourteen questions were formulated for the study. Each question was constructed to investigate the relationship between each measure of self-esteem and each measure of the impostor phenomenon.

Self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon scores were correlated to discover whether the experiences of teachers with self-esteem problems would also have problems with impostor phenomenon. The demographic variables, age, teachers’ highest educational level completed, highest level of education obtained by the teachers’ parents or guardian, the school level currently working in, years of teaching full-time, and ethnic/racial identification were included in this study to determine if any of them are predictors of level of self-esteem or impostor phenomenon.

The data collected focused on 14 questions. The first five questions focused on the levels of self-esteem by school levels and their differences, and the levels of self-esteem of Black teachers and White teachers along with their differences.
1. What is the level of self-esteem of female teachers employed in three different school levels (Grades K–6, elementary; Grades 7–9, junior high; Grades 10–12, senior high)?

2. Are there differences based on the school levels in which they teach?

3. What is the level of self-esteem of Black female teachers?

4. What is the level of self-esteem of White female teachers?

5. Is there a difference between the mean scores of Black and White teachers’ self-esteem?

Questions 6 through 10 focus on the levels of impostor phenomenon by school levels and their differences, and the level of impostor phenomenon of Black teachers and White teachers along with their differences.

6. What is the mean score of impostor phenomenon experienced by female teachers employed in elementary, junior, and senior high schools?

7. Are there differences based on the school grade level in which they teach?

8. What is the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by Black teachers?

9. What is the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by White teachers?

10. Is there a difference between the mean impostor phenomenon scores as reported by Black and White teachers?
The focus of question 11 is on the relationship between self-esteem and age, educational level of the teacher and their parents/guardians, the school level currently working in, years of full-time teaching, and ethnic/racial identification.

11. Is there a relationship between the following demographic variables and self-esteem: (a) age, (b) the educational level completed, (c) the level of education obtained by parents or guardians, (d) school level grade, (e) years of teaching full-time, and (f) ethnic/racial identification.

The focus of question 12 is on the relationship between the impostor phenomenon and age, educational level of the teacher and their parents/guardians, the school level currently working in, years of full-time teaching, and ethnic/racial identification.

12. Is there a relationship between the following demographic variables and impostor phenomenon: (a) age, (b) highest educational level completed, (c) highest level of education obtained by parents or guardian, (d) grade level currently working in, (e) number of years of full-time teaching, and (f) ethnic/racial identification.

Questions 13 and 14 focus on the correlation between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon and the difference between Black and White teachers.

13. What is the correlation between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon?

14. What is the correlation between differences on the ISE and IT for the two racial groups (Black teachers and White teachers)?
For each area, the question is provided as well as the test that was applied to respond to the question. In conclusion of this chapter, a summary of the findings are highlighted and an analysis of those findings is given.

Self-Esteem, Impostor Phenomenon, and Selected Demographic Results

Self-esteem scores and impostor phenomenon scores were tabulated for each school level (elementary, junior high, and senior high). Table 1 contains the mean scores and standard deviations for the ISE. Table 2 contains the mean scores and standard deviations for the IT. The score range for both tests is from 0 to 100. For the ISE, a score of above 30 (+5) indicates the presence of problems with self-esteem. A low score (below 30) indicates that if there are problems with self-esteem, they are generally considered to be minor or fall within areas not referenced by the items on the ISE. For the IT, a score between 41 and 60 indicates the presence of moderate impostor experiences; between 61 and 80 indicates frequent impostor experiences; and a score higher than 80 indicates intense impostor experiences.

An analysis of variance was used to determine if there were differences on the two tests among the three school levels. The tabulated scores for Black female teachers and the White female teachers were correlated. A t test was utilized to determine the significance of difference between the groups.

To determine if any of the demographic variables collected were predictors of level of self-esteem or level of impostor phenomenon, a multiple correlation was computed. The final analysis correlation was to determine if there is a relationship
Table 1

Self-Esteem Scores by School Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scoring Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>23.67</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.47</td>
<td>16.21</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>16.26</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Three School Levels</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>25.28</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Possible range of scores = 0–100. High scores indicate problems with self-esteem.*

Table 2

Impostor Phenomenon Scores by School Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scoring Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>48.60</td>
<td>15.28</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52.57</td>
<td>14.14</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>55.15</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Three School Levels</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>50.30</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Possible range of scores = 1–100. High score indicates problems with impostor phenomenon.*
between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon. A simple correlation analysis between the scores on the ISE and the IT for each of the three school levels (elementary, junior high, and senior high) was conducted.

**Question 1.** What is the level of self-esteem of female teachers employed in three different school levels (Grades K–6, elementary; Grades 7–9, junior high; Grades 10–12, senior high)?

As can be seen from Table 1, the teachers of the elementary school level obtained the lowest mean score of 23.67. The teachers of the senior high school level obtained the highest score with a mean of 33.00. The mean score for all the school levels combined was 25.28.

**Question 2.** Are there self-esteem mean score differences based on the teachers’ school levels?

A one-way ANOVA was computed to evaluate the differences in composite scores on a self-esteem scale among the teachers at different school levels. The independent variable, teachers’ grade levels, included three levels (elementary, junior high, and senior high). The dependent variable was the composite score on the ISE. The ANOVA was not significant with $F(2, 96) = 2.32, p = .10$. Therefore there are no differences in self-esteem scores among the three levels. Table 3 presents results from the ANOVA.

**Question 3.** What is the level of self-esteem of Black female teachers?

**Question 4.** What is the level of self-esteem of White female teachers?
Table 3
One-way Analysis of Variance Summary of School Levels Differences on Self-Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>942.63</td>
<td>471.31</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>19455.45</td>
<td>202.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>20398.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5. Is there a difference between total self-esteem scores of Black teachers and total self-esteem scores of White teachers?

As shown in Table 4, the ISE mean scores of the Black teachers was 24.54 and the score for the White teachers was 25.14. To determine the significance of the difference between the total self-esteem scores of Black and White teachers, the means were computed and a $t$ test was utilized (see Table 5). There is no difference between Black and White teachers’ mean self-esteem scores.

Question 6. What are the mean impostor phenomenon scores experienced by female teachers employed in elementary, junior, and senior high schools?

As can be seen from Table 2, teachers at the elementary school level obtained the lowest mean score of 48.60. Teachers at the senior high school level obtained the highest score with a mean of 55.15. The mean score for all the school levels combined was 50.30.
### Table 4

**Self-Esteem Scores by Race**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scoring Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Teachers</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>25.14</td>
<td>14.30</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.54</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5

**t Test of Mean Scores on Index of Self-Esteem for Black and White Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Question 7.* Are there impostor phenomenon mean score differences based on the teachers’ school levels?

A one-way ANOVA was computed to evaluate the differences in composite scores on the IT among the teachers at different grade levels. The independent variable, teacher level, included three levels (elementary, junior high, and senior high). The dependent variable was the composite score on the IT. The ANOVA was not significant with $F(2, 96) = 1.33, p = .27$. The data indicate that there are no differences in impostor phenomenon scores among the three levels. Table 6 presents results from the ANOVA.
Table 6

One-way Analysis of Variance Summary of Differences of Impostor Phenomenon and School Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>602.47</td>
<td>301.24</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21750.43</td>
<td>226.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>22352.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 8.** What is the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by Black teachers?

**Question 9.** What is the level of impostor phenomenon experienced by White teachers?

**Question 10.** Is there a difference between the mean impostor phenomenon scores as reported by Black teachers and the White teachers?

As shown in Table 7, the IP mean scores of the Black teachers was 52.27 and the score for the White teachers was 50.41. To determine if the mean impostor phenomenon scores of Black and White teachers were significantly different, the means were compared utilizing a $t$ test (see Table 8). There is no difference between Black and White teachers' mean impostor phenomenon scores.

**Question 11.** Is there a relationship between the following demographic variables and self-esteem: (a) age, (b) highest educational level completed,
Table 7
Impostor Phenomenon Scores by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Scoring Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Teachers</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>50.41</td>
<td>14.83</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.27</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) highest level of education obtained by parents or guardian, (d) grade level currently working in, (e) number of years of full-time teaching, and (f) ethnic/racial identification?

The initial research proposal called for conducting a multiple regression analysis using scores on the ISE as the dependent variable. However, initial analysis of scatter plots on the proposal predictor variables revealed there were no linear relationships between them and the criterion variable. Therefore, a primary assumption of multiple regression analysis was violated; as a result, the analysis was not conducted.
**Question 12.** Is there a relationship between the following demographic variables and impostor phenomenon: (a) age, (b) highest educational level completed, (c) highest level of education obtained by parents or guardian, (d) grade level currently working in, (e) number of years of full-time teaching, and (f) ethnic/racial identification?

The initial research proposal called for conducting a multiple regression analysis using scores on the impostor phenomenon test as the dependent variable. However, initial analysis of scatter plots on the proposal predictor variables revealed there were no linear relationships between them and the criterion variable. Therefore, a primary assumption of multiple regression analysis was violated; as a result, the analysis was not conducted.

**Question 13.** What is the correlation between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon for all teachers?

The correlation was computed using composite scores for self-esteem and impostor phenomenon. The results were significant at the .05 level \( p = .0001 \) with \( r = .46 \). This indicates there is a relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon.

**Question 14.** What is the correlation between differences on the ISE and IT for the two racial groups (Black teachers and White teachers)?

The Pearson product–moment correlation was also computed using composite scores from the ISE and IP tests to assess the degree of difference
between teachers of different races. The correlation for Black teachers \( (r = .69, p = .013) \) was higher than the correlation for White teachers \( (r = .42, p = .0001) \).

**Summary**

In scoring the ISE, a cut off score of 30 (± 5) is used. Persons with scores above 30 have clinically significant problems and scores below 30 indicate that individuals may not have or only has minor problems with self-esteem. The total mean scores for the Black and White respondents demonstrated that teachers of elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels in general experience minor problems with self-esteem. There were no significant differences between Black and White female teachers on self-esteem that responded to the surveys. In examining the difference of self-esteem among school levels, none of the groups demonstrated a significant difference at the .05 level.

In scoring the IT, a total score of 40 or less indicates that the respondent has few impostor characteristics. If the score is between 41 and 60, the respondent has moderate impostor experiences. A score between 61 and 80 means the respondent frequently has impostor feelings. A score higher than 80 means the respondent often has intense impostor experiences. The results of this study indicate that female teachers of all three school levels (elementary, junior high, and senior high) have had some experiences at a moderate level with the impostor phenomenon. There were no significant differences between the mean scores reported by Black teachers and
White teachers. There were also no significant differences based on the school grade level in which they teach.

Further investigation revealed that the variables of age, the highest educational level completed by the teachers, the highest level of education obtained by the teachers' parents or guardian, the school level currently working, the number of years teaching full-time, and ethnic/racial identification had little no influence on the prediction of self-esteem scores or level of impostor phenomenon. Finally, there was an attempt to determine if there is a relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon.

Because the measurement instruments have an inverse scoring procedure, the analysis revealed that the relationship is an inverse relationship, that is, high levels of self-esteem problems are positively related to high impostor level scores. In other words, persons who have higher levels of self-esteem problems are also more likely to experience the impostor phenomenon as a way of discounting their successes.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and summarize the present study. The focus will be on briefly summarizing the content of the previous four chapters and the conclusions and implications that can be drawn from the research findings.

Summary of the Study

Description

This research examined the relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon of female teachers of kindergarten through grade 12. The purpose of this study was to investigate if there is a relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon as demonstrated by female teachers of kindergarten through grade 12. The variables under investigation in the present study were chosen based on a desire for a better understanding of female teacher's level of self-esteem and the experience of the impostor phenomenon, and determining if one experience (self-esteem), is related to the other (impostor phenomenon). Those ideas focused primarily on the need to include variables that are significant in the life span of women's psychological well-being. Results were expected to provide a clearer understanding of female teachers' levels of self-esteem
and their experience of the impostor phenomenon, and suggest that there may be a relationship between the two.

**Relevant Research**

The review of the literature focused primarily on findings from the research into women's experiences that have been influenced by their level of self-esteem and experience of the impostor phenomenon. The main purpose of the review was to provide empirical evidence supporting the predicted outcomes in the study. Most of the research focused on information that was reported through others' research that was developed through empirical research concerning the following variables: relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon, women's career issues, the difference between Black women's and White women's career experiences, and the experience of women in the teaching profession.

The literature provided important information about the variables under investigation in this study. First, there was evidence that although more women have entered male-dominated careers, many women continue to enter female-dominated careers. Second, family and social messages have influenced women's self-esteem and impostor phenomenon experience. Third, although Black women face similar obstacles as White women, Black women face additional barriers to career opportunities and success which influences self-esteem and impostor phenomenon. Fourth, the relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon has not been well researched, but evidence suggests that there is no relationship between the
two variables. Finally, literature reviewing the definitions and conceptualizations of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon has been consistent.

Methodology

The sample in the present study consisted of female public school teachers of grades kindergarten through 12 who had at least 1 full year of teaching experience in a mid-sized metropolitan area. The school district has three different school levels: elementary, junior high, and senior high. The participants were made up of primarily White teachers (83%). Nineteen percent identified themselves as representing a racial/ethnic group other than White, with Black American being the largest of these categories (11%).

The participants were sent a packet containing three instruments: (1) The Index of Self-Esteem, (2) the Impostor Test, and (3) a demographic questionnaire. In accordance with ethical guidelines, individuals were informed that participation in the study was completely voluntary and all responses were anonymous.

The primary questions raised in this study were examined by measuring the self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of the individual teachers and comparing the scores among school levels and race (Black and White teachers).

Statistical Analyses

The statistical procedures used to analyze the data were simple correlations, $t$ tests, one-way analyses of variance, and Pearson product–moment correlations.
After the self-esteem scores and the impostor scores were tabulated for each grade level, a one-way ANOVA was computed to evaluate the differences in composite scores among the teachers at different school levels. To determine if there was as significant difference between the scores of Black and White teachers, the mean scores were compared using a t test. The Pearson product–moment correlation was computed using composite scores from the self-esteem and impostor phenomenon tests to determine the differences between the two variables.

Summary of the Findings

Preliminary Analyses

First, there was evidence that although there was indication that senior high school teachers have problems with self-esteem, female teachers, kindergarten through grade 12, experience minor problems with self-esteem. In reviewing the difference between the Black and White teachers’ self-esteem, there was no significant difference between their mean scores. Second, the evidence demonstrates that teachers, kindergarten through grade 12, both Black and White, experience a moderate level of the impostor phenomenon. Third, the findings for relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon are inconsistent with some researchers who report that there is no relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon.
Discussion of the Findings

In exploring the relationships between self-esteem, the impostor phenomenon, and selected demographic factors for female teachers, it was expected that teachers of the elementary school level would score higher on both the ISE and the IT, compared to teachers of the junior high or senior high school levels. This expectation was based on the issues associated with low self-esteem and high impostor experiences such as negative self-evaluation and feelings of incompetence (Daly & Burton, 1983) which some of the participants openly expressed to the researcher following the presentation for participation. It was also expected that Black teachers would score lower than White teachers on the ISE because of the issues associated with low self-esteem and higher on the IT because of experiences such as the lack of opportunity for career advancement (Blau & Winkler, 1989), and the experience of anxiety that accompanies the lack of competence when entering college and choosing a career (Fleming, 1984).

Although it is difficult to generalize about the status of U.S. teachers, the expected results were also based on the fact that working conditions for many teachers have not always been good. It has been reported in some studies that some teachers have needed to work with a lack of respect from some students who openly admitted that they do not like their teachers (Johnson, Dupuis, Musial, Hall, & Gollnick, 1996).

It was further expected that the results would support the concept that there is a negative relationship between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. In
addition, the present study examined whether select demographic variables would be good predictors of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into three sections. The first section focuses on the conclusions of the research questions. The second section focuses on limitations of the study, and section three presents implications for research and professional practice based on the findings.

Conclusions

The first five questions were concerned with self-esteem of the female teacher participants. The researcher anticipated that lower school levels would be associated with lower self-esteem. The reason for this belief has to do with how much students will challenge teachers, assuming younger children would be less challenging than adolescents. Although there appeared to be a difference in self-esteem scores of teachers by grade level, with the senior high school level teachers having a higher score than elementary and junior high, there were no significant differences based on the three school levels. Because of the various barriers presented in the literature review, it was expected that Black teachers would have lower levels of self-esteem than White teachers. While Black teachers, had slightly lower self-esteem scores (24.54) than the White teachers (25.14), the difference between the two groups was not significant. With the instrument used for the present study, lower scores (−30) indicate an absence of problems, while higher scores (+30) indicate the presence of problems. It is possible that the difference in
the scores for school level and race was due to the unequal distribution of participants in the groups.

Questions 6 through 10 were concerned with the impostor phenomenon for female teachers. Similar to the researcher's expectations of the self-esteem scores, it was expected that the elementary school level teachers would demonstrate more problems with impostor phenomenon. The reason for this belief is again because of the anticipated challenge at different school levels. If high school students present more of a challenge to teachers than the younger students, elementary school level teachers may avoid the challenge to their ability to succeed. Although there was a slight variation in scores, teachers in all three school levels scored in the moderate range. Similar to the self-esteem scores, there was not a significant difference. Although there was a slight difference in scores for Black and White teachers, the difference was not significant.

Questions 11 and 12 were focused on an effort to determine if any of the demographic variables were good predictors of self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Scatterplots revealed there were no linear relationships between them. The analysis that was initially proposed was not conducted. While the demographic variables were not used to compute a multiple regression, some of the information such as the education level of the teacher's parents or guardian, and the teacher's years of teaching experience provided an interesting trend. It appeared that the average education obtained by the parents or guardians was between a high school education and a bachelor's degree. The mean years of teaching experience was 14
years. Some of the variables in the demographic questionnaire seemed consistent with the results of the study. From the demographic information, these teachers are in careers that they want to be in rather than being there because they were told to or because it is the only career they feel they could be competent in. This again seems to be consistent with having a healthy self-esteem. Looking at all of the teacher's responses and reviewing them by school level, 81% of the teachers at the elementary school level indicated that teaching was their first career choice. Eighty-three percent of the junior high school level and 71% of the senior high school level indicated that teaching was their first career choice. Further research in this area is encouraged. The last two questions were concerned about the relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon for both the Black teachers and the White teachers. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the scores of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon. These results were not consistent with studies found in the literature reviewed for this study. This may be due to the fact that the number of Black teachers available for the study was significantly lower than the number of White teachers.

In summary, the results from the study revealed that there is a relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon. This is a new finding, which is in contrast with previous studies and implies that women with low self-esteem also have experiences with impostor phenomenon. If women have a low perspective of themselves, then they may also believe that the only reason they have successfully completed their college education and become teachers was because of some reason.
other than their own competence. Because teachers' level of self-esteem can influence the self-esteem of their students, the results about self-esteem and impostor phenomenon of teachers is encouraging. In other words, teachers are often considered to be models for their students. Therefore, a teacher with low self-esteem may have difficulty reinforcing their student's self-esteem. The results of this study indicates that teachers overall are not showing problems with self-esteem or the impostor phenomenon.

Limitations

Several limitations may have influenced the results from this study and should be taken into consideration when making interpretations about the findings. First of all, because the area of women and self-esteem has not been widely explored, the literature on this topic was limited. The literature available to review on the topic of the impostor phenomenon was especially limited due to the fact that very little research has been conducted on this topic. Such scarcity in the literature may have affected the conceptual framework for this study.

Another important limitation is that self-report was the only method of data collection. As a result, it is difficult to assess the extent to which participants may have been influenced by social desirability. Other methods of data collection such as professional assessment, supervisor perceptions, or peer review may have provided a richer picture of the relationships between the variables under investigation.
Measurement issues may also have confounded the results. The availability of instruments to test self-esteem for adults is limited. The ISE is one of few instruments designed specifically to test self-esteem of adults. Most research focusing on self-esteem has been conducted with children. The amount of research on the IT was also limited, which, in turn, limits the number of instruments available for assessment.

Although there were many positive aspects about the population of this study, such as their availability, the positive attitudes of the teachers, and the support and encouragement of the district administrators and the school principals, the fact that they were all from one school district may be a limitation. By using one school district, the number of participants was limited and there was only one senior high school involved in the study. Similarly, the number of Black women available for this study was also limited.

A limitation that might have influenced the response rate was the fact that the teachers were involved with two other surveys at the time this study was presented.

Implications

Directions for Future Research

In light of the present study, researchers can play an important role in providing more in-depth information on self-esteem awareness, as well as the effects of the impostor phenomenon. Nine recommendations for expanding the present
research and increasing the generalizability of research findings arise from the previous discussion.

1. The significance of self-esteem and impostor phenomenon to women’s psychological well-being has been documented. Self-esteem is multifaceted and therefore changes throughout the life span. The current quantitative study provided a “snapshot” of self-esteem for one adult population. A qualitative study of self-esteem from girlhood to womanhood could provide some valuable information. This study could focus on how life experiences through various stages of life change or remain consistent. The results of the study could help professionals with prevention or intervention of women with low self-esteem. This information could also provide valuable insight for working with women experiencing the impostor phenomenon.

2. The present study was conducted over a limited time span with participants responding to the surveys after one visitation from the researcher (or a representative for the researcher). A longitudinal study would be helpful in clarifying changes and flexibility of self-esteem and impostor experiences. This type of study would provide information about variables that tend to change women’s self-esteem and/or impostor phenomenon experiences and how flexible those experiences are from one situation to another.

3. A study of family and social influence would also provide valuable information about levels of self-esteem and the experience of the impostor phenomenon. Considering how important relationships are for women, research of
this nature would provide information about how family members and societal forces contribute to women's self-appraisals during vulnerable stages of their life.

4. The present study surveyed women working at one level in one area of employment. This study needs to be replicated using women at various levels of career status. As the participation of women in the labor force has changed, there is a need to understand how social expectations has shifted with the change. This study would include how working outside of the home in any employment capacity affects women's self-esteem.

5. A difference between men and women could provide information about the influence that career status can have on self-esteem. This study could examine the self-esteem of men in male and female-dominated careers and women in both female and male-dominated careers.

6. Further research investigating the relationship between self-esteem and impostor phenomenon is recommended. Research of this nature would provide more information regarding the common characteristics of women with low self-esteem and high impostor phenomenon. Because the impostor phenomenon is a relatively unexplored area of research, further research needs to be conducted on the topic independently, as well as, in relationship with self-esteem.

7. Replicating this study using a broader sample and multiple instruments to assess self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon could be conducted. This approach would be more complex, but it would provide a more accurate measure of the constructs and decrease the likelihood of measurement error.
8. It is believed that research on the importance of self-esteem and mental health has been limited because most of the research that has been done has been conducted by personality theorists rather than counseling theorists (Betz, Wohlgemuth, Serling, Harshbarger, & Klein, 1995). Research of this nature conducted by counseling theorists could provide additional perspectives of intervention for women with low self-esteem and high imposter phenomenon.
Appendix A

Script for Participant Invitation and Explanation of Study
The Relationship Between Self-esteem and Impostor Phenomenon
of Female Teachers of Kindergarten Through 12th Grade

Script for Participant Invitation and Explanation of Study

Hello, my name is Sheila Matthews, and I am a doctoral student in the
Counselor Education/Counseling Psychology department at Western Michigan
University, Kalamazoo. As part of my requirements for finishing my doctorate, I am
conducting a research project. I am here today to invite those of you who might be
interested, to participate. To complete the research for my dissertation, I am asking
that you fill out three self-report instruments. These three instruments should take
about 20 minutes to complete. This one set of instruments would be the only
participation requested and, if you decide to participate, your identity would be kept
in strict confidence. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is
no money being offered for participation.

You may fill them out at a time or place of your convenience. However, I
would like to request that you fill them out by yourself, seal them inside the enclosed
envelope, and place them in the pick-up box located in your school mailroom. The
box will be labeled “Matthew’s Study.” You may refuse to participate or withdraw
from the study at any time without any penalty. I would like to request that all forms
be placed in the pick-up box within two weeks after they are placed in your mailbox.
I will now open it up for questions.

Thank you for your time and participation. Any questions?
Appendix B

Representatives' Script for Participant Invitation and Explanation of Study
The Relationship Between Self-esteem and Impostor Phenomenon of Female Teachers of Kindergarten Through 12th Grade

Representatives' Script for Participant Invitation and Explanation of Study

Hello, my name is _________________, and I am representing Sheila Matthews, a doctoral student in the Counselor Education/Counseling Psychology department at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo. As a part of her requirements for finishing her doctorate, she is conducting a research project. I am here today on her behalf to invite those of you who might be interested, to participate. To complete the research of her dissertation, she is asking that you fill out three self-report instruments. These three instruments should take about 20 minutes to complete. This one set of instruments would be the only participation requested and, if you decide to participate, your identity would be kept in strict confidence. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and there is no money being offered for participation.

You may fill them out at a time or place of your convenience. However, she would like to request that you fill them out by yourself, seal them inside the enclosed envelope, and place them in the pick-up box located in your school mailroom. The box will be labeled “Matthew’s Study.” You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. She would like to request that all forms be placed in the pick-up box within two weeks after they are placed in your mailbox. I will now open it up for questions, if you have any questions that I am unable to respond to please feel free to contact Sheila Matthews at (616)968-1939.

She thanks you for your time and participation. Any questions?
Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire
Demographic Questionnaire

The information gathered in this demographic survey is anonymous. Please answer all items by filling in or circling the appropriate answer.

1. Age: _____ years.

2. Your Highest Educational Level Completed:
   _____Bachelor’s   _____Master’s   _____Ed.S.   _____Ph.D. or Ed.D.

3. Highest level of education obtained by your parents or guardian:
   _____Less than High School   _____High School   _____Bachelor’s
   _____Master’s   _____Ed.S.   _____Ph.D. or Ed.D.

4. Which school level are you currently working in?
   _____Elementary   _____Jr. High   _____Sr. High

5. What is your current teaching status?   _____Full-time Classroom Teacher
   _____Part-time Classroom Teacher   _____Substitute Teacher   _____Other

6. How many years have you been teaching full-time? ________

7. Was teaching your first career choice?   _____Yes   _____No
   If no, what was your first choice? ____________________________________________

8. Please rate your current level of teaching:

   1     2     3     4     5
   Poor   Fair   Good   Very Good   Excellent

9. How satisfied are you with your career as a teacher?

   1     2     3     4     5
   Very Unsatisfied   Very Satisfied

(Please turn over)
10. Ethnic/racial Identification (check one):

____ African American/Black                ____ Asian American

____ Caucasian/European American           ____ Hispanic/Latino/Chicano

____ American Indian                        ____ Alaskan Native

____ Pacific Islander

____ Multiracial (Please specify______________________________)

____ International (Non-U.S. Citizen. Please specify______________)

____ Other (Please specify _________________________________)
Appendix D

Survey Packet Cover Letter
Dear Teachers:

I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education/Counseling Psychology department at Western Michigan University. I am presently conducting research for my doctoral dissertation. I will be examining characteristics of female public school teachers.

I believe the results of this study will enhance the awareness of female teacher’s experiences, as well as a catalyst for future research. Within this survey packet there are three (3) surveys: Index of Self-Esteem, the Impostor Test, and a Demographic Questionnaire. Please fill them out honestly by yourself and seal them in the enclosed envelope. You may skip questions if you wish or you may refuse to participate altogether. Place the envelope in the box located in your mail-room that is labeled “Matthew’s Dissertation Study.” I will collect the surveys two weeks from Friday.

There will be no way to identify the individual participant. The surveys are coded only for data matching purposes. The information collected will only be reported in aggregate form. By completing and returning the survey forms, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw your consent to the research or discontinue participation in the research at any time without prejudice, penalty, or risk of any loss of service you would otherwise have.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at (616)968-1939, or my advisor, Dr. Donna Talbot, (616)387-5122. You may also call Western Michigan University to contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (387-8293) or the Vice President for Research (387-8298) if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance in this study. Upon the request, I will be available to consult with the participating schools regarding the results of the study.

Sincerely,

Sheila Matthews, M.A.
Appendix E

Participant Follow-up Letter
Dissertation Study  
Western Michigan University  
Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Department  
Dr. Donna Talbot, Principal Investigator  
Sheila Matthews, Student Investigator  
The Relationship Between Self-esteem and Impostor Phenomenon of Female Teachers of Kindergarten Through 12th Grade

Dear Teachers:

I am a doctoral student in the Counselor Education/Counseling Psychology department at Western University. I am presently conducting research for my doctoral dissertation. I will be examining characteristics of female public school teachers.

Approximately two weeks ago you received a packet in your mail box containing a letter explaining my research study and three surveys. As indicated earlier, I believe the results of this study will enhance the awareness of female teacher's experiences, as well as serve as a catalyst for future research.

Hopefully, you have had a chance to read through the letter and to consider being a part of the research project. If you have returned the packets to the drop box, I would like to thank you for your cooperation and please disregard this notice. If you have not returned the surveys, I hope you will decide to participate in the study. Please fill the surveys out honestly by yourself and seal them in the enclosed envelope. You may skip questions if you wish or you may refuse to participate altogether. Place the envelope in the box located in your mail-room that is labeled “Matthew’s Dissertation Survey.” I will collect the surveys two weeks from Friday.

There will be no way to identify the individual participant. The surveys are coded only for data matching purposes. The information collected will only be reported in aggregate form. By completing and returning the survey forms, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can withdraw your consent to the research or discontinue participation in the research at any time without prejudice, penalty, or risk of any loss of service you would otherwise have.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at (616)968-1939, or my advisor, Dr. Donna Talbot, (616)387-5122. You may also call Western Michigan University to contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (387-8293) or the Vice President for Research (387-8298) if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

Thank you again for your consideration and assistance in this study.

Sincerely,

Sheila Matthews, M.A.
Appendix F

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval

98
Date: 22 December 1999

To: Donna Talbot, Principal Investigator
Sheila Matthews, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Sylvia Culp, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 99-11-17

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Impostor Phenomenon of Female Teachers of Kindergarten Through 12th Grade" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 22 December 2000
BIBLIOGRAPHY


