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**An Age and Gender Comparison of Adolescent Hostility and its
Relationship to Depression and Bullying**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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Abstract

This study set out to establish the relationship of adolescent hostility to depression and bullying in respect to age and gender. The two groups measured comprised 355 children aged 13 and 14, and 17 and 18 from both urban and rural co-educational high schools. Students were required in class to complete a questionnaire comprising three clinical assessment tools - the Beck Depression Inventory-II, Cynical Distrust Scale (revised) and Peer Relations Questionnaire, measuring depression, hostility and bullying respectively. Results using Pearson's r , confirmed correlations of 0.01 significance between hostility and depression for both genders and age groups. The hostility-bullying relationship was found to be only significant for males. Boys-especially the younger group, reported more frequent and physical bullying, whereas girls experienced greater verbal and psychological bullying. Age was found to be a moderating factor, suggesting that boys as they get older use more covert ways of dealing with hostility. These findings contribute to current knowledge on adolescent hostility, and provide valuable information useful to schools and those developing strategies for the prevention and treatment of hostility, depression and bullying.

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PREFACE

This present study sets out to examine the relationship between hostility, and depression and bullying in New Zealand adolescents. In particular it looks at these relationships in respect to variance due to age and gender-areas where there has been little if any research.

My interest in carrying out this research is in response to the large number of problems currently being experienced by New Zealand adolescents. Depression, bullying and hostility are all symptoms of an unhealthy environment; areas which need to be addressed through research, public awareness, and by putting in place effective education and treatment programmes.