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BULLYING AND GENDER: THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL,

AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS ON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

IN SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

by

Cassundra Peyton-Brown

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010

ABSTRACT

BULLYING AND GENDER: THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL,

AND PHYSICAL IMPACT ON MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS

IN SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

by Cassundra Peyton-Brown

August 2010

Bullying is a great concern in schools today. When bullying occurs, it hinders
school success and academic performance. During the late 1980s and 1990s, school
violence was prevalent in middle school characterized by events such as the Columbine
shooting. This forced both students and school personnel to deal with school shootings,
gang activities and other violent acts. According to subsequent investigations, some of
these incidents occurred because students were bullied and teased. This supports the
maxim that students can only be successful academically in a safe and orderly
environment.

The first interest of this study was to assess the effects of bullying on middle
school students in terms of the social/emotional impact, psychological impact, and the
physical impact. Data collection took place during the 2009-10 school year; collected
data were entered into Microsoft Excel and then imported into SPSS version 17.0. A
repeated measures ANOVA and t-tests were used to determine the degree to which the
independent variables (gender and grade level) mediated the dependent variables
(social/emotional impact, psychological impact and physical impact). It was found that
the social/emotional and psychological effects of bullying have a greater impact on
middle school students than the physical effects of bullying, female participants

expressed significantly stronger impact of bullying than the males and there was a fairly

equal impact of bullying across grade levels for 7th and 8th grade students.

The University of Southern Mississippi

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
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Approved:

__Dr. Rose McNeese_____
Director

__Dr. J. T. Johnson_____

__Dr. Willie Pierce_____

__Dr. Gary Peters_____

__Dr. Susan A. Siltanen_____
Dean of the Graduate School

August 2010

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, biological and extended. My family provided love, care, and support during this process. I am grateful for my four children: Melvin Antonio, CiGi, Philece, and Benjamin Brown; my two grandchildren, Javon and Miracle. Special dedication to my parents, my mother, the late Mrs. Bessie Richmond Magee, retired teacher of 33 years, who taught me perseverance and patience; my father and stepmother, Mr. Frankie D. Peyton, retired principal and Mrs. Erminia H. Peyton, retired teacher; my aunt, Mrs. Edna Foxworth and my uncle, Mr. Moses Richmond, my pastor, District Superintendent Reuben McSwain and church family who prayed fervently for my success. I am most grateful to God for granting the wisdom, knowledge, and ability to pursue until the end never giving up and holding fast to Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

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Special thanks to the superintendents, staff, parents and participants of the middle schools in South Mississippi. I am also grateful to the faculty and staff at Mary Bethune Alternative Center where I serve as principal for their inspiration and motivation during this process.

A special thanks to all my colleagues who constantly reminded me that I could succeed, especially Malcolm and Dr. Yolanda Cobb.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I shall remember forever and will never forget,

Monday: my money was taken,

Tuesday: names called,

Wednesday: my uniform torn,

Thursday: my body pouring with blood,

Friday: it's ended, and

Saturday: freedom. (Marr & Field, 2001, p.xv)

This excerpt is the final diary page of 13-year-old Vijay Singh, found hanging

from the banister rail at his home the Sunday after he committed suicide. This account

was detailed in the groundbreaking work, *Bullycide, Death at Playtime: An Expose' of

Child Suicide* (Marr & Field, 2001), which demonstrated compelling evidence that

bullycide is very prevalent in today's society. *Bullycide* is a term used by Marr and Field

(2001) for the act of committing suicide as the result of being bullied.

One of the major concerns in education today is school violence. Investigations

made after many fatalities committed in schools around the world reveal that school

violence occurs when students are bullied. Thomsen (2002) stated, "Violence begins long

before guns are brought to school; in fact, violence can begin with acts of bullying when

kids are singled out and made to feel uncomfortable" (p. 141). According to Beane

(2008), bullying is the most common form of school violence. During the late 1980s and

early 1990s, schools became places where violent acts occurred frequently. At that point,

schools were described as places where gang activities and killing sprees left students,

educators, and parents in fear (Linquanti & Berliner, 1994). Much of the violence

occurred unexpectedly by students who had been repeatedly bullied. McGraw (2008)

wrote that "bullying starts in elementary school and peaks in middle school" (p. 71).

Unfortunately, in most cases, these activities were either not reported or randomly

reported and sometimes ignored by adults (McGraw, 2008).

A study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Nickelodeon (Arce,

2001) revealed that school students across the United States rated bullying and teasing as

a *big problem* and revealed numerous reports of violent acts committed in schools due to

bullying. Brown (2009) wrote an article in a Mississippi newspaper, *The Clarion Ledger,*

involving an incident in a Mississippi school district where a 14-year-old girl pulled out a

gun during the bus ride to school after being bullied and teased by the students on the

bus.   According to an interview with her mother, the student was tired of being bullied

and teased daily. The parent failed to report the incident to school officials and the girl

felt she had to retaliate. A teenage football player wrestled the girl, retrieved the gun, and

got the other students off the bus safely without incident. *The Clarion Ledger* also shared

that during the 2008-2009 school year in Mississippi, there were 35 reports by school

districts of a firearm on school property as reported by Shane McNeill, director of the

Office of Healthy Schools at the Mississippi Department of Education.

Simon (2009) wrote in a CNN report, April 2009, that eleven year old, Jaheem

Herrera, hanged himself April 16, 2009, after being repeatedly bullied at Dunaire

Elementary School, in Dekalb County, GA. Herrara's mother had reported several times

that her son was being bullied, called "gay," "ugly," and "a virgin" because he was from

the Virgin Islands. The school district had an anti-bullying program and administrators

had attempted to solve the problem, but Jaheem did not get any relief. He was tired of the harassment and felt that dying was his only way out.   Plaisance and Johnson (2009) reported that Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, another eleven year old, hanged himself after being bullied and teased at school according to his mother, Ms. Sirdeaner Walker who found her son hanging in his bedroom. Ms. Walker had worked with school officials; however, her son was still called *faggot* and *gay*.

Arce (2001) discovered that children ages 8 to 11 years old felt that bullying rated higher than smoking, drinking, drugs, or sex, and children older than 12 to 15 years rated bullying higher than substance abuse or sex. Both age groups acknowledged that teasing and bullying were "big problems that ranked higher than racism, AIDS, the pressure to have sex, or the pressure to try alcohol or drugs" (n.p.).

The results of a Secret Service study (Slobogin, 2001) on school shooting incidents in the United States revealed that young men who had a history of feeling depressed committed the majority of the school shooting attacks. More than two-thirds of the school shooters felt persecuted or bullied by someone and used this as the motive for taking revenge on the schools (Slobogin, 2001). Students who are bullied receive unwanted attention that often causes humiliation, embarrassment, and rejection that can lead to emotional and psychological scarring. These negative notions vary from person to person and incident to incident.

Olweus (1993) began researching and studying bullying in Sweden in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Initially, Olweus (1993) called the bullying behavior "mobbing" and later "bully/victim" (p. 1). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the public awareness of bullying among children increased in countries such as Japan, England, The

Netherlands, Canada, the United States, and Australia. A Norwegian newspaper reported in 1982 that three 10-to-14-year old boys from Norway had committed suicide due to severe bullying by peers (Olweus, 1993). After the young men took their lives, people became alarmed and concerned that bullying must be addressed. It was at this point that Olweus began his study of bullying and developed an effective bully prevention program for schools.

Harris and Petrie (2003a) defined bullying as "intentionally harmful, aggressive behavior of a more powerful person or group of people directed repeatedly toward a less powerful person, usually without provocation" (p. 2). Coloroso (2003) explained bullying as "a conscious, willful, and deliberate hostile activity to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and create terror" (p. 13). Olweus (1993) added, "a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and overtime, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (p. 9). Sullivan, Cleary, and Sullivan (2004) further clarified bullying as "any negative and often aggressive or manipulative act or series of acts by one or more people against another person or people usually over a period of time. It is abusive and is based on an imbalance of power" (p. 5). According to the National Mental Health Information Center (2009), bullying is a learned behavior and may be evident as early as two years of age.

Given the many definitions of bullying, Olweus (1993) suggested there are four common criteria that explain bullying:

1. It is aggressive and intentionally harmful.

2. It is carried out repeatedly.

3. It occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power, and

4. It usually occurs with no provocation from the victim. (p. 54)

Harris and Petrie (2003a) described two categories of bullying, *direct bullying* and *indirect bullying*. Direct bullying includes physical violations such as fighting, hitting, kicking, taunting, and threatening a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. Indirect bullying includes teasing, isolation, and spreading of rumors. "When direct or indirect bullying occurs, it causes psychological, emotional, and sometimes physical harm to the victim" (Olweus, 1993, p. 35). Whether bullying is direct or indirect, the key element of bullying that distinguishes it from other forms of violent behavior is the physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993).

While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad & Smith, 1994).

> Bullying was reported as more prevalent among males than females and occurred with greater frequency among middle school-aged youth than high school-aged youth. For males, both physical and verbal bullying was common, while for females, verbal bullying and rumors were more common. (Nansel et al., 2001, p. 2095)

Nansel et al. (2001) concluded that given the emotional and behavioral difficulties of bullying, the issue needs immediate attention, preventive intervention, and further research.

Olweus (2003) reported that psychologists and psychiatrists commonly view individuals with an aggressive and tough behavior pattern are actually anxious and insecure. Additionally, bullies usually lack understanding of their victims and display impulsive tendencies. Sullivan et al. (2004) acknowledged that bullying usually involves more than one person against another person, with one in every six adolescent students acknowledging that they have been bullied in school.

During the adolescent years, from 11-to-12 years old, students are focusing on their identity while trying to determine who they are and the true meaning of their lives (Sullivan et al. 2004). However, when bullying occurs it tends to hinder the normal developmental pattern. When negative effects such as bullying or teasing interrupt a student's normal growth pattern, students are affected socially, emotionally, psychologically, and physically. Sullivan et al. (2004) reported that students who do not deal with bullying in school usually have an ordinary life free of the negative influences. Consequently, bullying should not be ignored, it is the responsibility of the adults— parents, teachers and administrators—to address the problem of bullying in school when reported or observed (Sullivan et al., 2004).

Bullying can happen anywhere to anyone at anytime. People who bully come in all shapes, sizes, races, creeds, colors, or ethical groups. According to Sullivan et al. (2004), "A victim of bullying can be hurt physically, emotionally, or psychologically. All acts of bullying have an emotional or psychological dimension. Bullying can be

physical or non-physical and can include damage to property" (p. 5). Every time a bully

acts violently, it makes the victim feel overpowered. The resulting physiological

response is to protect oneself and become defensive to the threats. The aggression

sometimes makes the bullies want to be isolated from their peers. However, the more

they are bullied the more isolated they become, which may trigger other forms of

bullying (Sullivan et al. 2004).

When bullying occurs, there may be several participants. Coloroso (2003)

identified three participants as "the bully, the bullied, and the bystander" (p. 3). These

roles may be assumed or interchanged at any given time. However, Coloroso (2003)

further acknowledged that the bullies are the *perpetrators*, the ones who intend to harm

or inflict pain on others, because they feel they can overpower the victims or force them

to comply with their request. The *victim* is the person to whom the attack is directed.

The *bystanders* or observers are involved indirectly by not attempting to stop the bullying

or by just being an observer.

Harris and Hathorn (2006) reported that when educators treat bullying as normal

development and ignore bullying incidences as minor problems, bullying behavior tends

to escalate. Those who treat bullying as normal behavior and ignore the bullying,

generally do so for the following reasons:

1. Lack of understanding of violence,

2. Role of dominance involved in violence,

3. Lack of knowledge of negative behaviors that create violence,

4. Occurrences of bullying behavior,

5. Denial of the effect of bullying behaviors, and

6. Lack of understanding of the effects of parental neglect. (Harris &

Hathorn, 2006)

Like many parents, some school officials feel that bullying is a part of

adolescence. Recent studies indicated that educators lack the knowledge and/or training

for effective management of incidents of bullying. Rigby (2003) wrote that some

explanations of bullying draw upon an understanding of child development. He pointed

out that bullying begins in early childhood when individuals begin to assert themselves at

the expense of others in order to establish their social dominance. Bullies tease others,

especially those with less power than themselves, in an attempt to intimidate them

(Rigby, 2003).

On March 3, 2004, Goals 2000: The Educate America Act (2007) legislation was

approved which provided the federal government a new role in the support of education.

One of the eight goals was, "Every school in the United States will be free of drugs,

violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a

disciplined environment conducive to learning" (Goals 2000, n.p.). However, violence in

schools continues to concern educators, parents, community leaders, and students as

bullying occurs on a daily basis and sometimes leads to violent retaliation (Kaiser &

Rasminsky, 2007).

Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peaks in the

middle school/junior high school years, and declines during the high school years.

However, while direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears

to remain constant. School size, racial composite on, and school setting (rural, suburban,

or urban) do not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of

bullying. Boys who were identified as bullies in middle school were four times as likely as their peers to have more than one criminal conviction by age 24 (Olweus, 2003).

Olweus (1993) stated, "Various reports and studies have established that approximately 15% of students are either bullied regularly or are initiators of bullying behavior" (p. 18). According to research by Nansel et al. (2001), approximately 30% of all children and youth in grades 6 through 10 have been bullied or have bullied other children sometimes or more often within a semester. "Both bullying and being bullied are associated with poorer psychological adjustment. . .those bullied demonstrated poorer social and emotional adjustment, reporting greater difficulty making friends, poorer relationships with classmates and greater loneliness" (Nansel et al., 2001, p. 209).

DeVoe and Kaffenberger (2005) reported results of a survey conducted in 2001 where students were bullied in school. The students were fearful of attending school and sometimes skipped school to avoid being bullied. When students were bullied in school, they also suffered physical and psychological effects. The survey revealed that their peers physically beat some students and other students suffered psychological and emotional damage from the aggressive behaviors displayed by the bullies. Some of the students who suffered psychological effects of bullying reported they lacked the ability to concentrate on their academic work.

Coloroso (2003) explained while young people may have felt hopeless about being bullied, these inappropriate behaviors can be stopped. "Bullying is a learned behavior that can be changed" (Coloroso, 2003, p. 13). This learned behavior may have been the result of a child who was bullied or from observing parental or peer examples of bullying. Adding to the bullying problem, parents and educators enable bully behaviors

to continue or worsen when they ignore bullying or brush it off as being associated with simply "growing up."

In a meta-analysis study conducted by Marzano (2003a) on effective school practices, one of the five school-level factors associated with effective schools and increasing student learning is providing a "safe and orderly environment" for teaching and learning. He stated, "If teachers and students do not feel safe, they will not have the necessary psychological energy for teaching and learning" (p.7). Marzano's (2003a) study implied there is a relationship between school leadership and student achievement. The leadership in a school is responsible for making sure that all students are safe and orderly in the learning environment. Waters and Grubb (2004) implied that school leadership must clarify what is essential and important, such as student safety. School leaders are responsible for making sure students are safe and free from bullying in school.

During the 1990s, school violence became a big concern. Most of the perpetrators acknowledged that one of the reasons for their violent behavior was bullying by their peers. Coloroso (2003), author of *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander,* cited several cases. In Moses Lake, Washington, in February 1996, a 14-year-old student walked in his algebra class at the junior high school with a hunting rifle, killing his teacher and two fellow peers. In Bethel, Alaska, in February 1997, a student smuggled a shotgun in his pants and later killed the principal and a fellow classmate. In Pearl, Mississippi, in October 1997, a 14-year-old student at Pearl High School went on a shooting rampage because he was teased about his appearance. In West Paducah, Kentucky, in December 1997, five students were wounded and a high school freshman killed three students as the students were in a circle praying at school. In Jonesboro,

Arkansas, in March 1998, two middle-school boys killed four students and injured 10 including two teachers, after pulling the fire alarm to get students out of the building. In Columbine, Colorado, in 1999, at Columbine High School two students went on a shooting rampage killing 12 people and wounding 23 others as they retaliated against being bullied. All of the shooters reported being victims of bullying.

Coloroso (2003) cited other incidents where adults ignored bullying and violence occurred:

- In Manchester, England, in January 1999, an 8 year-old girl committed suicide after becoming frustrated with teasing and bullying from her peers.

- In British, Columbia, in April 1997, a student drew a knife on a peer after being taunted by her peers.

- In Victoria, British Columbia, in November 1997, a 14-year-old young woman was beaten to death because of her size and weight.

- In Littleton, Colorado, in April 1999, Eric Harris and Dylan Kieblod killed a teacher, 12 students, and injured 18 students after being bullied and teased.

 All of these incidents were the result of students who were bullied and teased at school. The victims felt that the adults ignored the problems or assumed the problems would resolve themselves. For most of the situations, the bullied students retaliated because they felt that the adults were not helping them and the students had lost hope (Coloroso, 2003).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Schools that are safe and orderly environments allow students to learn and achieve at their highest potential. However, bullying and teasing can compromise safety

in the school. Coloroso (2003) stated that bullying is a life and death issue that is ignored at our children's peril. Students who are bullied receive unwanted attention that often causes humiliation and embarrassment. Perceptions of these negative experiences vary from person to person and incident to incident. Students who bully in school have often been victims or bystanders of inappropriate bullying behaviors. The bystanders are the onlookers who are drawn into the bullying situation, often affecting the students who are bullied, or are affected by the bullying themselves. When a bystander or witness observes bullying behaviors, he or she may also become fearful, avoid contact with others, withdraw from peer activity, or develop interpersonal and psychological hindrances that may keep them from becoming productive young people in school. In some instances, bystanders become involved in the inappropriate conduct as well (Hoover & Oliver, 1996.

When bullying occurs in school, it may cause emotional and psychological scars that will hinder students' progress and success in school. When students feel safe in school, the learning environment is more conducive to academic and behavioral success (Harris & Petrie, 2003b; Linquanti & Berliner, 1994; Marzano, 2003b; Olweus 1994). Students who bully in school have sometimes been victims or bystanders of inappropriate bullying behaviors. The adults cannot afford to ignore, reject, or deny bullying behaviors in schools. When students experience bullying behaviors they become fearful of attending school and provide various excuses to avoid school. Students who fear going to school sometimes pretend to be ill, skip school, and act out in school to be sent home for fear of being bullied by their peers. Students are bullied in school, on the way to school and on the way home from school. When students spend time trying to avoid being bullied, they

tend to not be effective and successful learners because their attention is not on their academic success but instead on how to survive being bullied (Harris & Petrie, 2003b).

According to Coloroso (2003), students who are bullied often grow up to become adult bullies and increase the risk of bullying their own children, which can negatively affect their interpersonal skills. In order to stop bullying behavior, it is important to understand what bullying is; who bullies; and when, where, and why bullying occurs in schools. The result of this study will assist school leaders in providing interventions for bullying in middle schools in South Mississippi. One of key components to reducing incidents of bullying is adult awareness and involvement. Adults must avoid the attitude that *kids will be kids* or *boys will be boys*. It is no longer acceptable for students to feel uncomfortable in school. All students should feel safe in the school environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to obtain knowledge of how middle school students in South Mississippi are affected socially/emotionally, psychologically, and physically according to gender.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H1: There is a statistically significant difference between the social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects of middle-school students in South Mississippi who are bullied.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference between males and female middle-school students in South Mississippi who are bullied on their social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects by gender.

H3: There is a statistically significant difference between seventh and eighth grade students in South Mississippi who are bullied on their social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects by gender.

Research Questions

   The purpose of the study was to analyze how middle-school students in South Mississippi are affected socially/emotionally, psychologically, and physically when they are bullied by gender.

1. What are the social-emotional effects on middle school students in South Mississippi who are bullied in school by gender?

2. What are the psychological effects on middle school students in South Mississippi who are bullied in school by gender?

3. What are the physical effects on middle school students in South Mississippi who are bullied in school by gender?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined:

   Abuse. "Harmful treatment of a person" (Meeks, Heit, & Page, 1995, p. 641).

   Adverse environment. "Set of conditions and surroundings in which a person lives that interferes with growth, development, and success" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 641).

Aggressive behavior. "The use of words and/or actions that show disrespect toward other" (Meeks et al., 1995, p.641).

Aggression. "An attack made without reasonable cause" (Webster's, 2005).

Aggressive. "Showing readiness to attack others; being forceful and sometimes pushy" (Webster's, 2005)

Anger. "Anger is usually a response to being hurt or frustrated, causing a feeling of being irritated, annoyed, and/or furious. This hurt might be emotional, psychological, social, and/or physical" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 641).

Assault . "A physical attack or threat of attack on a person" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 8).

Assertive/Assertion. "A behavior that demonstrates an appropriate expression of one's feeling, beliefs, and opinions. Assertion takes into account the other person's feelings and is not a negative confrontation" (Vernon, 1989, p. 131).

Bully. "A person who uses bullying behavior; tries to overpower a susceptible person; has a tendency to be hotheadedness, has a positive attitude toward violence" (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2007, p. 236)

Bullying. "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (Olweus, 1993, p. 7)

Bystander. "The supporting cast who aid and abet the bully through acts of omission and commission. They can stand idly or look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of a bunch of bullies" (Coloroso, 2003, p. 62).

Child Abuse. "Harmful treatment of a person under 18 and includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 642).

Domestic violence. "Violence that occurs within the family or within other relationships in which people live together" (Meeks et al., 1995, p.643).

Embarrass. "To cause to feel confused and distressed" (Webster's, 2005)

Empathy. "The ability to share in another person's emotion or feelings" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 643).

Environment. "Everything that is around you in the place in which you live" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 643).

Fighting. "The act of taking part in a physical struggle" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 643).

Harassment. "A course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes substantial emotional distress in such a person and serves no legitimate purpose (Under the United States Code Title 18 Subsection 1514 (c) 1)" (Macklem, 2003, p. 3).

Homicide. "The accidental or purposeful killing of another person" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 644).

Humiliation. "The enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away one's pride, honor or dignity" (Rosenberg, 2003, n.p.).

Intimidation. "Believing the world is an unsafe and violent place. Becoming fearful and distrusting of others, overreacting to slights and minor incidents. The intimidation they feel can lead to depression" (Coloroso, 2003, p.123).

Loneliness. "An anxious, unpleasant, and painful feeling that results from having few friends or from being alienated" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 645).

*Manipulative. "*To manage skillfully and especially with intent to deceive" (Webster's, 2005)

Middle School. Students attending school in grades 7 and 8.

Moral development. "The process of learning to base one's behavior on personal beliefs of right and wrong" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 645).

Nurturing environment. "A set of conditions and surroundings in which a person lives that promotes growth, development, and success" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 645).

*Passive. "*Offering no resistance; not acting but acted upon" (Webster's, 2005).

Proactive aggression. "Aggression that usually occurs in the form of object acquisition, bullying, or dominance of a peer" (Dodge, 1991, p. 202).

Psychological effects. A repeated pattern of damaging interactions between parent(s) and child that becomes typical of the relationship; when a person conveys to a child that he or she is worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value in meeting another's needs. (Florida Atlantic University Mental Health Counseling Program, 2007, n.p.)

Respect. "Having esteem for someone's admirable characteristics, responsible and caring" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 646).

Social skills. "Skills that can be used to relate well with others" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 647).

Taunting. "A behavior that is not intended to hurt the other person It is sometimes done for fun or to get laughter" (Coloroso, 2003, p. 32).

Teasing. "A behavior that is intended to harm. It involves humiliation, cruel or demeaning jokes" (Coloroso, 2003, p. 32).

Values. "The beliefs, goals, and standards held by a person" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 648).

Victim. "A person who is harmed by violence" (Meeks et al., 1995, p. 648)

Delimitations

The participants in this study were middle-school students who attended school in South Mississippi. The participants were limited to three public schools in South Mississippi.

Assumptions

The respondents answered the question honestly.

Justification

When children come to school in a democratic society they bring with them their rights to a democratic society, including the "right to be spared oppression and repeated intentional humiliation" (Olweus, 1993, p.427). Since the birth of our nation our society has established a history of using aggression to resolve problems. Unfortunately, using violence to solve problem has become the norm in a number of social contexts including family relationships, schools, and communities (Hoover & Oliver, 1996). Olweus (1993) revealed the magnitude of bullying in schools and the negative impact bullying can have on the emotional, psychological, and physical states of school children. From teasing to harassing to killings in schools, bullying invades and corrupts the positive culture necessary to maximize student learning (Marzano, 2003b).

The NICHD survey found that bullying has long-term and short-term psychological effects on both those who bully and those who are bullied. Victims experienced loneliness and reported having trouble making social and emotional adjustments, difficulty making friends, and poor relationships with classmates. Victims of bullying often suffer humiliation, insecurity, and a loss of self esteem, and they may develop a fear of going to school The impact of frequent bullying often accompanies these victims into adulthood; they are at greater risk of suffering depression and other mental health problems, including schizophrenia. In rare cases, may commit suicide. (Erikson, 2010, p. 2)

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2010), young people today are using new media technology, including cell phones, personal data assistants, and the Internet, to communicate with others locally and internationally. This electronic social networking, such as text messaging, chat rooms, and social networking websites (e.g., MySpace and Facebook), have allowed children to easily develop social relationships, as well as to expand their learning opportunities. However, this has created new ways for adolescents to bully others through the internet. Referred to as *cyberbullying* (CDC, 2010), a new wave of violence has resulted in emotional and physical abuse and even death of innocent, immature, and vulnerable adolescents. Terrorized by on-line harassment and cyber bullying, some victims have escaped this form of electronic violence by committing suicide. "Like traditional forms of youth violence, electronic aggression is associated with emotional distress and conduct problems at school" (CDC, 2010, n.p.).

An estimated 30% of 6th to 10th graders in the United States were either a bully, a target of bullying, or both (Nansel et al., 2001). However, more recent data reported by the CDC (2010) revealed that about 32% of students in the United States reported being bullied in schools during the 2007 school year, while about 4% of students reported being cyber-bullied during the same year. Bullying negatively impacts the educational process of schools and student learning as "children who bully are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, skip school, and drop out of schools" (CDC, 2010, n.p.)

Faced with the increased incidents of violence in schools that can negatively impact student achievement and the accountability of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to increase student achievement, school leaders need to have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a safe learning environment in which students can learn and teachers can teach. This study will provide helpful information for school leaders and school stakeholders regarding the number of incidents of bullying and the impact of the bullying among the students in the Middle Schools in South Mississippi included in this study for the purpose of developing programs and implementing practices to reduce bullying in their schools and communities and, consequently, to increase student achievement.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the major concerns in education today is school violence. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Fact Sheet 2010 revealed that school violence is a extension of youth violence and youth violence implies dangerous conduct that may start when children are real young and continue until they are adults. These behaviors could include bullying, slapping, punching, and the use of dangerous weapons (CDC, 2010). There may be several reasons why students exhibit school violence such as aggressive behavior, struggle for power over another or the desire to mimic another behavior.

The CDC shared that violence could result in serious injury, significant social and emotional damage, or even death. Data released on the CDC Fact Sheet (2010) revealed that violent incident continued to occur in public schools revealing that approximately 38% of public school reported to police at least one violent act. Violence in schools causes many problems and hinders academic performance.

School violence starts out with bully on the playground, or pushing and shoving in the lunch line, but given the right set of circumstances what might have been prevented with some supervision instead turns into something deadly" (Last, 2001, n.p.).

According to CDC Youth Violence Fact Sheet 2010, "Youth violence is the second leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 10 and 24" (n.p.). The CDC (2009b) data also revealed that during violent acts at schools, a substantial amount of young people were killed, injured, various weapons were brought to school,

and bullying incidents were reported more. Violence can also affect the population causing a depreciation in property values and increase in crime rates.

The nursery rhyme, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me," illustrates the significant emotional and psychological scarring that often affects students who have been bullied. Students of all ages and genders are bullied in schools daily. According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (2003), over 30% of youth in the United States (or over 5.7 million children) are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of a bully, or both. Bullying has increased in recent years, and several laws have been passed banning bullying and harassment in schools. According to a UCLA study (2003), bullying occurs frequently in schools, sometimes leading to retaliation. Students resort to retaliation when they feel they are not getting help with bullying.

Recently, on the NBC Nightly News, reporter Rossen (2010) reported that bullying is a problem in needs of a lot of attention. This concern is shared by many including the federal government. Rossen reported on the incident that occurred in Massachusetts where a young lady was bullied and committed suicide after not getting help with the problem. Rossen shared National Center for Education Statistics data, "At least 32% of students from ages 12-to-18 years old who attend public schools, reported that they have been bullied and 4% stated that they have been cyberbullied" (n.p.). Kevin Jennings with the U. S. Department of Education stated in the interview with Rossen, "What keeps him up at night is that there are students out there who would rather die than go to school" (Rossen, 2010).

According to Spivak and Prothrow-Stith (2001) in an article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, approximately 30% of children and youth in grades 6 through 10 reported that they had been bullied or had bullied other children 'sometimes' or more often within a semester. Nansel et al. (2001) shared the results of a national survey in the United States including 15,000 students in grades 6-10, "13% reported bullying others, 11% reported being the target of bullies, and another 6% said that they bullied others and were bullied themselves" (p. 285).

What is Bullying?

Olweus (1993) defined bullying as repeated exposure, over time, to negative actions from one or more other students. Negative actions can include physical, verbal, or indirect actions that are intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another. Health Resource and Service Administration (2005) defined bullying as aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (2007) explained bullying as a repetitive aggressive behavior (words, actions, or social exclusion) directed toward an individual for the purpose of intentionally hurting or harming the person. The aggression is delivered by someone (bully) that is physically, verbally, or socially stronger than the recipient (victim), creating an imbalance of power. Tattum and Tattum (1992) added, Bullying is the willful, conscious desire to hurt another and put him/her under stress (p. 14).

Farrington (1993) saw oppression as central to what bullying is. His definition stated, Bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person (p.32). Rigby (2002) suggested, "Bullying involves a desire to hurt, a harmful action, a power imbalance, (typically) repetition, an unjust use of

power, evident enjoyment by the aggressor, and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim" (p. 142). Beane (2008) explained that bullying is a form of overt and aggressive behavior that is intentional, hurtful, and persistent (repeated). "Bullied children are teased, harassed, socially rejected, threatened, belittled, and assaulted or attacked (verbally, physically, and psychologically) by one or more individuals" (Beane, 2008, p. 2). The various definitions of bullying have several things in common, such as unwanted consequences for the victim, aggression, and negative attention that may cause long-term effects.

Willis (2001) stated, "If you think bullying is about anger, aggression, or conflict, think again. It's about contempt. Contempt can range from a disregard for another human being to loathing for that human being" (p. 4). A 1999 CNN report revealed that a study was conducted in a Midwestern middle school with 558 students and discovered that 80% of the students shared that four out of five students said they acted like bullies at least once a month which included aggressive behavior, physical aggression, social ridicule, teasing, name-calling, and making threats.

Beane (2008) shared various causes of bullying:

1. Biological factors, such as genetics;

2. Human brain mechanism, the limbic system, that detects and responds to emotions perceived in the face of others;

3. Personal temperament or anger control issues;

4. Lack of sensitivity or empathy for others;

5. Social influences or social relationships including prejudices, jealousy, peer pressure, and family interactions;

6. Observational learning from others such as viewing violent television shows or movies and playing video games that include aggression toward others—sports violence such as wrestling, ice hockey, football and rugby;

7. A sense of superiority, power, or control over another person;

8. Fear;

9. Self-centeredness and a desire for attention; and

10. Revenge. (pp. 23-40)

The result of bullying can be devastating for the victim, as well as the bystander and even the bully. Harris and Petrie (2003a) wrote that the bully, the victim and the bystander all suffer during bullying incidents. The bully is hurting and wants to hurt others. The victim can be hurt social/emotional, psychologically, and physical. The bystander can also have psychological effects after witnessing the bullying incident. Harris and Petrie (2003a) also stated, "Girls report bullying more than boys; however, girls engage in more indirect bullying and boys engage in more direct bullying" (p. 4). Direct bullying involves physical bullying such as hitting, threatening, teasing, etc., whereas, indirect bullying involves name calling, spreading rumors, and isolating (Harris and Petrie, 2003a, p. 3).

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

Bullying has been a growing concern in schools for many years due to its negative influence on school success and academic achievement. Also, many theorists have various beliefs to explain why students bully others. It can happen to anyone at anytime during the school day. Olweus (1993), known as the Father of Bullying Research, began researching bullying in schools and the effects of bullying on students during the early

1980s. Olweus (1993) began his study on bullying after three 10-to-4-year-old boys in

Norway committed suicide after being bullied. This event caused an outcry for bullying

to be addressed. The suicide of a girl and boy in Massachusetts and a boy in Georgia,

caused concern parents, educators and even the federal government to try to put

intervention in place to help with bullying.

Marzano's (2003a) meta-analysis study analyzed research on what works in

schools by having an effect on student achievement. The study found that students learn

more effectively in an environment free from chaos and fear with the presence of

structure and a well-managed classroom environment. Bullying was identified in

Marzano's (2003a) study as a school factor that can result in chaos and fear, causing a

negative impact on student learning. The federal law (P.L. 107-110), known as No Child

Left Behind (2001), signed into law by President Bush in 2002 required that "all students

would be proficient by 2014" (n.p.). As a result of this law, students are assessed

throughout the school year to measure student achievement and adequately yearly

progress in various subject areas. Criteria stated in this law also mandates that classrooms

will have the opportunity to learn in a safe and orderly environment.

There have been several studies conducted on bullying. Sullivan et al. (2004)

found that acts of bullying increases during adolescence and decreases during high

school. According to Haynie et al. (2001), a study conducted in Maryland in 2001 with

4,236 middle school students, revealed that 30.9% of the students reported they had been

bullied more than three times during the past year. A study conducted in 2000 by

Simonton, Burthwick, and Hoover (2000) in a small town in American concluded that

one in every three students was bullied. Smith and Shu (2000) of the United Kingdom

conducted a study on bullying involving 6 to 10 year old in English schools. This study

revealed that 55.5 % shared that they were not bullied while 32.3 shared that they were

bullied. A study conducted in Australia (Peterson & Rigby, 1999) with 38,000 students

revealed that one in every six students had been bullied at least once a week.

Marzano (2003b) identified five characteristics of motivation theory—drive

theory, attribution theory, self worth theory, emotions, and self-system. The drive theory

involves a motivation to participate in a task that is rewarding to the individual. The

attribution theory involves four attributes: ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. The

most useful attribute is effort. The self-worth theory involves the search for self-

acceptance. The emotions theory, involves control over one's values or beliefs. Self-

system involves tasks that help us decide whether to participate in new ventures

(Marzano, 2003b).

The Social-Emotional Effects of Bullying

Beane (2008) revealed that the human brain may have a built in mechanism that

detects and responds to emotions perceived in the faces of others. The study showed that

"bullies feel rewarded for mistreating others" (p. 25). Beane (2008) explained further that

the temperament of bullies is a factor in understanding why they bully others.

Temperament was defined as "the mixture of elements or qualities that make up an

individual's personality" (Beane, 2008, p. 26). Bullies are influenced by their family—

mother, father, sister, brother—or even peers that they hang around. These influences,

referred to as *observational influences* (Beane, 2008), often affect the way bullies treat

other people. Bullies also feel that they are superior to others, and they display an

attitude where they look down on others who may be inferior or less fortunate. On the

other hand, victims of bullying usually have low self worth, low self esteem, and suffer emotionally. The victims tend to blame themselves for being bullied and sometimes develop mental health issues later in their adulthood (Beane, 2008).

Olweus (1994) revealed that individuals formerly bullied were found to have higher levels of depression and poorer self esteem at age 23, and they were more harassed and socially isolated when compared to other adults. Barton (2003) shared that victims of bullying sometimes develop depression and suicidal ideations. The American Psychological Association (APA, 1999) suggested that bullying is a serious and more common problem than previously recognized as it can leave emotional wounds after the physical wounds have healed. There are some children who exhibit feelings of dominance with others and identify themselves to be better than others frequently teasing, taunting, and bullying in the process. This behavior is sometimes the result of the way children are taught by their parents.

Daniel Goldman (1995) shared there are five domains of emotional intelligence from his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ.* "The domains include understanding one's own emotions or self-awareness, managing or having some control over one's own emotions in others and being able to feel empathy for others, and building and maintaining social relationships" (Goldman, 1995, p. 98). Emotional intelligence must also be addressed in the bully because the bully often demonstrates a deficit or lagging development in emotional intelligence.

The bully often has no understanding of how her behavior impacts others. She has no concept of how others are feeling. There is no empathy for the plight for others. The ability to empathize is a sign of a higher level of or growing level of

emotional intelligence, and bullying is often a sign that there is no empathy. And finally, there is little or no understanding of how to build or maintain appropriate social relationships. (Beane, 2008, p. 33)

When *Emotional Intelligence* (Goldman, 1995) was published, the field of social and emotional learning (SEL) was just beginning to evolve as an intervention for reducing dropouts, substance abuse, unwanted teen pregnancies, and school violence. SEL programs taught children specific social-emotional skills like self-awareness, self-management, empathy, perspective taking, and cooperation. In short, they were lessons in emotional intelligence. Along with the case for SEL as a prevention and promotion strategy, another benefit emerged: social and emotional learning facilitates academic learning (Goldman, 1995). Thus, it offers a much-needed and very timely aid to schools in fulfilling their main mission.

Daniel Amen (1998), author of *Change your Brain, Change your Life*, is a clinical neuroscientist, child and adolescent psychiatrist, and medical director of the Amen Clinic for Behavioral Medicine in Fairfield, California. Nationally recognized as an expert on the relationship between the brain and behavior, Amen (1998) explained that the brain has various parts. "The limbic system is the emotional center of the brain that performs such tasks as storing highly charged emotional memories, it determines one's emotional tone and connects events emotionally, it promotes bonding, and it controls motivation" (p. 38). Additionally, Amen (1998) suggested that violence is a complex human behavior that is the result of a combination of psychological, social, and behavioral factors as they are filtered through the limbic system of the brain.

According to Amen (1998) most educators have assumed that the kind of academic learning that goes on in school has little or nothing to do with one's emotions or social environment. Neuroscientists have reported the opposite (Amen, 1998). The emotional centers of the brain are intricately interwoven with the neurocortical areas involved in cognitive learning. When a child trying to learn is caught up in a distressing emotion, the centers for learning in the brain are temporarily hampered. The child's attention becomes burdened caused by the source of the trouble. As a result the child has less ability to hear, understand, or remember what the teacher is saying. This distraction negatively influences the child's ability to learn and shows the direct link between emotions and learning (Amen, 1998). In their book, *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning,* Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) also presented powerful evidence of the links between social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic learning and provided schools with scientific evidence of the links between SEL and academic learning.

The Psychological Effects of Bullying

When students are bullied in school there may be some psychological effects. Various studies have revealed that students who have been the victim of bullying use their time being terrified of the people who bullied them. They sometimes withdraw from their peers and isolate themselves to avoid the constant bullying, teasing and harassment. Harris and Hathorn (2006) found that acts of bullying have profound psychological effects on children. Barton (2003) stated, "Attachment theory is thought by some to be a strong explanation for bullying and victimization behaviors" (p. 23). Attachment theory is one explanation psychologists often use to explain child

development in social domains. During conflict situations, children with insecure attachments are more likely to escalate the conflict and use aggression as a means of resolving conflict and controlling their environment.

Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory identified five basic human psychological needs: biological and physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and belonging needs, self-esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization. This theory involved layers of progress from the first need (physiological need) being met and to the highest level—self-actualization. After the physiological needs are met, the next level includes the need for an individual to feel safe and secure in his or her surroundings. "Humans need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, whether it comes from a small or large social group" (Maslow, 1954, p. 7) When an individual does not feel loved, he or she becomes vulnerable to bullying or teasing which hinders students' success in the learning setting and human development (Maslow, 1954). Sometimes bully victims may allow bullying to dictate their emotional reaction, which could result in low self-esteem and a low sense of worth. Maslow (1954) explained that when a person's self-esteem is compromised, it could cause emotional and/or psychological effects.

Blumer's (1969) theory of *symbolic interactionism* deals with the approach of studying human group life and human conduct. Symbolic interactionism involves three premises:

(1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them;

(2) The second premise derives from or arises out of the social interaction that

one has with another person (process of social interaction); and

(3) The third premise is that the meanings derived from social interactions are

handled in, and modified through, an interpretation process used by the person

in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969, p. 2).

The University of Washington (2007) in Seattle conducted research on media

violence and found that four-year-old children who watched television excessively were

more likely to mistreat others by the time they were eleven years old. The study also

revealed that video games caused psychological effects which caused bullies to release

angry outbursts and make them want to hurt others (University of Washington, 2007).

The Physical Effects of Bullying

McGraw (2008) stated that bullies can hit, fight and badly bruise their victim but

the physical injuries can also cause a victim to have panic attacks. Panic attacks can

make it hard for a person to breathe even when they are asleep. A victim of bullying may

also become nervous, irritable, or agitated and become depressed, withdrawn from others,

or even seek revenge which can result with more violent acts (McGraw, 2008). Victims

of bullying frequently skip school and drop out of school to avoid being bullied.

McGraw (2008) stated, "Up to 160,000 students stay home from school each day to avoid

a bully" (p. 77).

Barton (2003) responded to the argument of whether bullying is a part of nature or

nurture. He explained, " A person's biological or genetic makeup play a vital role in

whether one bullies or not, a person's surrounding or environment also plays a vital role"

(p. 114). Barton (2003) discovered that men demonstrate more physical bullying

behavior than women, and children of parents who bullied also demonstrated bullying behaviors. Banks (1997) added that bullies are aggressive and they, too, may have been bullied by someone or suffered physical abuse.

Juvonen (2003) reported that bullying and being victimized by bullies have been recognized as health problems for school children because of their association with a range of adjustment problems, including poor mental health and violent behavior. The act of being bullied tends to increase some students' isolation because their peers do not want to lose status by associating with them or because they do not want to increase the risks of being bullied themselves (Olweus, 1993).

Aggression

Youth today are turning to aggressive behaviors to work out problems or conflicts with their peers. Sometimes these aggressive behaviors result in violence or criminal acts. There are various reasons why students exhibit aggressive behaviors. According to Sterba and Davis (1999), "Some people cite the soaring divorce rate and single-parent homes; others say youth have become desensitized to violence by what they see in the movies, on television, and in video games" (p. 2).

Fletcher (2006) reported a study conducted with seventh and eighth grade adolescents to determine the effects of television viewing. Some of the students display extreme aggressive behavior after watching various episodes on television. Males were thought to be more physically aggressive than females, while females were usually more verbally aggressive. People often become aggressive when they try to control others or gain possessions or respect. These aggressive behaviors often result in bullying (Fletcher, 2006).

Bullying involves aggression toward others (Olweus, 2003). According to Smith and Mackie (2007), *aggression* can be defined as "a behavior whose immediate intent is to hurt someone" (p. 474). Conflict often leads to aggression, but aggression can also have other origins, such as anger or frustration. Some psychologists (Smith & Mackie, 2007) believe that humans frequently express aggression when they are annoyed, in a rage, or emotionally out of control. Smith and Mackie (2007) defined conflict as the perception that "what is wanted by one group may be against the desire of another group" (p. 474).

Hoover and Oliver (1996) shared that aggression is affecting our family relationship and keeping violence as a normal behavior and this trend continues from one generation to another generation. Sterba and Davis (1999) shared that aggression is a behavior that is intended to harm or hurt others, identified as *reactive* and *proactive* aggression. When reactive aggression is displayed, a person may have a temper tantrum, want to have their way, or want to be in control of the situation. According Sterba and Davis (1999), "reactive aggressor are expulsive and can not avoid conflict and will escalate using verbal and physical aggression" (p. 14). When proactive aggression is displayed, a person is identified as starting trouble and usually called a bully. The proactive aggressor starts fights, teases, call names. (Sterba & Davis, 1999).

Some people believe that the violent behaviors young people display are the result of their exposure to musical videos, musical lyrics, violent television programs, the accessibility of weapons, and the use of drugs and alcohol (Walker, 2008). The music videos and musical lyrics that young people listen to sometimes contain negative messages and negative images especially about women. The violent television programs include killing and shooting sprees and also include national wrestling matches.

shooting sprees and also include national wrestling matches.

Beane (2008) indicated that children who view a lot of violent television, violent videos, and violent movies or play violent videos games, often become more aggressive and less empathetic toward others. According to Beane (2008), there is a relationship between the violent video games and the underdeveloped impulse control part of the brain. The impulse control center of the brain—the part of the brain that enables us to think ahead, consider consequences, and manage urges—is the part of the brain right behind our forehead called the prefrontal cortex. This part of the brain is "under construction" during the teenage years and not completely developed until an individual is in his early twenties (Beane, 2008).

Anderson, Gentile, and Buckley (2007) reported that violent music lyrics increased aggressive thoughts and hostile feelings. They stated that there are now good theoretical and empirical reasons to expect the effects of music lyrics on aggressive behaviors to be similar to the effects of exposure to TV and movie violence and to those found in the more recent research efforts on violent video games (Anderson et al., 2007).

Walker (2008) reported there are many things that may cause aggression. Aggressive behaviors may rely on a person's behavior, how a person identifies with another person, the understanding of another person, or the condition or circumstance person, the understanding of another person, or the condition or circumstance a person finds himself or herself involved in. Aggressive behavior involves hitting, teasing and kicking. These types of aggressive behaviors also occur when students are bullied or teased. Bullies exhibit aggressive behaviors that cause their victim to suffer

social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects. Victims who suffer

social/emotional effects of bullying while they are young grow up and continue to bully

during adulthood. There is a relationship between aggression and self-esteem (Walker,

2008). "Typical fourteen or fifteen year old students do not solve problems by talking

anymore; they become aggressive and sometimes violent" (Walker, 2008, p. 28).

Categories of Bullying and Kinds of Bullies

There are two categories of bullying: *direct bullying* and *indirect bullying* (Banks,

1997). Boys usually are involved with direct bullying, while girls are commonly

associated with indirect bullying. Direct bullying involves physical bullying and verbal

attacks, while indirect bullying is not physical, but involves spreading rumors or slander

against another person. Banks (1997) explained that direct bullying begins during

elementary years and peaks during middle school. Some bullying may occur in high

school, but it is not as prevalent as in the middle school years. Direct assaults sometimes

decrease with age, while verbal abuse is steady.

Types of Bullying

The Alberta Children Services (ACS) (2005) identified three types of bullying:

physical, verbal, and relational bullying. Physical bullying involves striking a victim or

damaging one's property. Verbal bullying involves words that harm or humiliate a

victim. Relational bullying involves rejection or exclusion by peers and includes

spreading of rumors (ACS, 2005). "The most devastating effect with this type of

bullying is the rejection by the peer group at a time when children most need their social

connections" (The ACS, 2005).

Other forms of bullying exist, according to Rigby (2003b), "It is sometimes claimed that bullying tends to be associated with racial or ethnic divides and it is argued that some ethnic groups are more powerful than others whom they seek to dominate" (n. p.). "Racist bullying can be identified by the motivation of the bully, the language used, and/or by the fact that victims are singled out because of the color of their skin, the way they talk, their ethnic grouping or by their religious or cultural practices" (Rigby, 2003b, n.p.).

Franklin (2004) shared a form of bullying called *cyber bullying*:

> Cyber bullying is the use of information and communication technologies—e-mail, cell phones, pagers, text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, personal polling sites, or a combination of these to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group for the intention of harming others. It started a few years ago, and it's getting bigger. (Franklin, 2004, p.12)

The CDC (2010) reported that 9-to-35 % of young people say they have been the victim of electronic aggression.

An article in the *American Family Physician* (2004) explained that anyone is subject to bullying. Bullies tend to be aggressive toward people who seem different including those with different skin color, culture, size, attire, or even disabilities. Bullies are often appositionally defiant and linked to committing criminal acts. They are sometimes alone or accompanied by their peers acting superior and displaying aggression toward their victim. Bullying is a general term applied to a pattern of behavior where a

person exhibits extreme anger and aggression causing bitterness and violent behaviors. "Students who are victims of bullying are typically anxious, insecure, cautious, and suffer from low self-esteem. They rarely defend themselves or retaliate when confronted by students who bully them" (Banks, 1997, n.p.). Students who are victims of bullying feel that schools are not a safe place.

An American Psychological Association (APA, 1999) study revealed, "bully-victims are often punished for their bully behaviors while their experiences as victims go unnoticed" (APA, 1999, n.p.). When a person receives a consequence for bullying behaviors, they sometimes display aggression. This study revealed that those who bully are also sometimes victims.

Victims of bullying feel they are in control of the situation, yet they are often insecure (APA, 1999). Moreover, they find it difficult to communicate with adults, including their parents and teachers. Victims often feel they have brought these negative experiences upon themselves. Furthermore, they believe that reporting bullying incidents may make matters worse. They are greatly concerned about retaliation, which often affects their academics and school performance. Several cases exist wherein victims reported being bullied to their parents, but their reports were dismissed as a natural part of the adolescence growth (APA, 1999).

Effects of Bullying

The effects of bullying may vary according to the age group and usually effects the victim socially/emotionally and psychologically. The effects of bullying involve how the victim perceives how he or she is bullied. Harris and Petrie (2003b) shared that when students are bullied in elementary school, their self-esteem and emotional stability may

be affected. Those who bully at an early age usually continue to bully and sometime even drop out of school. During the high school years, bullying causes students to have poor social skills and have difficulty getting along with their peers. When students are bullied in high school, they tend to isolate themselves from other students. They usually will carry these poor social skills into their adulthood (Harris and Petrie, 2003b).

Hyland and Davis (1999) wrote that bullying is a thought-out aggression. The effects of the thought-out aggression cause emotional scars for the victim. Emotional scars tend to diminish one's self worth and sense of security. When this occurs, the victim feel hopeless and helpless.

Bullying and Gender

There is continuing debate regarding male and female bullies. Many researchers (Deschenes & Esbensen, 1999; Franklin, 2004; Macklem, 2003) believe that boys bully more frequently than girls do. Recent research indicates a change. Franklin (2004) wrote that Michelle MacPherson, a social worker with the Department of Family and Community Services in New Brunswick, Canada, stated that "Girls actually bully more that boys. At one time, boys bullied more than girls did, but now girls are much more physical. Verbal and relational aspects of bullying is more prevalent in girls, physical bullying more than boys" (Franklin, 2004, n.p.).

Deschenes and Esbensen (1999) reported that males are more aggressive than females. They further stated that violent occurrences have leaned toward males, but, in recent years, girls' involvement in crimes has been increasing. Macklem (2003) wrote, "Bully behavior is different in boys and girls. Boys who bully threaten to hit or take

things from peers. Boys tend to be stronger than their peers and need to control others.

Girls spread rumors and leave a child out of a group" (n.p.).

Bullying in Middle Schools

Several studies indicated that most bullying begins during early adolescence and

middle school. Harris and Petrie (2003a) wrote, "When bullying occurs, it engenders

destructive behaviors in this already difficult time of adolescence, behaviors that can

become insurmountable barriers for children in fact, the amount of teasing and its

intensity have increased over time, but now the stakes are much higher" (p. 146).

> Childhood bullying has long been perceived as an inevitable part of growing up.
>
> However, recent survey data show that American children 8 to 15 years of age
>
> rate bullying as a greater problem than racism or pressure to have sex or use
>
> alcohol and other drugs. (Linquanti & Berliner, 1994)

School violence has been identified as one of the major contributors to school failure

(Goodstadt, 1989). Schools are considered to be safe havens where learning occurs, but

when bullying is allowed it causes psychological and emotional distress for the victims.

When students are under emotional or psychological stress, they do not focus on

academic success. Some administrators and school personnel minimize bullying in

schools because they feel that there is no real solution or they feel that if they ignore the

problem, it will go away. When bullying is ignored, victims often take matters into their

own hands and may commit violent acts out of fear or retaliation.

Conclusion

This study is valuable to all stakeholders in schools, including parents, school

superintendents, and school administration, teachers, students, and community leaders.

Precautionary measures and training should be taken when dealing with bullying on school campuses. Students need socialization methods to help them with this rising concern. As parents become more involved with their students' education, they will be able to deter some of the risky behaviors associated with bullying. Laws were recently passed in South Carolina and Alaska to protect students who are bullied. Overall, bullying is a great concern in schools today and affects the academic success of students. Research studies (Banks, 1997; Coloraso, 2003; Olweus, 2003) support that students suffer social-emotional, psychological, and physical effects, which cause students to avoid school and not succeed academically. Educators and parents must unite to alleviate this persistent problem.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

School violence has become a great concern in schools. Students who feel they

have to retaliate or defend themselves from bullying sometimes cause violence. Bullying

occurs when a student experiences unwanted negative aggressive behavior frequently and

when one person exhibits power over the other. The National Report Juvenile Offenders

and Victims (2006) research indicated that violence in school must be addressed so

students will not fear attending school because of the inappropriate conduct. The study

also indicated that there has been a decline in violence in school since 1994, "falling to a

level not seen since at least the 1970s" (n.p.). There has been a decline in male violence;

however, female violent crime is on the rise.

Harris and Petrie (2003b) identified two categories of bullying: "direct bullying

and indirect bullying" (p. 3). Direct bullying is an open attack on a person that involves

both physical and sometimes verbal abuse. The physical attacks may include hitting,

kicking, pushing, and choking. Verbal abuse or harassment includes name-calling,

threatening, taunting, malicious teasing, rumor spreading, and slandering. Indirect

bullying is sometimes harder to detect. It includes social isolation, intentional exclusion,

making faces, obscene gestures, and manipulating friendship relationships. Whether

separate or together, direct and indirect bullying can cause harm to the development and

well-being of young people.

The purpose of this study was to obtain knowledge of how middle-school students

in South Mississippi who were bullied or teased are affected socially/emotionally,

psychologically and physically. This quantitative study examined the relationship

between the social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects of bullying on middle

school students in South Mississippi by gender.

<div align="center">Research Design</div>

The research design for this study was descriptive and causal comparative. The

goal of this study was to measure the social/emotional, psychological, and physical

effects that bullying has on middle-school students in South Mississippi.

Participants

All participants were middle-school students in grades 7 and 8. The population of

interest was middle-school students in South Mississippi . For adequate power,

approximately 250 middle school students in South Mississippi were sought.

Instrumentation

The Middle School Bullying Questionnaire (Appendix A) was the data-gathering

tool. The one-page instrument developed by the researcher contains 19 items with *Yes* or

No responses and Likert-type questions. The Likert-type questions are based on a five

point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* (5) to *Strongly Disagree* (1). The

questions involve the students' social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects of

bullying. The survey includes the researcher's generated questions.

There are three parts to the questionnaire. Part I includes demographics of the

participant, gender, race, and grade level. Part II includes *Yes* or *No* questions involving

whether or not a participant was bullied in school. Part III includes involving the

social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects of middle-school students. The

social- emotional effects of bullying are covered in questions 8-12. The psychological

effects of bullying are covered in questions 13-16. The physical effects of bullying are covered in questions 17-19.

Procedures

A literature search/review was conducted by the researcher. The researcher created a Middle School Bullying Questionnaire (Appendix A). The researcher secured permission from the dissertation committee to proceed with the study. The researcher received IRB approval (Appendix B). The researcher contacted superintendents of designated school districts where the questionnaire were administered to obtain permission to administer the Middle School Bullying Questionnaire. (Appendix C) After obtaining permission from the superintendents the researcher requested permission from the designated middle school principals (Appendix D), explained the procedure, and obtained permission from the principals to work with the school counselors. The researcher met with the school counselors and explained the procedure for completing the Middle School Bullying Questionnaire.

Procedure for administering middle school bullying questionnaire. During regularly scheduled group counseling sessions, the counselor completed a unit on bullying in middle schools. The counselor then explained the purpose of the study and answered any questions that participants had regarding the study. The study was conducted during a regularly scheduled counseling session. The counselor explained the procedures and sent parent permission slips (Appendix E) home with the middle school students. The students volunteered to participate by completing a Student Assurance Form (Appendix F). The middle school students returned the permission forms and the students completed the Middle School Bullying Questionnaire.

The questionnaire was completed in a quiet setting free of distraction, and participants were seated at individual desks. The students' desks were spaced so that no student would be able to see the others' responses. While the participants were completing the surveys, the counselor was very observant of participants' emotional state. If a student became upset or uncomfortable while completing the questionnaire, they were removed from the study, the parent was notified and the counselor offered counseling or referred the participant to an outside agency.

The researcher delivered 250 questionnaires to each of the three designated middle schools and the questionnaires were picked up one week from the date they were delivered. The researcher called the counselor two days after delivery to see if assistance was needed. The researcher picked up the completed middle school questionnaires from the designated middle schools. The researcher entered all data into Microsoft Excel and then imported it into SPSS version 17.0. The data will be destroyed within a year.

Research Questions

The study analyzed how middle-school students in South Mississippi were affected socially/emotionally, psychologically, and physically when they were bullied or teased.

1. What effects do verbal and physical bullying have on middle-school students in South Mississippi?

The first research question in this study examined the social/emotional effects that bullying had middle school students in South Mississippi. The responses from Questions 8-12 were used in this analysis. The Cronbach alpha for the social-emotional section was 0.875.

2. What are the social-emotional effects on middle-school students in South

    Mississippi who are bullied or teased in school?

The second research question in this study examined the psychological effects that bullying had middle school students in South Mississippi. The responses from Questions 13-16 were used in this analysis. The Cronbach alpha for the psychological section was 0.839.

3. What are the psychological effects on middle-school students in South

    Mississippi who are bullied or teased in school?

The third research question in this study examined the physical effects that bullying had on middle school students in South Mississippi. The responses from Questions 17-19 were used in this analysis. The Cronbach alpha for the psychological section was 0.778.

Research Hypotheses

There is a statistically significant difference between the social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects of middle school students in South Mississippi who are bullied or teased.

H1: There is a statistically significant difference between the social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects of middle-school students in South Mississippi who are bullied.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference between males and female middle-school students in South Mississippi who are bullied on their social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects.

H3: There is a statistically significant difference between seventh and eighth grade students in South Mississippi who are bullied on their social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects.

HI used a repeated measures ANOVA, while H2 and H3 used *t-tests*.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

School safety is a great concern in education today. Educators must make sure

that students learn in a safe and orderly environment in order to achieve at their highest

potential. School safety must involve all stakeholders—students, parents, teachers,

school personnel, and community leaders. Bullying is a growing problem that has caused

great concern in schools recently. Educators are searching for answers to address this

problem while youth are facing daily challenges that may hinder their academic success.

Bullying involves repeated aggressive behavior that is unwanted, intended to cause harm

or hurt to another individual, a result of an imbalance of power and may cause social-

emotional, psychological or physical harm (Olweus, 2003).

Recent news reports have indicated that students who are bullied are confronted in

schools frequently and do not feel safe. As a result during the late 1990s, we had an

increase in school violence. There were school shootings that occurred at Columbine

High School, Columbine, CO, Pearl High School, Pearl, MS, Littleton, CO and Arkansas.

All of these school shootings were the result of students being bullied or teased in school.

People sometimes ignore bullying and believe that it is part of growth development.

However, if bullying is not addressed or stopped it can hinder a student's progress in

school or cause other effects on our youth. In April 2009, two 11-year-old boys

committed suicide after repeatedly being bullied or teased in school. In Springfield, MA,

Carl Hoover and in Stone Mountain, GA, Masika Bermudez both hanged themselves.

These students lived in states that had laws against bullying in schools and their parents had reported the problems to school personnel.

This study investigated bullying in middle school in South Mississippi and will provide schools with suggestions on implementation of an effective bullying prevention plan. The study was conducted between September 2009 and December 2009. The study was proposed for middle schools in South Mississippi in four public school districts. The study was successfully completed in three of the school districts however, permission was not granted in one of the school districts after two requests. All participants were middle school students in grades seven and eighth who returned a signed parent permission form and a student assurance form.

The purpose of this study was to establish when middle students in South Mississippi are bullied if there is a social-emotional, psychological, or physical effect on them. The Middle School Bullying Questionnaire (Appendix A) was the data-gathering tool. It was a one-page instrument that contains 19 items with yes or no responses and Likert scale questions involving the social-emotional, psychological and physical effects of bullying in South Mississippi. The researcher created and validated the survey for reliability. A total of 684 questionnaires were returned to the researcher. The questionnaires included missing data in many of the questions. Some of the participants completed question one through three and stopped. Some of the participants skipped around and did not answer completely.

Descriptive

Table 1

Percentage of Participants by Gender and Grade Level

	Frequency	*Percentage*
Gender		
Male	301	44.0
Female	362	52.9
Missing	21	3.1
Grade		
Seventh	315	46.1
Eighth	341	49.9
Missing	28	4.1

In this study, Table 1 presents frequency and percentage of participants by gender and grade. There were a total of 684 participants who completed the Middle School Bullying Questionnaire. The largest percentage of the participants in this study were females at 52.9% (n=362) and eighth grade students at 49.9% (n=341).

Table 2

Frequency of Students Who Had Been Bullied Daily, Verbally, Socially, Emotionally, or Physically

Question 3.   I have been bullied or teased during school.

	Frequency	*Percent*
Yes	399	58.3
No	260	38.0
No Response	24	3.5

Question 4: I am or was bullied daily.

	Frequency	*Percent*
Yes	100	14.6
No	316	46.2
No Response	266	38.9

Question 5: I experienced bullying that was verbal (name-calling, spreading rumors, threats)

	Frequency	*Percent*
Yes	264	38.6
No	148	21.6
No Response	269	39.3

Question 6: I experienced bullying that was emotional (being left out/ignored/isolated).

	Frequency	*Percent*
Yes	191	27.9
No	223	32.6
No Response	269	39.3

Question 7: I experienced bullying that was physical (hitting, fighting, taking things, etc.).

	Frequency	*Percent*
Yes	132	19.3
No	285	41.7
No Response	265	38.7

In this study, the data in Table 2 presents the frequency of the participants who answered whether they had been bullied at school, daily, verbally, emotionally, or physically. The majority (n = 399, 58.3%) of the participants in this study answered that they *had been bullied or teased during school hours* with the frequency of verbal bullying (38.9%) and emotional bullying (27.9%) greater than for physical bullying (19.3%).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations by Question

	Means (M)	*Standard Deviation*
Social-Emotional Effects (Questions 8-12)		
Q8: I felt unwanted and humiliated by my friends.	2.20	1.36
Q9: I felt embarrassed.	2.72	1.54
Q10: I felt afraid –fearful, in a dangerous position.	2.04	1.27
Q11: I felt unwanted by my friends.	2.15	1.33
Q12: I felt like I did not belong with my friends.	2.28	1.45
Psychological Effects (Questions 13-16)		
Q13: I felt like my friends did not want me around them.	2.20	1.41
Q14: I felt helpless.	2.08	1.35
Q15: I felt like no one cared about me .	2.25	1.45
Q16: I felt like it would never end .	2.43	1.51
Physical Effects (Questions 17-19)		
Q17: I felt no sense of worth.	2.07	1.30
Q18: I felt that it was my fault.	1.94	1.34
Q19: My self-esteem was affected.	2.30	1.51

Rating Scale: (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Neither Agree or Disagree,
(2) Disagree, to (1) Strongly Disagree

In Table 3, the participants answered the questions on a five point Likert Scale with scores ranging from (5) *Strongly Agree,* (4) *Agree,* (3) *Neither Agree or Disagree,* (2) *Disagree,* to (1) *Strongly Disagree.* As indicated in Table 3, approximately 75% of the participants answered 3 or below. About 25 % of the participants answered above 3 and about 8% answered above 4. The highest ranking among the participants was question 9 (M=2.72) which stated, when I was bullied or teased, *I felt embarrassed.* The next highest ranking among the participant responses was Question 16 (M=2.43), which stated when I was bullied or teased, *I felt like it would never end.* The next highest ranking among the participants' responses was Question 19 (M=2.30), which stated when I was bullied or teased, *my self-esteem was affected.* The lowest ranking response among the participants in this study was Question 18 (M=1.49), which stated *I felt it was my fault.*

Social emotional effects of bullying. For this study, students rated *feeling embarrassed* (M=2.72) as the highest rating in the questionnaire involving the social-emotional effects of bullying. The other rating in descending order were *I felt like I did not belong with my friends* (M=2.28), *I felt unwanted and humiliated by my friends* (M=2.20), *I felt unwanted by my friends* (M=215), *and I felt afraid (fearful, in a dangerous position)* (M=2.04). However, social/emotional effects and psychological effects of bullying were rated higher than physical effects of bullying.

Psychological effects of bullying. The study showed social-emotional effects of bullying were the highest rated among the participants in this study, the psychological effects of bullying were next in ranking with students rating the following descending order: *I felt like it would never end* as highest (M=2.43), *I felt like no one cared about me*

(M=2.25)*, I felt like my friends did not want me around them* (M=2.20)*,* and *I felt*

helpless (M=2.08) as the lowest response. Whereas, the psychological effects of bullying

were not the highest effect in this study, the data indicates that the participants rated

psychological effects as higher than the physical effects.

    Physical effects of bullying. The study showed physical effects of bullying was

rated lower than emotional or psychological effects among the participants in the study

with students rating the following in descending order: *My self-esteem was affected*

(M=2.30), *I felt no sense of worth* (M=2.07), and *I felt that it was my fault* (M=1.94).

    While overall social-emotional effects of bullying were the highest rated among

the participants in this study, the psychological effects of bullying were next, and

physical effects was lowest in ranking. For this study, the top five student rating for

effects of bullying include the following in descending order:

    1. *I felt like it would never end as highest* (M=2.43),

    2. *My self-esteem was affected (M=2.30),*

    3. *I felt like no one cared about me* (M=2.25)*,*

    4. *I felt like my friends did not want me around them* (M=2.20)*,* and

    5. *I felt helpless* (M=2.08) as the lowest response*.*

<div align="center">Statistical Analysis</div>

    The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H1: There is a statistically significant difference between the social-emotional,

psychological, and physical effects of middle-school students in South Mississippi who

are bullied. Using a repeated measures ANOVA this hypothesis was accepted with a

F(2,481)=12.47, p<.001. The data in Table 4 reveals that the participants in this study

rated psychological and social-emotional effects of bullying higher than physical effects

of bullying. The participants in this study rated social-emotional effects of bullying as

the highest effect.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Total by Effects of Bullying

Effect on Students	*Mean (M)*	*SD*	*n*
Social-Emotional Effects	2.28	1.14	483
Psychological Effects	2.25	1.18	483
Physical Effects	2.11	1.51	483

H2: There is a statistically significant difference between male and female middle-school

students in South Mississippi who are bullied based on the total effects of bullying. This

hypothesis was accepted with a $t(470)=2.64$, p=0.009. In this study, the females

expressed significantly stronger total effects of bullying than for the males (Table 5).

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Total Effects of Bullying by Gender

Gender	n	Mean (M)	SD
Males	213	2.08	1.09
Females	259	2.35	1.08

H3: There is a statistically significant difference between the seventh and eighth grade students in South Mississippi who are bullied on their social/emotional, psychological, and physical effects. This hypothesis was rejected with a t (465)=0.177, p=860. The means in Table 6 indicates that the mean of seventh graders was fairly similar to the mean of eighth grade participants.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Total Effects of Bullying by Grade Level

Grade	n	Mean (M)	SD
Seventh	220	2.24	1.10
Eighth	247	2.22	1.08

Summary

Bullying is a great concern in many schools today. This study confirmed that bullying continues to be an issue with the participants rating social/emotional effects of bullying higher than the psychological or physical effects of bullying. The effects of bullying can have long-term effects on the victims and can hinder academic success. The results of this study showed three main findings:

1. The strongest finding for this study was the psychological/emotional impact of bullying on middle school students who participated in this study.

2. Bullying occurs more frequently among female victims than for male victims.

3. There were fairly equal response ratings across grade levels with regard to the bullying and its impact on middle school students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary

This chapter reviews and discusses the results of the study based on the following

research questions:

1. What are the social-emotional effects on middle school students in South

    Mississippi who are bullied in school?

2. What are the psychological effects on middle school students in South

    Mississippi who are bullied in school?

3. What are the physical effects on middle school students in South Mississippi

    who are bullied in school?

Discussion

This study shares incidents where young people committed suicide or took others'

life because they wanted the bullying to stop. For that reason, this study was conducted

to look at the effects that bullying had on middle school students in South Mississippi. In

addition, the researcher analyzed the data to determine the impact of bullying by gender

and by grade level. The data revealed that the social-emotional effects and the

psychological effects of bullying were statistically higher than physical effects of

bullying. With respect to grade level, the mean of responses for seventh grade (M= 2.24)

participants was similar to the mean of eighth grade (M=2.22) participants, indicating no

significant difference among seventh and eighth grade participants with respect to this

study. For gender, the mean of responses for female (M= 2.35) participants was

significantly stronger than for male (M=2.08) participants, indicating that females were

more highly affected by bullying than for males with respect to this study.

Bullying is a common problem in schools today often effecting academic

achievement and student success. The social-emotional, psychological, and physical

effects of bullying on middle school students has become a growing concern for

educators, parents, and community leaders. Harris & Petrie (2003a) defined bullying as

"intentionally harmful, aggressive behavior of a more powerful person or group of people

directed repeatedly toward a less powerful person, usually without provocation" (p. 2).

Bullying among students, particularly middle school students, is considered a part of the

growth process. Some adults felt that 'kids will be kids' and recited the cliché –'sticks

and stone may break my bones but words will never hurt me.' Unfortunately, words do

hurt and may affect students' socially, emotionally and psychologically (Olweus, 2003).

Beane (2008) shared that the emotional scares last a lot longer than the physical scares

and sometimes may cause young people to retaliate or perform violent acts because they

want the bullying to stop. Students often feel helpless after reporting incidents of

bullying and take matters in their own hands.

Research Question 1

What are the social-emotional effects on middle school students in South Mississippi who

were bullied in school? For this study, middle school students in South Mississippi

responded to a series of questions that illustrated the social-emotional effects of bullying.

The students rated *feeling embarrassed* (M=2.72) as the highest rating in the

questionnaire involving the social-emotional effects of bullying. The other rating in

descending order were *I felt like I did not belong with my friends* (M=2.28), *I felt unwanted and humiliated by my friends* (M=2.20), *I felt unwanted by my friends* (M=215), *and I felt afraid (fearful, in a dangerous position)* (M=2.04). However, social/emotional effects and psychological effects of bullying were rated higher than physical effects of bullying.

DeVoe and Kaffenberger (2005) reported results of a survey conducted in 2001 where students were bullied in school. The students were fearful of attending school and sometimes skipped school to avoid being bullied. When students were bullied in school, they also suffered physical and psychological effects. The survey revealed that their peers physically beat some students and other students suffered psychological and emotional damage from the aggressive behaviors displayed by the bullies. Some of the students who suffered psychological effects of bullying reported they lacked the ability to concentrate on their academic work.

There may be various reasons why middle school students rated social-emotional bullying as significant to them. Beane (2008) wrote "because humans are social, relational creatures, we influence others and are influenced by others" (p. 25). Many students are effected and influenced by positive and negative perceptions. Parents can be one of the most powerful positive influences during the adolescent years. However, some parents rely on others to influence their children often leaving their peers and other influences such as rappers, etc to teach them violent behaviors such as bullying and teasing. Middle school students who endured social-emotional effects of bullying experience difficulties daily in school. According to Beane (2008), students who experience bullying sometimes suffer from stress and anxiety. In addition to direct

attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. Indirect bullying includes teasing, isolation, and spreading of rumors. "When direct or indirect bullying occurs, it causes psychological, emotional, and sometimes physical harm to the victim" (Olweus, 1993, p 35). Students who suffer stress from bullying often have emotional scars that affect them during their adolescent years and sometimes later in adulthood. They are easily embarrassed or humiliated by their peers and will either withdraw or retaliate. The students who are bullied have challenges focusing on academics, they will often daydream and not complete academic requirements. The distractions that students experience sometimes cause them to make wrong decisions after being bullied.

Other reasons why students may have rated embarrassment as the highest social-emotional effects involves peer acceptance, name calling, isolation from a group, or spreading of rumors. When students are single out or ignored, it causes embarrassment. Embarrassment may involve personal inadequacies, deficiencies, mistakes, personal appearance, or the lack of necessary resources, etc.. The list for embarrassment is not limited. However, when a student or person is put in a position where they are being attacked and humiliated and no matter what, it will not stop, this results in embarrassment. When a student is singled out and made a spectacle before his/her peers, the emotional effects can be demoralizing especially during the adolescent years. This is one of the factors that affect students who are bullied in school.

The CDC (2010) reported that 9-to-35 percent of young people say they have been the victim of electronic aggression. The psychological and emotional impact of *cyberbullying* has resulted in several injuries and suicides in the United States as reports

are increasing in headline news regarding this rapidly growing public concern.

Plaisance and Johnson (2009) reported a social-emotional affect of bullying, shared by Ms. Sirdeaner Walker mother of eleven year old Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, was the cause of Carl committing suicide on April 6, 2009 after being bullied repeatedly at school. Carl felt embarrassed, humiliated by his friends, unwanted and did not feel that he belonged. Carl frequently shared horrible incidents during his school experience often reporting to his mother who reported the incidents to school personnel. The student felt helpless and did not feel that the adult were doing anything to help him with the constant bullying. Several days before Carl committed suicide, he shared with his mother that he had accidently bumped a television stand with his backpack at school and the television hit a girl. The young girl embarrassed him by yelling and threatening to do bodily harm to him. He reported the incident to his mother; however, he and the young lady were punished and the problem was not resolved. After school, he went home and hung himself.

Simon (2009) shared an incident involving eleven year old, fifth grader, Jaheem Herrara, of Atlanta, GA who commit suicide after repeatedly being bullied in school, called gay, and teased about his Virgin Island accent. Masika Bermudez, mother of Jaheem explained that her son was embarrassed numerous times while a student at Dunaire Elementary School in DeKalb County, GA. Jaheem committed suicide because he fearful of being bullied or teased.

In summary, the data indicated that social/emotional effects of bullying are a great concern for middle school students in South Mississippi schools. Stakeholders--educators, parents, community leaders, and concerned citizens --must come together to

make sure that students have a safe and supportive environment to learn. Students have a

right to learn and teachers have a right to teach.

Research Question 2

What are the psychological effects on middle school students in South Mississippi who

were bullied in school? Middle school students in South Mississippi responded to a

series of questions that responded to the psychological effects of bullying. While social-

emotional effects of bullying were the highest rated among the participants in this study,

the psychological effects of bullying were next in ranking with students rating the

following descending order: *I felt like it would never end as highest* (M=2.43), *I felt like*

no one cared about me (M=2.25), *I felt like my friends did not want me around them*

(M=2.20), and *I felt helpless* (2.08) as the lowest response. Whereas, the psychological

effects of bullying were not the highest effect in this study, the data indicates that the

participants rated psychological effects as higher than physical effects as a result of

bullying in this study.

There may be various reasons why middle school students rated social-emotional

bullying as significant to them. The psychological effects of bullying can be very

challenging for middle school students. A study conducted by the Kaiser Family

Foundation and Nickelodeon (Arce, 2001) revealed that school students across the United

States rated bullying and teasing as a *big problem* and revealed numerous reports of

violent acts committed in schools due to bullying. An article, "Mind Games Used by

School Bullies", written April 1996 in *The Independent News* (1996), stated that "school

bullies who perfect psychological techniques of torment can inflict greater long term

harm on their victims than those who use more direct physical methods, according to new

research" (n.p.).   When students are bullied the psychological effects can cause damage while the bullying is going on but according to research, the long term effects can do damage over years. Kaiser and Rasminsky (2007) wrote, "Children who are harassed experience fear, anxiety, insecurity, oppression, depression, inability to concentrate in class, headaches, stomachaches, and nightmares" (p. 238). The data revealed that the highest ratings for the effects of psychological bullying were *they felt that it (bullying) would never end* and *no one cared about them.*   This psychological effect can lead to devastating results for students during the adolescent years. According to Thomsen (2002), "Kids who are different are singled out and made to feel self-conscious and bad about themselves" (p. 141).

Research Question 3

What are the physical effects on middle school students in South Mississippi who were bullied in school? A series of questions involving the physical effects of bullying were given to middle school students in South Mississippi. The participants' ranked series of questions involving the physical effects of bullying where given to middle school students in South Mississippi. The participants' ranked *self esteem* (M=2.30) as the highest means for physical effects of bullying, *I felt a sense of worth* (M=2.07) next and *I felt that it was my fault* (M=1.94) as the lowest response for the physical effects of bullying. There may be several reasons the data on physical effects of bullying were not significant. According to a recent report on MSNBC.com (2010), a study funded by the Department of Justice revealed "the percentage of children who reported being physically bullied over the past year had declined from nearly 22 percent in 2003 to under 15 percent in 2008" (p. 1). Professor Finkelhor, the lead author of the Department of Justice

study stated he was encouraged that physical bullying was deceasing and this may result in lower violent crime and domestic issues. This study also indicates that physical bullying is not as prevalent as researcher predicted. When comparing the effects of social-emotional, psychological bullying, and physical bullying, the data indicates that the participants in this study rated the physical effects of bullying as the lowest effect. This may reveal that physical bullying may not be a problem in middle schools in South Mississippi. Given all of the effects, physical bullying would be more noticeable because it involves hitting, beating, etc and a child would have bruises, marks or abrasions. The majority of the participants in this study were females and eighth grade. There was not a great difference in the number of female and male participants.

For gender, this study found that females are significantly more strongly impacted emotionally and psychologically than for males. While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad & Smith, 1994).

> Bullying was reported as more prevalent among males than females and occurred with greater frequency among middle school-aged youth than high school-aged youth. For males, both physical and verbal bullying was common, while for females, verbal bullying and rumors were more common. (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheitt, 2001, p. 2095)

Nansel et al., (2001) concluded that given the emotional and behavioral difficulties of bullying, the issue needs immediate attention, preventive intervention, and further research. Juvonen (2003) added that bullying and being victimized by bullies have been recognized as health problems for school children because of their association with a

range of adjustment problems, including poor mental health and violent behavior. The act of being bullied tends to increase some students' isolation because their peers do not want to lose status by associating with them or because they do not want to increase the risks of being bullied themselves (Olweus, 1993). With respect to grade level, this study found there was generally no difference with regard to participants' responses to bullying across grade level.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

In summary, bullying is a common issue in schools. According to Olweus (1993), the father of bullying research, bullying has been around for decades and continues to be a detour to student academic success. Olweus (1993) defined bullying as "repeated exposure, over time, to negative actions from one or more students" (p. 10). This negative action could be classified into two types of bullying, direct and indirect according to Harris and Petrie (2003a). The direct bullying involves the physical effects of bullying. This includes hitting, kicking, fighting, etc. The majority of the physical bullying will reveal visible signs that can be observed, such as black eyes, cuts, bruises, etc. The second type of bullying is indirect bullying which involves the social/emotional and psychological effects of bullying.

Coloroso (2003) explained bullying as a repetitive aggressive behavior (words, actions, or social exclusion) directed toward an individual for the purpose of intentionally hurting or harming the person. The aggression is delivered by someone (bully) that is physically, verbally, or socially stronger than the recipient (victim), creating an imbalance of power. Bullies will be aggressive and use any means to obtain what they

want at the expense of others. The aggressive behavior according to Sterba and Davis (1999) will cause long term effects.

Bullying is a problem that has been around for years. During the 1960s, Olweus, began studying bullying when a group of students in Sweden committed suicide after being bullied. This event started many to investigate bullying incidents. Some people thought that bullying was a normal part of the growth process while other felt that it was a blatant disregard for another person. Bullying was ignored by many and sometimes is ignored now. However, several states in the United States have passed legislation against bullying because young people continue to harass, intimidate and bully others. This study collaborates what bullying experts, Coloroso (2003), Olweus (2003), Rigby (2003) and others have shared in their research, that bullying has long term effects that leave scars.

Researchers such as Coloroso (2003) and Rigby (2003) stated that the indirect bullying could cause more long term effects on bully-victim than direct bullying. One researcher wrote, long after the physical scars are healed, the psychological and social/emotional effects are still embedded in the mind of the victim. When victims suffer the effects of bullying, it sometimes affects them throughout their adult life.

The participants in this study rated social/emotional and psychological effects of bullying as the highest effect. The researcher feels that bullying should be addressed with anti-bullying laws and anti-bullying programs that will be consistently and effectively implemented daily. It is not acceptable to have laws and programs on paper and not enforce. However, all stakeholders- parents, educators, administrators, and community leaders must be trained on bullying and how to assist a student who may be a

victim of bullying. Rossen (2010) reported on NBC Nightly News that bullying is affecting the graduation rate and attendance rate for students. Bullying should be controlled and eliminated in our school because all students deserve to learn in a safe and orderly environment. Bullying behaviors should be addressed immediately without adverse consequences to the victim.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted at middle schools in South Mississippi and several questions warrant further investigation.

1. This study should be repeated and a comparison should be made to see if social/emotional effects of bullying are the highest effects with the same school during the next school year.

2. This study should concentrate on more than middle schools in South Mississippi, it should include all middle schools in Mississippi to make a comparison to see if the females experienced stronger effects of bullying than the males.

3. Further studies should include the long term effects of social-emotional and psychological bullying has on middle school students using a more in depth instrument to assess the effects.

4. Further studies should include an anti-bullying program for middle school students with working knowledge and outreach program to help eliminate bullying in middle schools.

The overall goal of this study was to evaluate the effects of social-emotional, psychological, and physical bullying of middle school students in South Mississippi. This research will bring an awareness of a prevalent problem that occurs in schools today

and provide answers. Many students suffer daily from the effects of bullying. It is no longer acceptable for educators, parents and other stakeholders to ignore this problem and hope it goes away. The age old cliché of "sticks and stone will break my bones but words will never hurt me" is not true. As the literature review in this study and the data reveals that words, nasty rumors, embarrassment, intimidation, etc., really do affect victims of bullying. No one should suffer this unwanted attention and the bullying should stop.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

This study was limited to selected middle schools in South Mississippi involving only seventh and eighth grade participants.

<div align="center">Recommendation for Policies and Practices</div>

Bullying can have a devastating effect on the victim, therefore, it is important that schools have the policies and practices in place to detour the problem.   Several states such as Massachusetts , Florida, Texas, Georgia, California, Indiana, Illinois, and Connecticut have anti bullying laws and legislation. While the laws are good and require that school administrator and staff have a *duty to report*, in some cases, the laws are not as effective because it is not implemented with consistency and integrity as required.

This study revealed that the participants reported that social/emotional effects of bullying is the highest effect. According to research, social/emotional bullying has long term effects on individual. The researcher recommends that all school especially those in who participated in the study have an effective bullying policy that is implemented daily with integrity. The policy should be taught to the staff first, to the students, parents and community stakeholders. Students should be taught to report bullying immediately

without adverse consequences. The school environment should be a safe place for all students to learn and the policy should not just be on paper or in the student handbook, but should be enforced by all school personnel.   Every bullying case should be investigated and school personnel should be alert to the problem areas and provide adequate supervision for all students. Parents and community leaders should assist as needed with parents frequently talking with their students about anti bullying policies and procedures. I agreed with Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheitt (2001) who stated that the emotional and behavioral difficulties of bullying needs immediate attention, preventive intervention, and further research.

The findings in this study can be used by the participating middle schools in South Mississippi as they address bullying issues in their schools. The schools that participated in this study requested that the finding of this study be shared with their district.

APPENDIX A

MIDDLE SCHOOL BULLYING QUESTIONNAIRE

MIDDLE SCHOOL BULLYING QUESTIONNAIRE

"Bullying definition: We want to know what you think about bullying, but you can start by thinking of bullying as one or a group of students picking on another student or treating them in a way that they do not like." (Hoover and Oliver, 1996, p. 114)

Directions: Circle the best answer that describes your experience as a middle school student.

Part I   Circle your response

1**.** Gender   **a.** Male   b. Female

2**.** Grade Level   **a.** Seventh (7th)   b. Eighth (8th)

Part II   Select yes or no

3. I have been bullied or teased during school   Yes   No

      If the answer to #3 is no, thanks, do not continue.

4. I am or was bullied daily   Yes   No

5. I experienced bullying that was verbal (name-calling, spreading rumors, threats, etc.). Yes No

6. I experienced bullying that was emotional (being left out/ignored/isolated).   Yes No

7. I experienced bullying that was physical (hitting, fighting, taking possessions, etc.).   Yes No

Part III Circle your response

5=Strongly Agree 4 = Agree   3=Neither Agree or Disagree 2=Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

When I was bullied or teased,

8. I felt unwanted and humiliated by my friends.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I felt embarrassed.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I felt afraid (fearful, in a dangerous position).	5	4	3	2	1
11. I felt unwanted by my friends.	5	4	3	2	1
12. I felt like I did not belong with my friends.	5	4	3	2	1

13. I felt like my friends did not want me around them.	5	4	3	2	1
14. I felt helpless.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I felt like no one cared about me.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I felt like it would never end.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I felt no sense of worth.	5	4	3	2	1
18. I felt that it was my fault.	5	4	3	2	1
19. My self-esteem was affected.	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL FORM

The University of
Southern Mississippi

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **27030722**
PROJECT TITLE: **Bullying: How Does Age and Gender Influence Whether or Not Middle School Students in South Mississippi Perceive They are Bullied or Teased? Does Bullying Affect Academic Achievement?**
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **01/27/07 to 01/27/08**
PROJECT TYPE: **New Project**
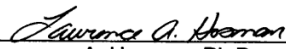PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Cassundra Peyton-Brown**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**
DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & Research**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **03/07/07 to 03/06/08**

_____
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

____3-08-07____
Date

APPENDIX C

SUPERINTENDENT PERMISSSION LETTER

108 Saucier Drive
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
January 27, 2009

Superintendent
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

Dear Dr. Superintendent:

     My name is Cassundra Peyton-Brown. I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS and I would like your permission to conduct a survey in the middle school. The goal of this survey is to assess the social/emotional, psychological and physical effects of middle school students who are bullied or teased in school as it relates to gender. With your permission, the guidance counselors at the designated middle schools will administer the survey to the students who return a completed parent permission form.

     The survey will provide beneficial data that will assist school personnel and those who may be bullied in school. I will be happy to share the result of the study. The survey will be anonymous and provide no risk to the participants. It will be conducted in four public school districts in South Mississippi –Hattiesburg Public, Forrest County Schools, Lamar County Schools and Petal City Schools.

     After your permission is obtained, I will meet with the middle school principal and provide information regarding the study. After obtaining permission from the middle school principal, I will meet with the school guidance counselor to seek assistance in administering the study. Students who return completed parent permission forms will participate in the study. In the enclosed envelope please see the middle school bullying questionnaire, the letter to the principal, and the parent permission form. Students should not include any personal information that will identify them (i.e., name, address, and phone number). If parents would like to get additional information, they may email me at cibrown@bellsouth.net.

     I would greatly appreciate your school district's participation in this research project. If you have questions, please email me or call me at (601) 297-0718. Please return your response in the enclosed stamped envelope, no later than February 1, 2009.
Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Cassundra Peyton-Brown

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL PERMISSION LETTER

108 Saucier Drive
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
January 27, 2009

Dear Principal:

My name is Cassundra Peyton-Brown. I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS and I would like your permission to conduct a survey in the middle school. The goal of this survey is to assess the social/emotional, psychological and physical effects of middle school students who are bullied or teased in school as it relates to gender. With your permission, the guidance counselors will administer the survey to the students who return completed parent permission form.

The survey will provide beneficial data that will assist school personnel and those who may be bullied in school. I will be happy to share the result of the study. The survey will be anonymous and provide no risk to the participants. It will be conducted in four public school districts in South Mississippi –Hattiesburg Public, Forrest County Schools, Lamar County Schools and Petal City Schools.

After obtaining your permission, I will meet with the school guidance counselor to seek assistance in administering the survey. Students who return completed parent permission forms will participate in the study. In the enclosed envelope please see the middle school bullying questionnaire, the letter to the principal, and the parent permission form. Students should not include any personal information that will identify them (i.e., name, address, and phone number). If parents would like to get additional information, they may email me at cibrown@bellsouth.net.

I would greatly appreciate your school's participation in this research project. If you have questions, please email me or call me at (601) 297-0718. Please return your response in the enclosed stamped envelope, no later than February 1, 2009.
Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Cassundra Peyton-Brown

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

APPENDIX E

PARENT PERMISSION FORM

108 Saucier Drive
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
January 27, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

      My name is Cassundra Peyton-Brown. I am a doctoral student at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS. Your child has been asked to voluntarily participate in a research project that involves answering a questionnaire.   This questionnaire was designed to help us understand how well students at this school get alone and how they treat each other. Your answers will help teachers, principals, and counselors learn more about the way school feels to students. The students will make their school a better place to grow and learn in a safe and orderly environment.

      Bullying is a growing problem that has caused great concerns in schools recently. The questionnaire will determine whether students have been bullied or teased at school and, if so, how it has affected them. It will provide beneficial data that will assist school personnel make the school a safe facility for students to learn. The survey will be anonymous; moreover, it will be conducted in several public schools in South Mississippi—Hattiesburg Public Schools, Forrest County Schools, Lamar County Schools, and Petal City Schools. The middle school bullying questionnaire will be administered by the school guidance counselor.

      The counselor will randomly select the participants during regularly scheduled counseling sessions.   The participants may be from various socioeconomic statuses with both genders equally represented. The counselors will use counseling groups that have already been established throughout the school year.

      During regularly scheduled group counseling sessions, the counselor will complete a unit on bullying in middle school. The counselor will examine the purpose of the study and answer any questions that participants may have. The study will be conducted during a regularly scheduled session. The students will obtain completed parent permission slip and complete assent forms before completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be completed in a quiet setting free of distraction and participants will be seated in individual desk. While the participants are completing the surveys, the counselor will be very observant of participants' emotional state. If a student becomes upset or uncomfortable while completing the questionnaire, they will be advised to refrain from participating, the parent will be notified and the counselor will offer counseling or refer the participant to an outside agency. If you would like to get additional information, you may email me at cibrown@bellsouth.net or call me at (601)297-0718. Please be informed that your child is not required to participate in the study, this is strictly voluntary and your child can cease participate at any time, without penalty or loss of benefits.

   This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the

Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

      The survey will take less than 20 minutes to complete and will not compromise your child's academics. Please select your choice and sign the form below. There is no penalty for not participating. If you have questions, please contact me by email at cibrown@bellsouth.net.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Cassundra Peyton-Brown

Please select one:

_____   I would like for my child, _____to participate in the

     bullying research project described on the letter above.

_____   I would not like for my child, _____to participate in the

     bullying research project described on the letter above.

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (printed)   Parent/Guardian's Name (Signature)

APPENDIX F

STUDENT ASSURANCE FORM

Student Assurance Form

This questionnaire was designed to help us understand how well students at this school get alone and how they treat each other. Your answers will help teachers, principals, and counselors learn more about the way school feels to students. This questionnaire is designed to make this school a place where students will grow and learn in a safe and orderly environment.

Bullying is a growing problem that has caused great concern in schools recently. The questionnaire will determine whether students have been bullied or teased at school and, if so, how has it affected them. It will provide beneficial data that will assist school personnel make the school a safe facility for students to learn.

Please be informed that you are not required to participate in the study, this is strictly voluntary and you may cease to participate at any time, without penalty or loss of benefits.

My parent has completed and signed a form for me to complete the Middle School Bullying Questionnaire.

Please select one:

_____   I , _____, would like to volunteer to participate in the

bullying research project described in the parent permission form.

_____   I, _____would not like to volunteer to participate in the

bullying research project described in the parent permission form

_____   _____

Student's Name (printed)   Student's Name (Signature)

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