SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' EXPERIENCES WITH

TEACHER-TO-STUDENT MISTREATMENT

by

Sharon R. Brown Lyles

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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APPROVED BY:

Rita Schellenberg, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Lucinda Spaulding, Ph.D., Committee Member

Deborah Kipps-Vaughan, Psy.D., Committee Member

Scott Watson, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Advanced Programs

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative, transcendental, phenomenological study was to describe school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting. There are few United States studies presented in the literature on the topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment and its significant negative impact on students from either the teacher or student viewpoint, but no research has been conducted on this issue from the school psychologist's perspective. The central research question addressed by the study was this: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment? Members of the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) and Virginia school psychologists, as identified by the Virginia Department of Education (VADOE), were invited to complete an initial online survey. Of the 139 school psychologists who responded to the survey, six were interviewed and engaged in an online discussion forum for member-checking, follow-up, and feedback purposes. The study indicated that 74.8% ($n = 89$) of school psychologists acknowledged that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment. School psychologists' position is that teacher-to-student mistreatment is ethically and morally inappropriate, and the repercussions can be enduring for the student. The impact of teacher-to-student mistreatment increased the advocacy, collaboration, and consultation duties on the role of a school psychologist. School psychologists expressed a desire to be a preventative, proactive link that encourages early intervention between teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Keywords: school psychologist, teacher, student, mistreatment.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for blessing me with enduring strength, focus, motivation, and wisdom. What a journey it has been! Through this process, my relationship with You has grown and I am eternally grateful for a better understanding of Your word including those written in Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God."

To my loving husband, Billy; thank you for always being there for me, with unconditional love, patience, and understanding throughout this long journey. Without your kindness, encouragement, and generous support, I could not have succeeded.

To my awesome teacher-friend, Cristyl, and enduring 'beach crew' friends who kindly understood my absences from various social events, games, gatherings, and so on; thank you for your timely answers to APA questions, prayers, and personal encouragement.

I am forever grateful to my family, friends, Dr. Schellenberg (Chair), Dr. Spaulding (Committee member), and Dr. Kipps-Vaughan (Committee member), for guidance and support in perseverance of this project!

Finally, to the memory of my sweet, little, baby dog Nicholas, who comforted me during this dissertation process as only a loyal companion could. *Mamma loves you, Daddy loves you, and Jesus loves you*. Rest in Peace.

Everything that was written in the past was written to teach me, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures I might have hope. Romans 15:4

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Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP)

Virginia Department of Education (VADOE)

Virginia Psychological Association (VPA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a personal story to tell about school discipline. Regardless if the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 experience was pleasant or not, every student has been exposed to various positive and negative methods of school discipline (Hyman, 1985). Some may speak of how a ruler was slapped on the open palm or knuckles as a punishment for wrong doing, or a paddle was swung in redirection of a student's inappropriate actions. Even more students can describe an event where a teacher purposefully berated, cursed, made sarcastic comments, name-called, or even humiliated a student in admonition of breaking classroom rules. Others may tell of willful inaction by the teacher in the form of denying or ignoring student requests. Past and present literature provides ample evidence of teachers "who isolated and excluded students from class and programs; did not allow students to go to the bathroom; threw objects at children; and screamed, humiliated and intimidated students" (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011, p. 249).

This research study did not address the saturated topics of school corporal punishment, physical abuse, or sexual abuse by teachers. Instead, the study focused on the phenomenon of verbal and nonverbal mistreatment of students by teachers, as observed by school psychologists who are educational specialists in the school environment. Although the majority of teachers are kindhearted and passionate about nurturing their students, the fact remains that the phenomenon under study still exists and is present in an unknown number of teachers, as evidenced through the teacher-student relationship. This phenomenon of mistreatment is academically, socially, and psychologically destructive to students (McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, & Brethour, 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). This chapter provides background information relevant to the study, the problem and purpose statements, and significance of the study. The study's research questions, research plan, and

delimitations are also identified.

Background

Laws that govern school corporal punishment in the United States are clearly defined, differing in legislative detail within each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia (Lamping, 2011). Verbal abuse is not considered corporal punishment. The boundaries of verbal punishment or verbal abuse by educators as a school discipline technique are blurred. Inappropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors against students by teachers are broadly defined under each state's board of education policies addressing conduct. The Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education, Virginia Code 8VAC 20-22-690 states that a teacher's license could be revoked due to "conduct with direct and detrimental effect on the health, welfare, discipline, or morale of students" (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2012, para. 1), but there is no explicit regulation that specifically addresses verbal or nonverbal abuse by educational staff. A discrepancy exists between intended written guidelines and reality. Documented in a position paper by the National Association of School Psychologists, it is explained that "there are some beliefs and principles regarding children's rights and education that are not necessarily covered by statute" (2003, p. 1). The literature reveals some teachers continue to habitually use both spoken language and body language that is offensive, causes mental distress, and belittles students without repercussion (Brendgen, Wanner, Vitaro, Bukowski, & Tremblay, 2007; Hyman & Perone, 1998; Hyman & Snook, 2001; Moon, Hays, & Blurton, 2009). Some intellectuals may question if verbal abuse by educators has increased as a direct result of the decrease or cessation of the use of physical, corporal punishment (Hyman & Snook, 1999).

The ultimate goal of discipline within the school environment is to encourage responsible behavior through discouraging misconduct by controlling a student's inappropriate actions or

redirecting the offending behavior into more appropriate conduct (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Whitted and Dupper (2008) stated, "although teachers and other adults have every right to maintain order and discipline in schools, they do not have the right to misuse their considerable power and authority in the name of maintaining discipline and control" (p. 339). Sometimes, the struggle to maintain order and discipline goes too far and crosses an invisible ethical and moral line.

An unspecified number of teachers consistently verbally and nonverbally mistreat students in a skewed effort to control noncompliant student behaviors through force and fear (Brendgen, Vitaro, & Wanner, 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Casarjian, 2000; Childers, 2009; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Far too often, school administrators and other educators are aware of this toxic situation that repeatedly intersects the line, but it is rarely addressed, acknowledged, or corrected (Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEachern, Aluede, & Kenny, 2008; McEvoy, 2005; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). What remains is a mentality that promotes and encourages, through inaction, a type of "hidden trauma" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 187) in the hearts and minds of student victims. Instead of school discipline that follows ethical and moral standards, students often endure verbal disrespect, degradation of character, emotional instability, and reduced ability to learn (Allen, 2010; Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). These toxic patterns inflict social and psychological harm just as destructive as a teacher's physical abuse (Brendgen et al., 2006; Gibbs, 2007; Hyman & Snook, 1999; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006).

Communication is vital in a relationship, especially between a teacher and a student. A teacher's communication skills have a large impact on the classroom management style. Communication can be both verbal and nonverbal. Research shows that most communication is interpreted nonverbally through use of visual cues, gestures, and body language (Babad, 2009). Although many teachers often use verbal directives to gain control of the classroom environment, their use of nonverbal cues reinforces verbally spoken words and intentions in the classroom. A teacher's use of positive communication with his or her students can have an encouraging effect on the success of classroom management (Zeki, 2009). The opposite is also true, meaning negative verbal and nonverbal communication can have an adverse impact on the classroom. Even after decades of research and instruction on teacher-student relationships, teacher communication styles, and classroom management approaches, chaos is still prevalent in many classrooms (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Many times teacher-student conflicts erupt from disruptive interactions which "can sometimes trigger a chain of actions and reactions that spirals out of control, leading to coercion, chaos, and damage" (Allen, 2010, p. 8). Those patterns of adverse interpersonal encounters often lead to poor teacher-student relationships and communication problems. Understanding what school psychologists witness in schools is important because often what is being observed is a combination of relationships and communication.

School psychologists spend a majority of their day in the company of teachers and students (Farrell, Jimerson, Kalambouka, & Benoit, 2005; National Association of School Psychologists, 2009). Teachers and students can be considered their clients, as school psychologists characteristically operate in a supportive role within the educational environment. An effective school psychologist can be "aptly characterized as change agent, mental health

specialist, systems specialist, advocate, program developer and evaluator" (Nastasi, 2000, p. 550). Increasingly, the profession of school psychologist has placed emphasis on involvement in "consultation, collaboration with other professionals, and intervention assistance" (Ern, Head, & Anderson, 2009, p.1). School psychologists routinely work closely with teachers in consultation-based activities. Historically, school psychologists assist students to "succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally" while working with all educators to support "learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community" for all children (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009, p. 21).

School psychologists are uniquely positioned to identify potential student mistreatment situations in the school system given the amount of time spent with both teachers and students. School psychologists differ from other educators in the school system in that they are more likely to have the opportunity to observe social, emotional, and physical changes in students when mistreatment has occurred and as it occurs. Teachers may be too busy or stressed to notice how their verbal or nonverbal actions negatively affect the student. An objective observer can be more perceptive. School psychologists become aware of these adverse behaviors through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day.

Educational and mental health professionals, as members of state and national organizations, follow compulsory ethical codes of conduct. Those professionals' aspiring to the highest level of conduct strictly follow the code of ethics mandating them to do no harm to their clients (American Psychological Association, 2010). School psychologists are educational professionals who also care for the mental health of their student clients and "routinely engage in ethical decision making" (Lasser & Klose, 2007, p. 484). It is the school psychologist's social

and ethical responsibility to advocate for all students and to intervene when needed on the child's

behalf. King and Janson (2009) stated, "ethics is a critical resource in helping professionals

determine whether their personal notions of what is best practice truly promotes what is best for

children" (p. 4). In terms of ethical and social responsibility, an intriguing question is then

raised: If one would naturally take measures to protect a student who was being sexually or

physically abused by an educator, then why not advocate for a student who was being verbally or

nonverbally mistreated by a teacher?

Many teacher-to-student relationships and encounters are observed daily by school

psychologists on multiple grade levels and in a variety of schools. Although most teachers care

deeply about their students, the literature exposes evidence that there remains a minority number

of teachers who mistreat students (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Casarjian, 2000;

Childers, 2009; Hart, 1987; Hyman, 1990; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009;

McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006;

Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). The number of teachers involved in the

mistreatment of school children may be small, but the negative impact upon students is

significant and persistent (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Childers, 2009; Hyman

& Snook, 1999; Hyman & Snook, 2001; Moon et al., 2009).

American school systems require high-quality, certified teachers (Committee on the

Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States & National Research Council,

2010), but these educational systems should also demand high-quality teacher-student

relationships (O'Connor, 2010). The impact of teacher-student relationships has far reaching

implications. There are enduring benefits in positive relationships, but also distressing literature

on the long-term repercussions if negative teacher-student relationships persist. Hamre, Pianta,

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Downer, and Mashburn (2008) confirmed that "relationships with teachers are a foundational component of young children's experiences in school that have shown promise as assets for promoting adjustment and learning" (p. 115). O'Connor (2010) asserted "a robust literature demonstrates high quality teacher-child relationships contribute to children's social and cognitive skill development" (p. 188).

The teacher-student relationship has a direct effect on a student's "academic, social, behavioral, and emotional problems" (Brendgen et al., 2007, p. 26), and is an important contributor to a student's overall educational performance and functioning in the classroom (Ray, 2007). Teacher behaviors that are positive and supportive toward students are important components of a successful teacher-child relationship; however, negative teacher behaviors that are insensitive, awash with angry interactions, and fail to show support for students contribute to confusing and conflicting conditions that are academically, socially, and psychologically destructive to students (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). When unhealthy teacher-student relationships emerge, especially early in interactions, these "problems perpetuate over time" (Brendgen et al., 2006, p. 1586). Educational research "shows that verbal abuse by the teacher may indeed have a strong negative impact that is still evident during adulthood" (Brendgen et al., 2007, p. 26). During a medical review of a case, Krugman and Krugman (1984) noted that "verbal abuse is one of the most common types of child abuse and can easily be unrecognized but inflict much damage to a child's self-esteem" (p. 285). Maltreatment by teachers, as described by Hart (1987), "depresses learning, increases ill mental health, and causes future behavioral problems through tension, fear, resentment, hostility and disappointment" (p. 170). The adverse effects from negative teacher-student relationships can have a continuing

impact (Hyman, 1985; Hyman & Snook, 1999). Long after the actual conflict between a teacher and student, Hyman and Snook (1999) found that "adults often report vivid memories of the event and sometimes re-experienced some of the emotional trauma" (p. 37) impacting the previous student, psychologically and emotionally, with lasting repercussions.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, and the veiled way in which teacher-to-student mistreatment has commonly been handled (Hyman & Snook, 2001; Olweus, 1999), American studies on the topic are scarce (Childers, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Beyond the United States, research reveals other countries (e.g., Africa, Ireland, Israel, Egypt) have an assortment of literature on the issue (Allen, 2010; Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; McEachern et al., 2008), where the United States has limited published studies. Widespread differences in areas such as cultural beliefs, educational environment, and legislative boundaries make for complex comparisons between studies from diverse nations, therefore investigating the phenomenon from within a single country diminishes such confounding variables. Studies from an American context are needed due to the indicated scarcity of research from the United States on this topic, and the effect of studying the phenomenon may help reduce incidents of mistreatment, which is contrary to the present moral compass of American school systems.

An extensive literature review revealed only three empirical American research studies that directly investigated the topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment, excluding matters of school corporal punishment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse by teachers. A study was conducted in 2005 by Dr. Alan McEvoy of Wittenberg University in Ohio who gathered descriptive and narrative data from students and school staff to determine the existence and prevalence of teachers who bully students. McEvoy (2005) distinguished this type of teacher-to-

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student mistreatment as "humiliation that generates attention while it degrades a student in front of others" (p. 141), occurring most often in the school classroom. McEvoy (2005) identified the bullies as "teachers (or other staff, including coaches, who have supervisory control over students)," and defined the phenomenon as "a pattern of conduct, rooted in a power differential, that threatens, harms, humiliates, induces fear, or causes students substantial emotional distress, and serves no legitimate academic or ethical purpose" (p. 141). A mixed-method study conducted by Twemlow et al. (2006) revealed close to 50% of all teachers interviewed ($N = 116$) honestly confessed to bullying a student. The teacher respondents acknowledged "that bullying is a hazard of teaching, and that all people bully at times and are victims and bystanders at times" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 194). A study conducted by Whitted and Dupper (2008) obtained data from students from alternative education environments ($N = 50$), where close to 90% reported experiencing mistreatment by an adult in the educational setting. The researchers concluded that there was an alarming amount of teacher bullying behavior happening in the school environment that negatively affected a student's wellbeing.

Fundamentally, the phenomenon and significance of a teacher's mistreatment toward a student is a topic that is under-acknowledged, under-studied, and under-deliberated within the educational community (Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). This empirical gap in the literature signals a need for research to be carried out from the school psychologists' perspective defining their widespread experiences in the school environment on the sensitive but devastating topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment. As of 2008, Charvat (2008) calculated there are 35,400 credentialed school psychologists in the United States. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), a national professional organization for school psychologists, indicated

membership of 24,467 for years 2011-2012 (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012b). At a statewide level for 2013, the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) indicated an organization with 247 members (Dr. L.E. Sutton, personal communication, March 18, 2013). This study aspired to reveal whether teacher-to-student mistreatment is a concern for school psychologists, to expound on their collective experiences, and to explore the need for further action. This study aided in vastly increasing educators' awareness and understanding of this problem in schools, and the extent to which it contributes to other problems experienced by students.

There are four interrelated theoretical concepts and principles underpinning this research. Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of the 1930s and Albert Bandura's (1977) popular social learning theory of the 1960s, jointly lay the foundation of understanding that knowledge and learning is generated through interaction with others. Together these theorists contribute to the concept that learning is social and the development of knowledge cannot be separated from the environment (Ferrari, Robinson, & Yasnitsky, 2010). Therefore, when incidents of mistreatment happen in the classroom between a teacher and student, positive or negative, it reinforces the ideology presented in the related literature that these experiences have a lasting impact on the student.

Albert Bandura's (1989, 1993) revised social cognitive theory in 1986 placed much emphasis on the idea of self-efficacy, which is closely related to Carl Rogers' (1967) self-concept theory of the 1960s. Both theorists' ideas support that each person's personal, behavioral, and environmental variables are interrelated factors that influence one's thoughts and behaviors. Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, and Barber (2010) indicated that "stemming from social cognitive theory, Bandura (1989, 1993) referred to beliefs about one's

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ability to successfully produce a desired outcome as self-efficacy," (p. 174) which can be directed to a particular population and circumstance. Carl Rogers' (1967) self-concept theory is parallel because it also emphasizes how one's personal successes and failures are related to inner self-perception and how people learn to view themselves and their relationships with others (Corey, 2001). As noted in Proverbs 23:7 (Amplified Bible), "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he," meaning one's thoughts bear fruit. This notion applies to both teachers and students. White (1989) asserted "as students observe other students or the teacher, they tend to think and have feelings about what they observe" (p. 457). An ineffective teacher with low self-efficacy and low self-concept can negatively impact the students in the classroom. It can be a cascading effect in which the ineffective teacher believes that he or she is not adequately managing the classroom, leading to disorder and chaos, and progressing to a reduction in classroom learning. A student with low self-efficacy and low self-concept may not believe in his or her academic abilities because of the teacher's verbal mistreatment, wounding the student's perception of self, which consequently leads to a disruption in learning. Ultimately, positive teacher-student relationships inspire and motivate, while negative teacher-student relationships depress self-worth and confidence, essentially devaluing the academic experience.

Situation to Self

In qualitative research, the researcher is the human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), working with narrative data to quantify in words, inference and interpretation of gathered data. Not only did I use the data gathered to answer established research questions, and used the co-researchers' relevant quotes to support established themes, but I also became the device used to describe the feelings, emotions, and experiences into meaningful statements. It is important to identify how I am qualified to be the instrument to interpret the data being collected, so my

inspiration and revelation to conduct this study are disclosed below.

The motivation for conducting this study is found in my 13 years' of experience in public education within various positions including a special education teacher, guidance counselor, and seven years' as a state licensed, nationally certified school psychologist. As a school psychologist, I am bound by moral principles and a code of ethics to do no harm. I am also a product of many accredited university programs with rigorous competencies that have produced a lifelong student of psychology and education. As a school psychologist, I am a highly trained observer and educationalist with "preparation in mental health and educational interventions, child development, learning, behavior, motivation, curriculum and instruction, assessment, consultation, collaboration, school law, and systems" (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009, p. 21). I have experience with, and advocate for children of all ages, grades, developmental and cognitive levels. The National Association of School Psychologists (2009) organization describes school psychologists as those who help students "succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students" (p. 21).

Unfortunately, for more than a decade, there have been many occasions in which I have witnessed incidents of verbal and nonverbal teacher-to-student mistreatment at all grade levels. I chose to report these incidents to school administrators, but to my dismay, found no real resolution. This research study arose out of 13 years of frustration with educators and sincere empathy for students. Subsequently, this research problem, observed anecdotally in practice, also was found to be a gap in the empirical literature.

My paradigm is of the constructivist worldview where I sought to understand the "co-

researcher's" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 15) experience with the phenomenon. The co-researcher allows for a first-person account of the experience under study. My worldview compels me to search for the complexity of views, and through various interactions I strove to make sense of the meanings and essence of the research data gathered from the co-researchers' experiences. The pragmatism worldview is also relevant for this research study due to the nature of the co-researcher. Ultimately, school psychologists want to know how they can best contribute knowledge, skills, and abilities to their educational world. Pragmatism is concerned with what is working and how to "solve problems, improve programs" (Patton, 2002, p. 136). The concept of pragmatism is also a relevant mission of the school psychologist's occupation in order to be able to offer solutions, assistance, or recommendations to educational problems. Acknowledging these paradigms, the predominant goal of this study was to gather multilayers of information from school psychologists to understand their experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment and to answer research questions.

There are many philosophical assumptions (i.e., rhetorical, ontological, epistemological, axiological, methodological) that I bring to this research study. My rhetorical philosophical assumption concerns the language of the research, which captured the personal voice and language of the school psychologist co-researchers in an informal, non-technical, literary style. This relaxed style of language helped describe the co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon. Incorporating the co-researchers' unique perceptions, language, and multiple realities is consistent with the constructivist worldview noted above. My ontological philosophical assumption refers to the subjective nature of reality that is seen by each of the co-researchers in the study. I used quotes and constructed themes according to the co-researchers' narratives in order to build multiple perspectives of reality concerning the phenomenon. My

epistemological philosophical assumption is the role of knowledge created through this process

as I lessen the distance between my own knowledge base and the topic examined. My

axiological philosophical assumption examined the role of values as surveyed through the

research, which is value laden and contains bias. As a transcendental researcher, I used "epoche"

(Moustakas, 1994, p. 22), or "bracketing" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97) techniques, to reduce bias

throughout the study. Finally, the methodological philosophical assumption is the process of the

research that will frame my study topic within the context of the phenomenon. The design was

emergent as I recorded the co-researchers' experiences and worked to follow the method of

research to discover the essence of the phenomenon.

Problem Statement

Despite the wealth of knowledge on the importance of positive teacher-student

relationships (O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Thijs, Koomen, & Leij, 2008) and the negative effect

of peer-on-peer bullying in schools (Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; Olweus, 1999; Sharpe, 2011)

documented in the literature, little attention has been given to damaging teacher behaviors, or

teacher-to-student mistreatment, that are academically, socially, and psychologically destructive

to students (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009;

Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). There are few American studies presented in

the literature on the topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al.,

2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008) and its significant negative impact on students (Brendgen et al.,

2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Childers, 2009; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Hyman & Snook, 2001;

Moon et al., 2009) from either the teacher or student viewpoint, but no research has been

conducted on this issue from the school psychologist's perspective.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe school psychologists'

experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12

educational setting. Teacher-to-student mistreatment is generally defined as a teacher's verbal

and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists

in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment. The operational definition of

observation is the point at which school psychologists become cognizant of the phenomenon

through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions

with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day. Areas of

concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, included teachers' verbal

communications toward and about students, as well as teachers' nonverbal communications,

including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language. There

is established literature on the sexual and physical abuse of students by teachers (Anderson &

Levine, 1999; Haviland, Yamagata, Werner, Zhang, Dial, & Sonne, 2011; Khoury-Kassabri,

2009; Shakeshaft & Cohan, 1995; Shakeshaft, Hofstra University and Interactive, Inc., &

Department of Education, 2004; Smith, 2010; Sorenson, 1991; Straus, 1991), and this study

excluded these topics of mistreatment.

The intent of the research was to describe the experiences and perceptions that school

psychologists have concerning this significant phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment in

their professional lives throughout the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting.

Through acknowledgment of the problem and the defining of school psychologists' experiences,

a resolution can emanate in a consolidated effort to advocate for and protect students. Harrison

(2009a) stressed that "school psychologists are indispensable school professionals who are

uniquely qualified to assist with solutions for many issues related to children's learning and

mental health" (p. 2). As an activist in the NASP profession, Lazarus (2012) confirmed that

"engaging in advocacy on behalf of children, their families, and the profession of school

psychology is the responsibility of the association as well as every NASP member and leader"

(p. 2).

Significance of the Study

Empirically, this study adds to the literature because the research on the phenomenon of

teacher-to-student mistreatment is rare (Childers, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow

et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011), but the overall problem may

be more prominent than individuals realize (Hyman & Snook, 1999). It is vital to research,

explore, and acknowledge the serious topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment "due to the

potential mental and emotional damage that can be inflicted on the student" (Childers, 2009, p.

7). McEvoy (2005) confirmed that,

> Teachers who bully feel their abusive conduct is justified and will claim provocation by
>
> their targets. They often will disguise their behavior as "motivation" or as an appropriate
>
> part of instruction. They also disguise abuse as an appropriate disciplinary response to
>
> unacceptable behavior by the target. The target, however, is subjected to deliberate
>
> humiliation that can never serve a legitimate educational purpose. (p. 141)

Mistreatment experiences extend well beyond what school psychologists observe between

teachers and students; by-standers such as classmates, fellow co-workers, and other educators

experience even more wide ranging effects (Twemlow et al., 2006). Because teacher

mistreatment incidents are rarely reported (Hyman & Snook, 1999; Paul & Smith, 2000), the

bullying atmosphere produced by the teacher creates a type of hostile learning environment in

which victims feel they have no recourse or protection by higher school administration (Whitted

& Dupper, 2008). Educators "often observe children in harmful situations and do not act" (King & Janson, 2009, p. 1). Not addressing episodes of teacher-to-student mistreatment has critical ethical and moral repercussions (King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005).

The phenomenon as experienced by school psychologists is unique and the theoretical implications of the teacher-to-student experiences are supported by the principles of Vygotsky (1978), Bandura (1977, 1989, 1993), and Rogers (1967) regarding the constructs of knowledge development, social learning, self-efficacy and self-concept. The theoretical framework from these theorists, which encompasses the ideas of internalization of information which influences behavior, actions, and reactions are influenced by others; and self-efficacy and self-concept impacts perception, learning and relationships, and aids in the support and substantiation of the data collected from this study.

Since the school psychologist is uniquely positioned to observe the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment, it was hypothesized that when discussing the topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment with school psychologists, it would not be difficult for these professionals to recollect an incident which they observed or experienced. It was important to recognize the seriousness of the phenomenon, acknowledge how students were adversely impacted, and utilize the knowledge gained from school psychologists' experiences to add to the literature for examination of future resolution. It is essential that practitioners of the school psychology profession continuously add to the body of knowledge related to problems commonly shared by all. This qualitative study on teacher-to-student mistreatment as experienced by school psychologists reveals implications for teacher education, contributes to future research on the topic, increases the understanding on the prevalence of the problem, and heightens awareness of the general public and educators everywhere. The findings of this study

advance scholarly knowledge, and has applied benefits for school psychologists worldwide.

Research Questions

The review of the literature led to the creation of one central research question and five sub-questions. The central question is listed below.

- What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?

The literature supports this overarching question by providing evidence of a minority number of teachers who engage in bullying and emotionally abusive behavior toward students (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Casarjian, 2000; Childers, 2009; Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). In McEvoy's (2005) study, he found "overwhelming anecdotal evidence" that bullying by teachers exists (p. 143). This research study ultimately adds to the limited body of research on this topic. Hyman and Snook (1999) asserted that mistreatment in schools by teachers may be more notorious and pronounced than the general public understands it to be. Therefore, it is essential to understand school psychologists' holistic experiences with this topic.

The study was also guided by five sub-questions, as bulleted below.

- What do school psychologists perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?

An operational description of an adverse teacher-student relationship consists of teacher behaviors that are harmful, ineffective, and non-nurturing; behaviors that denigrate students, decreasing elements of respect, rapport, cooperation, and communication between the teacher and the student. Paul and Smith (2000) wrote about the concept of negative pedagogy where they described the misuse of power by teachers over students, which adversely impacted the

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teacher-student relationship. Thijs et al. (2008) further depicted that the act of teachers' "negative (conflicted or dependent) relationships appear to operate as risk factors" (p. 244) for all students and by-standers. It is natural to sense that teachers with high stress levels are associated with lower quality teacher-student relationships, and vice versa (Ray, 2007). It was further explained by Ray (2007) that the way in which a teacher engages in mistreatment of a student "may impact the student's academic, psychological, and social development" (p. 429). In recent literature, psychological mistreatment "has been linked with disorders of attachment, developmental and educational problems, socialization problems, disruptive behavior, and later psychopathology" (Hibbard, Barlow, & MacMillan, 2012, p. 372). Understanding which destructive behaviors are present in the school environment that can influence the teacher-student relationship is fundamental in finding opportunities for resolution.

- What is the language of school psychologists in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?

The literature reveals many different words and definitions to describe mistreatment, including the terms maltreatment, abuse, and bullying; each holds the same core root of inappropriate treatment of students. There are different patterns of verbal and nonverbal misconduct by teachers that can be described in terms of harm or distress to a student socially, psychologically, and emotionally. It is crucial for school psychologists to define what they observe of the phenomenon. Delineation of vocabulary and language gathered from co-researchers' narrative data will assist in clearly establishing the essence of the study.

- How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?

The operational definition of adverse impact in this case is the result of short-term and/or

long-term negative effects of inappropriate and harmful behavior by the teacher towards the student. A review of the literature revealed three research studies that confirm teacher-to-student mistreatment exists (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The short-term and long-term negative impact of the mistreatment upon students was also discussed within this collection of studies. McEvoy (2005) pronounced that students who are mistreated by a teacher "typically experience confusion, anger, fear, self-doubt, and profound concerns about their academic and social competencies" (p. 142). The potential negative impact on a child's self-perceptions from incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment may not only hinder academic progress and success, but also breed problems in the areas of emotional and behavioral concerns (Brendgen et al., 2007). For these moral and ethical reasons, it was essential to query school psychologists for further explanation of the observed short and long-term impact of mistreatment on students.

- What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?

Teachers who mistreat students often attempt to defend or rationalize their inappropriate actions by blaming their actions on the student, explaining that the child deserved it (Twemlow et al., 2006). Twemlow et al. (2006) also uncovered that a number of teacher participants were also bullied in their youth, thus perpetuating a malicious cycle. Other literature suggested that mistreatment by educators may be a reflection of professional burnout, personal stress levels, or skill deficits with classroom management (Hyman, 1985; Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; Olweus, 1999). Research by Guglielimi and Tatrow (1998) found that "teacher stress and burnout inevitably affect the learning environment and interfere with the achievement of educational goals insofar as they lead to teachers' detachment, alienation, cynicism, apathy, and absenteeism

and ultimately the decision to leave the field" (p. 61). Establishing an inquiry into school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs helped to increase an understanding of the problem, and assists in educating affected teachers to adopt appropriate behavioral modifications.

- How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?

This question addresses the vocational side of this topic. Wnek, Klien, and Bracken (2008) stated that "a vital part of being an effective school psychologist is advocating for change in the school system when change is needed" (p. 149). Through their consultation, intervention, and assessment roles, school psychologists are routinely called on to assist teachers with improving their classroom behaviors, perceptions, and relationships with students (Green & Gredler, 2002; Hamre et al., 2008; Thijs et al., 2008) in an effort to promote healthy relationships and a healthy atmosphere in which children can learn. Lasser and Klose (2007) noted that "school psychologists must frequently navigate systems boundaries, conflicting values and beliefs, and multiple roles" (p. 484), and evaluative choices have to be made daily concerning personal and ethical decisions. These contradictions influence decision making choices of the school psychologist and the bearing upon their educational role and profession.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Research Plan</h2>

The study was conducted as a qualitative, phenomenological, transcendental design. A qualitative inquiry provided an alternative way to respond to research questions using a descriptive approach examining complex social issues. This study researched a phenomenon that is both intricate and sensitive. The complex stories shared on incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment was from multiple individuals' unique perspectives that incorporated his or her

detailed understanding on the moral and ethical issues observed. This type of research in its natural setting helps to make sense of the co-researcher's experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The co-researcher offers information-rich "first-person accounts" of the experience essential to the study (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). A descriptive qualitative research approach was chosen to gather data and narrative information from the school psychologist co-researcher through use of a statewide survey, in-depth interviews, open-ended questions, researcher annotated observations, and reflections from the experience.

Phenomenological design was chosen because it was a fitting way to gather co-researchers' comprehensive reflections, deeper meanings, and experiences with the phenomenon. A transcendental approach to phenomenology permitted me to suspend personal bias and understanding of the issue being studied, and to take on a fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994) from the co-researcher on the topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon.

Delimitations

Delimitations are decisions made by the researcher to help define or limit the scope of the research. This study did not address or include the topics of school corporal punishment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse of students by teachers because these areas are saturated with relevant studies and an abundance of established research literature on abuse. A phenomenological study was purposefully chosen over the narrative approach so as to gather collective voices of experiences with the phenomenon versus one or two individual stories. The phenomenological design allowed for exploring the issue inductively using multiple sources of data, which assisted in answering research inquiries concerning the prevalence of the problem. Although, the work place of the school psychologist can vary greatly (e.g., public schools, private schools, faith-based schools, university, independent practice, hospital/ medical, state

department), it was expected that the majority of the participating co-researchers would be employed with a non-private, secular school system, and submit answers to questions from the perspective of a public school psychologist.

Another delimitation involved the choice to include only school psychologists operating in the Commonwealth of Virginia, including those who have membership in VASP, which also helped to understand the nature of the issue from the context of a statewide viewpoint as opposed to a local problem, therefore increasing transferability. Choosing to delimit to the Virginia population could have also turned into a study limitation if the overall response rate was minimal. Additionally, I used specific criteria to choose Virginia school psychologists with more than two years of experience in the profession because it takes time to understand the scope of the problem when entering a new job or new school environment.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This phenomenological study was designed to describe school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting. This chapter commences with a presentation of the theorists and their theoretical frameworks that contribute to the foundational beginnings of this study. Next, a review of the literature is presented in six essential areas: the professional role of school psychologists, negative teacher behaviors and the teacher-student relationship, significant studies surrounding the topic of the research, pertinent definitions regarding mistreatment, substantial information on the negative impact mistreatment has on students, and literature surrounding why mistreatment occurs in the educational setting.

Because little attention has been given to the topic of teacher-student mistreatment in the educational setting, and few American studies have addressed this sensitive subject matter, the importance of further research on this educational topic is substantial. Not addressing this under acknowledged, or "hidden trauma" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 187), creates a critical ethical dilemma that educational professionals, such as school psychologists, have to face on a daily basis. The circumstance of teacher-to-student mistreatment produces an inner ethical appeal and professional responsibility to intercede on the child's behalf (King & Janson, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

This inquiry is grounded in relevant previous work of authors surrounding the subject matter. To begin, there are four interrelated theoretical concepts and principles underpinning this research study: Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of the 1930s which relates to Albert Bandura's (1977) popular social learning theory of the 1960s, and Albert Bandura's (1989, 1993)

revised social cognitive theory in 1986, emphasizing self-efficacy which parallels Carl Rogers' (1967) self-concept theory of the 1960s.

Vygotsky and Bandura

Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory underscored the construct of social learning. Vygotsky's (1978) theoretical principles maintained that children construct their own knowledge, learning leads to development, language is an important role in cognitive development, and development cannot be separated from the social learning environment. Verbal and nonverbal language is an important psychological tool that directs one's thinking (Miller, 2011). Students, in particular, internalize information which can change their way of thinking and behavior. Vygotsky (1978) stated that an important change in students' development occurs when "socialized speech is turned inward" (p. 27), allowing them to master their own behavior. Students acquire knowledge through positive and negative interactions with other children, peers, and teachers in the educational environment. Vygotsky's theory affirmed that learning happens "first, on the social level" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57) then psychologically, which indicated learning is embedded in social relationships. The framework of "learning and development take place in socially and culturally shaped contexts" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 194). Students' beliefs and perceptions about themselves are easily influenced by peers, teachers, and society. When incidents of mistreatment happen in the classroom between a teacher and a student, a student's internal consciousness or identity can easily be damaged or skewed by negative teacher actions toward him or her, and by the treatment of witnessing classmates. Brassard, Germain, and Hart (1987) determined that "it is the psychological impact of maltreatment that determines how the victim will view self, others, expectations for the nature of interactions between people, and the manner in which one must live one's own life" (p. 15).

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These powerful experiences, that resist being detached from the current environment, have a lasting impact on students academically, socially, and psychologically (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008).

Vygotsky (1978) and Bandura (1977) jointly lay the foundation of understanding that knowledge and learning is generated through interaction with others. Similar to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, Bandura's (1977) popular social learning theory of the 1960s emphasized the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are developed within the dynamic interactions of a social group. As students are verbally and nonverbally directed by the classroom teacher, they actively construct knowledge while interacting and exploring their environment. Students often learn from one another through imitation, modeling, and observation (Vygotsky, 1978). These learned skills help an individual develop social, emotional, and practical skills needed in the educational environment.

Both Vygotsky (1978) and Bandura's (1977, 1989, 1993) theoretical principles support the idea that all students need a positive learning environment in order to succeed. The educational climate is also important because students cannot effectively learn in a chaotic environment (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). In conjunction with a healthy and encouraging learning environment, establishing positive teacher-student relationships is equally vital. An environment that is physically and emotionally safe, supportive, and nurturing is ideal for educational success (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). Teachers must strive to maintain this type of environment or students will be hindered in their attempts to thrive and reach their academic potential. Encountering incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment forces children into a negative learning environment in which their cognition, learning, social development, and

growth may be obstructed (Martin, Cromer, & Freyd, 2010).

Bandura's (1989, 1993) revised social cognitive theory in 1986 placed much emphasis on the idea of self-efficacy. The theoretical ideas of Bandura (1989, 1993) support that each individual's personal, behavioral, and environmental variables are interconnected factors that influence thoughts and behaviors. The concept of self-efficacy is a reflection of the individual's perception of his or her own ability to succeed in a situation and the value he or she can offer to the social group. Self-efficacy is influenced by external social factors, and can be a powerful manipulative tool used in handling individual goals, tasks, and personal challenges. White (1989) stated, "thoughts influence our activities while social actions are always influencing our thoughts" (p. 458). Social cognitive theory stresses that an individual's actions and reactions are influenced by another person's actions or perceptions in the social environment. This concept can be applied to the teacher and student situation. An individual's low self-efficacy discourages growth and skill development, and it negatively impacts personal motivation for improvement. Teachers' "beliefs regarding their abilities to impact decision making in their school and to manage and motivate children in their classroom" (O'Connor, 2010, p. 192) help to shape their feelings of professional self-efficacy.

Bandura and Rogers

Bandura's (1989, 1993) theory concerning self-efficacy is closely related to Carl Rogers's (1967) theory of self-concept. Both theories emphasize that the actions, behaviors, words, expressions, and interactions of one person can impact another's consciousness, directing his or her innermost thoughts and behavior. Just as Bandura (1989, 1993) proposed that the personal, behavioral, and environmental variables are all interrelated factors, Rogers's (1967) theory of self-concept accentuates that personal successes and failures are related to how people

have learned to view themselves and their relationships with others. Students' evolving concepts of self and identity can be affected by, and create changes in, both their social behavior and inner perceptions of themselves (Grusec, 1992). The potential negative impact on a child's self-perceptions from incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment may not only hinder the development of a student's self-esteem through academic achievement or the sense of acceptance and belonging in relationships, but breed problems in the areas of emotional and behavior concerns (Brassard, Germain, & Hart, 1987; Brendgen et al., 2007). Consequentially, if a teacher has low expectations of a student, it may negatively impact the student's academic growth because the teacher does not possess a level of respect or "unconditional positive regard" (Corey, 2001, p. 172) toward the student.

This literature review centered on Lev Vygotsky, Albert Bandura, and Carl Rogers, and how their individual theories placed interrelated meaning on knowledge development, social learning, and the constructs of self-efficacy and self-concept as derived through interaction with others in a learning environment. The four theories interconnect to support the significance of teacher-student relationships, whether positive or negative. Simply put, a teacher's belief about a student strongly influences the child's beliefs about himself or herself. Utilizing the foundation of the established theoretical framework, the profound topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment is crucial to research, acknowledge, and explore because of the capacity of "mental and emotional damage" (Childers, 2009, p. 7) that can be imposed on a child.

Review of the Literature

As noted above, discussion of the literature is organized into the following sections based on topics examined (a) the school psychologist's professional role, (b) negative teacher behaviors and the teacher-student relationship, (c) significant studies surrounding the topic of the

research, (d) definitions regarding mistreatment, (e) negative impact mistreatment has on students, and (f) literature surrounding why mistreatment occurs in the educational setting.

Role of the School Psychologist

School psychologists' collective voices, regarding their experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment and how it has impacted their profession, need to be heard. Even though the job title of "school psychologist appeared as early as 1915 and the earliest state credentialing began in the mid-1930s" (Harrison, 2009b, p. 2), the occupation continues to be vital to the current educational field, and remains entrenched in the day to day activities of the educational process. School psychologists maintain a delicate balance between education and psychology (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009). They provide quality education for all students by integrating sound psychological and educational research into their practice (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009). School psychologists have vast knowledge and exposure to a variety of teaching styles, while their experiences provide for a wealth of resources. Their insights into comprehending the successes and failures in the educational setting are professionally unique. Educational professionals routinely seek the specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities of school psychologists in the areas of assessment, consultation, counseling, and teaching.

Wnek et al. (2008) stated that a critical role in "being an effective school psychologist is advocating for change in the school system when change is needed" (p. 149). The roles and responsibilities of school psychologists vary considerably, as they operate in an array of primary, elementary, middle, and high school environments of America's rural and urban, public and private settings (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009). They have access to a varying degree of school district practices and policies, politics, rules, regulations, and

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expectations. Their occupational numbers in a school district can range from one to hundreds,

depending on the population (Charvat, 2008; National Association of School Psychologists,

2012b). School psychologists' numbers may vary, but their professional competencies, ethical

obligations, and collective objectives, link all school psychologists together as a state and

nationally licensed professional educational organization.

School psychologists have exposure to children ages birth to age 22, of all races,

developmental stages, disabilities, intellect, and exceptionalities (National Association of School

Psychologists, 2009). They serve a broad audience, which allows for exposure to a variation of

teachers (e.g., different ages, years of experience, culture, educational backgrounds, assorted

subjects and teaching methods, classroom management skills, communication styles). School

psychologists observe and collaborate with teachers who are at different points in their careers:

new and experienced, energized, and burnt-out. School psychologists hold an essential support

position, caring for and offering assistance to both teachers and students in need. According to

Harrison (2009a), they are valuable professionals who are specially qualified to address students'

mental health concerns as well as issues related to classroom learning. In the current educational

climate, "children, families, and schools are experiencing an increasing need for the services of

school psychologists" (Harrison, 2009b, p. 2).

The profession of the school psychologist has solidly demonstrated its importance as a

key intervention resource for all educational stakeholders. School psychologists are proficient in

addressing a wide range of issues that can impact a student's school experience (Brelsford,

2010), as they interchangeably operate in different consultation, collaboration, intervention,

coaching, and assessment roles (Ern et al., 2009; Green & Gredler, 2002). The literature reveals

that educational administration call on educators, including school psychologists, to provide

interventions that "pay attention to the complex interaction between teacher, child and classroom-level factors that contribute to the development of poor student-teacher relationships" (Hamre et al., 2008, p. 134). A school psychologist's license requires participation in professional development activities focused on current practices that could help teachers improve in their classroom skills as well as relationships with students (Thijs et al., 2008). School psychologists are able to use this valuable information to better educate and arm teachers with an awareness of possible reasons behind the emotional and behavioral issues their students may be having; therefore, helping teachers improve poor teacher-student relationships. Thijs et al. (2008) assert the school psychologist "should assess teachers' relationship perceptions and their intended pedagogical practices, and encourage teachers to scrutinize the links between them" (p. 257). This assessment and encouragement could assist teachers in further examination of the quality of their own teacher-student relationships, leading to transformation of their true intentions into more appropriate actions.

The National Association of School Psychologists (2009) members work with students of all ages to help them "succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally" (p. 21). One primary goal of the school psychologist is "to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community" for all children (National Association of School Psychologist, 2009, p. 21). The literature review clearly summons school psychologists to help teachers improve upon their behaviors, perceptions, and relationships with the children they serve. Lazarus (2012) strongly stated, "we must do a better job in advocating for our children's emotional well-being. If we, as experts in the social-emotional development of children, do not, then who else will?" (p. 2).

Negative Teacher Behaviors and Teacher-Student Relationships

Teacher behaviors that are positive and supportive toward students are important components of the successful teacher-student relationship. A student's level of achievement, growth, and development are easily influenced by individual characteristics, as well as the overall dynamics of the teacher-student relationship (Ray, 2007). Generally, interactions that are more positive than negative are not marred by persistent behavioral problems and conflict (O'Connor, 2010). Hamre et al. (2008) confirmed that "relationships with teachers are a foundational component of young children's experiences in school that have shown promise as assets for promoting adjustment and learning" (p. 115). Challenging problems in the classroom tend to materialize early in the teacher-student relationship, and these difficulties persevere over time (Brendgen et al., 2006). The literature revealed one main reason students drop out of school is due to negative teacher-student relationships (Hyman, 1985; Childers, 2009). The complex combining of teacher and student attitudes and their interactions directly contribute either to a high or low caliber of rapport and bond. Regardless of the purpose behind the problematic teacher-student relationship, the negative repercussions can wield "academic, social, behavioral, and emotional problems" on students of all ages (Brendgen et al., 2007, p. 26).

Even though some students' inappropriate behaviors make it difficult to manage the classroom, the fact remains that teachers are the professionals in the room and are required to act appropriately in all conditions. Mistreatment or abuse toward students is never an appropriate response to any situation. The literature reveals that a "proportion of school teachers commonly used emotional abuse, in partnership with other disciplinary measures, as a means of exerting classroom control and maintaining dominance over students" (Sharpe, 2011, p. 30). Often, the damage is tough to identify and diagnose due to the fact that it is "perpetuated by professionals and woven into the fabric of classroom management strategies" (King & Janson, 2009, p. 2).

Despite the fact that educators are entitled to utilize classroom management techniques to maintain order in the classroom, teachers do not possess the right to abuse students or misuse their power for the sake of discipline (Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Power and control within bullying behaviors come "from degradation and intimidation" (Gibbs, 2007, p. 11). The literature recounted narrative interviews with mature adults involving incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment, describing the most devastating negative experience of their lives (Brendgen et al., 2006; Hyman & Snook, 1999).

Generally, the significant topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment is not addressed and goes undocumented in the educational world. Often, among educational by-standers, the statement may be heard, "If parents really knew what happens in school..." Unfortunately, many educators are in denial that teacher-to-student mistreatment situations occur. King and Janson (2009) declared that "emotional maltreatment is often unrecognized and unacknowledged and is accepted as standard practice in many schools" (p. 2). Hyman, Cohen, and Mahon (2003) stated "victimization of students by educators, most often in the name of discipline, is widely practiced and little recognized as a serious problem that contributes to student disruption, alienation, and aggression" (p. 73). Educators often witness or become aware of a harmful situation that has happened, and turn their attention elsewhere so they do not have to act (King & Janson, 2009). Bystanders include teachers, parents, and students, who incorrectly "dismiss the behavior as merely an authoritative stance by an overbearing personality" (Davies, 2011, p. 2). Teacher-to-student mistreatment is "often rationalized as disciplinary actions that are a necessary means to maintain order and gain children's compliance in the classroom" (King & Janson, 2009, p. 2). When teachers mistreat students, school can be a place of fear, humiliation, and intimidation. Some teachers use bullying strategies to control an unruly classroom (Zerillo & Osterman,

2011). The educational setting is no place for any sort of abuse, mistreatment or maltreatment to occur, and authors, like King and Janson (2009), petition others "to recognize the harm, label the harm, and act" (p. 2).

Teacher-to-student mistreatment "is an elusive concept, but one that requires focused attention given its traumatic and enduring effects" (Nesbit & Philpott, 2002, p. 32). The fact that teacher-to-student mistreatment has received so little scholarly attention or research has certainly assisted in helping to shield, or keep hidden, the subject matter from the attention of many educational stakeholders. The unimaginable topic of "emotional abuse carries its own form of lethality, the capacity to mutilate the human spirit" damaging students to where elements of "self-esteem are gradually subtracted" (Nesbit & Philpott, 2002, p. 32). A low-quality, negative teacher-student relationship that lacks nurturing characteristics facilitates conditions that foster bullying behavior in school (Hong, Espelage, Grogan-Kaylor, & Allen-Meares, 2012).

Some teachers felt their bullying behaviors were not a major concern and were justified to meet instructional goals (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Verbal and nonverbal negative behaviors such as "cursing, name calling, and even sarcasm were cited as types of serious teacher abuse" (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011, p. 250). Teachers admitted observing "colleagues who isolated and excluded students from class and programs; did not allow students to go to the bathroom; threw objects at children; and screamed, humiliated, and intimidated students" (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011, p. 249). These negative teacher behaviors carry consequences that are just as grave as the effects of peer-on-peer bullying, adversely impacting a student academically, socially and psychologically (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Research by Hyman et al. (2003) confirmed "the frequent and often unrecognized abuse in the school may

cause pervasive emotional, social, and academic problems in children" (p. 73). Davies (2011)

observed that this negative teacher-student condition in which "an educator has crossed a line of

responsibility and descended into the role of bully" can create an antagonistic learning

environment where "students feel they have no recourse and therefore fail to report the behavior"

(p. 2).

The authors Hyman and Snook (2001) wrote extensively on negative school climates,

documenting the following:

These schools are characterized by high rates of verbal assaults of students in classrooms.

Bullying, including scapegoating, name-calling, and put-downs (by both peers and staff)

are rampant, even tolerated. In these settings, there are generally high rates of detentions,

suspensions, and expulsions with an emphasis on punishment rather than prevention. (p.

134)

Students who experience these negative teacher-student relationships are put at risk for

escalation of short-term and long-term academic and behavioral problems.

Further supporting the literature that highlights the overall purpose of this study,

Brendgen et al. (2006) recommended "school psychologists, and other clinicians need to be

informed about the risk associated with verbal abuse by the teachers, to facilitate early detection

of symptoms and to help prevent potential negative consequences for child adjustment and

health" (p. 1596). Through conducting this study and building awareness, the efforts made to

avert or deter teacher-to-student mistreatment can only help in the overall promotion of a

student's self-concept and self-esteem as well as academic, social, and emotional skills.

Significant Studies

American studies on the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic are infrequent (Childers,

2009; McEvoy, 2005; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Apart from the research conducted on excluded topics of this study (i.e., school corporal punishment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse), a comprehensive literature review revealed that there are three American studies that expose the phenomenon of teachers engaging in bullying behaviors (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Much of what is known about teacher-to-student mistreatment is based on anecdotal and narrative reports, as well as these limited American studies. Outside of the United States, other countries (e.g., Africa, Ireland, Israel, Egypt) have a mixture of literature on the issue (Allen, 2010; Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; McEachern et al., 2008). These foreign studies are widespread in differences in such areas as cultural beliefs, educational environment, and legislative boundaries, which can make for complex comparisons between studies from diverse nations; therefore, investigating the phenomenon from within a single country diminishes such confounding variables.

Studies confirm teacher-to-student mistreatment exists. Teacher-to-student mistreatment exists and is clearly documented in American school systems (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Whitted and Dupper (2008) stated that in the educational system, while "the vast majority of adults in authority interact respectfully with students, some adults physically and psychologically bully students" (p. 329). Dr. Alan McEvoy (2005) conducted a pilot study to investigate the pervasiveness of bullying by teachers, and reported 93% of students answered favorably that they could readily point out which teacher mistreated students. Confirmation of this finding was supported through McEvoy's (2005) focus group discussions with school staff, where educators could also pick out which teachers bullied and mistreated students often enough to be effortlessly identified within the school setting. A

study by Twemlow et al. (2006) discovered that "45% of teachers admitted to having bullied a student" (p. 194). In the alternative education setting, Whitted and Dupper (2008) revealed 86% ($n = 43$) of students reported one or more "incidents of adult physical maltreatment" and 88% ($n = 44$) reported one or more occurrences of "adult psychological maltreatment" (p. 329). Each of these studies concluded that there is an alarming amount of teacher-bullying behavior happening in the school environment that is negatively affecting students' wellbeing.

Studies demonstrate teachers' beliefs that student mistreatment is justifiable. Too often, teachers attempt to justify their mistreatment and bullying actions by claiming that students deserve it (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The literature noted a number of "teachers use the code of the streets (tough language, four-letter words, intimidation, tough demeanor and tough posturing) as a way to exert power and authority" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p.188). Teachers felt their behavior was reasonable and warranted, and these educators supported rationalizations of this negative conduct as an appropriate classroom motivator (McEvoy, 2005).

Studies illustrate how teachers mistreat students. Teacher-to-student mistreatment manifests itself in different ways (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The most common physical maltreatment in Whitted and Dupper's (2008) study included 70% of students reported teachers would not allow them to go to the bathroom. The most common psychological maltreatment, reported by 66% of the respondents, was that teachers yelled at them (Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Students who are mistreated by teachers "typically experience confusion, anger, fear, self-doubt, and profound concerns about their academic and social competencies" (McEvoy, 2005, p. 142). McEvoy (2005) further explained,

Like stalking victims, students who are the targets of teachers who bully feel trapped in a

situation where the abuser is all-powerful. Sometimes they may be literally trapped in an

environment (e.g., classroom or office) where offensive conduct is imposed upon them

and there is no escape. More often, they feel situationally trapped. Any complaint about

the abusive behavior places the student at risk of retaliation by the teacher, including the

use of grades as a sanction. Equally important, it is the student not the teacher who

suffers deprivations if he or she misses class, withdraws from a course, or has to avoid

enrolling in certain classes because the teacher is a bully. (p. 142)

A teacher who is a bully creates a negative climate for the school environment, as well as for

colleagues and students. Teachers often witness their fellow teachers' abusive practices, but fail

to act. Not helping students can worsen the situation. What "perpetuates power struggles in the

school system is the bystander observer" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 188). According to

Twemlow et al. (2006),

When a teacher is a bully and is having a negative effect on the environment, the entire

work environment for the majority of the teachers is made needlessly hostile and

vulnerable children suffer significant trauma, often with attendant learning and

psychiatric problems. Non-bullying teachers are often forced into an avoidant,

bystanding role for fear of retaliation from unions, colleagues and conflicting loyalties.

(p. 196)

These studies contribute to the acknowledgement of traumatic teacher-to-student mistreatment

and its effects on a student's personal growth.

Studies uncover long-term effects of teacher-to-student mistreatment. The

detrimental effect of the teacher-to-student mistreatment experience is not only found noticeably

in the short-term, but also the long-term (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted &

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Dupper, 2008). Over half of the student respondents in Whitted and Dupper's (2008) study reported that an adult, such as a teacher, was involved in their worst recalled experience at school; confirming that children's experiences with adult educators impact them over time. An unforeseen outcome was uncovered in McEvoy's (2005) study: specifically, student recollections on "how emotional and vivid these accounts were, even long after the events took place" (p. 146). Notably, McEvoy (2005) recognized that "even if only a few teachers engage in this behavior within a school, the consequences for school climate and for fulfilling the institution's educational mission are profound" (p. 148). Teacher-to-student mistreatment "produces a hostile climate that is indefensible on academic grounds; it undermines learning and the ability of students to fulfill academic requirements" (McEvoy, 2005, p. 142). Because of the significance of Whitted and Dupper's (2008) statement previously noted, it is reemphasized that "although teachers and other adults have every right to maintain order and discipline in schools, they do not have the right to misuse their considerable power and authority in the name of maintaining discipline and control" (p. 339).

   Studies draw attention to the lack of repercussions for teacher mistreatment behaviors. There are seldom negative sanctions for teacher-to-student mistreatment (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Studies highlight that teacher-to-student mistreatment remains a substantially disguised problem that commands much more attention than is currently given (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The literature revealed a profound frustration by researchers and victims that mistreatment persists without repercussions for the teachers that bully students. There is a lack of integrity and justice by educators in positions of power to allow these known issues to persist (McEvoy, 2005). It was discovered that "school policies and responses to reports of abusive behavior by teachers

generally are ineffective or do not exist. Few schools have any avenue to redress legitimate

grievances" (McEvoy, 2005, p. 141). From the literature, it is concluded that provisions to

preclude teacher-to-student mistreatment situations are as scarce as the studies themselves, and

the normal channels to report teacher-to-student mistreatment, and any expected repercussions of

such actions, are visibly absent from current school policies and procedures.

Mistreatment Defined

Regardless of the way in which it is labeled, whether it is referred to as mistreatment,

maltreatment, bullying, or abuse, the behavior of some teachers toward students is abusive. Each

term holds the same core root of inappropriate treatment toward students. Merriam-Webster's

online dictionary (2013) defined mistreatment as "to treat badly" with synonyms of "brutalize,

manhandle, mishandle, misuse" (para.1). Below are different words and definitions from the

literature revealing various ways to refer to the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment.

Maltreatment. Various maltreatment definitions from the literature are listed below.

- Childers (2009) defined student maltreatment as "the physical or psychological treatment
  of a student by a teacher that is abusive and/or neglectful and which negatively impacts
  the student" (p. 2).

- Hart, Germain, and Brassard (1983) wrote "psychological maltreatment of children and
  youth consists of acts of omission and commission which are judged on the basis of a
  combination of community standards and professional expertise to be psychologically
  damaging. Such acts are committed by individuals, singly or collectively, who by their
  characteristics (e.g., age, status, knowledge, organizational form) are in a position of
  differential power that renders a child vulnerable. Such acts damage immediately or
  ultimately the behavioral, cognitive, affective, or physical functioning of the child.

Examples of psychological maltreatment include acts of rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, exploiting, and mis-socializing" (p. 2).

- Khoury-Kassabri (2009) described emotional maltreatment as being "humiliated, cursed, called names, or having a staff member humiliate their family" (p. 916).

- King and Janson (2009) labeled maltreatment of a child as "a steady stream of shaming, ridiculing, and labeling that diminishes his self-concept, erodes his sense of competence, and negatively impacts the way his peers view him" (p. 2).

- Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (2013) defined maltreatment as "to treat cruelly or roughly" (para.1).

- Paul and Smith (2000) wrote of a related term called negative pedagogy, which is used to define adverse teaching practices that are coercive and intimidating.

Bullying. A seriation of bullying definitions from the literature are listed below.

- Davies (2011) used a definition of "a repeated pattern of conduct to punish, manipulate, or disparage a student; this behavior is rooted in a power differential" (p. 8).

- Gibbs (2007) noted "the power in bullying comes from degradation and intimidation" (p. 11).

- Hong et al. (2012) indicated "bullying is commonly identified as verbal, physical, or social forms of aggression inflicted by an individual or a group of individuals and directed against a child or adolescent who is not able to defend himself or herself" (p. 168).

- McEvoy (2005) defined teacher bullying as "non-sexual abuses of power over students by teachers" (p. 141).

- McEvoy (2005) explained that "bullying by teachers (or other staff, including coaches,

who have supervisory control over students) is defined as a pattern of conduct, rooted in a power differential, that threatens, harms, humiliates, induces fear, or causes students substantial emotional distress, and serves no legitimate academic or ethical purpose" (p. 141).

- Twemlow et al. (2006) reported "a bullying teacher was defined as a teacher who uses his/her power to punish, manipulate or disparage a student beyond what would be a reasonable disciplinary procedures" (p. 191).

- Whitted and Dupper (2008) described bullying as a "particularly virulent pattern of teacher behavior is behavior that manipulates or publically humiliates students" (p. 330).

Abuse. Various definitions from the literature on the subject of abuse are listed below.

- Brendgen et al. (2006) provided definitions of verbal abuse as "ridiculing and teasing, name calling, or yelling at the child," as well as "verbal putdowns, negative prediction, negative comparison, scapegoating, shaming, cursing and swearing, and threats" (p. 1586).

- Nesbit and Philpott (2002) described different types of abuse as "a direct attack on the soul" (p. 32).

- Whitted and Dupper (2008) documented that abuse makes students "feel ridiculed, mistreated, verbally or physically attacked, and /or ignored by the school staff" (p. 331).

Collecting relevant terms, definitions, and interpretations of the phenomenon from a review of the literature is important when conducting observations in the current study. A description of common vocabulary and language gathered from narrative data will assist me in clearly establishing the essence of the study.

Negative Impact

Negative teacher behaviors that contribute to the mistreatment of students adversely impact students academically, socially, and psychologically (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Depictions from the literature of these three areas are expounded below.

Academically. Academically, the student's focus is abruptly shifted from concentration on academic tasks into survival mode, as the student attempts to understand why this is happening to them in the school environment. Incidents of mistreatment force students to alter their self-perceptions and their way of thinking, hindering academic progress, and causing damage to their mental health while possibly spawning behavioral problems (Brendgen et al., 2007). Recognizing "that a positive school climate is critical to student motivation and academic success, the presence of teacher-to-student maltreatment can cause physical, mental, and/or emotional harm to a student" (Childers, 2009, p. 9). A teacher's bullying behaviors produce an oppositional learning environment that is incompatible in the educational world and leaves students unable to fulfill their potential (Davies, 2011; McEvoy, 2005). Ill-gotten modes of compulsory motivation by teachers should never be accepted as appropriate classroom management techniques by educators, as students are "subjected to deliberate humiliation that can never serve a legitimate educational purpose" (McEvoy, 2005, p. 141).

Socially. Socially, the school classroom can be a powerful playground of fear, anger, threats, humiliation, and intimidation (Brendgen et al., 2007; Davies, 2011; Gibbs, 2007; McEvoy, 2005; Ray, 2007; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). McEvoy (2005) remarked that "as social beings, humans fear shunning and humiliation almost as much (if not more) as we fear physical harm. This means the threat of humiliation can be used as a weapon" (p. 142). Attention gained from humiliation of a student by a teacher is an enormous abuse of

power and authority, as well as profoundly unethical and immoral. There is an overabundance of trustworthy but unofficial evidence of teachers' socially chastising students by using inappropriate sarcasm, cursing, yelling, name-calling, and intimidation toward students in the educational environment (McEvoy, 2005). In terms of the bystander role, it is socially harmful when "those teachers, students, support staff and parents who do nothing, ignore, or perhaps even enjoy the pain of those who are responding to the bullying" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 188). Because this mistreatment is so uniquely obscured from the general public's view, the trouble may be more notorious than society recognizes.

Psychologically. Psychologically, teacher-to-student mistreatment may in fact be "as significant of a source of strain as physical punishment" upon an innocent child (Moon et al., 2009, p. 104). The intangible aspect of human emotions invoke an accompanying feeling to what was observed, heard, or experienced in the classroom. Students who suffer from various instances of abuse by a teacher will undoubtedly experience significant negative emotions creating a psychological imbalance. This imbalance may result in depression, anger, lack of concentration and motivation, and behavioral difficulties in school; furthermore, it may also raise the likelihood of the student being impacted by that childhood experience as an adult (Brendgen et al., 2007; Moon et al., 2009). Research by Hyman et al. (2003) confirmed "student victimization caused by both school personnel and peers can result in symptoms of anger, depression and anxiety" (p. 73). The significant topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment is crucial to research because of the "potential mental and emotional damage" (Childers, 2009, p. 7) that can be imposed on a child.

Why Mistreatment Happens

The literature offered various explanations on why teacher-to-student mistreatment

happens, such as teacher burnout, exhaustion, and depression (Tsouloupas et al., 2010), stress placed upon teachers by strenuous educational requirements (Nesbit & Philpott, 2002), and general deficits in teaching skills regarding classroom management (Khoury-Kassabri, 2009). As previously addressed, the literature indicated that mistreatment by teachers persists because key educational administrators rarely admit the problem exists, and do not recognize or stop the predicament as it manifests (Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEachern et al., 2008; McEvoy, 2005; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008).

Burnout, exhaustion, and depression. Chronic strain in the work environment can lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, a sense of depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishments within the teaching profession (Steinhardt, Smith Jaggars, Faulk, & Gloria, 2011). Often when educators feel they are "overloaded, they distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work in an effort to cope with feelings of exhaustion" leaving less time and energy for them to properly attend to their students (Steinhardt et al., 2011, p. 421). Teacher burnout and depression often result in high usage of sick leave days and turnover rates (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Steinhardt et al., 2011; Tsouloupas et al., 2010). Less supportive teachers who are emotionally drained, depressed, lack personal self-esteem or self-efficacy, were found to be more involved in problematic interactions with students than would be normally expected (Hamre et al., 2008). If educators remained in a work place that experienced persistent failure, morale problems, and disappointments, normally empathetic teachers would be exposed to sustained pressure; resulting in the potential for educators "who are emotionally exhausted and who become apathetic, cynical or rigid" creating an atmosphere where "the teacher-student relationship may become mechanical and distant" (Steinhardt et al., 2011, p. 421). Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, and Feldman (2003) stated "school psychologists are well positioned in

school structures to be vigilant for the signs of teacher burnout" (p. 132). Consequently, the outcome of the current study may be capable of supporting the efforts to be more attentive to teachers' emotional needs.

Stress. Teachers' high stress levels generate the potential for methods of mistreatment in the classroom setting (Nesbit & Philpott, 2002). Educators are predisposed to high levels of stress when it comes to daily interaction with students, colleagues, administration, and parents (Tsouloupas et al., 2010). In general, habitually "stressed and anxious teachers become less tolerant, less caring, less patient, and less involved with students" (Anderson, 1999, p. 6). School psychologists are adept in recognizing harmful stress levels in co-workers, and are capable of sponsoring and supporting programs to reduce the unhealthy effects of stress (Anderson & Levine, 1999).

General skill deficits. Incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment may be a reflection of the previously discussed bouts of burnout and stress, or they may be a learned behavior response coupled with general deficits in teaching skills regarding appropriate classroom management (Hyman, 1985; Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; Olweus, 1999). Teachers who exhibit bullying behaviors characteristically lack structure and leadership abilities (Davies, 2011). Mistreatment by teachers can develop out of negative emotions, which can produce personal disappointments in their abilities to control the classroom and instruct their students (Tsouloupas et al., 2010). These types of teachers possess deep character flaws which manifest in deficits with their classroom management skills. As a result, these teachers justify their bullying behaviors toward students by rationalizing that the student deserved the punishment, humiliation, abuse, or mistreatment (Hyman, 1985; Twemlow et al., 2006).

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Summary

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Empirically and theoretically, this study adds to the literature because scholarly research on the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment is rare (Childers, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011), and no research has been conducted on the topic from the school psychologist's perspective. The overall phenomenon may be more widespread than individuals imagine (Hyman & Snook, 1999). Mistreatment of students by teachers "has been given relatively little attention by the general public and helping professions, and it has seldom been the primary target of research or intervention" (Hart, 1988, p. 243). This research study fills a gap in the literature and aids in the further understanding of this serious issue in the field of education. Because of the "potential mental and emotional damage that can be inflicted on the student" (Childers, 2009, p. 7), this profound topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment is vital to research, acknowledge, and explore.

Supported by the overall mission of this current phenomenological study, Brendgen et al. (2006) directly pointed out that school psychologists should be more aware of issues concerning teacher-to-student mistreatment "to facilitate early detection of symptoms and to help prevent potential negative consequences for child adjustment and health" (p. 1596). Through implementation of this current qualitative study, the act of describing school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational setting assists in gaining the necessary information to produce needed qualitative data on the topic, as well as initiate ways to help curb this ongoing problem. This study adds to the body of knowledge of the school psychologist profession, revealing implications for teacher education, increasing the understanding on the prevalence of the problem, and heightening awareness of the general public and educators everywhere.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe school psychologists'

experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12

educational setting. Teacher-to-student mistreatment is generally defined as a teacher's verbal

and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists

in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment. Areas of concern addressed in this

study, as observed by school psychologists, include a teacher's verbal communication toward

and about students, as well as a teacher's nonverbal communication including emotional

mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language. There is established

literature on the sexual and physical abuse of students by teachers (Anderson & Levine, 1999;

Haviland et al., 2011; Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; Shakeshaft & Cohan, 1995; Shakeshaft et al.,

2004; Smith, 2010; Sorenson, 1991; Straus, 1991), and this study excluded these topics of

mistreatment.

The intent of the research was to describe the experiences and perceptions that school

psychologists have concerning the phenomenon in their professional lives throughout the Pre-

Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting. Through acknowledgment of the problem

and defining of school psychologists' experiences, a resolution can arise in a consolidated effort

to advocate for and protect students. Elements of chapter three include the design of the study,

research questions, information on the co-researchers, the setting, and methodology on the data

collection and analysis procedures.

Design

The study utilized a qualitative, phenomenological, transcendental design. A qualitative

inquiry provided an alternative way to respond to research questions using a descriptive approach examining complex social issues. This type of research in its natural setting helped to make sense of co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A descriptive qualitative research approach was chosen to gather data and narrative information from the school psychologist co-researcher through use of a statewide survey, open-ended questions, in-depth interviews, researcher annotated observations, and reflections from the experience.

A phenomenological design was chosen because it was the most appropriate way to gather co-researchers' in-depth reflections, deeper meanings, and lived experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A transcendental approach of phenomenology permitted me to suspend personal bias and understanding of the issue being studied, and to take on a fresh perspective from the co-researchers' information (Moustakas 1994) concerning the phenomenon. By conducting this research through a transcendental lens, it brought about a heightened awareness leading to a better insight or understanding of the experience because it was "perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). Moustakas (1994) explained the human science researcher's challenge in phenomenology is,

> To describe things in themselves, to permit what is before one to enter consciousness and be understood in its meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection. The process involves a blending of what is really present with what is imagined as present from the vantage point of possible meanings; thus a unity of the real and the ideal. (p. 27)

Two comprehensive inquiries encompassed and complemented the overarching qualitative, phenomenological design, by striving to understand what the co-researchers

experienced in terms of teacher-to-student mistreatment, referred to as textural descriptions, and how the co-researchers experienced the phenomenon, referred to as structural description (Moustakas, 1994). When combined, the textural and structural descriptions guided the focus of the research toward the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

A review of the literature led to the creation of one central research question and five sub-questions.

Central question:

- What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Sub-questions:

- What do school psychologists perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?

- What is the language of school psychologists in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?

- How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?

- What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?

- How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?

Participants

Participants, who are referred to as "co-researchers" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 15), were solicited through a two-step process. The co-researchers are the key contributors, members, and

participants who offer information-rich "first-person accounts" of the experience essential to the study (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). School psychologist co-researchers populated from members of the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP), as well as other Virginia school psychologists, as provided by the Virginia Department of Education (VADOE), which incorporated a broad directory of school psychologists. The directory provided by VADOE included school psychologists with and school psychologists without an active membership with VASP. To access these two populations, a non-random sampling of Virginia Academy of School Psychologist (VASP) members was conducted with permission of VASP (see Appendix R). After completing the necessary steps as a current VASP member to obtain permission to acquire mailing labels, VASP provided a maximum number of Virginia licensed school psychologist organizational members' names and addresses, and the survey letter was mailed. According to VASP regulations on accessing the membership database, approval led to a production of VASP member's mailing label data, not email addresses. Then, a non-random sampling from a VADOE directory of Virginia school psychologists was conducted with permission (see Appendix S), producing a list of approximately 643 Virginia school psychologists' first names, last names, email addresses, and affiliated counties. The use of purposeful sampling with this membership organization and educational body population provided the study with the largest possible, information-rich representation of practicing school psychologists throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

For this study, there were 686 school psychologists who were invited to participate in this study, and of that number, a total of 135 co-researcher participants responded to all demographic questions on the online survey, revealing the following population (see Table 1).

Table 1

Survey Demographics

Survey Demographics

Gender   Female 117 (84%)
               Male   22 (16%)

Age range
               25-35 (27.4%)
               36-45 (32.6%)
               46-55 (18.5%)
               56-65 (20.7%)
               66 and over (0.7%)

Years of experience as a school psychologist
               1-2 years (1.5%)
               3-4 years (3.0%)
               5-10 years (28.1%)
               11-15 years (18.5%)
               More than 15 years (48.9%)

Highest degree level
               Master's degree (13.3%)
               Educational specialist degree (59.3%)
               Doctoral degree (19.3%)
               Other (8.1%)

Membership status
               Both VASP and NASP (21.5%)
               Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) (7.4%)
               National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (29.6%)
               None (41.5%)

General region of work in Virginia
               North/Northern area (38.5%)
               South/Central area (33.3%)
               East/Tidewater area (14.8%)
               West/Southwest area (13.3%)

Work setting
               Rural/suburban setting (70%)
               Urban/city setting (30%)

Main setting of work place
               Public school (97.0%)

Other (3.0%)

Type of school
Primary/Elementary (28.4%)
Junior High/Middle School (6.7%)
High School (11.9%)
Multiple levels of schools (53.0%)

Approximate number of students served
>50 (0.7%)
51 - 100 (3.0%)
101 - 1,000 (19.4%)
1,001-5,000 range (70.9%)
5,000< (6.0%)

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First Phase for Soliciting Co-researchers

VASP. The first phase of soliciting co-researchers for the study was by a letter (see

Appendix B), mailed through the U.S. Postal Service, using the VASP member's mailing label,

provided that the member did not have a corresponding email address in the VADOE directory.

This letter invited VASP members to participate in an online survey (see Appendix D), designed

in Surveymonkey.com, using a website link accompanied by an explanation of the study's

purpose, importance, and statement of informed consent (see Appendix C). The website was

created exclusively for this research project. It functioned as an all-in-one website where the

VASP member went to launch the online survey utilized in the first phase, provide an additional

opportunity to give interview contact information utilized in the second phase, and the location

for participation in the online discussion forum utilized in the third phase.

VADOE. The majority of solicitations for co-researchers in this study were managed

through electronic email to Virginia school psychologists on the VADOE's list. This email (see

Appendix B) invited co-researchers to participate in an online survey (see Appendix D),

designed in Surveymonkey.com, using a hotlink that took them directly to the survey. A link to

the explanation of the study's purpose, importance, and statement of informed consent (see Appendix C) was placed on the first page of the electronic survey. Co-researchers then chose Yes or No if they wished to proceed with the survey, giving their informed consent. The survey invitation email was sent to the co-researchers' email addresses, allowing for secure following of survey replies, but not collecting the IP address or tracking the email address within the survey response. That created an efficient way to send out a two-week follow-up reminder email (see Appendix E). To be clear, the participants' email addresses were not visible on any of the responses, therefore allowing anonymity in survey answers.

Each co-researcher's email was electronically created using Surveymonkey.com's "Email Invitation Collector" system. This collector system not only generated the opportunity to resourcefully indicate which email address had or had not responded to the survey and sent out reminder emails, but created complete control over electronic flexibility, functionality, and analysis of the online survey. The co-researcher launched the online survey from the internal email link. The electronic survey data collected was kept confidential and considered anonymous. By design, the response data from the survey's closed and open-ended questions was not linked to the respondent's personally identifiable email address, thus protecting anonymity. Similarly, the response data from those VASP members who participated by mailed invitation letter was not tracked due to the lack of an email address, which also allowed for anonymity in survey responses.

The online survey provider mentioned was Surveymonkey.com. This online survey provider enabled the co-researchers to quickly and efficiently answer online survey questions and provide demographic information. The respondents answered a variety of questions (e.g., demographic, multiple choice, open-ended questions) and had the opportunity to reply with

either an affirmative or negative response on whether they wished to be considered for inclusion in the second phase of the process outlined below, involving in-depth interviews. As a benefit of utilizing an online survey, I was able to instantly access, download, and analyze the survey information given throughout the data collection process.

Although current literature reveals a large degree of variation in response rates, an expected usable survey return rate ranged from 10% - 30% (Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment, The University of Texas at Austin, 2007; Hamilton, 2003; Sheehan, 2001). A 2012 online survey of NASP members produced an encouragingly higher rate of 37.7% (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012b). For this study, a total of 686 school psychologists were invited to participate in the statewide online survey. A response rate of 20.3% was realized by 139 total co-researchers, 16% males ($n = 22$) and 84% females ($n = 117$), who launched the survey. Of the 139 co-researchers who responded, 66 (47.5%) completed all questions on the online survey. The aggregate cost for office supplies, postage, gift cards, interview travel expenses, NVivo software license, managing the domain and data collected through the Surveymonkey.com and website was approximately $700.00.

Second Phase to Concentrate Co-researchers

The second phase was a narrowing-down of specific co-researchers for the second part of the study, who were selected through a non-random, purposeful criterion sampling process. Patton (2002) stated that this concept is useful when the researcher wants to obtain rich information from a source of "predetermined criterion" (p. 238) to "learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry" (p. 230). The criteria used to choose particular co-researchers included selecting Virginia school psychologists who scored highly on the first three questions on Part Two of the online survey, specifically those who responded with

"agree" to survey Question 13 concerning the existence of mistreatment, with "frequent" concerning observations on survey Question 14, and "very concerned" to survey Question 15 relaying their personal level of concern on the phenomenon. The criteria list also included those school psychologists who had more than two years of experience, who indicated a willingness on the statewide survey to be interviewed either face-to-face or online with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or FaceTime, and who would participate in the third phase of the data collection process delineated below which allowed final contact through an online discussion forum. Through use of the purposeful criterion sampling procedure, co-researchers were selected without regard to age, gender, cultural background, geographic location, level of specialist degree, or school affiliation. When the co-researcher answered in the affirmative expressing interest in being interviewed, he or she provided basic contact information (i.e., name, email address, phone number). This contact information was separated from the survey data to ensure anonymity. To ensure confidentiality, co-researchers and their locations were provided pseudonyms. Each of the co-researchers involved in the second phase gave informed consent (see Appendix G) to participate in an in-person or online with face-to-face capabilities, in-depth semi-structured interview process with open-ended questions that was audiotaped and transcribed, along with completing a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F). Identical interview questions were posed to each of the co-researchers in the same way for consistency.

Polkinghorne (1989) noted that the number of co-researchers needed in a phenomenological study can vary greatly, as the researcher puts forth effort to obtain rich descriptions of the phenomenon under study. Examples of studies outlined by Polkinghorne (1989) included three to 30 co-researchers selected for inclusion in different studies. Following this general guideline, I set a mark of 10 co-researchers to be interviewed as a goal toward

thematic saturation of the phenomenon. For this study, a total of 10 school psychologists

expressed interest in being involved in the final two phases of the research study, of which six

school psychologists completed the informed consent documents and followed through with the

in-depth interview and discussion forum. Considerable effort was made to contact and

encourage the remaining four co-researchers to complete the necessary documents that would

allow for inclusion in the interview/discussion forum process. After progressive energies were

spent clearly communicating the requirements needed and the vast flexibility of the researcher in

gathering the documents and conducting the rest of the procedures, I chose to honor the decision

of the remaining four school psychologist's demanding schedule which prohibited them from

moving forward with the study.

 The demographic characteristics of the six co-researchers participating in the second and

third phases of this study are revealed in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Interview/Discussion Forum Demographics

Interview/Discussion Forum Demographics		
Gender	Female	4
	Male	2
Age range		
	25-35	2
	36-45	2
	46-55	1
	56-65	1
	66 and over	0
Years of experience as a school psychologist		
	1-2 years	0
	3-4 years	0
	5-10 years	2
	11-15 years	1
	More than 15 years	3

Highest degree level

Master's degree	0
Educational specialist degree	5
Doctoral degree	1

Membership status

Both VASP and NASP	1
Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP)	2
National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)	0
None	3

General region of work in Virginia

North/Northern area	0
South/Central area	6
East/Tidewater area	0
West/Southwest area	0

Work setting

Rural/suburban setting	5
Urban/city setting	1

Main setting of work place

Public school	6

Type of school

Primary/Elementary	2
Junior High/Middle	0
High School	0
Multiple levels of schools	4

Approximate number of students served

1,001-5,000 range	6

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Third Phase Utilizing Co-researchers

The third phase used the same six co-researchers with pseudonyms selected in the second phase, who were individually interviewed and who also answered the online survey. An invitation was extended to the established six co-researchers to join into the existing secure online discussion forum located on the website created exclusively for this research study, where research data gathered from the co-researchers was presented for member-checking, feedback,

clarification, and follow-up purposes. Responses to discussions were printed and included in the data analysis.

Setting

The work place of the school psychologist can vary greatly (e.g., public schools, private schools, faith-based schools, university, independent practice, hospital/medical, state department). As noted in Chapter One, Charvat (2008) calculated there are 35,400 credentialed school psychologists in the United States, and the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) indicates an organization with 247 members (Dr. L.E. Sutton, personal communication, March 18, 2013). An estimated 650 school psychologists are employed in Virginia schools each year (Virginia Department of Education Special Education & Student Services, personal communication, September 13, 2013). The Commonwealth of Virginia has a formal statewide organization named the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP), which conducts statewide and regional professional development trainings for school psychologists each year. The VASP organization also supports the objectives of the Virginia Psychological Association (VPA). Since most school psychologists are practitioners within the public school system, the majority of training supports the legal, ethical, practical, and professional needs of the psychologist within the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational system. The much larger national professional organization for school psychologists is designated the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). Through a nationwide member survey, Curtis, Lopez, Castillo, Batsche, Minch, and Smith's (2008) data confirmed that over 80% of NASP members work in the public school setting. Accordingly, it was expected that the majority of VASP member and non-VASP member Virginia school psychologists would have the same type of work setting. Of this study's survey respondents, the majority of school psychologists work in

the rural/suburban setting (70%), in the Commonwealth of Virginia (98%), are employed in multiple levels of schools in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment (53%), and reported the estimated number of students served in the 1,001-5,000 range (70%). Consistent with expectations, all six interview/discussion forum co-researchers' main work place settings were in the public school system within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Specifically, the interview/discussion forum co-researchers' demographics included exactly five co-researchers who reported their school system was located in a rural/suburban setting and one reported an urban/city setting. Four school psychologists operate in multiple levels of the Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 environment, with the remaining two operating in the primary/elementary school setting. As indicated, the first phase's setting for the survey was online, where the school psychologist could reply electronically. Therefore, responses were obtained statewide by the school psychologist co-researchers.

The study's setting for the second phase involved in-depth interviews that occurred in either the online format with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or FaceTime, or face-to-face at a convenient location such as a place of work, business, or home. The co-researcher chose the mode and site that was most convenient, confidential, and comfortable. Generally, school psychologists have some flexibility in their daily schedules, so finding a convenient time or place was not expected to be a hindrance to the process. Many school psychologists inherently chose the setting to be the work place, which occurred within the school district's educational environment. Moustakas (1994) urged researchers to locate information-rich co-researchers who would offer original descriptions of the phenomenon "through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews" (p. 21). I was flexible in meeting the needs and requests of the co-researchers in order to get the most candid and honest responses as possible

concerning the phenomenon studied (Moustakas, 1994). To ensure confidentiality, co-researchers' site information were provided pseudonyms.

The final setting during the third phase was in an online format where co-researchers joined the established online discussion forum. The online site was opened at a designated time and date, exclusively to those co-researchers that participated in phase two of the study. This third setting allowed for Moustakas's (1994) recommendations to be followed, which called for multiple, in-depth discussions with co-researchers in a best effort to obtain "a comprehensive description" of the phenomenon (p. 13).

The Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the "human science researcher" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27) is also the human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My role as researcher was to uncover the essence of the phenomenon. As a fellow school psychologist who has observed and experienced the phenomenon under study, I bracketed out any personal bias concerning the phenomenon, meaning to "set aside prejudgments" and "preconceived ideas about things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). To begin my duties as a researcher, I know, recognize, and acknowledge my previous experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment as a school psychologist with over seven years' experience would potentially impact my understanding of the study. Overwhelmingly, my desire as a researcher was to readily accept the information brought forward by the co-researchers in the study without pre-judgment. As the human inquirer of this study, I hereby disclosed my personal bias from past associations and experiences up-front, therefore starting the bracketing process. Through use of constant bracketing and memoing techniques, I protected against allowing it to color the present data collection and analysis process. Putting routine methods in place assisted me in safe-guarding the bracketing process. As noted in the Data Analysis section

of this chapter, bracketing techniques consisted of constant monitoring throughout the research process, use of a daily audit trail log, and multiple memoing techniques to separate fact from opinion. Also, the questions posed to co-researchers in the data collection process were pilot tested to reduce query or response bias. Each mechanism employed remained a powerful part in protecting this research study from bias.

As a licensed school psychologist, I am an active member of VASP and NASP. My personal, professional, and educational experiences listed below qualify me to be the human instrument in the study. The main element that is most fitting as a qualifier is the fact that I have functioned as a school psychologist for seven years in a rural public school system, and have over a decade of experience witnessing the phenomenon in that setting. My background information with public education includes 13 years of public school experience: teaching kindergarten through grade three special education students, operating as a guidance counselor, experience as an educational specialist assisting the Director of Special Education and Exceptional Programs, and psychologist in the school system for pre-school age through high school age children in two rural neighboring county systems. I hold a nationally certified school psychologist license and guidance counselor license in both Virginia and North Carolina. My educational background comprises of being a candidate for a Doctor of Education degree in Curriculum & Instruction, an Educational Specialist degree in School Psychology, Master of Science in Education degrees in Guidance & Counseling and Community & College Counseling, and finally a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science/Business Administration with a minor in Sociology. I am a lifelong member of a Disciples of Christ (DOC) church in Virginia. My Christian beliefs lead me to know that my God-given gift is the art and science of listening and learning. Through God's amazing grace and guidance, I am called upon to listen, help,

encourage, and counsel people of all ages. I acknowledge my Christian belief system compels me to want to safeguard young children from harm, and display empathy to those in need, as well as encourage or inspire solutions when needed.

Data Collection

I obtained permission (see Appendix A), from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University exists to protect and ensure the rights of the co-researchers participating in this academic research study. I followed ethical guidelines while conducting this study. The appropriate application was completed and submitted as required by university guidelines. IRB approval was obtained prior to collecting research data and commencing with the study. As the data collection process began, I created a daily log for an audit trail. This provided a schedule and running detail of daily activities.

Pilot Test

Prior to the pilot test, a review of the questions took place to obtain content validity utilizing experts in the field of education. This review covered each of the research survey, interview, and discussion forum questions prior to implementation of the study. The research study's chair and one committee member both hold PhDs, and are highly trained, experienced, licensed, skilled educators with essential public school experience. These two members complement the final committee member, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, who is a highly trained, experienced, skilled expert in the field of school psychology. Each of these professionals has obtained a doctorate in their field of study and currently practice at the university level.

In addition to a review of the questions by educational professionals who have obtained

doctorates in their fields of expertise and have an expressed interest in this research study, and the approval by the university's Institutional Review Board, a pilot test was performed to establish credibility of questions and procedures within the research study (Patton, 2002). After receiving IRB approval, and while waiting on data collection approvals and permissions, the pilot test was conducted utilizing a small sample outside of my study of seasoned school psychologists. I identified and selected two established school psychologists in my local area with over three years' experience in their field, and who have direct knowledge of the phenomenon under study. The purpose of the pilot study was not to collect research data but to refine and provide critical examination of each survey, interview, and discussion forum question (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This simulated process can discover flaws and limitations not yet recognized by the researcher, and helped to increase the potential success of the overall study. The pilot test allowed for a refinement period which assisted in assessing the scale for understanding of content and response choices, original intent in wording of questions, and the total time needed to complete the survey. Other areas examined, such as common grammatical mistakes, appropriateness of terminology on items, redundancy, presence of bias and clarity was evaluated in the pilot test. Each person participating in the pilot test reviewed the study and offered comments for improvement. No content area was changed, but minor adjustments were made in the area of mechanics of style (i.e., punctuation, spelling). Changes made as a result of the pilot test are documented in the audit trail (see Appendix Q).

Survey

The data collection process commenced with a statewide online survey to VASP members and other Virginia school psychologists. I submitted a written request addressed to the VASP Chair and Research Committee for permission to obtain VASP members names and

mailing addresses. In addition, with permission from VADOE, a broad listing of Virginia school

psychologists' names, email addresses, and affiliated counties was provided.

Upon receiving necessary permissions from VADOE, and an approval letter from the

VASP Chair and Research Committee, I was provided access to 686 school psychologist's

contact information. Using the VASP member's mailing label, provided that the member did not

have a corresponding email address in the VADOE listing, I mailed the member a survey

participation letter with the online survey website link. At the same time the letters were mailed

out to VASP members, an email embedded with the online survey hotlink was electronically

mailed to other Virginia school psychologists listed in VADOE directory. Simultaneously, the

online survey through Surveymonkey.com became active and ready for completion. As noted

above, important information, including statements of informed consent and confidentiality, was

provided on the first page of the website and online survey. The survey consisted of

demographic questions and comprehensive survey questions. The survey questions were

comprised of Likert scale, ranking order, multiple choice, comment/essay box, and open-ended

questions, and concluded with a yes/no indicator box for an invitation to be interviewed face-to-

face or in an online format with face-to-face capabilities through Skype or FaceTime

technologies. Since the majority of co-researchers were only able to answer in detail on the

survey; material gathered from these participating school psychologists provided information-

rich data.

The survey was open for three weeks as its designated time frame for participation. At

the two-week mark, a reminder email was sent to participants email addresses. The email

requested completion of the survey, invited prospective interviewees to provide contact

information, and reminded the potential participant that school psychologists who completed the

survey had the opportunity to be entered into a random drawing for a chance at one of five twenty-dollar Amazon.com gift-certificates in appreciation for finishing the survey.

Through the initial use of an extensive statewide survey and, secondly, via in-depth interviews with a select number of co-researchers, widespread and thorough data was obtained. A qualitative researcher's primary goal is to describe rather than explain (Moustakas, 1994), so it was important to collect extensive data, descriptions and details in a concentrated effort to understand the phenomenon.

Interviews

In the second phase of the data collection process, I accessed the survey data collected by Surveymonkey.com. This data included each co-researcher's decision on whether or not they wished to be considered for an interview. If the co-researcher responded in the affirmative, his or her contact information was recorded. The contact information data was separated from all survey question responses. Using the purposeful criterion sampling procedure noted in the participant section of this study, I selected 10 Virginia school psychologists for the interview process. I objectively and yet purposefully narrowed down the pool of potential interviewees into the sample by analyzing the responses given to the first three questions on Part Two of the online survey. Specifically, those who responded highly on the first three questions included those responses with "agree" to survey Question 13 concerning the existence of mistreatment, with "frequent" concerning observations on survey Question 14, and "very concerned" to survey Question 15 relaying his or her personal level of concern on the phenomenon. I incorporated a further plan if needed to narrow-down potential interviewees. The plan was that if after the initial purposeful criterion procedures were completed the situation arose where there were a larger response of co-researchers wanting to be considered for an interview than anticipated, I

would have employed a second set of narrowing-down procedures. In particular, those that responded "Virginia" concerning the main state employed on survey Question 11, with "public school" concerning his or her main work setting in survey Question 7, and finally, reviewing and choosing a respondent's compelling narrative description in survey Question 22 concerning the worst teacher-to-student mistreatment experience ever observed as a school psychologist. Sampling continued until reaching thematic saturation.

After giving written informed consent (see Appendix G), each of the co-researchers involved in this second phase participated in an in-person or online with face-to-face capabilities such as Apple's FaceTime, in-depth semi-structured interview process with open-ended questions that was audiotaped and transcribed. Moustakas (1994) stated "the phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions" (p. 114). Interview questions (see Appendix H) were administered through a flexible interview guide approach (Patton, 2002). This approach was focused but also allowed dialog as needed for follow-up inquiries, permitting tailored semi-structured, and open-ended questions. In-depth interviews offered an additional window to gain insight into school psychologists' experiences, feelings, beliefs, and expectations concerning the phenomenon. Identical interview questions were posed to each of the co-researchers in the same way for consistency. Flexible and open-ended interviewing techniques created the atmosphere for revealing properties of the phenomenon as observed by school psychologists that may not be captured with other means, such as the sole use of questionnaires. The interview sessions lasted 30 minutes to one hour in length.

The interview questions are outlined in table format (see Table 3) at the end of the Data Collection section of this chapter, listed in Appendix H of the dissertation, and grounded in the

literature. To establish the validity of the interview questions, supporting information has been

provided concerning each question and its basis in the literature. In addition to the interview

questions, each co-researcher completed a Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix F). This

aided in recording demographic characteristics, including the co-researcher's age, gender, years

of experience as a school psychologist, highest degree obtained, membership status, setting of

employment, and number of students served. As noted above, a pilot test was conducted

utilizing a small sample of seasoned school psychologists. To be clear, the expert review took

place prior to the proposal defense to the dissertation committee, and the pilot test occurred after

receiving IRB approval.

All interview data were transcribed by me as completed. Via an additional data

collection tool, I employed a personal electronic audio recorder for researcher reflection

purposes to add additional feedback after each interview experience, as well as written researcher

field notes to collect both descriptive and reflective notes (Moustakas, 1994). These memoing

techniques were used throughout the research process to capture co-researchers' nonverbal

communication conveyed during the interview process, and to help separate fact from opinion as

anecdotal notes were collected of personal thoughts, ideas, and reactions occurring during the

process. Transcribed audio recordings of interviews, researcher reflections, and field notes were

collectively utilized to gather data.

The point of the interview process within a phenomenological study was to describe the

meaning of the co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). As the co-

researcher talked about his or her experiences with the phenomenon, the possibility existed that

there was sensitive information shared that touched on mandated reporting events. As needed, I

was prepared to respond to these events by asking if the respondent reported such events as

required by his or her school protocol, and to extend an offer to help the co-researcher find appropriate resources in their geographic area.

Online Discussion Forum

In the third phase of the data collection process, and after all interviews were completed, I extended an invitation to the established six co-researchers to join into an existing secure online discussion forum. Each of the established co-researchers was assigned pseudonyms and passwords to participate in the forum. This online forum was an established and secure way to communicate with me and anonymously with other select co-researchers, join discussions to share thoughts and experiences on specific topics, and to respond with feedback on data collected for member-checking purposes. The participants were notified that the discussion forum session was open continuously for seven consecutive days for co-researcher responses, and I was present on-line for a designated time each day for immediate interactive response sessions. The invited members connected with me on the forum for member-checking of data gathered, clarification, follow-up, and feedback purposes. For triangulation, the follow-up questions posed aligned with the survey and interview questions presented earlier in the process. The discussion forum also allowed the invited members to expand on current exposure to the phenomenon studied; as this topic is a fluid one, where experiences can change from day to day. Typed responses on the discussion forum, transcribed researcher reflection, and analytic memoing was utilized to aid in eventual coding and data analysis. In all phases of this data collection process, I incorporated consistent reflexivity to demonstrate trustworthiness of analysis, exploring potential bias that extended from my position.

Table 3

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

Questions

Questions to support central question: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?

1. As a school psychologist, please share your story or experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. (Please do not include real names of people or schools.)
2. What is your response (i.e., feelings, internal reaction, external actions) when you become aware of teacher-to-student mistreatment?
3. How do you become aware (i.e., read, hear, observe) of teacher-to-student mistreatment?
4. Describe the characteristics and personality of teachers who mistreat students.
5. Describe the characteristics and personality of students who are mistreated.

Questions to support first sub-question: What do school psychologists' perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?

6. What verbal teacher behaviors contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships?
7. What nonverbal teacher behaviors contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships?
8. What verbal teacher behaviors contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?
9. What nonverbal teacher behaviors contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?
10. Other than student misbehavior, what triggers a teacher's negative reactions toward a student? What patterns have you noticed?
11. What student behaviors may contribute to negative reactions in teachers?
12. Describe the relationship between a teacher and student in a mistreatment situation? What patterns have you noticed?
13. What is present in the school environment (i.e., climate, morale, building, practices) that may influence the teacher-student relationship in a negative way?

Questions to support second sub-question: What is the language of school psychologists' in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?

14. How do you define teacher-to-student mistreatment?
15. What terms do you use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment?
16. How would teachers define teacher-to-student mistreatment?
17. What terms would teachers use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Questions to support third sub-question: How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?

18. Describe the short-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher.
19. Describe the long-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher.
20. How does teacher-to-student mistreatment impact the student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally?
21. In what way does teacher-to-student mistreatment cause mental and/or emotional damage on the student?
22. What are the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Questions to support fourth sub-question: What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?

    23. Why does teacher-to-student mistreatment happen?

    24. What can teachers do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment?

    25. What can school psychologists do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment?

    26. What can school administrators do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment?

    27. What school policies or procedures are in place to prohibit teacher-to-student mistreatment?

    28. What professional repercussions do teachers encounter for mistreating students?

Questions to support fifth sub-question: How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?

    29. How have your experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted your role as a school psychologist (e.g., job duties, ethical obligations, advocacy, training, stress level)?

    30. How have these collective experiences affected your relationship with teachers and school administrators?

    31. What conflicting decisions, values and beliefs (i.e., personal, professional, ethical) have you experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment?

    32. Imagine you had the power to change the school psychology profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. What changes would you make?

Providing support information concerning each question and its basis in the literature helps to establish validity to the interview questions. Listed below are sub-headings containing supporting documentation for interview Questions 1 through 32.

School psychologist experiences. The purpose of Questions 1 through 5, which support the central research question, was to gather information on school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Studies conducted by McEvoy (2005), Twemlow et al. (2006), and Whitted and Dupper (2008) revealed that an unspecified number of teachers consistently verbally and nonverbally mistreat students. These studies support the development of Question 1, which sought out the school psychologists' perspectives and experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. Questions 2 and 3 were included as an inquiry into how the school psychologist found out about the phenomenon and what his or her reaction was to the mistreatment observed. Since school psychologists are in the company of

teachers and students daily, it is very likely that they may become aware of mistreatment situations occurring most often in the school classroom (McEvoy, 2005). King and Janson (2009) found that educators could be bystanders who witness or become aware of harmful situations. Davies (2011) noted that bystanders may react by dismissing the offending teacher's behavior "as merely an authoritative stance by an overbearing personality" (p. 2). Questions 4 and 5 were specifically designed to generate a picture of the characteristics and personality of those teachers and students involved in mistreatment situations. Ray (2007) reported that teachers with high stress levels are commonly associated with lower quality teacher-student relationships. Twemlow et al. (2006) described mistreatment of students by teachers as a type of "hidden trauma" (p. 187). The literature suggests that the character and personality of a student can be impacted by mistreatment, through enduring verbal disrespect, degradation of character, emotional instability, and a reduced ability to learn (Allen, 2010; Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). McEvoy (2005) pronounced that students who are mistreated by a teacher "typically experience confusion, anger, fear, self-doubt, and profound concerns about their academic and social competencies" (p. 142). This type of impact on a student's self-perception could create personality changes and breed problems in others areas of emotional and behavioral concern (Brendgen et al., 2007). Therefore, understanding what school psychologists' holistic experiences are with the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic was essential to comprehend.

Perceptions of negative teacher behaviors. Questions 6 through 13 were designed to reveal school psychologists' perceptions on the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. Questions 6 through 9 were constructed to extract a list of

verbal and nonverbal teacher behaviors that school psychologists perceive as contributing to healthy and adverse teacher-student relationships. Childers (2009) found "that a positive school climate is critical to student motivation and academic success, the presence of teacher-to-student maltreatment can cause physical, mental, and/or emotional harm to a student" (p. 9). Having a clear perspective from school psychologists on what healthy, positive teacher-student relationships are observed in the school environment was useful in determining what contributes to adverse relationships, since American studies on the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic are scarce (Childers, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Verbal and nonverbal negative behaviors such as "cursing, name calling, and even sarcasm were cited as types of serious teacher abuse" (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011, p. 250). Question 10 addressed what triggers or patterns are noticed when teachers react negatively toward students. As noted in Luke 6:45 (Good News Translation), "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of," meaning one's inner thoughts flow outside in the form of words and actions. Some teachers may react according to their feelings or emotions. Teachers often teach as they were taught. Hyman and Snook (1999) found that adults who experienced mistreatment, "sometimes re-experienced some of the emotional trauma" (p. 37), which may trigger inappropriate actions, impacting others in the environment. And, subsequently, Question 11 strived to discover what student behaviors may contribute to negative reactions in teachers. Allen (2010) reported that often teacher-student conflicts erupt from disruptive interactions which "can sometimes trigger a chain of actions and reactions that spirals out of control, leading to coercion, chaos, and damage" (p. 8). Question 12 is closely related to Questions 10 and 11, but was designed to access specific information on the perceived relationship between a teacher and student. Brendgen et al. (2007) noted how important the

teacher-student relationship was as it has a direct effect on a student's "academic, social, behavioral, and emotional problems" (p. 26). Observations from school psychologists on patterns of adverse interpersonal teacher-student encounters were important to understand because those confrontations often lead to poor teacher-student relationships and communication problems (Allen, 2010). Question 13 was included to address what may be present in the school environment (i.e., climate, morale, building, practices) that influences the teacher-student relationship in a negative way. The National Association of School Psychologists (2009) explains that school psychologists' roles and responsibilities vary considerably, as they operate in an array of primary, elementary, middle, and high school environments of America's rural and urban, public and private settings. Therefore, school psychologists may have information to share on the varying degree of school district practices and policies, politics, rules, regulations, and expectations that may influence the teacher-student bond. Questions 6 through 13 combined seek to understand what destructive behaviors are present in the school environment that may influence the teacher-student relationship.

School psychologist language. Questions 14 through 17 were constructed to access the language of school psychologists in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment. Since this phenomenon is a topic that is under-acknowledged, under-studied and under-deliberated within the educational community (Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008), defining the common language and key terms used by the involved parties is important to understand. Questions 14 and 15 asked school psychologists to define and describe teacher-to-student mistreatment. Questions 16 and 17 were used to find out what terms school psychologists believe teachers would use to define and describe teacher-to-student mistreatment. Twemlow et al. (2006) found that some

teachers justify their behaviors toward students by rationalizing that the student deserved the punishment, humiliation, abuse, or mistreatment. Discovering any dissimilarity in the use of terminology concerning the phenomenon could provide insight on differing beliefs concerning teacher-to-student mistreatment. Therefore, delineation of vocabulary and language gathered from school psychologists was important to the foundation of the study.

Adverse impact on students. Questions 18 through 22 were included to explore how school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Answers to Questions 18 and 19 were closely related and possibly intertwined, where school psychologists disclosed the observed short-term and long-term impact on students mistreated by a teacher. Because the impact upon students is significant and persistent (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Childers, 2009; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Hyman & Snook, 2001; Moon et al., 2009), and can inflict social and psychological harm just as destructive as a teacher's physical abuse (Brendgen et al., 2006; Gibbs, 2007; Hyman & Snook, 1999; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006), distinguishing what types of short-term and long-term impact detected is vital. Hart (1987) described short-term impacts that "depresses learning, increases ill mental health, and causes future behavioral problems through tension, fear, resentment, hostility and disappointment" (p. 170). McEvoy (2005) described students who were observed to be angry, confused, fearful, and concerned about their own academic and personal abilities. Brendgen et al. (2007) reported on long-term impacts that were "still evident during adulthood" (p. 26), exemplifying how significant and persistent mistreatment can be on students (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Childers, 2009; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Hyman & Snook, 2001; Moon et al., 2009).

Question 20 addressed how teacher-to-student mistreatment broadly influences the

student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. The literature reveals that negative teacher behaviors adversely affect students academically, socially, and psychologically (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Research also shows that displays of verbal and nonverbal teacher mistreatment toward students carry consequences and creates distress to a student socially, psychologically and emotionally (McEvoy 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Hart, Germain, and Brassard (1983) wrote of psychological mistreatment by teachers, who by position demonstrate "differential power that renders a child vulnerable" (p. 2). Davies (2011) observed teachers who "crossed a line of responsibility and descended into the role of bully" (p. 2) creating an antagonistic learning environment. This environment also influences their academic potential, reducing students' ability to learn (Allen, 2010; Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Akin to Question 20, Question 21 was constructed to specifically inquire as to the way teacher-to-student mistreatment causes mental and/or emotional damage on the student. School psychologists are educational professionals who also care for the mental health of students. Question 21 is supported in the literature by the "potential mental and emotional damage" (Childers, 2009, p. 7) that teacher-to-student mistreatment can impose upon a student. Comprehension on the way teacher-to-student mistreatment damages a student's mental health is reinforced by many in the literature, including research presented by Brendgen et al. (2007), Hyman and Perone (1998), Hyman and Snook (2001), and Moon et al. (2009).

Question 22 was specifically included to explore school psychologists' perceptions on the

ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment. School psychologists are

mental health professionals who are bound by moral principles and a code of ethics to do no

harm. King and Janson (2009) found that many educators know of or observe mistreatment in

the educational setting but choose not to stop it, creating an atmosphere of critical ethical and

moral repercussions (King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005). The literature shows that this level

of inaction crosses an invisible ethical and moral line, but could also produce an inner desire in

some adults to intercede on the child's behalf (King & Janson, 2009). Overall, for moral and

ethical reasons, it was essential to query school psychologists for further explanation on the

observed adverse impact of mistreatment on students.

     Why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens. Questions 23 through 28 were

included to explore school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment

happens. Question 23 was a straight forward question asking why teacher-to-student

mistreatment occurs. The literature confirms that the phenomenon exists (McEvoy, 2005;

Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008), therefore, perception on why it happens is the

next natural question to ask. The literature begins to suggest various reasons on why the

phenomenon arises, such as teacher burnout, exhaustion, and depression (Tsouloupas et al.,

2010). A clearer answer from the school psychologist perspective was useful and relevant.

Questions 24 through 26 all posed a prevention question to three groups of educators: teachers,

school psychologists, and school administrators. These answers at times overlapped, but were

essential to understand if prevention was a goal after realizing the entirety of the phenomenon.

Pragmatism is concerned with what is working and how to "solve problems, improve programs"

(Patton, 2002, p. 136). Thus, pragmatically, the literature suggests that mistreatment persists

because key educators rarely admit the problem exists, and do not stop the phenomenon when

detected (Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEachern et al., 2008; McEvoy, 2005; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Question 27 was specifically designed to get an indication of school policies or procedures that are in place to prohibit teacher-to-student mistreatment. McEvoy (2005) discovered that "school policies and responses to reports of abusive behavior by teachers generally are ineffective or do not exist. Few schools have any avenue to redress legitimate grievances" (p. 141). The literature suggests that provisions to preclude teacher-to-student mistreatment situations are as scarce as the studies themselves, and the normal channels to report teacher-to-student mistreatment, and any expected repercussions of such actions, are visibly absent from current school policies and procedures. Question 28 was constructed to learn what professional repercussions teachers encounter for mistreating students. The literature reveals that there are seldom negative sanctions for teacher-to-student mistreatment (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Studies in the literature reveal a high level of frustration from researchers and victims that the phenomenon remains a substantially disguised problem without known repercussions (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Therefore, establishing an inquiry into school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens may increase understanding of the problem and assist educators to adopt appropriate modifications.

  Impact on professional role. The final set of Questions 29 through 32 explored the phenomenon's impact on the professional role of a school psychologist. Question 29 asked the interviewee to explain how his or her role as a school psychologist has been impacted; such as in job duties, ethical obligations, advocacy, training, and stress level. The literature confirms that school psychologists interchangeably operate in different consultation, collaboration, intervention, coaching, and assessment roles (Ern et al., 2009; Green & Gredler, 2002).

Research also shows that advocacy is an important aspect of the school psychology profession (Lazarus, 2012; Wnek et al., 2008). Question 30 was constructed to investigate how these collective experiences affected the school psychologists' relationships with teachers and school administrators. Thijs et al. (2008) reported on the various professional development activities of school psychologists, which can help sharpen their own skills as well as help other educators improve classroom talents and relationships with students. It would be useful to know if school psychologists have access to any training that addresses the phenomenon and related conflicts. Any negative encounter or relationship with another person can potentially "operate as risk factors" (Thijs et al., 2008, p. 244). If the literature has confirmed the phenomenon can adversely impact the teacher-student relationship (Paul & Smith, 2000), then inquiry as to how it affects professional working relationships with other educators is a relevant avenue to explore. Question 31 intended to investigate any personal, professional, or ethical conflicting decisions, values and beliefs that school psychologists have experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Often, there can be situations of "conflicting loyalties" (Twemlow et al. 2006, p. 196). Lasser and Klose (2007) noted that "school psychologists must frequently navigate systems boundaries, conflicting values and beliefs, and multiple roles" (p. 484), and evaluative choices have to be made daily concerning personal and ethical decisions. These contradictions influence decision making choices of the school psychologist and the bearing upon their educational role and profession. Finally, Question 32 was created in an effort to create vision. This question asked what changes the school psychologist would make if they had the power to transform the school psychology profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. Ultimately, school psychologists want to know how they can best contribute knowledge, skills, and abilities to their educational world. The literature reveals that

pragmatically, school psychologists are "change agents" (Nastasi, 2000, p. 550). Wnek et al. (2008) stated that school psychologists stand ready to offer adjustment "when change is needed" (p. 149). The question is relevant for school psychologists who desire to contribute solutions, assistance, or recommendations to educational problems such as teacher-to-student mistreatment.

Data Analysis

As this research study employed a transcendental phenomenological design, the data was analyzed according to strategies recommended by Moustakas (1994) throughout the stages of collecting data, organizing data, analyzing data, and synthesizing data. I made a concentrated effort toward triangulation of the information collected and analyzed. The data contains the voice of the co-researcher and the data analysis process is inductive, which constantly seeks to establish themes.

I coded each "meaning units" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122) of the data analysis phases (i.e., survey data, interview data, online discussion forum data) for thematic statements, and then synthesized findings across all sets of data to reach the essence concerning the phenomenon. While the volume and substance of my data analysis was from using qualitative research methods, I collected demographic information and data from online survey respondents on the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon using prompts that produced quantitative figures, including scaled responses and multiple choice questions. Quantitative data was used to record various demographic characteristics, including items such as the co-researchers' ages, gender, years of experience as school psychologists, highest degree obtained, membership status, setting of employment, number of students served, as well as descriptive Likert scale and multiple choice responses to questions concerning their level of experiences with the phenomenon. Descriptive statistics were generated to report overall group and individual counts and

percentages on each quantitative question. Similarly, individual survey responses were tabulated and grouped by each Likert scale and multiple choice question through Surveymonkey.com, and results were exported for analysis. Analyzed results were reported in narrative form for a richer understanding of its detailed meaning. Consideration was given to the quantitative results, as I analyzed and coded the mass accumulation of qualitative data gathered during interviews, discussion forum, open-ended survey questions, as well as research reflections, bracketing, memoing, and audit trail log. Rich qualitative data was predominantly the main source of information gathered to help generate needed textural and structural descriptions. Hence, the essence of this study and significance of data analysis for this study was discovered, not in the quantitative numbers generated from demographic characteristics or a tally of how many co-researchers chose one answer over another, but in the valuable information gathered from real school psychologists and their real life experiences with the phenomenon, which cannot be obtained simply from a numerical value.

Open-ended survey data results from the online survey provider were collected, printed, and input into a qualitative data analysis computer software package (NVivo) for electronic and visual analysis of demographic information and answers to survey questions, allowing for identification of emerging themes, patterns and interpretation. The demographic data from the survey provided important information as to who the respondents were and where they operated within the school psychology profession. Transcripts of interviews, researcher reflection, and memoing was printed and electronically entered into NVivo to allow for interpretive data analysis by the researcher. All online responses from the discussion forum were also printed and stored in NVivo for examination, along with any related transcriptions of memoing and reflections. Although, the use of NVivo assisted in speeding up the electronic coding process, I

continued to rely on my own insight and understanding as the human instrument to describe the essence of this study.

All data was solely transcribed by me. Confidentially was of utmost importance throughout the study. From the very beginning of the data collection process, I used pseudonyms for each co-researcher to protect his or her identity and for any site or setting divulged. All transcriptions and research data in paper format were stored in a locked cabinet, and all electronic data were password protected and then destroyed after the transcription was completed.

Bracketing

Following Moustakas' (1994) model, the first data analysis technique that I employed was bracketing techniques. Bracketing forced me to suspend past familiarities with the topic and allowed the co-researchers to freely expand on their experiences with the phenomenon examined. Previously noted use of a personal electronic audio recorder for researcher reflection and feedback purposes was used after each interview experience, which developed into a convenient and confidential digital data collection tool. The digital and written researcher reflection notes and memoing techniques were used to help keep bias in control by separating fact from opinion, as private anecdotal notes were documented during the data analysis process. After bracketing for personal experiences and bias, I continued to use the daily audit trail log (see Appendix Q) that began in the data collection phase. The use of the daily audit trail log helped to further reduce bias and pre-conceptualizations, and also provided a running timeline and detail of daily activities.

Horizonalization

The second technique used to analyze the data involved reviewing each statement

collected from the co-researcher on how thoroughly it described the experience. In the "process of horizonalization" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95), I recorded all relevant and significant statements found in the responses gathered from triangulated data sources concerning how the participants experienced the topic. These significant statements originated from survey responses, interview responses, and discussion forum responses. Each statement was non-repetitive and had "equal value" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 94).

Clustering and Coding of Meanings

In the third technique, the significant statements were clustered into larger themes. An example of larger themes that surfaced, while researching the fifth sub-question concerning the impact on the role of the professional school psychologist, included significant statements and reoccurring responses surrounding the terms resource, stress and frustration, increase in advocacy and consultation duties, and a desire to do more (see Table 5). I began to organize my data to include all significant statements from horizonalization, and from all of the previously transcribed data. To better facilitate and electronically organize the large amounts of data collected, I used a qualitative data analysis computer software package named NVivo 10 to manage information, code themes and query data. NVivo efficiently assisted in organizing, storing, and retrieving electronic data, created portable and secure data sets, and was a supportive tool in building a quality representation of the data collected. Once the collected data were imported, NVivo allowed for the use of electronic marking tools, called electronic coding strips, which functioned like a highlighter pen that coded important information while constructing themes. Initial meaningful codes were made by reviewing and choosing imported data to be electronically coded into another file accompanied by a colorful visual representation within the software. As I continued to read through all the data, I noted any emerging themes and coded

corresponding text and quotes with NVivo. This process allowed me to begin to visually break down the large amounts of information gathered into clusters of information for emerging and overarching themes.

Within the true spirit of qualitative analysis, the second clustering or coding technique used to examine the data was focused coding (Esterberg, 2002). This was a second look at the data already coded to allow for further development of themes, and observation of any further relevant elements of the phenomenon, such as patterns, similarities, or differences. I pulled all similar electronically coded data, including quotes, into one document by use of an NVivo query of the narrative information, and reread. This focused coding technique, combined with the attributes within the NVivo software package, helped to visually uncover themes and connections that would not have been as easily identified through solely a paper and pen method. New themes or phenomena discovered received another electronic depiction to designate a new code. This process allowed me to further break down the data gathered into refined codes for more detailed, confirmed additional themes.

Textural and Structural Descriptions

The fourth technique was a synthesis of the data, involving the descriptions of meanings. Two comprehensive inquiries encompass and complement the overarching qualitative, phenomenological design, by striving to understand what the co-researchers experienced in terms of teacher-to-student mistreatment, referred to as "textural description" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 47), and how the co-researchers experienced the phenomenon, referred to as "structural description" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). I composed textural descriptions concerning *what* the co-researchers experienced, detailing what happened using "original texture of things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59), or verbatim examples. Then using "imaginative variation" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122), I

created structural descriptions concerning *how* the experience occurred, which reflected on the context of the phenomenon involvement.

Essence

The final technique integrated a composite, holistic, narrative account of the phenomenon using textural and structural descriptions. These encompassing accounts described the essence of the experience and represented the overall purpose and outcome of the study. Developing the essence is a final step of a phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994).

<p style="text-align:center">Trustworthiness</p>

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is essential for establishing a strong study, which incorporates research credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was established through triangulation of data, member-checking, and feedback from co-researchers. Data triangulation was gained through use of multiple credible and dependable techniques as outlined above, and an organized data collection and analysis methodology to corroborate the outcome of the qualitative study. The rich information gathered from the school psychologists' interview responses was presented through member-checking and feedback sessions during the third phase of the data collection process, which established credibility toward the authenticity of the findings. This process increased the credibility of the study because it is a natural fact-checker, ensuring that the information gathered from the respondents is accurate and factual. Accuracy of the findings was verified, allowing for any misinformation to be immediately corrected.

Transferability was increased through use of dense descriptive data on the participants and setting, including textural and structural descriptions using participant quotes, which resulted in narrative descriptions of the phenomenon describing the essence of the experience. These

thick, rich descriptors create the possibility of hypothetically and academically transferring the information gathered in the context of this study to another's context and population.

Establishing dependability and confirmability in the study began with consistency. Providing vivid details of the co-researchers' settings and context of experiences provided a strong insight to the study. Creation of a daily audit trail consisted of daily logging the procedures performed and events conducted to gather data. This procedure increased the dependability of the study, allowing for someone to replicate the steps taken to gather data and complete the study. Memoing is a one page log which outlines facts observed on one side of the page and running thoughts and opinions on the other side of the page. Memoing was important to the study because it works to reduce bias.

Ethical Considerations

It was important to anticipate any possible ethical concerns related to the study. The main concern was confidentiality, which is critical for gaining the trust of the co-researchers. Assuring the confidentiality of the co-researchers was a key component that encouraged the release of their personal experiences to flow in narrative form to be captured. Privacy was maintained; all co-researcher survey answers were provided anonymously. I used pseudonyms for each co-researcher to protect his or her identity and for any site or setting divulged. I pledge to not use the names of the school psychologists participating in the study nor their site name in any future writing, publication, or presentation concerning this study.

The security of data is an important consideration. All transcripts and research data have been stored in a locked cabinet for the time frame required by IRB, and all electronic data, including the NVivo software, are password protected. The information stored on the Surveymonkey.com and electronic websites are encrypted according to the websites trusted

privacy policies. The researcher is the only person with access to the data, and after the three

year time period for maintaining research data, all research-related data, including remaining

audio recordings, will be deleted, erased, and destroyed.

As discussed above in the data collection process, some co-researchers never had the

opportunity to talk about their experiences with the phenomenon; therefore, the opportunity

existed for sensitive information to be shared that could have touched on mandated reporting

events. All school psychologist co-researchers who participated in this study were trained

mental health professionals who naturally have access to many resources to assist with personal

stressors or professional concerns. In addition, I stood ready to respond to these events by asking

if the respondent reported such events as required by their school protocol and to extend an offer

to help the co-researcher find appropriate resources in their geographic area. As a mandated

reporter, had situation arose where an incident was revealed making reporting necessary, each

case would have been examined on an individual basis and addressed as required by law.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data analysis and to address the triangulated findings related to each research question. The purpose of conducting this research was to describe the experiences and perceptions of school psychologists concerning teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational environment that occurred during their professional lives. Analyzed results of the qualitative data gathered during the survey, interviews, discussion forum, researcher reflections, bracketing, memoing, and audit trail log processes have been synthesized into a narrative form within this chapter delivering rich, meaningful, phenomenological descriptions. After a descriptive report of the study's demographics and a brief introduction to co-researchers through use of participant portraits, this chapter is organized in terms of themes generated by triangulation of the multiple data sources. The first research question below was the central research question which remained the overarching inquiry that directed the remaining five research questions.

Central question:

- What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Sub-questions:

- What do school psychologists perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?

- What is the language of school psychologists in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?

- How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?

- What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?

- How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?

The research questions guided the development of this study as well as the analysis of the data. Throughout this study, many themes (see Table 4, see Table 5) emerged from the data analysis process that both complemented and supported the research questions. Consequently, those same themes and research questions guided the organization of the manuscript. This chapter closes with a discussion of themes by data source, a review of member checking which adds to the credibility of the study, and finally a summary of findings which re-emphasizes the essence of the study.

Demographic Information

Quantitative data was gathered to record various demographic characteristics of the co-researchers, including items such as age, gender, years of experience as a school psychologist, highest degree obtained, membership status, setting of employment, number of students served, as well as descriptive Likert scale and multiple choice responses to questions concerning their levels of experience with the phenomenon. A total of 686 school psychologists were invited, using a combination of emailed and mailed invitations, to participate in the statewide online survey. A response rate of 20.3% was realized by 139 total participants, 16% males ($n = 22$) and 84% females ($n = 117$), who launched the survey. Of the 139 participants who responded, 66 (47.5%) completed all questions on the online survey. A total of 135 responded to all demographic questions, revealing a population as seen in Table 1 located in Chapter Three. A total of 22 participants offered their email addresses as entry into a gift card drawing, of which

five were selected randomly for the five prizes.

Interview/Discussion Forum Co-researcher Characteristics

After completing the online survey, a total of 10 school psychologists expressed interest in being involved in the next two phases of the research study, of which six school psychologists completed the informed consent documents and followed through with the in-depth interview and discussion forum. After progressive steps were taken to clearly communicate the requirements needed to the remaining four school psychologists and the vast flexibility of the researcher in gathering the documents to conduct the rest of the study, I chose to honor the decision of the remaining four participants' demanding schedules which prohibited them from moving forward with the study. Due to the survey being completely anonymous, I was not able to obtain further contact information from other survey participants which limited my ability to replace the four participants who decided not to continue.

Specific demographic characteristics of the six co-researchers can be found in Table 2 located in Chapter Three. The study's demographic characteristics revealed that the majority of school psychologists who completed the survey are employed in the North/Northern area of Virginia, and the majority of school psychologists who participated in the interview/discussion forum work in the South/Central area of Virginia. With the exception of location of employment and membership status, all other demographic characteristics for the interview/discussion forum participants follow the majority pattern of those responding to the online survey.

An introduction to each of the six co-researchers can be found below in the style of brief participant portraits. Pseudonyms were provided in sequence P1 through P10 as the survey participants expressed interest in being considered for the interview and discussion forum processes. As stated above, four participants did not continue with the process, leaving the

pseudonyms P1, P5, P9, P10 without data.

Participant portrait of P2 is one of a female school psychologist in the age range of 46-55 with more than 15 years of professional experience. She works in a public school in the South/Central region of Virginia in a rural/suburban area. She operates in multiple grade levels within the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment.

P3 is one of a female school psychologist in the age range of 36-45 with more than 15 years of professional experience. She is an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) with membership in both VASP and NASP, and operates in an urban/city area of South/Central Virginia. Her job duties incorporate multiple grade levels within the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment.

Portrait of P4 is one of a male school psychologist in the age range of 25-35 with 5-10 years of professional experience. He is an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) with membership in VASP. This school psychologist operates in multiple grade levels in the public school environment in a rural/suburban South/Central region of Virginia.

P6 is one of a female school psychologist who has earned a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree in the field of education. She is in the age range of 36-45 with 11-15 years of professional experience. Her primary duties are with the primary/elementary public school population in the South/Central region of Virginia.

Portrait of P7 is one of a female school psychologist with 5-10 years of professional experience in the age range of 25-35. She is an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) with membership in VASP and operates in the primary/elementary public school environment. Her work setting is in the rural/suburban area of South/Central Virginia.

P8 is one of a male school psychologist in the age range of 56-65 with more than 15 years

of professional experience. His job duties incorporate multiple grade levels within the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 public school environment. The setting of his work is in the rural/suburban area of the South/Central region of Virginia.

Themes by Data Sources

Data was triangulated through co-researcher responses to questions posed from an online survey, interview sessions, and discussion forum prompts. Six main themes emerged (see Table 4) from the multiple data sources, including teacher-to-student mistreatment exists, lack of understanding by teachers, reasons why vary, appearance of mistreatment, impact of damage, and impact on the role of the school psychologist. The table is followed by a discussion of the triangulation of themes.

Table 4

Themes

Themes Supported by Data Sources (Survey data, Interview data, Discussion Forum data)

1. Teacher-to-student mistreatment exists
    1a. Occurrences vary

    1b. Student's resilience

    1c. Language/Definitions vary

    1d. Nebulous topic

2. Lack of understanding by teachers
    2a. How to deal with student behavior/Lack of behavioral management skills

    2b. Lack of understanding of disabilities and its impact

    2c. Lack of knowledge on impact of poverty and student's background/environmental factors

    2d. Lack of tolerance of conduct beyond the norm/normal expectation

    2e. Lack of awareness of teacher mistreatment behaviors

3. Reasons why vary
   3a. Power struggles/Misuse of power and authority

   3b. Personality

   3c. Pressured teaching climate & Stress/Frustration/Burnout

   3d. Lack of repercussions

   3e. Lack of teacher-student connection/healthy relationship building

4. Appearance of mistreatment
   4a. Verbal

   4b. Nonverbal

   4c. Academically/Socially/Emotionally/Mentally/Psychologically

5. Impact of damage
   5a. Short-term/Long-term

   5b. Damages ability to trust

   5c. Life-long repercussions

6. Impact on School Psychologist role
   6a. Advocacy/Consultation increase

   6b. Stress/Frustration

   6c. Reinforces resource role

   6d. Desire to do more/Glad to share information

Some information that follows in this section of the chapter will include data that were presented in the findings by research question (see Appendix T), since the material originated from the same data sources. A discussion follows, presenting the six main themes and relative subthemes that emerged from this study's three data sources.

Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment Exists

The first main theme to emerge from the analysis of the data was that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists. Survey data from participant responses (74.8%, $n = 89$) confirmed that

teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment. Interview respondents corroborate this, revealing that they have personally witnessed, seen, heard, read, perceived, and observed incidents of mistreatment in the school environment. Discussion forum co-researchers reported that incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment continued in the school environment even as this study's data collection process concluded.

From this first main theme, four sub-themes developed relative to the phenomenon, including occurrences vary, student's resilience, language/definitions vary, and nebulous topic.

Occurrences vary. Respondents on the survey rated how often they have observed incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment as a school psychologist: 2.5% ($n = 3$) answered Frequently, 31.9% ($n = 38$) answered Occasionally, 55.5% ($n = 66$) answered Rarely, and 10.1% ($n = 12$) answered Never. Co-researchers revealed during the interview process that some do not encounter the phenomenon every day, but when they do witness teacher-to-student mistreatment, it is something that they are alarmed about that moves them to take action, such as trying to resolve the issue or consult with a trusted source. Discussion forum responses confirmed that occurrences of teacher-to-student mistreatment vary from school to school and from teacher to teacher.

Student's resilience. The co-researchers' responses to survey questions revealed that 88.1% ($n = 104$) of school psychologists believe that 1% - 24% of students are mistreated by a teacher. There were 4.2% of co-researchers that believe that 50% - 74% of students are mistreated, 5.1% of co-researchers believe that 25% - 49% are mistreated, and 2.5% of co-researchers believe that zero students are mistreated by a teacher. This data indicates that this remaining percentage of students, meaning those that fell in the 25% - 74% range, could be a mixture of students who are not mistreated or who are resilient in the face of mistreatment. The

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co-researchers' responses to interview questions supported the fact that the impact of teacher-to-student mistreatment often depends on the age, grade, and resilient personality of the individual student, as well as the severity of the mistreatment. The interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses revealed that the same type of mistreatment can manifest itself in different ways in different students. Some students are naturally resilient to difficult circumstances and recover quickly from stressful situations, where other students are not and the impact of teacher-to-student mistreatment is noticeable.

Language/Definitions vary. The top four terms ranked by school psychologists on the survey that best described the teacher-to-student phenomenon in the educational setting included emotionally distressing, mistreatment, abuse, and psychologically damaging. Relative responses were given by the same school psychologists during an open-ended survey question which asked them to provide a definition of teacher-to-student mistreatment. Their responses were grouped in the following categories: Abuse, Adverse action that denigrates or degrades, Disrespect, and Power. These terms and categories of responses given by survey participants corresponded to the information provided by interview and discussion forum participants. The interview and discussion forum co-researchers' collective definition of teacher-to-student mistreatment is any adverse action by a teacher that denigrates or degrades a student.

Nebulous topic. On the survey, the majority of school psychologists (69.6%, $n = 55$) reported that they have never provided in-service training or offered professional development concerning the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic. An anonymous answer recorded from an open-ended survey question which asked for a definition of teacher-to-student mistreatment included, "this is like the word dyslexia, meaning that it doesn't mean the same thing to different people." This sentiment of teacher-to-student mistreatment being ambiguous and hard to

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understand, describe, and define is relevant to the information gathered from interview and discussion forum responses. Interview co-researchers revealed that they have never been offered training on the phenomenon, nor have they provided professional development sessions on the topic within their school systems. Relevant interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses surrounded the opinion that the phenomenon is a nebulous topic, meaning vague, cloudy, not clearly defined or easy to perceive or understand. Responses from discussion forum co-researchers maintained that the topic is rarely discussed and there is little awareness surrounding the issue in the educational setting.

Lack of Understanding by Teachers

The second main theme to emerge from the data analysis is a lack of understanding by teachers. On the survey, a total of 82.5% ($n = 85$) school psychologists reported that they believe that teachers who mistreat students have lost their sensitivity to the power of verbal remarks and the power and usefulness of nonverbal communication. Collective anonymous responses to an open-ended survey question revealed survey respondents believe that some teachers have a lack of understanding on how to deal with frustrating student behaviors, have a poor understanding of the sociocultural factors that might be impacting the student, have a poor understanding of the function of student behaviors including not realizing that the student's behaviors are serving another purpose and that purpose needs to be addressed, a lack of understanding that there might be something that the teacher is doing to increase the undesirable student behaviors, a misunderstanding of what having a controlled educational environment actually means, and a lack of understanding of the needs of diverse student populations.

The responses from interview co-researchers also mirrored the theme of lack of understanding by some teachers on how to deal with the range of student behaviors, impact of

poverty and disability in a child, and the students' diverse circumstances. Data collected from discussion forum co-researcher responses warned that the offending teachers should be more cautious and be more aware of their actions and reactions in the classroom.

From this second theme, five sub-themes developed, including how to deal with student behavior/lack of behavioral management skills, lack of understanding of disabilities and its impact, lack of knowledge of impact of poverty and students' background/environmental factors, lack of tolerance of conduct beyond the norm/normal expectation, and lack of awareness of mistreatment behaviors.

How to deal with student behavior/Lack of behavioral management skills. School psychologists rated on the survey how often they have observed teachers using negative verbal and nonverbal behavior as a classroom management technique to maintain classroom discipline, resulting in Occasionally 49.5% ($n = 51$), Rarely 31.1% ($n = 32$), Frequently 16.5% ($n = 17$), and Never 2.9% ($n = 3$). A total of 66% of the combined occasionally and frequently responses reveal that the majority of teachers display a lack of appropriate behavioral management skills in the classroom to handle student behavior. While there were numerous ($n = 82$) viewpoints recorded on the survey as to why mistreatment happens, many school psychologists maintain that an inappropriate use of power and control justified as classroom management techniques, and the absence of healthy relationship building between the teacher and student, were both major dynamics in the phenomenon. A large number of open-ended survey responses recorded yelling as a prominent tool for teachers who displayed poor classroom management skills. Interview and discussion forum co-researchers' answers reflected the survey responses. Many co-researchers felt that some teachers lack a general understanding on how to appropriately deal with student misbehaviors and felt that teacher education programs do not spend enough time on

behavioral management techniques to prepare for a diverse classroom. Interview co-researchers

reported that some teachers often claim that student behavior is due to reasons like laziness,

attention problems, and lack of motivation, when in fact these frequent complaints are often

symptoms masking larger unresolved issues of students, meaning the misbehavior is reflective of

something else. Teachers also use the complaints to redirect the attention from their lack of skill

to appropriately deal with the behavior in the classroom. Interview participant 7 eloquently

stated, "The repercussions always come back on the student instead of reflecting on that

teacher's practices." Responses from interview and discussion forum questions revealed that

some teachers lack the understanding of how important positive reinforcement is in the

classroom. Co-researchers disclosed that teachers develop the mentality that there is no need for

positive reinforcers or incentives, only that there is a need for consequences. Co-researchers'

responses impressed the constant need to praise students' behavior, and to show them frequently

what they are doing right. Otherwise, teacher behaviors as a result of a lack of understanding

can negatively affect the way students view themselves, their capabilities, their learning, and the

student-teacher relationships.

Lack of understanding of disabilities and its impact. Survey data collected from open-

ended survey question #22 included school psychologists' professional experiences with teacher-

to-student mistreatment in the educational environment. A large portion of those survey

responses involved disability related incidents and insensitive comments made by teachers.

Experiences ranged from teachers yelling at students with disabilities making rude or threatening

comments, to the arbitrary removal of disability related accommodations, and forcing students

with disabilities to perform tasks beyond their capabilities, pushing students to the point of

behavioral escalation. Interview and discussion forum data collected from co-researchers

corroborated these reports. Interview participant 7 spoke of an experience when a new student came into her school diagnosed with Downs Syndrome:

> This school was not really accustomed to having students with high needs . . .so it has been a really learning process on helping them put behavior supports in place. The teacher was very verbally aggressive towards the student and took advantage of the fact that the student could not understand the nuances of everything she was saying. And the way the teacher then talked to others about the student. It was very negative. It was very clear that the teacher did not want the student, and did not want the student in the class. Just a very bad situation over all.

Co-researchers' responses to interview questions divulged that students with disabilities were removed from the classroom and yelled at in the hall by regular education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators, and that there were demeaning verbal comments made by educators, including gym coaches and teacher aides, and overt resistance by teachers to put behavioral supports in place to accommodate students with special needs. Other co-researcher experiences revealed that some teachers believe that children do not really have a disability and that if the student worked harder, there would be no need for specialized education. The sentiment that someone else needs to deal with the student or the problem was also an undercurrent in the interview responses describing teachers who mistreat students with disabilities. Interview participant 6 reported, "Certain types of teachers, they almost bully students to get them to do something or to intimidate them." In other interview responses, school psychologists spoke of the concept of skill deficit vs. performance deficit, or the concept of cannot do versus will not do, where teachers exhibited a lack of understanding that some students with disabilities really do not know how to perform simple tasks that teachers take for granted,

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and that direct instruction of those skills needs to be taught in basic fashion before the student

can perform at the expected level in the classroom. The negative and verbally aggressive nature

of the teacher-to-student mistreatment in the classroom exemplifies the lack of understanding of

the disability that the student endures, and the resulting impact upon the spirit of the child. Data

collected from discussion forum responses exhibited the continuation of this very concept,

prompting the school psychologists to plan for opportunities to further educate the teaching staff

on student disabilities.

Lack of knowledge on impact of poverty and student's background/ environmental

factors. The open-ended survey question that prompted school psychologists to share their

perspectives on why teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs provided a relevant anonymous

response,

> Over worked, under staffed teachers with little training in behavior modification or
>
> classroom management come work for the inner city school. They start out excited until
>
> they see the serious effects of poverty and poor education in our students. They become
>
> overwhelmed and have little support from administration. The majority of teachers want
>
> to help, but circumstances increase their frustration and negative behaviors.

Other similar statements came from interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses who

felt that a teacher's lack of knowledge on the true impact of poverty and the heavy baggage some

students carry around with them each day, can negatively impact the relationship between the

student and teacher. Some triggers for teacher-to-student mistreatment identified by interview

participants included students not completing class work quickly, not comprehending concepts

fast enough, not following directions, a student's parents, and the overall effects of poverty on a

student. Interview and discussion forum co-researchers noted that often student behaviors stem

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from what is absorbed in the household, and some learn to disrespect other people and the importance of an education in their home environment. Interview participant 2 said, "Sometimes it is just a way of life and a culture." Other co-researchers shared their experiences of a teacher who did not understand the foundational concept of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs identified in 1943. Co-researchers shared examples of when an impatient teacher threw a student's lunch away prematurely resulting in the student escalating in behavior because the child was hungry, and when a teacher punished a student through isolation in the cafeteria accompanied with demeaning comments due to the student sucking the ketchup out of a packet. Interview participant 3 shared that "Children in poverty are more likely to have a harder time with teachers, because they don't do their homework, they are tired, they are grouchy, sleepy, hungry, dirty. It puts them at a higher risk than some kids," and that same risk spills over into being targeted by a teacher who does not know student risk factors. Discussion forum responses echoed that some teachers often have a lack of understanding on what is happening in the students' backgrounds or home environments, including how devastating the effects of poverty can be on students just trying to get their basic needs met, such as food, clothing, love, safety, and shelter.

Lack of tolerance of conduct beyond the norm/normal expectation. Responses to survey question #38 concerning why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens included an anonymous response stating, "teachers are frustrated and their tolerance for behaviors reduces as time goes by, teachers have so much paperwork and so many students and so many curriculum objectives to cover that they don't have time/patience for misbehavior." The same level of intolerance beyond the norm or lack of tolerance for a student's differences was observed in the interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses. Interview participant 7 observed

mistreatment by teachers with "students who have behavioral problems in addition to learning problems. Particularly students who have high frequency or high intensity behaviors . . . I think that teachers tend to be teachers that may have a low frustration tolerance." Other responses involved the rigidity of teachers thinking that each student should act in a certain way and there is no tolerance for the diverse range of student needs, and the all-or-nothing mentality of teachers who will not accommodate for a few needy students. The interview and discussion forum co-researcher response of participant 3 summed up this sub-theme stating, "Teachers come in with the expectation that students will sit in nice little rows, saying yes ma'am and no ma'am all day, and that is not what they are confronted with and they don't have the toolset to really know what to do."

Lack of awareness of teacher mistreatment behaviors. There were several responses to the open-ended survey question #38 prompting school psychologists to address why they believed teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs. Many responses included teachers often think they are helping the student by toughening them up, or providing needed discipline, or building personal character through the use of adverse verbal and nonverbal behavior in the educational environment. The concept of teachers' lack of awareness of their own mistreatment behaviors is echoed in the interview and discussion forum responses. Co-researchers reported that they often pull offending teachers to the side and make them aware of what they have done, to bring their attention to the mistreatment. Other co-researchers described experiences of witnessing coaches berating young students in an effort to "straighten them out or toughen them up." Interview participant 8 aptly shared comments pertaining to a lack of teachers' awareness of their own mistreatment behaviors: "Teachers justify it. A.) It is not really just mistreatment, and B.) I was just trying to get them to do what they need to do, and C.) Everything I have ever told you about

this child, it is true. It is never about me, the teacher, but about him." Discussion forum

responses corroborate the concept, revealing that teachers often do not have insight into their

own behaviors or are unaware that their behavior contributes to teacher-to-student mistreatment.

Reasons Why Vary

The third main theme to emerge from the analysis of the data is there are various reasons

why teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs. School psychologists indicated various situations

they believe may influence teacher-to-student mistreatment in the classroom. Co-researchers on

the survey ranked the top four situations to include lack of teacher skill in classroom

management/ behavior management, teacher personality characteristics (angry/resentful

attitude), teacher burnout, and student misbehavior. Comments from open-ended survey

question #38 concerning why mistreatment occurs were grouped in the following categories:

Lack of awareness, Lack of behavioral management skills, Lack of connection, Lack of

repercussions, Lack of understanding, Personality, Power and control, and

Stress/Frustration/Burnout. Interview data collected from co-researchers surrounded similar

concepts, including responses of power struggles/lack of skills, personality types, and the

teacher's personal stress and frustration. Discussion forum responses concerning the

phenomenon confirm that the reasons why some teachers mistreat students are complex, and

these adverse teacher behaviors can be difficult to reverse.

From this third theme, five sub-themes developed, including power struggles/misuse of

power and authority; personality; pressured teaching climate and stress/frustration/burnout; lack

of skills, awareness, and repercussions; and lack of teacher-student connection/healthy

relationship building.

Power struggles/Misuse of power and authority. The data collected from open-ended

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survey question #22 described co-researchers' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment

revealing instances where teachers were observed misusing their power and authority over

students and engaging in unnecessary power struggles. Anonymous responses to this survey

question include, "Teacher uses authority as a means to punish student even when the behavior is

within acceptable ranges as established by teacher despite students protest to the contrary," and

"Overuse and abuse of their power and authority as a teacher to verbally and non-verbally

mistreat students as a classroom discipline technique." Survey responses on open-ended

question #38 concerning why mistreatment happens included similar anonymous responses:

"Teachers engage children in power struggles," and "Teachers have a need to control and use

that as their method to keep students in line." Data collected from interview and discussion

forum co-researchers are comparable. Interview participant 3 consistently described teacher-to-

student mistreatment as incidents of power struggles. Participant 3 stated, "I do see teachers

getting into power struggles with students and escalating behavior that then results in suspension

or referral or that kind of thing. It goes back to power struggles. Teachers just get caught up in

the moment . . .they don't think through their actions."

Participant 2 spoke at length explaining why mistreatment occurs:

> Teachers feel that they have to have the kids under control all the time and if they don't,
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> there will be chaos, they will not learn. It is becoming increasingly stressful that
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> everyone has to pass this test, so teachers have to get this done quickly, and if anyone is
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> out of line, I am going to miss the whole lesson. Look at snow days. Teachers
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> exaggerate and get upset that they will miss a whole day of instruction. The teacher was
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> furious with me for taking a kid out of the reading classroom for counseling. She was
>
> mad, stating that, "He was missing instruction." Some teachers are angry, and some

people have no insight into themselves, and they really don't see they are doing anything wrong. Teachers argue over not wanting to reward kids. Teachers complain that the other kids will see this kid getting a reward and it is not fair. I cannot tell you how many times teachers complain and say, "it is not fair." I ask the teacher, "Are you taking the wheel chair or glasses from a kid? Because, the other kids don't have wheel chair. And do you make the kid take off their glasses?" I explained the others don't need this, but this kid does. It is just a mentality that, they did not have it as a kid and I turned out fine. They don't understand. They feel like you are paying them to do what they are already supposed to do. We have gone from one extreme to another. People get stuck and believe they need to do this to maintain order.

Multiple interview and discussion forum co-researchers' responses alluded to an undertone of constant and unnecessary battle of power between the teacher and student that often results in mistreatment situations. Vivid descriptions of teachers drawing a line to not be crossed, and teachers taunting students with their position of authority over students were littered throughout co-researchers' responses.

Personality. Responses from a survey question reported the majority (38.1%, $n = 45$) believe that when school psychologists and educators begin a discussion, it is not usually difficult for them to recall situations where teachers bullied or mistreated students. And, 64.7% ($n = 77$) of school psychologists believe that there is a high degree of agreement among students that teachers mistreat students. Among the various reasons why survey respondents believe teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs are the personality traits of the teacher. On the open-ended survey question #38, anonymous responses included, "Inherent characteristics of the teacher (angry, resentful)," "Teacher was treated the same way by their parents or teachers,"

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"Teachers lose sight of why they teach," and are "no longer positively invested in their students."
Parallel characteristics and personality of teachers who mistreat students were described by interview and discussion forum co-researchers as someone who is angry, cynical, has a low threshold for frustration, and one that employs power struggles as classroom management. In addition to general personality clashes between the teacher and student, interview participants provided further distinctive descriptors of their experiences with teachers, including those that were more punitive than positive in the classroom, and pessimistic teachers who have pre-set negative expectations of students and are generally resistant to change, which easily rouses negative reactions. Discussion forum responses from co-researchers support the survey and interview data by providing new experiences observed from teachers who modeled similar adverse personality characteristics resulting in reoccurring mistreatment situations.

Pressured teaching climate & stress/frustration/burnout. Survey data from open-ended question #38 collected reasons why teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs. Survey respondents provided a myriad of reasons concerning distressed educators and the corresponding climate of frustration and teacher burnout. Particular anonymous responses included, teachers engage in mistreatment behavior due to the pressures of working "miracles with minimal resources and limited parent involvement which leads to early burnout," "High demands/expectations placed on teachers can lead to transference of those expectations," and "Increased class sizes decreased morale due to increased work and no compensation, high stakes testing, teachers are frustrated with students and do not feel supported and often time their frustration is taken out on the student." The responses from school psychologists during all three data collection sources were empathetic to the stress, frustrations, and pressured climate that teachers operate in on a daily basis. Co-researchers acknowledged that teachers often have

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increased expectations and are employed in an overworked, understaffed environment which can increase frustrations and negative behaviors. But school psychologists' responses maintain that no matter the reason, teacher-to-student mistreatment is inappropriate and unethical. Responses from interview and discussion forum co-researchers embody the idea that teachers' negative behaviors often are in response to stressors of high workloads, unfunded bureaucratic mandates and pressures on student achievement, a hurried pace and culture of teaching, more negative than positive administrative feedback, increased management of larger numbers of students and student needs, decline in morale and increased frustration that leads to an attitude of burnout. Interview and discussion forum co-researcher participant 7's response fittingly related her experiences by stating, "I think the climate of public education contributes to this because it is so standards driven" creating an atmosphere of transference from the teacher to the student, then "everything the student does becomes reframed in to this negative view and the teacher starts to become unwilling to do anything different or implement any changes."

Lack of repercussions. Data from survey responses addressed school psychologist's perceptions on why mistreatment occurs as it relates to a teacher's general lack of repercussions for mistreating students. The question of school system policies was posed to co-researchers taking the survey. Of the 79 responses, 55.7% ($n = 44$) reported that their school system did not have any policy in place that specifically addresses, discourages, or prohibits teacher-to-student mistreatment, or indicates the consequence or punishment for teacher-to-student mistreatment. Of the 82 co-researchers who responded to this survey question, 61 (74.4%) agreed that it would be beneficial for school systems to have a policy in place that outlines teacher-to-student mistreatment and delineates the penalty for those educators who violate the policy. Open-ended survey question #38 collected reasons why mistreatment happens, which included ample

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anonymous co-researcher responses relative to the topic, specifically, "Administration failure to fire ineffective or abusive teachers," "Administrators defend teachers when abuse is reported, and administrators have been heard saying they will defend teachers automatically no matter what," and "Lack of administrative support for disciplinary consequences resulting in teachers to address/punish the behavior as they see fit." Survey responses were consistent with interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses that an educational environment that does not deliver repercussions for adverse actions is a climate that is conducive to mistreatment of students. Interview and discussion forum co-researchers reported that there is an inadequate level of policy in place that prohibits teacher-to-student mistreatment relative to this study, resulting in a lack of consequences for inappropriate verbal and nonverbal teacher behaviors.

Lack of teacher-student connection/healthy relationship building. Survey respondents offered 96 responses on various patterns of teacher behaviors that contribute to negative feelings toward a student. Included in the survey responses were a teacher's lack of positive feedback and encouragement and lack of personal connection with the student. Survey data obtained from question #38 open-ended responses also revealed co-researchers' perspectives concerning the absence of healthy teacher-student connections contributing to teacher-to-student situations. A relative anonymous response included, "It begins with a lack of knowledge or ability on the part of teachers to identify with a child and help them to achieve" which could help "change the teacher's perspective of the child." Responses from interview and discussion forum co-researchers emphasized the importance of survey data concerning healthy relationship building. Teachers who engage in positive interactions with students, who provide an appropriate amount of proximity and eye contact, who acknowledge the student's presence inside and outside of the classroom, as well as generally find ways to show the student the

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teacher is concerned about his or her welfare, are all points made in responses from co-researchers concerning the creation of healthy teacher-student connections. Discussion forum responses support the idea that teachers should work on positive relationship building with students and that school psychologists can assist with this task through consultation and collaboration activities.

Appearance of Mistreatment

The fourth main theme to emerge from the data analysis is the appearance of mistreatment. There was a large amount of survey data concerning the characteristics and content of teacher-to-student mistreatment. The majority of school psychologists (98.1%, $n = 101$) who answered the survey agreed that some teachers exhibit negative behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. A total of 100 school psychologists identified different types of verbal and nonverbal negative behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. The most outstanding verbal behaviors identified on the survey included yelling (78%), negative comparison (73%), putdowns/ridiculing/sarcasm/humiliation (68%), shaming (65%), excessive verbal punishment/reprimands (61%), negative prediction (55%), labeling (49%), nonverbal behaviors identified as excessive discipline referrals (56%), isolation (48%), ignoring/shunning/rejecting (45%), and humiliation/diminish self-concept (44%). The top three verbal negative teacher behaviors most frequently observed as identified by school psychologists are yelling, excessive verbal punishment/reprimand, and labeling. The top three nonverbal negative teacher behaviors most frequently observed are excessive discipline referrals, humiliation/diminish self-concept, and ignoring/shunning/rejecting. School psychologists answering the survey (66%, $n = 68$) have observed teachers using negative verbal and nonverbal behavior as a classroom management technique to maintain classroom discipline.

Interview and discussion forum co-researchers' responses involved detailed observations of various mistreatment situations. The entire group of interview participants witnessed teachers yelling at students of all ages and grade levels, which they conveyed is an unnecessary and ineffective way to get students' attention. Interview data collected from co-researchers also revealed nonverbal teacher behaviors that contributed to negative teacher-student relationships. Responses established by survey and interview data were supported by supplemental discussion forum experiences shared involving encounters with students who have been subject to withholding of affection by teachers as punishment.

From this fourth theme, three sub-themes developed, including mistreatment manifesting verbally, nonverbally, and academically/socially/emotionally/mentally/psychologically.

Verbal. Survey responses collected from participants documented various ways teachers verbally mistreat students. Anonymous responses to the open-ended survey question #22 regarding school psychologists' experiences with verbal teacher-to-student mistreatment included, "Teachers have been observed to single out children by yelling at them in front of the entire class, making rude and sarcastic remarks, and generally embarrassing and verbally abusing the child," "I observed a student being basically told that their opinion was worthless by a third grade teacher. The teacher then went on to tell the student to shut up," and "Teacher confronts a student about his/her behavior (rule breaking or inability to answer an academic question) with an angry voice, accompanied by statements such as, "Why did you do that?" "How would you like someone to do that to you?"'" revealing a teacher who punishes students using verbal intimidation and/or humiliation. Another example of data collected from survey participants concerning verbal mistreatment included sarcastic, demeaning comments directed at students with disabilities and multiple instances of special education and regular education teachers

verbalizing derogatory remarks toward students of all abilities. The verbal teacher behaviors that the interview co-researchers noted often contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships included yelling, using demeaning language to students and about students to co-workers, verbal intimidation, sarcasm, and engaging in verbal power struggles as a means to gain control. A pressing topic for interview participant 7 included a teacher's frequent verbal correction in the classroom, and negative language about a student, both delivered directly to a student and talking about the student with another teacher. Participant 8 also found that "sometimes teachers look at students, and roll their eyes and sigh, and say things like, 'Wait until you get that one, that kids going to make your life miserable.'" He explained that using that type of negative behavior just continues "to pass on that legacy of, 'mistreat that kid.'" Participant 8 gave various examples of verbal teacher behaviors that contributed to adverse teacher-student relationships, such as, "'Why won't you grow up? What are you, stupid? I taught that yesterday. Why are you even asking me that question?' Or a kid raising their hand and the teacher says, 'You have one more question. Really?'" Data recorded from interview and discussion forum co-researchers confirmed the survey's findings of teachers yelling at students of all ages and grade levels.

Nonverbal. Survey data collected through anonymous responses on open-ended survey question #22 regarding experiences with the phenomenon contained various instances of nonverbal mistreatment. Survey respondents described teachers using physical and social isolation and humiliation as punishment, demeaning body posturing and tone of voice, demands for eye contact and for respect, negative comments written about students in the Individual Education Plan and discipline referral documents. Co-researchers' interview data support the survey responses. The nonverbal teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships as explained by the interview participants include frowning or not smiling, having

an unfriendly stern expression, not making eye contact or rolling of their eyes, and keeping body language that is closed and gives the perception of negativity. Interview participant 2 pointed out that she witnessed teachers "gritting teeth, pointing, snapping of the fingers," which she said can turn students off. Participant 3 expressed, it is all about the student's perception of what nonverbal behaviors the teacher is doing, "the way the teacher made the student feel inside." Both interview and discussion forum responses substantiated data collected during the survey process concerning the use of nonverbal mistreatment by teachers toward students, especially in incidents of isolation and demeaning comments on educational paperwork such as office discipline referrals.

Academically/Socially/Emotionally/Mentally/Psychologically. All school psychologists answering survey questions believed that teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively impacted a student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally, revealing answers of Occasionally 42.4% ($n = 36$), Frequently 41.2% ($n = 35$), Rarely 16.5% ($n = 14$), and zero answering Never. When ranking these areas on the survey, school psychologists ranked emotionally as the area most frequently adversely impacted by teacher-to-student mistreatment, followed by academically, psychologically, and then socially, as the area least frequently adversely impacted. Likewise, interview co-researchers reported on how teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively impacts the student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. Responses included components of depression and anxiety, internal injury to the students' feelings and perception of self, a tenacious reduction in motivation and academic engagement, an emotional detachment from interpersonal relationships, and devastation to the expected bond of trust between the teacher and student. Interview participant 2 described how it can attack the student's self-esteem and self-worth:

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It can make you feel less of a person. It can really affect your self-esteem and self-worth, short-term and long-term. Academically, you are going to be less attentive, because you will be rethinking of what was just said to you, so you will miss out on academic things.

Further, interview co-researchers provided their experiences on how teacher-to-student mistreatment can cause mental and/or emotional damage on the student. Participant responses contained answers of fear, anxiety, withdrawal, rumination, and discouragement. Data collected from interview and discussion forum co-researchers also relayed examples of a reduction in attention related behaviors as an academic impact, depression and anxiety as an emotional/mental impact, trouble with relationship building as a social impact, and a reduction in self-confidence and self-esteem as a negative psychological impact.

Impact of Damage

The fifth main theme to emerge from the data analysis is impact of damage. Data collected revealed both short-term and long-term impacts concerning teacher-to-student mistreatment. From this fifth theme, three sub-themes developed, including short-term/long-term impacts, damages ability to trust, and life-long repercussions.

Short-term/Long-term impacts. On the survey, school psychologists identified specific short-term impacts observed in students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment. The top ten short-term impacts identified were: Behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, anger, conduct disorder, disruptiveness, inattention, hostility) (90.4%, $n = 75$); Academic problems (e.g., failing grades, school avoidance, truancy, depressed learning, lack of academic progress) (84.3%, $n = 70$); Declining school morale/atmosphere/climate (60.2%, $n = 50$); Emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability) (59.0%, $n = 49$); Resentment/Poor attitude (57.8%, $n = 48$); Confusion (56.6%, $n = 47$); Withdrawal/Give-up/Lack of motivation (55.4%, $n = 46$);

Humiliation (54.2%, $n = 45$); Stress/Tension (51.8%, $n = 43$); Psychological trauma (e.g.,

psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual

self-doubt) (45.8%, $n = 38$). Similarly, school psychologists also identified long-term impacts

observed in students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment. The top ten long-term impacts

identified on the survey were: Behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, anger, conduct disorder,

disruptiveness, inattention, hostility) (85.5%, $n = 65$); Academic problems (e.g., failing grades,

school avoidance, truancy, depressed learning, lack of academic progress) (80.3%, $n = 61$);

Withdrawal/Give-up/Lack of motivation (60.5%, $n = 46$); Resentment/Poor attitude (52.6%, $n =$

40); Emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability) (50.0%, $n = 38$);

Declining school morale/atmosphere/climate (50.0%, $n = 38$); Psychological trauma (e.g.,

psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual

self-doubt) (44.7%, $n = 34$); Humiliation (42.1%, $n = 32$); Depression/Sad/Crying/Anxious

(40.8%, $n = 31$); Excessive worrying (40.8%, $n = 31$). Interview and discussion forum co-

researchers responded with information that supported the survey data. School psychologist

interview participants described the short-term impacts witnessed on students who have been

mistreated by a teacher. Short-term impacts were listed as withdrawal or declined engagement in

the classroom, behavioral escalations, suspensions, academic decline, absences, tardiness, poor

grades, truancy, and a desire to be removed from the classroom. The same interview participants

described the long-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Co-

researchers' collective experiences provided many responses, including enduring disengagement

and academic difficulties, interpersonal problems, lack of self-confidence, depression, truancy,

drop out, and lasting internalization. Similarly, interview participant 8 disclosed his personal

long-term effects with fear from a high school educational experience, sharing, "I am a probably

a good example of this myself. I am afraid of higher levels of math. Math is an area of weakness for me because I had a teacher in high school that would not help me."

Damages ability to trust. Approximately 30% of school psychologists responding to the survey question that identified the impact of teacher-to-student mistreatment reported witnessing impaired social functioning in students (e.g., lack of social skills, no friends, social deficits). These adjustment problems impact a student's internal desire to trust the offending teacher. Interview and discussion forum co-researchers' experiences corroborate the survey's findings. Interview participant 4 shared experiences of students who developed a lack of ability to trust adults in the school setting. Information gathered from co-researchers' emotional testimonies reverberated with fear that this type of negative impact can cast down a student's spirit, personally damaging his or her capacity to trust. Interview participant 8 pertinently stated teacher-to-student mistreatment,

> has the potential for damaging their ability to trust in authority figures and the ability to interact in appropriate ways with authority figures. Depending on the student, if the student who has a long history of adults mistreating or abandoning, it supports the vision that has already been established.

Life-long repercussions. Data collected on the survey revealed 50% ($n = 38$) of school psychologists responding to the survey question concerning long-term impacts of mistreatment on students witnessed emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability) along with 44.7% ($n = 34$) of co-researchers responding recalled witnessing psychological trauma (e.g., psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual self-doubt) on students suggesting that many repercussions from teacher-to-student mistreatment can be life-long. Similar responses were recorded on the open-ended survey

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question #22 which obtained school psychologist experiences with mistreatment, including an anonymous recollection where a teacher was observed "screaming at a student in front of the rest of the group because he did not understand what to do. It was many years ago, but I still remember," demonstrating that mistreatment experiences can not only linger in the memories of the victim but also in the enduring memories of bystanders witnessing the event. School psychologists provided their perspectives during the interview process on the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment. All data collected from interview and discussion forum co-researchers surrounded the viewpoint that teacher-to-student mistreatment is ethically and morally inappropriate and the repercussions can be life-long for the student. Interview participant 8 shared thoughts on how these experiences can cause life-long repercussions, stating, "That is what I fear the most. Kids can lose heart very easily. It bothers me that the comments a teacher makes can dishearten a child, attack their esteem, and trust" which can impact the student's internal view of self-worth and external view of education in the long run. Many co-researchers also revealed data that reinforced the idea of enduring repercussions as they shared various persistent memories of mistreatment during their personal and/or a close friend's Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 experience.

Impact on the School Psychologist Role

The sixth main theme to emerge from the data analysis is impact on the school psychologist role. A survey question asked respondents to rate their level of concern for teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment: 24.4% ($n = 29$) answered Very Concerned, 54.6% ($n = 65$) answered Somewhat Concerned, and 21.0% ($n = 25$) answered Not Concerned. The data collected on the level of concern extends to the daily impact teacher-to-student mistreatment has on the professional role and duties of the school psychologist. Interview and

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discussion forum co-researchers reported an increase in their advocacy, consultation, and collaboration duties, as well as elevated stress levels resulting in a number of considerations to change careers due to teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational environment. Discussion forum responses regarded how the role of the school psychologist could best intervene in mistreatment situations.

From this final theme, four sub-themes developed, including advocacy/consultation increase, stress/frustration, reinforces resource role, and desire to do more/glad to share information.

Advocacy/Consultation increase. Survey data revealed that the majority of school psychologists' (73.7%, $n = 84$) responses on teacher-to-student mistreatment is a significant response, where they believe that it is everyone's problem, it is a form of abuse and needs attention, and bystanders are also impacted. School psychologists indicated on the survey how often they advocated for students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, resulting in responses of Occasionally 41.0% ($n = 32$), Frequently 35.9% ($n = 28$), Rarely 19.2% ($n = 15$), and Never 3.8% ($n = 3$). The survey documented a combined 47.4% ($n = 37$) of school psychologists responded they occasionally to frequently counseled or consulted with teachers about their behavior toward or interactions with students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations. The report of increased advocacy and consultation duties was also supported by co-researchers' responses to the open-ended survey question #42 concerning the overall impact teacher-to-student mistreatment has had on the role of the school psychologist. Anonymous responses were, "I am more and more aware that when students are having difficulty in school (academic, behavioral, emotional) that the classroom environment needs to be considered and that it shouldn't be the assumption that the student is the problem," "I am more aware and

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conscious of the relationship between the teacher and student when conducting my observations in the classroom," "It reinforces my role as a child advocate," and it "Increases my workload and the number of referrals made to me." Interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses support the survey data. Co-researchers disclosed an increase in collaboration and consultation duties, as well as intensification on the desire to be the student's advocate when witnessing teacher-to-student mistreatment. Participant 7 reiterated that she will "start to feel angry and defensive about the child. Then feel the need to monitor the situation very closely." Interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses emphasized the ethical obligation to be an advocate for the student, especially in mistreatment situations.

     Stress/Frustration. The co-researchers' responses to survey questions revealed that 88.1% ($n = 104$) of school psychologists believe that 1%-24% of students are mistreated by teachers, creating a situation that can cause high levels of stress and frustration in the educational environment. Data collected from school psychologists on the survey also asked if teacher-to-student mistreatment situations were so frequent in their current job that they find themselves questioning if school psychology was the right career path. Of the 80 responding, there were 5 (6.3%) that answered Yes, 4 (5.0%) that answered Not sure, and 71 (88.8%) that answered No. The majority of school psychologists (69.6%, $n = 55$) reported on the survey that they have never provided in-service training concerning the phenomenon. This can be a result of a lack of past professional development experiences offered on the topic which could contribute stress and personal frustration. The survey revealed 28.2% ($n = 22$) of school psychologists confessed they sought out personal coping strategies due to the stress related to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations. Data collected concerning stress and frustration was also supported by co-researchers' responses to the open-ended survey question #42 concerning the overall impact

teacher-to-student mistreatment has had on the role of the school psychologist. Anonymous responses included, "Want to leave the profession due to no administrative support and no corrective action on part of school administration," "I often feel like the only one who feels the individual child is more important than the school's overall rating for achievement," and "There have been times when I feel socially isolated due to standing up for a student." Interview data collected from co-researchers also reflected incidents of stress and frustration while performing the duties of a professional school psychologist. When describing high levels of aggravation, interview participant 2 blurted out,

> If I could put valium in my veins, I would! I get really intense now. I say to myself, "Really! Did that just happen?" I find myself getting really upset. There are always a few incidents. Some people I confide in comment they think that I am just lying because it is sometimes so preposterous. It is very frustrating. It has made me want to get out of the field, honestly. But then I feel like, I am here because somebody has to be, someone has to take care of it. There are not many people that can take it, and not take it personally. Someone has to be an advocate.

School psychologists reflected during the interview on the conflicting decisions, values, and beliefs experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Experiences encompassed overcoming hard encounters with the opposition, sometimes getting reprimanded for what they believe in, and consultation with trusted colleagues or supervisors when needed. Interview and discussion forum data recorded frustration over limitation of authority in mistreatment situations and sometimes feeling as if they were walking a fine line with administrators when advocating for students. Interview participant 6 shared, it is "hard knowing that there is always fallout. It is still the right thing to do. We train our kids to speak up, so I have

to lead that way."

Reinforces resource role. Survey data collected concerning the vital role of being a resource to others is also supported by co-researchers' responses to the open-ended survey question #42 concerning the overall impact teacher-to-student mistreatment has had on the role of the school psychologist. Anonymous responses were recorded as, "I now see my role as providing positive behavioral supports to both students and teachers," "It reminds me of how important it is to use positive approaches to behavior problems," and "Educating and supporting teachers, acting as a resource and liaison to foster better student understanding and interactions, helping teachers see the impact that they are having and assisting them in taking on other perspectives about the student and the student's behavior." Interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses support the survey data emphasizing the importance of the resource role of the school psychologist. Interview participant 3 proudly declared, "I would not be looked at as a resource, an invaluable resource, if I were not providing something that people need. I am a go to person, a resource." Interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses supported the survey data, indicating school psychologists are natural resources to all persons who interact in the educational environment.

Desire to do more/Glad to share information. The final sub-theme addresses school psychologist co-researchers' desires to do more to eradicate mistreatment situations as well as the opportunity to express their views and share information concerning the rarely discussed topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment. Survey data indicated that the majority of school psychologists (72.0%, $n = 85$) have never received any direct training on how to effectively deal with the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. The desire of many school psychologist co-researchers was to grow in the knowledge on how to realistically address mistreatment

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situations in the school environment. An anonymous response to the open-ended survey

question #42 concerning the overall impact teacher-to-student mistreatment has had on the role

of the school psychologist included, it is a "difficult position to be in: risky to intervene but

unacceptable to look away." Similar responses were found in other open-ended survey responses

documenting the co-researchers' basic desires to do more to help. Data collected on interview

responses concerning what the professional school psychologists could do to prevent teacher-to-

student mistreatment emphasized areas of becoming more involved, recognizing mistreatment

for what it is early and intervene, and to educate others. The school psychologist interview

participants were invited to imagine they had the power to change the school psychology

profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon, and then were

asked to convey what changes they would make. Data recorded ranged from a desire for the

professional role of a school psychologist to be widened to a more administrative role, instead of

being restricted to a teacher/support staff role, to help make systemic decisions and to be utilized

more frequently to prevent problems before they begin, more time in the classroom to consult

and collaborate with teachers instead of being bound to a testing role, and finally, to create a

system-wide policy for all teachers to be more knowledgeable on disabilities, behavior

management, and the personal baggage that many students bring into the academic environment,

with an overall goal to encourage teacher empathy for those students who rest outside of their

normal expectations. Interview participant 2 described a vision of having more administrative

powers as a school psychologist, stating,

> I would put us a little over principals, because I think we have a better understanding, and
>
> we can think outside of the box a little better. Principals get stuck in their little rule book,
>
> thinking this behavior is 5 days, this behavior is 10 days.

Participant 2 went on to explain that having an extended role of authority in the school district would allow school psychologists to not only recognize instantly that the environment needs more positive energy, but "To say ok, this is what we need, we need to find a program, and enforce that it happens, and not just be testers." Interview and discussion forum co-researcher responses supported the survey data in terms of wanting to do more and be utilized more as a proactive as opposed to reactive resource when dealing with mistreatment situations. Discussion forum responses recorded statements from co-researchers who were grateful for the opportunity to confidentially share their perspectives on the phenomenon that is seldom discussed but persists as an ingredient in the overall role of the school psychologist.

Member Checking

All data gathered from the interview and discussion forum co-researchers were presented for member checking. One of the main reasons for use of a discussion forum in the final steps of the data analysis phase of this study was to create a secure, confidential, and convenient way to ensure credibility in the data collected through use of a member checking process. This process was conducted with each interview/discussion forum co-researcher to make sure both the data and the interpretations were verified, and feedback was collected. According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), the member checking step is an essential component to establishing credibility of the data collected, along with triangulation of data gathered from different sources, which in this study consisted of survey, interview, and discussion forum data. Since each interview and discussion forum co-researcher verified that the information gathered was an accurate representation of his or her experiences, it gave me reason to conclude that the data used in these findings are credible and trustworthy. Trustworthiness is essential for establishing a strong study, which incorporates the research's credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Summary of Findings

The rich descriptions found above, and in Appendix T, are the research study findings and textural and structural descriptions that were formed and supported by significant statements from data gathered during the survey, interviews, discussion forum, researcher reflections, bracketing, memoing, and audit trail log processes. All findings were combined to portray a composite experience in an effort to embody the essence of school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 educational setting. The textural and structural descriptions combined have guided the focus of the research toward the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The essence incorporates the common experiences of all research participants. To further deliver a better understanding for the reader on what it is like for the school psychologists to experience the phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1989), summative descriptive passages are presented below by research question.

Central Research Question: What Are School Psychologists' Experiences with Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment?

For this research study, professional school psychologists became co-researchers sharing their various professional experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment. A majority number of co-researchers (74.8%, $n = 89$) acknowledged that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment. Altogether, the largest number of co-researchers had five to more than 15 years of career experience to recollect; therefore, some had more frequent experiences than others. School psychologists' occurrences of teacher-to-student mistreatment varied from rarely to frequently. However, their level of concern for the phenomenon in the school environment ranged from

somewhat concerned to very concerned. Co-researchers ($n = 119$) shared their personal experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment, and throughout the data collection process, each person's recollections were strong regardless of the frequencies of the occurrences.

The phenomenon in this study is both sensitive and complex. Even though this manuscript painstakingly defined and outlined the operational definition of the term teacher-to-student mistreatment, gave real world examples of behaviors, and provided an exhaustive specimen list of possible short-term and long-term impacts, some co-researchers still were uncertain in their opinions with regards to how they personally defined the phenomenon. To some, it seemed to be a nebulous topic, one that is not easy to understand or perceive. This inherent problem may have contributed to the divergence between the lower awareness of occurrences reported and the higher level of concern on the phenomenon. Co-researchers expressed concern that the overall awareness of the phenomenon is lacking in educational conversations, and therefore not confronted in the academic environment, or in the preparatory curriculum provided to school psychologists. School psychologists' internal and external reactions to student mistreatment by teachers were described as powerful; that innate passion can fuel stress. The level of stress is often elevated when there is shock and frustration with confronting inappropriate teacher behaviors and uncooperative administration. Through their professional experiences as advocates for students, school psychologists reported that it can be a hard lesson to learn when dealing with both teachers and administration who may be the opposition. Sometimes, when there are too many intense phenomenon incidences, severe occupational stress was intensified which provoked the thought of changing careers.

First Sub-Question: What Do School Psychologists Perceive as the Negative Teacher Behaviors that Contribute to Adverse Teacher-Student Relationships?

Although the majority of teachers are kindhearted and passionate about nurturing their students, an overwhelming number of school psychologists (98.1%, $n = 101$) acknowledged that some teachers exhibit negative behaviors that contributed to adverse teacher-student relationships. To better define adverse teacher-student relationships, it consisted of teacher behaviors that are harmful, ineffective, and non-nurturing; behaviors that denigrate students, decreasing elements of respect, rapport, cooperation, and communication between the teacher and student. School psychologists believed that teachers who mistreat students have lost their sensitivity to the power of verbal remarks, and the power and usefulness of nonverbal communication. Co-researchers ($n = 100$) identified specific verbal and nonverbal adverse teacher behaviors observed during their careers, including yelling, sarcasm, put-downs, negative comparison, humiliation, isolation, and ignoring. Numerous patterns and characteristics were identified of a teacher who mistreats students, including one who is angry, cynical, has a low threshold for frustration, does not work to build a connection with students, and one that employs inappropriate power and control as a behavior management technique. During their careers, co-researchers found that this character of teacher often assumes a persistent conflict between the student and teacher which irreparably harmed the relationship. That persistent conflict was described as a situation where the teacher was not able to get past the encounter involving the student, creating a memory that lingered on, affecting the future relationship.

Second Sub-Question: What Is The Language of School Psychologists in Terms of Defining Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment?

The collective language used by school psychologists to define teacher-to-student mistreatment is any adverse action by a teacher that denigrates or degrades a student. Although co-researchers ($n = 89$) used multiple layers of terms and descriptions to depict teacher-to-

student mistreatment, school psychologists state that the phenomenon can best be described as emotionally distressing, abusive, psychologically damaging, mistreatment that is akin to bullying.

Third Sub-Question: How Do School Psychologists Describe The Adverse Impact On Students Who Have Been Mistreated By A Teacher?

School psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment revealed that there are both short-term and long-term adverse impacts. While every student is different in his or her reaction to life's challenges, including encounters with teacher-to-student mistreatment, each individual's response depended on the resilience of the child's personality and the severity of the mistreatment. The adverse impact of the phenomenon was detected in all major areas, including psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. Co-researchers witnessed the reverberations of mistreatment in these sensitive areas, creating bouts of depression and anxiety, internal injury to the student's feelings and perception of self, a tenacious reduction in motivation and academic engagement, an emotional detachment from interpersonal relationships, and devastation to the expected bond of trust between the teacher and student. Although short-term effects can be significant, school psychologists were especially fearful of the long-term effects caused by mistreatment situations, which can crush a student's spirit and create lifelong memories that can harm his or her inner perception of self-worth and external view of education. Relationship difficulties between the teacher and student can be internalized and have lasting effects. School psychologists were united in the viewpoint that teacher-to-student mistreatment is ethically and morally inappropriate, and the repercussions can be enduring for the student.

Fourth Sub-Question: What Conceptualizations Are Formed from School Psychologists' Perceptions on Why Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment Happens?

School psychologists have various perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens, including certain teachers' lack of skill in behavioral management, lack of understanding on how to deal with students who fall outside of their normal expectations, personality factors, stress, and burnout. While there were numerous ($n = 82$) viewpoints on why mistreatment happens, many school psychologists maintain that an inappropriate use of power and control justified as classroom management techniques and the absence of healthy relationship building between the teacher and student were both major dynamics in the phenomenon. School psychologists identified several prevention efforts for teachers who mistreat students, including elements of self-care, self-awareness, and self-reflection in conjunction with remaining open to feedback, constructive criticism, and recommendations for change. It is established that the phenomenon was a hidden topic (Twemlow et al., 2006) in the educational environment, and that notion of low awareness may explain the absence of teachers' efforts to readily seek assistance and collaboration on the issue. By virtue of their training, school psychologists can play an important role in the deliverance of these training needs (Hyman & Perone, 1998). School psychologists generated concise recommendations for school administrators in their efforts to prevent the phenomenon. Those preventative steps included school administrators need to acknowledge it, act on it, and actively prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. Although 74.4% ($n = 61$) believed it would be beneficial to have one in place, the majority 55.7% ($n = 44$) of school psychologists do not recall any policy in force that specifically addressed, discouraged, or prohibited teacher-to-student mistreatment, or indicated the consequence or punishment for teacher-to-student mistreatment. Even though school psychologists witnessed teachers mistreating students throughout their careers, co-researchers could not recall observing teachers enduring any professional

repercussions for mistreatment, outside of losing a colleague's respect.

Fifth Sub-Question: How Have Experiences with Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment Impacted the Professional Role of a School Psychologist?

Teacher-to-student mistreatment experiences have produced diverse impacts upon the professional role of a school psychologist. In addition to increased advocacy, collaboration, and consultation duties, many school psychologists have experienced elevated stress and frustration levels. Certain co-researchers have felt such stress and uncertainty that it has made them question their genuine abilities to help as school psychologists, and to fulfill their natural duties to be invaluable professional resources for school staff, and vital advocates for students. School psychologists found that teacher-to-student mistreatment repercussions often came back on the student instead of reflecting on the offending teacher's practices. Due to their inherent oath of advocacy for the student, professional school psychologists are sometimes reprimanded for standing up for what they believe in because they are resistant to compromise their values and beliefs. These collective experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment have the ability to both fracture and strengthen relationships with teachers and administrators. Consulting with other school psychologist professionals on confidential situations is a common avenue to meet collaborative and self-care needs. In the true spirit of school psychology, co-researchers possessed a strong desire to do more with their professional roles. School psychologists long to expand their positions so that they are utilized less as assessors, but more as preventative, proactive links (see Figure 1 in Chapter Five) that encourage early intervention on problems between teachers, parents, students, and administrators. School psychologists imagine a time when their elevated roles allow for equal input into systemic changes to better prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment, and their positions have more authority over teacher professional

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development, for they know that increased knowledge is better when it comes to building healthy relationships.

The previous section containing the summary of findings recapitulates the overall meaning of this study. The results presented in this chapter describe school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting, indicating that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists and its existence has influenced the functional role of the professional school psychologist. Further discussions of the findings are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Despite the wealth of knowledge on the importance of positive teacher-student relationships (O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Thijs et al., 2008) and the negative effect of peer-on-peer bullying in schools (Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; Olweus, 1999; Sharpe, 2011) documented in the literature, little attention has been given to damaging teacher behaviors, or teacher-to-student mistreatment, which are academically, socially, and psychologically destructive to students (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). There are few American studies presented in the literature on the topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment (McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008) and its significant negative impact on students (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Childers, 2009; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Hyman & Snook, 2001; Moon et al., 2009) from either the teacher or student viewpoint, and, until this study, no research has been conducted on this issue from the school psychologist's perspective.

Although most teachers care deeply about their students, the literature reveals evidence that there remains a minority number of teachers who mistreat students (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Casarjian, 2000; Childers, 2009; Hart, 1987; Hyman, 1990; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Moon et al., 2009; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). The number of teachers involved in the mistreatment of school children may be small, but the negative impact upon students is significant and persistent (Brendgen et al., 2006; Brendgen et al., 2007; Childers, 2009; Hyman & Snook, 1999; Hyman & Snook, 2001; Moon et al., 2009). Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe school psychologists'

experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting. Teacher-to-student mistreatment was defined as a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment. The operational definition of observation is the point at which school psychologists become cognizant of the phenomenon through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day. Areas of concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, included teachers' verbal communications toward and about students, as well as teachers' nonverbal communications, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language. There is established literature on the sexual and physical abuse of students by teachers (Anderson & Levine, 1999; Haviland et al., 2011; Khoury-Kassabri, 2009; Shakeshaft & Cohan, 1995; Shakeshaft, Hofstra University and Interactive, Inc., & Department of Education, 2004; Smith, 2010; Sorenson, 1991; Straus, 1991), and this study excluded these topics of mistreatment.

This final chapter offers a discussion of the current study within the context of previous research and presents conclusions. Additionally, this chapter offers perceptions on the contributions this study makes to the field of school psychology, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research, ending with a conclusion.

Summary of the Study

The study was conducted using a qualitative, phenomenological, transcendental approach. This study researched a phenomenon that is both intricate and sensitive, and the qualitative inquiry provided an alternative way to respond to research questions using a descriptive approach, examining complex social issues. Co-researchers offered complex,

information-rich "first-person accounts" of teacher-to-student mistreatment experiences essential to the study (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). A descriptive research approach gathered data and narrative lived experiences from the school psychologist co-researchers through use of a statewide survey, in-depth interviews, discussion forum questions, audit trail log, memoing, and researcher reflections. Data were analyzed using a transcendental phenomenological design according to strategies recommended by Moustakas (1994) including the stages of bracketing, horizonalization, clustering and coding, textural and structural descriptions, and the essence. Trustworthiness of the manuscript was established through triangulation of the data which established a strong study and incorporated the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Empirically, this study added to the literature because the research on the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment is rare (Childers, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Sharpe, 2011; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Zerillo & Osterman, 2011), but the overall problem may be more prominent than individuals realize (Hyman & Snook, 1999). It was vital to research, explore, and acknowledge the serious topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment "due to the potential mental and emotional damage that can be inflicted on the student" (Childers, 2009, p. 7). The findings of this study are consistent with the previous literature and studies on teacher-to-student mistreatment, and supports recent literature by Hibbard et al. (2012) surrounding psychological mistreatment of children.

A practical implication of this study is that it contributes to the extremely rare school psychology literature on the topic (Hyman & Perone, 1998), which should prompt more interest in research and exploration of the issue. This study lends significance to the related literature that established that the phenomenon is often a hidden topic that is under-acknowledged, under-

studied, and under-deliberated within the educational community (Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The study also provides relevant preventative recommendations for fellow school psychologists, school administrators, and teachers, including suggestions for self-awareness training for teachers who mistreat students to broaden their personal cognizance on verbal and nonverbal mistreatment behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. This study sparked interest into the possibility of differences in sensitivities or opinion between male and female school psychologists' perceptions of teacher-to-student mistreatment, and considerations as to the perceptions of school principals on the phenomenon's complex social issue. Implications of this study point to future collaboration and research with school guidance counselors concerning the importance of this topic in the field of education. Finally, this study offers Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) ideas concerning professional development, training needs, and professional practices.

Findings

As stated in Chapter One, everyone has a personal story to tell about school discipline. Regardless if the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 experience was pleasant or not, every student has been exposed to various positive and negative methods of school discipline (Hyman, 1985). These personal stories, full of memories and emotion, have a place in education in that these experiences have influenced, shaped, and formed people throughout the developmental Pre-K through Grade 12 years into adulthood. The topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment is both sensitive and controversial, but it exists and educators need to be aware of it. School psychologist co-researchers involved in this study shared their phenomenological experiences

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observed in the school environment. As a result of the findings, various themes were generated (see Table 4, see Table 5) from co-researcher responses.

The specific questions guiding this research concerning the phenomenon are listed as follows.

What Are School Psychologists' Experiences with Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment?

The study indicated that a majority 74.8% ($n = 89$) of co-researchers acknowledged that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment. School psychologists observed occurrences of teacher-to-student mistreatment varying from rarely to frequently, with the largest number of co-researchers having five to more than 15 years of career experience to recollect; thus, some had more frequent experiences than others. However, their level of concern for the phenomenon in the school environment ranged from somewhat concerned to very concerned. Throughout the data collection process, co-researchers shared their lived experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment, and each person's recollections were strong regardless of the frequencies of the occurrences.

What Do School Psychologists Perceive as the Negative Teacher Behaviors That Contribute to Adverse Teacher-Student Relationships?

An overwhelming number (98.1%, $n = 101$) of school psychologists acknowledged that some teachers exhibited negative behaviors such as yelling, sarcasm, put downs, negative comparison, humiliation, isolation, and ignoring, which contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. School psychologists believed that teachers who mistreat students have lost their sensitivity to the power of verbal remarks, and the power and usefulness of nonverbal communication.

What Is the Language of School Psychologists in Terms of Defining Teacher-to-Student

Mistreatment?

The collective language used by school psychologists to define teacher-to-student mistreatment is any adverse action by a teacher that denigrates or degrades a student. Co-researchers expressed that the phenomenon can best be described as emotionally distressing, abusive, psychologically damaging, mistreatment that is akin to bullying.

How Do School Psychologists Describe The Adverse Impact on Students Who Have Been Mistreated by a Teacher?

Although short-term effects are described as significant, school psychologists are especially fearful of the long-term effects caused by mistreatment situations, which can crush a student's spirit and create life-long memories that can harm his or her inner perception of self-worth and external view of education. Further, the co-researchers' position is that teacher-to-student mistreatment is ethically and morally inappropriate, and the repercussions can be enduring for the student.

What Conceptualizations Are Formed from School Psychologists' Perceptions on Why Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment Happens?

School psychologists provided various perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs, including certain teachers' lack of skill in behavioral management, lack of understanding on how to deal with students who fall outside of their normal expectations, personality factors, stress, and burnout. In addition, co-researchers maintained that an inappropriate use of power and control justified by the teacher as a classroom management technique, and the absence of healthy relationship building between the teacher and student are both major dynamics in the phenomenon. Even though school psychologists have been witnesses to the mistreatment of students by teachers throughout their careers, co-researchers

could not recall any policy that specifically addresses, discourages, or prohibits teacher-to-student mistreatment, or indicates the consequence or punishment for teacher-to-student mistreatment.

How Have Experiences with Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment Impacted the Professional Role of a School Psychologist?

The impact of teacher-to-student mistreatment increased the advocacy, collaboration, and consultation duties of the role of a school psychologist. Many co-researchers revealed a substantial rise in their levels of stress and frustration which created a measure of uncertainty upon their genuine ability to help the school community and exist as a vital advocate for the student. Often, school psychologists found that teacher-to-student mistreatment repercussions came back on the student instead of reflecting on the offending teacher's practices. Finally, school psychologists long to do more and expand their positions so that they are utilized less as assessors, but more as a preventative, proactive links (see Figure 1) that encourage early intervention between teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

<center>**Theoretical Implications**</center>

As discussed in Chapter Two, there are four interrelated theoretical concepts and principles that underpin this research study: Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of the 1930s which relates to Albert Bandura's (1977) popular social learning theory of the 1960s, and Albert Bandura's (1989, 1993) revised social cognitive theory in 1986, emphasizing self-efficacy which parallels Carl Rogers's (1967) self-concept theory of the 1960s. The borrowed theoretical concepts from Vygotsky (1978), Bandura (1977, 1989, 1993), and Rogers (1967), are supported through the findings of this study. Specifically, this study confirms the prior research findings of Vygotsky (1978), by supporting the theoretical concept that learning is embedded in social

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relationships. Students acquire knowledge through social interactions, positive and negative, with people in the educational environment, including teachers and other students. A student's belief and perception about himself or herself is easily influenced by teachers, peers, and society. Therefore, the findings of this study support the conclusion that when teacher-to-student mistreatment interactions occur, a student's internal thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and perceptions can be impacted, both in the short-term and long-term. Data collected from school psychologists in this study confirm previous literature statements that teacher-to-student mistreatment experiences can have a lasting impression on students academically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). As stated above in the summary of findings, school psychologists are especially fearful of the long-term effects caused by mistreatment situations, which can shatter a student's spirit and create life-long memories that can harm his or her inner perception of self-worth and external view of education.

The theoretical principles of Vygotsky (1978) and Bandura (1977, 1989, 1993) support the awareness that all students benefit from a positive learning environment. Establishing positive teacher-student relationships is also important to a healthy school environment. Attempting to learn in a negative atmosphere where the relationship between the teacher and student is not nurturing forces children into an unhealthy learning environment in which their cognition, learning, social development, and growth may be obstructed (Martin, Cromer, & Freyd, 2010). The outcome of this study revealed experiences with teachers who justified using an inappropriate measure of power and control as a classroom management technique, and the absence of healthy relationship building between the teacher and student prior to enforcing classroom consequences and punishments, which combine to feed into the forces of the

phenomenon.

Bandura's (1989, 1993) revised social cognitive theory placed much emphasis on the concept of self-efficacy, and an individual's personal, behavioral, and environmental variables are interconnected factors that influence thoughts and behaviors. Bandura's theory concerning self-efficacy complemented Carl Rogers's (1967) theory of self-concept, which stressed the actions, behaviors, words, expressions, and interactions of one person can impact another's consciousness, directing his or her innermost thoughts and behavior. The self-efficacy and self-concept of a student can be influenced by external factors, such as a teacher's verbal remarks and nonverbal behaviors in the classroom. This study discovered that school psychologists acknowledged that some teachers do exhibit negative behaviors, such as yelling, sarcasm, put downs, negative comparison, humiliation, isolation, and ignoring, which contributed to adverse teacher-student relationships. Also, co-researchers conveyed that teachers who mistreat students have lost their sensitivity to the power of verbal remarks, and the power and usefulness of nonverbal communication. This study not only affirmed the theories noted above, in that teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively affects a student's inner concept, efficacy, and esteem, but this study also revealed that the student is adversely impacted holistically, meaning psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. School psychologists reported that the phenomenon created incidents of depression and anxiety, internal injury to the student's feelings and perception of self, a reduction in motivation and academic engagement, emotional damage to interpersonal relationships, and a break in the bond of trust between the teacher and student. As noted above in the summary of findings, school psychologists agreed that teacher-to-student mistreatment is ethically and morally inappropriate and the repercussions can be lasting for the student involved.

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Lastly, the four theories of Vygotsky (1978), Bandura (1977, 1989, 1993) and Rogers (1967) framing this theoretical framework help support an understanding on aspects of the phenomenon, including knowledge development, social learning, teacher-student relationships, and the constructs of self-efficacy and self-concept as derived through interaction with others in a learning environment. These interconnected theories validate the simple statement made in Chapter Two: a teacher's belief about a student strongly influences the child's beliefs about himself or herself. This research study's findings further strengthen these theoretical concepts and contribute to the expansion of the literature base.

Relating Results to the Literature

The literature review from Chapter Two covered the topics of the school psychologist's professional role, negative teacher behaviors and the teacher-student relationship, significant studies surrounding the topic of the research, definitions regarding mistreatment, negative impact mistreatment has on students, and literature surrounding why mistreatment occurs in the educational setting. Below are discussions relating the study's findings in light of these related literature topics.

A literature topic covered in Chapter Two involved negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. The first research sub-question was created from this topic. The findings of this study relayed that although the majority of teachers are kindhearted and passionate about nurturing their students, an overwhelming number of school psychologists (98.1%, $n = 101$) acknowledged that some teachers exhibit negative behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. Co-researchers in this study also identified specific verbal and nonverbal adverse teacher behaviors observed during their careers, including yelling, sarcasm, put-downs, negative comparison, humiliation, isolation, and ignoring. Both of

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these finding statements are consistent with student mistreatment by teachers documented in the literature from McEvoy (2005), Twemlow et al. (2006), and Whitted and Dupper (2008). The studies recorded by the above-mentioned researchers contribute to the acknowledgement of harmful negative teacher behaviors in mistreatment situations. The current study's findings are also analogous with the conclusions of a previous study conducted by the National Center for the Study of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives in the Schools, where 60% of the 372 teenagers in the sample reported that their worst school experience had consisted of incidents of ridicule, verbal assaults and discrimination, humiliation, and isolation (Hyman, 1990). Co-researchers reported, in the current study, that negative teacher behaviors often created a persistent conflict between the student and teacher, which irreparably harmed the relationship, and which aligns with the related literature by Hyman and Snook (1999) of a continuing impact and findings of Brendgen et al. (2006) concerning challenging difficulties that persevere over time. Furthermore, support was made for the Brendgen et al. (2007) quote from Chapter Two, that the negative repercussions can wield "academic, social, behavioral, and emotional problems" on students of all ages (p. 26). This concept moreover is supported by recent literature surrounding psychological mistreatment of children which "has been linked with disorders of attachment, developmental and educational problems, socialization problems, disruptive behavior, and later psychopathology" (Hibbard et al., 2012, p. 372). The school psychologists in this study assert that the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon is ethically and morally inappropriate, which directly related to the prior research of Whitted and Dupper (2008), who acknowledged that no matter the circumstance, teachers do not possess the right to abuse students or misuse their power for the sake of discipline. Co-researcher data on the reported occurrences and concern over teacher-to-student mistreatment lend significance to the related literature that

established that the phenomenon is often a hidden topic that goes unaddressed and

undocumented in the educational world (Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson,

2009; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). A few co-researchers in

this study claimed that the phenomenon was a nebulous topic that was not easily understood,

even though detailed definitions and examples were provided. In related literature, Nesbit and

Philpott (2002) noted that the phenomenon "is an elusive concept, but one that requires focused

attention given its traumatic and enduring effects" (p. 32). The fact that the phenomenon has

received so little scholarly attention gives confirmation to the gap in the literature and urgency to

place the data from this study among the limited body of academic knowledge.

The largest section of related literature from Chapter Two focused on significant aspects

of the studies related to the phenomenon, which helped create the central research question that

addressed school psychologists' holistic experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment. A

majority number of co-researchers (74.8%, $n = 89$) shared genuine experiences with the

phenomenon, acknowledging that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school

environment. This finding supported the research of Childers (2009), McEvoy (2005), Sharpe

(2011), Twemlow et al. (2006), Whitted and Dupper (2008), and Zerillo and Osterman (2011),

who collectively documented that although American studies are infrequent, the phenomenon

still exists. Zerillo and Osterman's (2011) research also found that some teachers justified their

bullying behaviors toward students to meet instructional goals, and McEvoy (2005), Twemlow et

al. (2006), and Whitted and Dupper (2008) recorded that teachers attempt to rationalize their

mistreatment by claiming that students deserved it. Further, Davies (2011) documented that

teachers often "crossed a line of responsibility and descended into the role of bully" (p. 2).

School psychologists in this study also provided evidence of similar statements through sharing

of their narrative experiences on why mistreatment happens, including stories where teachers employed an inappropriate use of power and control, justifying it as classroom management (Hyman, 1985; Twemlow et al., 2006).

McEvoy (2005), Twemlow et al. (2006), and Whitted and Dupper's (2008) research documented detrimental short-term and long-term effects as a result of teacher-to-student mistreatment. Similarly, co-researchers revealed narrative accounts of how teacher-to-student mistreatment adversely affected a student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. The school psychologists reported that although the short-term effects can be significant, they are especially fearful of the long-term effects caused by mistreatment situations, which can crush a student's spirit and create life-long memories that can harm his or her inner perception of self-worth and external view of education. This confirms the statement made in Chapter One, that positive teacher-student relationships inspire and motivate, while negative teacher-student relationships depress self-worth and confidence, essentially devaluing the academic experience. Further findings from this study provide evidence that relationship difficulties between the teacher and student can be internalized and have enduring effects.

This study corroborated the related literature concerning the hidden, veiled topic of teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational environment. Data collected in this study supported the claim of previous researchers that the significance of the phenomenon is under-acknowledged, under-studied, and under-deliberated within the educational community (Hart, 1987; Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The research of McEvoy (2005), Twemlow et al. (2006), and Whitted and Dupper (2008) revealed that because the phenomenon remained a substantially disguised problem, there are seldom negative sanctions for teacher-to-student mistreatment. This study

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strongly validated this prior research through the current findings that demonstrated that even though school psychologists have been witness to the phenomenon, they could not recall any policy that specifically addressed, discouraged, or prohibited teacher-to-student mistreatment, or indicated the consequence or punishment for teacher-to-student mistreatment. Due to this reality, co-researchers reported that teacher-to-student mistreatment repercussions tended to revert to the student instead of reflecting on the offending teacher's practices. These co-researcher reports concerning the reverted repercussions upon students authenticates research findings by Whitted and Dupper (2008) who found similar situations created a hostile learning environment between the teacher and student.

The review of literature in Chapter Two provided various definitions for mistreatment, maltreatment, bullying, and abuse. Brendgen et al. (2006), Hart et al. (1983), King and Janson (2009), McEvoy (2005), Twemlow et al. (2006), Whitted and Dupper (2008), and many more scholars provided relevant descriptions according to their research, but regardless of each variation, each term held the same core root of inappropriate treatment toward students. The second research sub-question provided an opportunity for co-researchers to define the phenomenon. The collective language produced in this study defined teacher-to-student mistreatment as any adverse action by a teacher that denigrates or degrades a student. Furthermore, school psychologists went on to describe the phenomenon as emotionally distressing, abusive, psychologically damaging, mistreatment that is akin to bullying.

The topic of negative or adverse impacts upon students encompassed the next literature topic as shown in Chapter Two. This research study's third sub-question accounted for school psychologists' descriptions of the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. The literature documented that negative teacher behaviors adversely impacted students

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academically, socially, and psychologically (Hyman, 1985; McEvoy, 2005; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Split & Koomen, 2009; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). The narrative descriptions collected from co-researchers in this study provided support for the above statement through their communication of lived experiences on the various short-term and long-term adverse impacts upon students, which ultimately impacted the children in those developmental areas. In fact, school psychologists ranked the emotional impact as the most frequently adversely impacted area by teacher-to-student mistreatment. The related literature from Brendgen et al. (2007), Davies (2011), Gibbs (2007), McEvoy (2005), Ray (2007), Twemlow et al. (2006), and Whitted and Dupper (2008) relayed various impacts of mistreatment upon a child. Co-researchers provided similar narrative responses concerning real student experiences which included personal descriptions of fear, anxiety, withdrawal, rumination, and discouragement in the educational setting. Findings from this study also supported the related literature by documenting co-researchers' experiences with student depression and anxiety, damage to students' self-confidence and self-esteem, lack of motivation and academic engagement, detachment from interpersonal relationships, and the broken bond of trust between the teachers and students. The significance of the current findings of this study reinforced Childers's (2009) call for research due to the "potential mental and emotional damage" (p. 7) that can be imposed upon a student.

The next topic covered in the literature review from Chapter Two embraced why mistreatment happens. The literature surrounding this topic led to creation of the fourth research sub-question that gathered perceptions from school psychologists on why the phenomenon occurs. The current research study findings supported the literature from Tsouloupas et al. (2010) which declared teacher-to-student mistreatment is due to teacher burnout and depression,

Nesbit and Philpott's (2002) research on the high levels of stress placed upon teachers by strenuous educational requirements, and Khoury-Kassabri's (2009) study which revealed there are general deficits in teaching skills regarding classroom management. School psychologists contributed assorted rationales for the phenomenon, including certain teachers' lack of skill in behavioral management, lack of understanding on how to deal with students who fall outside of their normal expectations, power struggles, personality factors, stress, and burnout. As previously addressed, the literature indicated that mistreatment by teachers persisted because key educational administrators rarely admit the problem exists, and do not recognize or stop the predicament as it manifests (Hyman & Snook, 1999; King & Janson, 2009; McEachern et al., 2008; McEvoy, 2005; Nesbit & Philpott, 2002; Twemlow et al., 2006; Whitted & Dupper, 2008). Co-researcher responses on this research study supported the above statement by providing relevant preventative recommendations for fellow school psychologists, teachers, and school administrators. For example, the prevention steps recommended for school administration include the need to acknowledge it, act on it, and actively prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment.

The professional role of the school psychologist was an important topic that was examined. From the literature review, the fifth research sub-question was created to describe how experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment have impacted the professional role of a school psychologist. This study revealed that the phenomenon produced diverse impacts upon this role. Involvement in the concept of child advocacy has been a "long standing tradition of commitment" (Hart, 1988, p. 252) by professional school psychologists. As noted in Chapter Two, educational professionals routinely seek the specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities of school psychologists in the areas of assessment, consultation, counseling, and teaching, as they

maintain a delicate balance between education and psychology (National Association of School Psychologists, 2009). Lazarus (2012) and Wnek et al. (2008) also emphasized the importance of the advocacy role of school psychologists. Findings corroborate both of these statements, adding that sometimes the phenomenon creates an increase in the advocacy, collaboration, and consultation duties of the school psychologist, creating an elevated stress and frustration level that makes many co-researchers question their genuine ability to help and fulfill their duties to be vital advocates for students. In relation to elevated stress levels, findings from the current study also support a study on occupational stressors of school psychologists by Mills and Huebner (1998) which confirmed "40% of the school psychologists reported high levels of emotional exhaustion, 10% reported depersonalization reactions, and 19% reported a reduced sense of personal accomplishment" (p. 103).

As quoted in Chapter Two, Lazarus (2012) stated, "we must do a better job in advocating for our children's emotional well-being. If we, as experts in the social-emotional development of children, do not, then who else will?" (p. 2). This study confirms the notion made by Twemlow et al. (2006) concerning "conflicting loyalties" (p. 196), as evidenced through the narrative confessions of school psychologists who often felt they had to walk a fine line between teachers and administrators while advocating for students. School psychologists reported that navigating personal and systemic boundaries (Lasser & Klose, 2007) can sometimes fracture relationships with fellow educators in the school system. Hamre et al. (2008) called on all educators, including school psychologists, to continue to be key educational resources and provide interventions that reduce interactions "that contribute to the development of poor student-teacher relationships" (p. 134). As the related literature summons school psychologists to help teachers improve upon their behaviors, perceptions, and relationships with the children they serve, the

findings of this study revealed that co-researchers possess a strong desire to expand their profession so that they are utilized less as assessors, but more as invaluable resources that exist as preventative, proactive links (see Figure 1) encouraging early interventions on issues between key stakeholders inside and outside of the school building. The results of this study validated the related literature on the significance of healthy teacher-student relationships in the educational setting (Brendgen et al., 2007; Hamre et al., 2008; Hyman & Snook, 1999; O'Connor, 2010; Ray, 2007; Thijs et al., 2008) and their significance in the prevention of teacher-to-student mistreatment.

Contributions to the Field of School Psychology

The intent of this study was to describe the experiences and perceptions that school psychologists had concerning the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment in their professional lives throughout the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting. As noted previously, Harrison (2009a) stressed that "school psychologists are indispensable school professionals who are uniquely qualified to assist with solutions for many issues related to children's learning and mental health" (p. 2). And Lazarus (2012) confirmed that "engaging in advocacy on behalf of children, their families, and the profession of school psychology is the responsibility of the association as well as every NASP member and leader" (p. 2).

With few American studies documenting teacher-to-student mistreatment, it was important to add to the limited body of knowledge on this phenomenon. This current study acknowledged that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment and school psychologists' observed occurrences of teacher-to-student mistreatment varied from frequently to rarely. However, the level of concern on the phenomenon in the school environment ranged from somewhat concerned to very concerned. Yet, recollections were strong and genuine

reactions were intense, regardless of the frequencies of the occurrences. School psychologists should be unsettled about the existence of teacher-to-student mistreatment in their school settings. This study contributes to the extremely rare school psychology literature on the subject (Hyman & Perone, 1998), which should prompt more interest in research and exploration of the issue.

During the course of this study, some psychologists discovered the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment to be a critical but ambiguous topic. Some co-researchers' personal awareness, consciousness, and interpretations of what constituted teacher-to-student mistreatment was not clear, and for those professionals, this complex topic remained a nebulous one, meaning vague, cloudy, not clearly defined or easy to perceive or understand. Anyone can witness mistreatment, but someone must consciously decide that the action has crossed an invisible line in order to constitute it as mistreatment. This is a personal decision that is based on one's own values and belief system. That is where the blur begins and ends. Acknowledging, defining, and educating within the field of school psychology, and then expanding into other educational professions, on the absolute definition of the phenomenon is an important first step in addressing this profound but multifaceted issue. The profession of school psychology should strive to be a discipline where consciousness and convictions are clear and firm when it comes to advocating and protecting students, and the identification of teacher-to-student mistreatment situations are made without hesitation, addressing it properly. King and Janson (2009) stated that educators "often observe children in harmful situations and do not act" (p. 1). As a point of meditation to the field of professional school psychologists, I reiterate this persuasive question from Chapter One concerning ethical and social responsibility: If one would naturally take measures to protect a student who is being sexually or physically abused by an educator, then

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why not advocate for a student who is being verbally or nonverbally mistreated by a teacher?

This qualitative study examining teacher-to-student mistreatment as experienced by school psychologists revealed implications for teacher education, contributed to future research on the topic, increased the understanding on the prevalence of the problem, and heightened awareness of the general public and educators everywhere. This study offered information to school psychologist professional organizations, such as the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists (VASP) and National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), concerning the phenomenon regarding professional development and training needs, and professional practices. I agree with the idea presented by Hart (1988) who boldly stated, "school psychologists can and should take leadership roles in preventing" (p. 252) mistreatment of students by teachers. In terms of training needs as revealed in the current study, discussion forum co-researchers expressed a desire for the field of school psychology to provide a standard definition of the phenomenon, a clearer picture of concerning behaviors, and at what point school psychologists are to intervene. Important preventative measures and professional development opportunities that were revealed can be implemented by teachers, school administrators, and fellow psychologists in the field of school psychology. Those recommendations, as indicated in Chapter Four, for teachers who mistreat students include elements of self-care, self-awareness, and self-reflection in conjunction with remaining open to feedback, constructive criticism, and recommendations for change. Preventative steps for school administrators include a requisite to acknowledge it, act on it, and actively prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. Preemptive themes for the profession of school psychology outlined included becoming mindful of personal stress levels and attending to self-care needs; recognizing mistreatment for what it is and to intervene promptly; be a more preventive, and proactive

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advocacy link (see Figure 1) between teachers, parents, students, and administrators; and educate all key stakeholders. This study also informs key stakeholders of needed policy changes in the educational environment relative to the phenomenon. School psychologists collectively voiced a desire to see enforceable policies and procedures in place for prohibiting teacher-to-student mistreatment, to expand the school psychology profession for equal input into systemic changes, and to be utilized less as assessors and more as preventive measures to help build healthy relationships between students and educators. As the National Association of School Psychologists (2012a) indicated "school psychologists are uniquely positioned to use their knowledge of psychology, education, and child development and their consultation and advocacy skills to affect policies and practices within the schools" (p. 4).

The aforementioned preventative measures and professional development recommendations for teachers lend themselves to the topic of a pressured teaching environment. The climate that teachers operate in presently is an important concern that was brought up by all co-researchers during various times of the data collection process. This type of distressed climate seems to contribute to the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon (McEachern et al., 2008). Abundant stress levels, personal and professional frustration, and burnout often accompanies reduced educational resources, time, skills and/or patience for students who fall outside of the teachers' normal expectations, including those children who are academically, behaviorally, emotionally, mentally, or physically challenged. These contributors to the phenomenon are real, everyday occurrences in the field of teaching, but the field of school psychology can take a positive reactive stance by taking measures to help alleviate elements of this pressured teaching climate. Professional development sessions on self-care, self-awareness, and self-reflection could help teachers to combat personal stressors and prevent burnout. School

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psychologists are an automatic resource to many in the educational environment, and fostering healthy, caring relationships with all teachers through reaching out in a professional manner is a step in the right direction. School psychologists can work proactively with educators to evaluate classroom management techniques to ensure an appropriate use of authority and control is used by teachers, and school psychologists can implement creative ways to ensure healthy relationship building between the teachers and students. Data from school psychologist responses revealed that teachers who mistreat students often possess a low tolerance for students who fall outside of the teachers' normal expectations, a lack of understanding of reasons why students behave the way they do, and/or a lack of behavior management skills to know how to appropriately deal with challenging student behaviors. School psychologists are educational specialists concerning topics of student development, disabilities, and behavior management. This expert level of knowledge, skills, and abilities can be passed on to teachers who would benefit from assistance in weak areas.

The findings of this study advance the scholarly knowledge on this sensitive yet complex topic, and have applied benefits for school psychologists worldwide. Through acknowledgment of the phenomenological problem and the defining of school psychologists' experiences, a resolution can emanate in a consolidated effort to advocate for and protect students. Bringing forth awareness of the phenomenon and its harmful effects on students may serve to deter its occurrences in the educational environment and to impress upon key stakeholders such as administrators that their role and responsibility on this issue is of great importance for the wellbeing of all students and the climate of the entire school system. As King and Janson (2009) and McEvoy (2005) have noted, not addressing episodes of teacher-to-student mistreatment has critical ethical and moral repercussions for everyone involved in the educational system. Because of the profound emotional and mental harm teacher-to-student mistreatment can cause on a child, it is

important for professional school psychologists to recognize the seriousness of the phenomenon, acknowledge how students are adversely impacted, and utilize the knowledge gained from those two actions to stop and counteract mistreatment from occurring in the school setting by becoming that preventative link (see Figure 1) between teachers, parents, students, and administrators.

Limitations

As with all studies, there are limitations and areas of potential weakness on the study's data and outcome. The participants in this study included school psychologists who work in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Although this allowed for a statewide perspective versus local point-of-view, a larger sample population from a nationwide poll would have increased the number of participants and expanded the transferability of data found in the study. The number of males included in this study could also be a limiting factor. Out of the 139 total survey participants in this study, there were 16% males ($n = 22$) and 84% females ($n = 117$), which is generally representative of the male/female population as a whole in the school psychology profession (National Association of School Psychologists, 2012b). Other limitations can be attributed to the qualitative design of the study, including using volunteer participants and self-reporting of recollected data. A potential limitation to the credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), or internal validity, of the study could have been a school psychologist's reliance on his or her recollections. This limitation could be due to recall bias (Patten, 2003), where school psychologists rely on their memories to recall past phenomenological events. School psychologists may have been limited in their remembrance of specific circumstances as they actually happened. Reflecting on prior experiences tainted by bias may have contributed to inexact survey or interview data. Relaying of unpleasant events of the past could have made the

co-researcher uncomfortable, which might be a limiting factor on sharing narrative information. Another limitation could have been co-researchers' inclination to provide socially desirable responses due to the sensitive nature of the phenomenon: School psychologists could have possibly altered their responses in an effort to conceal the true level of teacher-to-student mistreatment observed in their school districts. Because of the purpose of the study, some co-researchers may have underestimated or overestimated their self-report on the phenomenon. Although the research questions were developed based on a thorough review of the literature, and I utilized a pilot test, an expert review, and the IRB approval process, some limitations of this study could be directly related to the strength of the survey, interview, and discussion forum researcher generated questions. Every known precaution was taken to validate each question and to ensure the inquiries were relevant, free of bias, and were attempting to assess what was being investigated. Due to the nature of the study and my familiarity with the phenomenon, an element of bias was possible. However, with each co-researcher encounter, I strived to minimize this bias to reduce misrepresentation and misinterpretation of the data. Through use of bracketing for experiences, memoing, audit trail, and through constant self-awareness and self-reflection, I continually meditated on not influencing the co-researchers' responses in any way.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Future Research**</div>

This study provides several directions for further research. Additional research is needed to examine the changing roles of the school psychologist and how this impacts ongoing training needs. An overwhelming majority of school psychologists (72.0%) in this study readily admitted to never receiving any direct training on how to effectively deal with the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon, resulting in 92.4% of school psychologists who have never provided in-service training to other educational staff members concerning the topic. Education is a key

component in breaking down the cycle of this phenomenon, which must start with the professional school psychologist. School psychologists in this study expressed concern that the overall awareness of the phenomenon is lacking in educational conversations, and therefore not confronted in the academic environment, or in the preparatory curriculum provided to school psychologists during their college or university training. Based on this data, future research could incorporate the professional development needs on many levels: locally, regionally, statewide, and nationwide.

Another recommendation includes using a qualitative research study with educators who are housed full-time with the students in the school building, such as school guidance counselors; this would be a logical next step in the research process. As McEachern et al. (2008) explained, "counselors assume multiple roles when dealing with issues of school-based emotional abuse: consultants, advocates, mediators, identifiers, counselors, and change agents" (p. 6). Expanding this research study to encompass the lived experiences and perspectives of guidance counselors, who are akin to first-responders in the school system, would be a natural extension of the current study, and the data gathered would add validation to and confirmation of the phenomenon, complementing the current findings. Similarly, professional itinerant educators, such as occupational therapists, school social workers, and speech pathologists, often travel from school to school interacting one-on-one with students and teachers, which makes them good candidates for research on this phenomenon. These professionals also have a unique overview of the school district, but with an in-depth scope of how teachers and students interact.

Data gathered from co-researchers in this study revealed some school districts utilize employee assistance programs, sometimes known as EAP, that are put in place to help with employee problems and to alleviate personal stressors, therefore reducing the number of

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phenomenon incidents. These employee assistance programs essentially offer a safe environment to share and vent, not creating a "gotcha" moment, but they provide a place to work on problem solving and skill building. Future research concerning school districts use of employee assistance programs and their effectiveness in the reduction of teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon would be of great interest to many in the educational field.

In terms of stress imposed upon students, data from the survey revealed that 88.1% of school psychologists believe that up to one-quarter of all students are mistreated by teachers, creating a situation that can cause high levels of stress and frustration in the educational environment. The negative impact of teacher-to-student mistreatment on students can be significant and persistent, creating both short-term and long-term repercussions. Hyman (1985) described adverse effects to be "long lasting, periodic, and episodic" (p. 36). Therefore, it may be useful to research and evaluate Irwin Hyman's (1985) concept of "Educator-Induced Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome" for diagnostic relevance. As documented by Hyman and Zelikoff (1987), there is "evidence that the pattern of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in children can be generated by educators" (p. 3). Further investigation into this little known and recognized clinical syndrome in school aged children would be beneficial to mental health professionals.

Finally, research can be expanded nationally and then internationally. This research study was conducted statewide. Future research can encompass the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to broaden the database of school psychologists' voices nationwide, and then further to international platforms, to amplify the voice of the professional school psychologists concerning the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. As Hyman (1985) recommended in his paper presentation, *Psychological Abuse in the Schools: A School*

Psychologist's Perspective, at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, abuse in the school environment needs more attention and a larger data base in which to examine solutions. And Hart (1988) established in professional publications that mistreatment of students by teachers "has been given relatively little attention by the general public and helping professions, and it has seldom been the primary target of research or intervention" (p. 243). Data from future national and international research studies can help fill that void.

Conclusion

There is a basic structure of hierarchy in most organizations. In the school environment, school administrators supervise teachers, and teachers are authority figures over students. Positions of authority should adhere to ethical and moral standards. Therefore, any action by a teacher that denigrates, degrades, or manipulates students, or misuses their authority and power to abuse or control students, are clear descriptions of teacher-to-student mistreatment, which is inappropriate at any time and in any environment. It is important for school psychologists to become that link in an organization that encourages both teachers and students to respect one another; after all, we are all human beings who desire love and acceptance in this world.

While this study establishes the existence of teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational environment, the outcome of this sometimes ambiguous topic is that the phenomenon continues to refer to students being mistreated academically, socially, emotionally, and/or psychologically. Thus, the phenomenon remains one that is ethically and morally inappropriate, and is completely preventable. The professional school psychologist possesses the knowledge, skills, and ability to persevere as the proactive, preventative link (see Figure 1) between teachers, parents, students, and administrators to eradicate teacher-to-student mistreatment.
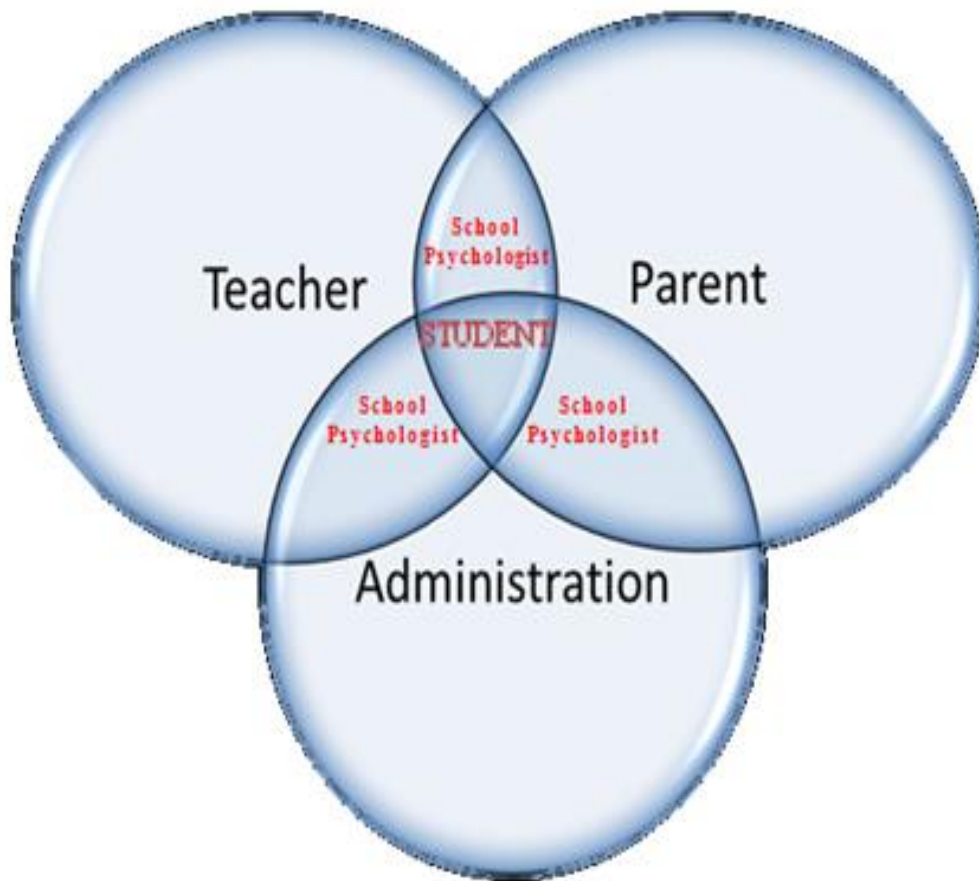
Figure 1. Visual model of the link by school psychologists created by Sharon Lyles.

The professional school psychologist possesses the knowledge, skills, and ability to persevere as

the proactive, preventative link between teachers, parents, students, and administrators to

eradicate teacher-to-student mistreatment.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 5, 2013

Sharon Lyles
IRB Approval 1713.110513: School Psychologists' Experiences with Teacher-to-Student Mistreatment

Dear Sharon,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

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APPENDIX B
Cover Letter

(Delivered by U.S. Mail)

Dear School Psychologist,

I would like to invite you to participate in a qualitative dissertation research study that I am conducting as a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am particularly interested in your responses because of your valuable experience as a professional school psychologist. You were selected as a possible participant because your name was chosen from the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists' (VASP) membership database and there was no corresponding email address in the VADOE directory. The researcher of this study is Sharon Lyles, who is a nationally certified, licensed school psychologist and a VASP member.

Online Survey Invitation

To participate in this study, utilize the website link listed below to access the online survey. The website has been created exclusively for this research project. Five participants completing the online survey will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com. The online survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. There is an option at the end of the online survey to be considered for an interview and participation in a brief online discussion forum. The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes and the online discussion forum will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your confidentiality is of utmost importance in this study. Your survey responses are being provided anonymously. Confidential data obtained from you will be combined with data from other participants; pseudonyms will be utilized. A statement of informed consent, confidentiality, and other important information about this research study can be found in the attached Consent Form, and on the website.

In order to complete the survey, please enter this website address on your computer, which will link you to the survey.
www.spstudy.org

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting.

Definitions

- Teacher-to-student mistreatment will be generally defined as a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment.
- This study excludes the topics of the sexual and physical abuse.

Information in this letter and the accompanying consent form is provided to assist you in your decision to take part in this research study. Please read this information carefully. If you have any questions about this research study, contact Sharon Lyles at (omitted). The research chair's

name is Dr. Rita Schellenberg at (omitted), rcschellenberg@liberty.edu.

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Your input is *very valuable* to the school psychology profession!
Thank you very much for your participation.
Sharon Lyles, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP, VASP member
Remember to access the online survey at   www.spstudy.org

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(Delivered by Email)

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Dear School Psychologist,
I would like to invite you to participate in a qualitative dissertation research study that I am conducting as a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am particularly interested in your responses because of your valuable experiences as a professional school psychologist. You are receiving this letter by email because your name and contact information was included in the Virginia Department of Education (VADOE) school psychologist directory. Permission was obtained and a directory listing was provided by VADOE. The researcher of this study is Sharon Lyles, who is a nationally certified, licensed school psychologist and a VASP member.

Online Survey Invitation
To participate in this study, utilize the link listed below to access the online anonymous survey. Five participants completing the online survey will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com. The online survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. There is an option at the end of the online survey to be considered for an interview and participation in a brief online discussion forum. The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes and the online discussion forum will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Your confidentiality is of utmost importance in this study. Your survey responses are being provided anonymously. Confidential data obtained from you will be combined with data from other participants; pseudonyms will be utilized. A statement of informed consent, confidentiality, and other important information about this research study can be found in the attached Informed Consent Form, and on the www.spstudy.org website.

<div align="center">

In order to complete the survey, please launch the online survey from this link
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HQJQB2H

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Purpose
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Your input is *very valuable* to the school psychology profession!
Thank you very much for your participation.
Sharon Lyles, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP, VASP member
Remember to access the online survey at   https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HQJQB2H

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APPENDIX C
Informed Consent

Consent Form
(Delivered by U.S. Mail)
School psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment.
Sharon Lyles
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to participate in a qualitative dissertation research study of school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational setting. You were selected as a possible participant because your name was selected from the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists' (VASP) membership database and there was no corresponding email address in the VADOE directory. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.   This study is being conducted by Sharon Lyles, a nationally certified, licensed school psychologist and doctoral candidate at Liberty University, School of Education.

Background Information:
The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting.

Definitions:
- Teacher-to-student mistreatment will be generally defined as a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment.
- The operational definition of observation is the point at which school psychologists become cognizant of the phenomenon through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day.
- Areas of concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, include teachers' verbal communications toward and about students, as well as teachers' nonverbal communications, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language.
- This study excludes the topics of the sexual and physical abuse.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
- Complete an anonymous online survey.
- There will be an option at the end of the survey to offer your contact information for consideration of a one-time, audio recorded confidential interview and brief discussion forum for follow-up questions. Pseudonyms will be provided. Audio recording is for transcription purposes only. You do not have to participate in the interview to complete

the online survey.
- This research study strives to discover school psychologists' perceptions of the phenomenon; it does not seek to isolate information on specific teachers or students.
- Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential. Consent will be assumed if the questions have been answered.
- Completing the confidential online survey should take approximately fifteen (15) minutes or less.
- The survey will be open for up to three weeks as its designated time frame for participation.

If you chose to offer your contact information and you are chosen for an interview and discussion form:
- Interviews will be either in the online format with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or Face Time, or face-to-face at a convenient location such as a place of work, business or home. Pseudonyms will be used to protect privacy. After giving written informed consent, the interviewee will choose the mode and site that is most convenient, confidential, and comfortable.
- The Discussion Forum will be in a convenient online format where the invited interviewee will connect briefly on the forum for checking of data gathered, clarification, follow-up, and feedback purposes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
As participation in this survey is confidential and anonymous, potential risks to you are minimal and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate.
- You may withdraw at any time with no penalty by closing out of the Surveymonkey.com website.
- If during the study, mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others are revealed, each case will be examined on an individual basis and addressed as required by law. The researcher will respond to these events by asking if the respondent reported such events as required by their school protocol and to extend an offer to help the interviewee find appropriate resources in his/her geographic area.
- Although there are no direct benefits to participation, there remains some benefit to society as a result of this study. It may increase the overall knowledge of issues surrounding the phenomenon experienced collectively by the school psychologist profession. Through acknowledgment of the phenomenon and the defining of school psychologists' experiences, there can emanate a resolution in a consolidated effort to advocate for and protect students.

Compensation:
Five participants completing the survey and providing an email address for contest entry will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com. Also, those participants expressing interest in being considered for a confidential interview and discussion forum at the end of the survey will gain an entry into the gift card giveaway contest. The drawing will occur in three weeks. At that time, the online survey will close for participation. Winners

will be notified by email. All email addresses provided for the contest entry will be separated from data collected to ensure anonymity in responses.

Confidentiality:
• Your confidentiality is of utmost importance in this study. Your survey responses are being provided anonymously. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times through this process. Your privacy and the research data will be kept confidential to the extent of the law.
• Research records will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet, and only researcher will have access to the records. After the three year time period for maintaining research data, all individual research-related data will be deleted, erased, and destroyed.
• Data from VASP members, who participated through a mailed invitation letter, will not be tracked due to the lack of an email address, allowing for both anonymity and confidentially in responses.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. Participation will not affect relations with the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists and the Virginia Department of Education. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Sharon Lyles, a licensed school psychologist and doctoral candidate at Liberty University, School of Education. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact her at (omitted). The research chair's name is Dr. Rita Schellenberg at (omitted).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the IRB at (omitted).
Please retain a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

To accept this informed consent allowing participation in this important study,
Enter this website address on your computer, which will link you to the survey.
www.spstudy.org
Proceed to the online survey and **select ACCEPT.**
Consent will be assumed if the survey questions have been answered.

Your input is very valuable to the school psychology profession!
Thank you very much for your participation.
Sharon Lyles, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP, VASP member

IRB Code Numbers: 1713
IRB Expiration Date: 11-5-2014

Consent Form

(Delivered by Email)
School psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment.
Sharon Lyles
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to participate in a qualitative dissertation research study of school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational setting. You were selected as a possible participant because your name and contact information was included in the Virginia Department of Education (VADOE) school psychologist directory. Permission was obtained and a directory listing was provided by VADOE. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by Sharon Lyles, a nationally certified, licensed school psychologist and doctoral candidate at Liberty University, School of Education.

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• Areas of concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, include teachers' verbal communications toward and about students, as well as teachers' nonverbal communications, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language.
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Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
• Complete an anonymous online survey.
• There will be an option at the end of the survey to offer your contact information for consideration of a one-time, audio recorded confidential interview and brief discussion

forum for follow-up questions. Pseudonyms will be provided. Audio recording is for transcription purposes only. You do not have to participate in the interview to complete the online survey.
- This research study strives to discover school psychologists' perceptions of the phenomenon; it does not seek to isolate information on specific teachers or students.
- Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential. Consent will be assumed if the questions have been answered.
- Completing the confidential online survey should take approximately fifteen (15) minutes or less.
- The survey will be open for up to three weeks as its designated time frame for participation. At the two-week mark, a reminder email will be sent to participants email addresses.

If you chose to offer your contact information and you are chosen for an interview and discussion forum:
- Interviews will be either in the online format with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or Face Time, or face-to-face at a convenient location such as a place of work, business or home. Pseudonyms will be used to protect privacy. After giving written informed consent, the interviewee will choose the mode and site that is most convenient, confidential, and comfortable.
- The Discussion Forum will be in a convenient online format where the invited interviewee will connect briefly on the forum for checking of data gathered, clarification, follow-up, and feedback purposes.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
As participation in this survey is confidential and anonymous, potential risks to you are minimal and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate.
- You may withdraw at any time with no penalty by closing out of the Surveymonkey.com website.
- If during the study, mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others are revealed, each case will be examined on an individual basis and addressed as required by law. The researcher will respond to these events by asking if the respondent reported such events as required by their school protocol and to extend an offer to help the interviewee find appropriate resources in his/her geographic area.
- Although there are no direct benefits to participation, there remains some benefit to society as a result of this study. It may increase the overall knowledge of issues surrounding the phenomenon experienced collectively by the school psychologist profession. Through acknowledgment of the phenomenon and the defining of school psychologists' experiences, there can emanate a resolution in a consolidated effort to advocate for and protect students.

Compensation:
Five participants completing the survey and providing an email address for contest entry will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com. Also, those

participants expressing interest in being considered for a confidential interview and discussion forum at the end of the survey will gain an entry into the gift card giveaway contest. The drawing will occur in three weeks. At that time, the online survey will close for participation. Winners will be notified by email. All email addresses provided for the contest entry will be separated from data collected to ensure anonymity in responses.

Confidentiality:
•   Your confidentiality is of utmost importance in this study. Your survey responses are being provided anonymously. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times through this process. Your privacy and the research data will be kept confidential to the extent of the law.
•   Research records will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet, and only researcher will have access to the records. After the three year time period for maintaining research data, all individual research-related data will be deleted, erased, and destroyed.
•   The electronic survey data collected will be kept confidential and your survey responses are being provided anonymously.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. Participation will not affect relations with the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists and the Virginia Department of Education. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Sharon Lyles, a licensed school psychologist and doctoral candidate at Liberty University, School of Education. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact her at (omitted). The research chair's name is Dr. Rita Schellenberg at (omitted).
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, (omitted).
Please retain a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

To accept this informed consent allowing participation in this important study,
please launch the online survey from this link
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HQJQB2H
Proceed to the online survey and **select ACCEPT.**
Consent will be assumed if the survey questions have been answered.

Your input is very valuable to the school psychology profession!
Thank you very much for your participation.
Sharon Lyles, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP, VASP member

IRB Code Numbers: 1713
IRB Expiration Date: 11-5-2014

APPENDIX D
Survey Questions

Online Survey
Informed Consent

1. Please indicate your choice. Do you agree to informed consent?
*   Accept - Yes, Proceed with the anonymous survey.
*   Decline – No, Close the survey.

Online Survey
Part 1

Demographic Data

2. What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
3. Please indicate your age range:
    a. Under 25
    b. 25-35
    c. 36-45
    d. 46-55
    e. 56-65
    f. 66 and over
4. How many years of experience do you have working as a school psychologist?
    a. 1-2
    b. 3-4
    c. 5-10
    d. 11-15
    e. More than 15
5. Please indicate your highest degree level:
    a. Master's degree
    b. Educational Specialist degree
    c. Doctoral degree
    d. Other
6. Please indicate your membership:
    a. VASP – Virginia Academy of School Psychologists
    b. NASP - National Association of School Psychologists
    c. Both VASP and NASP
    d. None, not a current member of either.
7. What is the main setting of your work place as a school psychologist?
    a. Public school
    b. Private school
    c. Hospital

       d. Private Practice/Consultant

       e. Other

8. Please estimate the total number of students at the schools that you serve:

       a. >50

       b. 51-100

       c. 101-1,000

       d. 1,001-5,000

       e. 5,000<

9. What is the main setting of your work place as a school psychologist?

       a. Rural/Suburban

       b. Urban/City

10. In what type of school are you mainly employed?

       a. Primary/Elementary

       b. Junior High/Middle School

       c. High School

       d. Multiple levels of school

11. What state do you work in as a school psychologist?

       a. Virginia

       b. Virginia and another state(s)

       c. Other (a different state other than Virginia)

12. In what general region of Virginia do you mainly practice?

       a. North/Northern area

       b. South/Central area

       c. East/Tidewater area

       d. West/Southwest area

Online Survey
Part 2

➢ Understanding what school psychologists' holistic experiences are with the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic is essential to comprehend.

13. In your opinion, does teacher-to-student mistreatment exist in the school environment? (Teacher-to-student mistreatment will be generally defined as <u>a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors</u> directed toward students as observed by school psychologists in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment. This study <u>excludes</u> the topics of sexual and physical abuse. Areas of concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, include teacher's verbal communication toward and about students, as well as teacher's nonverbal communication, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language.)
1=Agree (Yes)
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Disagree (No)

14. As a school psychologist, rate how often <u>you</u> have <u>observed</u> incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment.
(The operational definition of observation is the point at which school psychologists

become cognizant of the phenomenon through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day.)
1=Frequently
2=Occasionally
3=Rarely
4=Never

15. Rate your level of concern for teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment.
1=Very concerned
2=Somewhat concerned
3=Not concerned at all

16. In your opinion as a school psychologist, what general percentage (%) of students are mistreated by teachers?
1= 100%
2= 75%-99%
3= 50%-74%
4= 25%-49%
5= 1%-24%
6= 0%

17. As a school psychologist, have you ever received any direct training on how to effectively deal with the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon (i.e., a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors toward students)?
1=Agree (Yes)
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Disagree (No)

18. Choose a response: When school psychologists and educators begin a discussion, it is usually not difficult for them to recall situations where teachers bullied or mistreated students.
1=Agree (Yes)
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Disagree (No)

19. Do you believe that there is a high degree of agreement among students on which teachers mistreat students?
1=Agree (Yes)
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Disagree (No)

20. Rate your response on teacher-to-student mistreatment. As a school psychologist, do you feel that you take:
1=a passive response (i.e., It is an administrative problem.)
2=a neutral response (i.e., No response. It is not my problem.)
3=a stronger, significant response (i.e., It is everyone's problem. It is a form of abuse and needs attention. Bystanders and others are also impacted.)

21. Do you believe that when a teacher's authority to physically spank (i.e., corporal punishment) was made illegal, teachers' use of verbal abuse increased?
1=Agree (Yes)
2=Neutral (Not sure)

    3=Disagree (No)

22. As a <u>professional school psychologist</u>, please describe the <u>worst teacher-to-student</u> <u>mistreatment experience ever observed</u> in the educational setting. (Please do not include real names of people or schools.)
    1=Answer

23. As a school psychologist recalling your own Pre-K – Grade 12 experience, would you consider <u>yourself</u> a victim of teacher-to-student mistreatment?
    1=Agree (Yes)
    2=Neutral (Not sure)
    3=Disagree (No)

➢ Understanding what destructive behaviors are present in the school environment that influence the teacher-student relationship is fundamental in finding opportunities for resolution.

24. Do you believe that some teachers exhibit negative behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?
(An operational description of an adverse teacher-student relationship consists of teacher behaviors that are harmful, ineffective, and non-nurturing; behaviors that denigrate students, decreasing elements of respect, rapport, cooperation, and communication between the teacher and the student.)
    1=Agree (Yes)
    2=Neutral (Not sure)
    3=Disagree (No)

25. There are different types of negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. What types of adverse behaviors have you observed <u>teachers</u> engaging in towards students? Indicate all that you have observed below.

<u>Verbal mistreatment behaviors:</u>
1=cursing/swearing
2=excessive verbal punishment/reprimand(s)
3=labeling
4=name calling
5=negative comparison
6=negative prediction
7=shaming
8=teasing
9=threats/terrorizing/coercion
10=verbal aggression/manipulation
11=verbal putdowns/ridiculing/sarcasm/humiliation
12=yelling
13=other verbal mistreatment behaviors (please specify)

<u>Nonverbal mistreatment behaviors:</u>
14=emotional mistreatment
15=excessive punishment

16=excessive discipline referrals
17=humiliation/diminish self-concept
18=ignoring/shunning/rejecting
19=inducing fear
20=intimidation through gestures and body language
21=isolation
22=non-sexual abuse of teacher power
23=psychological distress
24=scapegoating
25=withholding affection
26=other nonverbal mistreatment behaviors (please specify)

26. Indicate the frequency of negative <u>verbal</u> teacher behaviors observed. Put in order the <u>verbal</u> behaviors that occur <u>most frequently</u> to <u>least frequent</u>.
    1=cursing/swearing
    2=excessive verbal punishment/reprimand(s)
    3=labeling
    4=name calling
    5=negative comparison
    6=negative prediction
    7=shaming
    8=teasing
    9=threats/terrorizing/coercion
    10=verbal aggression/manipulation
    11=verbal putdowns/ridiculing/sarcasm/humiliation
    12=yelling
    13=other verbal mistreatment behaviors
27. Indicate the frequency of negative <u>nonverbal</u> teacher behaviors observed. Put in order the <u>nonverbal</u> behaviors that occur <u>most frequently</u> to <u>least frequent</u>.
    1=emotional mistreatment
    2=excessive punishment
    3=excessive discipline referrals
    4=humiliation/diminish self-concept
    5=ignoring/shunning/rejecting
    6=inducing fear
    7=intimidation through gestures and body language
    8=isolation
    9=non-sexual abuse of teacher power
    10=psychological distress
    11=scapegoating
    12=withholding affection
    13=other nonverbal mistreatment behaviors
28. Do you believe that teachers who mistreat students have lost their sensitivity to…?
    1=the power of verbal remarks
    2=the power and usefulness of nonverbal communication
    3=both of the above

4=none of the above

29. How often have you observed teachers using negative verbal and nonverbal behavior as a classroom management technique to maintain classroom discipline?
    1=Frequently
    2=Occasionally
    3=Rarely
    4=Never

30. As a school psychologist, what <u>patterns</u> of teacher behavior have you noticed that contribute to negative feelings toward a student (e.g., never smiles, refuses recommendations, lack of positive feedback or encouragement, always criticizes)?
    1=Answer

31. What do you perceive as the negative <u>student behaviors</u> that may trigger or contribute to negative reactions in teachers?
    1=Answer

➢ It is key for school psychologists to define what they observe of the phenomenon. Delineation of vocabulary and language gathered from co-researcher's narrative data will assist in clearly establishing the essence of the study.

32. How do you <u>define</u> teacher-to-student mistreatment?
    1=Answer

33. Indicate terms that <u>describe</u> teacher-student mistreatment.
    Put in order the terms that you feel describes the phenomenon in the educational setting <u>from best describes</u> to <u>least describes</u>.
    1= abuse
    2= bullying
    3= emotionally distressing
    4= maltreatment
    5= mistreatment
    6= neglectful
    7= psychologically damaging

➢ For moral and ethical reasons, it is essential to query school psychologists for further explanation of the observed short and long-term impact of mistreatment on students. (The operational definition of adverse impact in this case is the result of short-term and/or long-term negative effects of inappropriate and harmful behavior by the teacher towards the student.)

34. Rate how often you believe teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively impacts students' psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally?
    1=Frequently
    2=Occasionally
    3=Rarely
    4=Never

35. Rank these areas as being <u>most frequently</u> to <u>least frequently</u> adversely impacted by teacher-to-student mistreatment.

1=academically
2=emotionally
3=psychologically
4=socially

36. What <u>short-term</u> impact(s) have you observed in students from teacher-to-student mistreatment? Indicate all that you have observed.
1=Academic problems (e.g., failing grades, school avoidance, truancy, depressed learning, lack of academic progress)
2=Emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability)
3=Behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, anger, conduct disorder, disruptiveness, inattention, hostility)
4=Psychological trauma (e.g., psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual self-doubt)
5=Impaired Social Functioning (e.g., lack of social skills, no friends, social deficits, adjustment problems
6=Confusion
7=Declining school morale/atmosphere/climate
8=Depression/Sad/Crying/Anxious
9=Drop-out of school
10=Excessive worrying
11=Fear/Phobia/Anxiety
12=Humiliation
13=Incontinence/Encopresis problems
14=Lying
15=Poor/Loss of appetite
16=Resentment/Poor attitude
17=Sleep disturbance/Nightmares/Night terrors
18=Somatizations (e.g., stomach ache, headache, backache, body aches)
19=Stealing
20=Stress/Tension
21=Suicide
22=Suicide attempt/Self-mutilation
23=Weight changes (e.g., weight gain/loss, purging, binging, self-image/body image problems)
24=Withdrawal/Give-up/Lack of motivation
25=Other (please specify)

37. What <u>long-term</u> impact(s) have you observed in students from teacher-to-student mistreatment? Indicate all that you have observed.
1=Academic problems (e.g., failing grades, school avoidance, truancy, depressed learning, lack of academic progress)
2=Emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability)
3=Behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, anger, conduct disorder, disruptiveness, inattention, hostility)
4=Psychological trauma (e.g., psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual self-doubt)
5=Impaired Social Functioning (e.g., lack of social skills, no friends, social deficits,

adjustment problems
6=Confusion
7=Declining school morale/atmosphere/climate
8=Depression/Sad/Crying/Anxious
9=Drop-out of school
10=Excessive worrying
11=Fear/Phobia/Anxiety
12=Humiliation
13=Incontinent/Encopresis problems
14=Lying
15=Poor/Loss of appetite
16=Resentment/Poor attitude
17=Sleep disturbance/Nightmares/Night terrors
18=Somatizations (e.g., stomach ache, headache, backache, body aches)
19=Stealing
20=Stress/Tension
21=Suicide
22=Suicide attempt/Self-mutilation
23=Weight changes (e.g., weight gain/loss, purging, binging, self-image/body image problems)
24=Withdrawal/Give-up/Lack of motivation
25=Other (please specify)

➢ Establishing an inquiry into school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens may increase understanding of the problem and assist in educating affected teachers to adopt appropriate behavioral modifications.

38. What are your perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?
     1=Answer
39. Indicate what situation(s) you believe may influence teacher-to-student mistreatment in the classroom. Put in order from most likely to least likely.
     1=Teacher burnout
     2=Teacher personal stressors/Depression
     3=Teacher personality characteristics/Angry/Resentful attitude
     4=Educator/Administrative pressure
     5=Federal/State unfunded mandates
     6=Lack of teacher skill in classroom management
     7=Student misbehavior
     8=Standardized testing (SOL) score pressures/Accountability
     9=Time constraints/Loss of instruction time
     10=Work environment stress/Low morale/school climate
40. Does your school system have a policy in place that…?
     1= specifically addresses, discourages, or prohibits teacher-to-student mistreatment?
     2= indicates the consequence or punishment for teacher-to-student mistreatment?
     3= both of the above
     4= none of the above

41. Would it be beneficial for school systems to have a policy in place that outlines teacher-to-student mistreatment and delineates the penalty for those educators who violate the policy?
    1=Agree (Yes)
    2=Neutral (Not sure)
    3=Disagree (No)

➤ Lasser and Klose (2007) noted that "school psychologists must frequently navigate systems boundaries, conflicting values and beliefs, and multiple roles" (p. 484), and evaluative choices have to be made daily concerning personal and ethical decisions. These contradictions influence decision making choices of the school psychologist and the bearing upon their educational role and profession.
Lasser, J., & Klose, L. M. (2007). School psychologists' ethical decision making: Implications from selected social psychological phenomena. School Psychology Review, 36(3), 484-450.

42. How have your experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted your overall professional role as a school psychologist?
    1=Answer
43. Due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, indicate how often you advocate for students.
    1=Frequently
    2=Occasionally
    3=Rarely
    4=Never
44. Due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, how often do you counsel or consult with teachers about their behavior toward or interactions with students?
    1=Frequently
    2=Occasionally
    3=Rarely
    4=Never
45. How often have you provided in-service training or offered professional development concerning the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic?
    1=Frequently
    2=Occasionally
    3=Rarely
    4=Never
46. Due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, do you seek out personal coping strategies because you find yourself stressed more? (e.g., self-care, relaxation therapy, spa, salon, retail therapy, exercise, time-off, etc.).
    1=Agree (Yes)
    2=Neutral (Not sure)
    3=Disagree (No)
47. How often does your normal routine get disrupted to address the repercussions of a teacher-to-student mistreatment situation?
    1=Frequently

2=Occasionally

3=Rarely

4=Never

48. Are teacher-to-student mistreatment situations so frequent in your current job, that you find yourself questioning if school psychology was the right career path for you?

1=Agree (Yes)

2=Neutral (Not sure)

3=Disagree (No)

49. Complete this sentence: Sometimes I feel so frustrated with teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents, that …….

1=Answer

50. Do you believe that teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents have increased during your career as a school psychologist?

1=Agree (Yes)

2=Neutral (Not sure)

3=Disagree (No)

51. How often do you discuss teacher-to-student mistreatment situations with other trusted school psychologist(s)/co-worker(s)?

1=Frequently

2=Occasionally

3=Rarely

4=Never

52. How often do you report teacher-to-student mistreatment situations to school administration in a school year?

1=Frequently

2=Occasionally

3=Rarely

4=Never

53. Of those reported to school administration, how often are teacher-to-student mistreatment situations addressed with the teacher in question or investigated?

1=Frequently

2=Occasionally

3=Rarely

4=Never

54. When you report situations to school administration, rate your belief on the school administrations' level of concern on the mistreatment situation.

1=Very concerned

2=Somewhat concerned

3=Not concerned at all

55. Do you feel that school administration takes your report(s) seriously?

1=Agree (Yes)

2=Neutral (Not sure)

3=Disagree (No)

56. How often do you feel that you cannot go to school administration to report or discuss teacher-student mistreatment, for fear of retaliation, undue judgment, or repercussions?

1=Frequently

2=Occasionally
3=Rarely
4=Never

57. Do you feel that school administration <u>will not</u> listen or respond in the way you want them to, which further discourages you to report or discuss teacher-student mistreatment?
1=Agree (Yes)
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Disagree (No)

58. During your career as a school psychologist, has the level of <u>student reporting</u> of teacher-student mistreatment…?
1=Increased
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Decreased

59. During your career as a school psychologist, has the level of <u>parent reporting</u> of teacher-student mistreatment…?
1=Increased
2=Neutral (Not sure)
3=Decreased

60. During your career as a school psychologist, have you ever encouraged a parent/guardian to report a teacher-student mistreatment situation…..?
1=to the school administration
2=to the Virginia Department of Education
3=both the school administration and the Virginia Department of Education
4=neither

61. During your career as a school psychologist, have <u>you</u> ever reported teacher-student mistreatment to….? Indicate all that apply.
1= the local school superintendent or school board
2= the Virginia Department of Education
3= other advocacy group
4= other state or federal agency
5= none

**Online Survey
Part 3**

School psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment need to be researched due to the absence of studies in this area.   Please consider sharing your voice of experience with teacher-student mistreatment through a confidential interview.

Confidential Interviews are requested!

62. Would you like to offer your contact information to be considered for a confidential interview? (Note: Contact information will be separated from survey answers to ensure

anonymity).
(Clicking below will 'pop open' a new window for collecting information....)

Answer:
Yes (Note: Participant will be redirected to a separate survey so contact information can be provided separate from the online survey questions ensuring anonymity.   Contact information will be separated from survey answers to ensure anonymity. WebLink to the "Contact Information" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WCS3JZ3)
No (If no – survey will continue to Question #63.)

THIS IS THE WINDOW THAT OPENS (WebLink to the "Contact Information" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WCS3JZ3)
1. If you are selected:
• Pseudonyms will be provided by the researcher. The Interview will be confidential, one-time, and audio recorded (for transcription purposes, then destroyed). It will be followed-up by a brief online (approximately 10 minutes) discussion forum for follow-up questions. You do not have to participate in the interview to complete the online survey.
• Interviews will be either in the online format with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or Face Time, or face-to-face at a convenient location such as a place of work, business or home. The interviewee will choose the mode and site that is most convenient, confidential, and comfortable.
• The Discussion Forum will be in a convenient online format where the invited interviewee will connect briefly on the forum for checking of data gathered, clarification, follow-up, and feedback purposes.
• The offer of your email address will also provide you with an entry into the Gift Card Giveaway Contest!
Note: The information entered here is separate from the survey data collected to ensure privacy and anonymity in responses given.
Name:
Email Address:
Phone Number:

63. As a Thank You incentive, five participants completing the online survey will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com!
Would you like to be included in the gift card giveaway contest? Email addresses will be separated from survey answers to ensure anonymity.
(Clicking below will pop open a new window....)

Answer:
Yes – (Note: Participant will be redirected to a separate survey so email address can be provided separate from the online survey questions ensuring anonymity. WebLink to the "Gift Card giveaway" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q5LPL9C)
No - I do not wish to be included in the gift card giveaway contest. (If no, Survey will end/close.)

THIS IS THE WINDOW THAT OPENS (WebLink to the "Gift Card giveaway" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q5LPL9C)

1. "As a Thank You incentive, five participants completing the online survey will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com!"

If you would like to be included in the gift card giveaway contest, please indicate an email address as your contest entry. If you win, this email address will be used to contact you. Note: All email addresses entered here are separate from the survey data collected to ensure privacy and anonymity in responses given.

Email Address:

Thank you for your valuable time, consideration, and information!

Follow-up Email (Two-week reminder)

Dear School Psychologist,

About 14 days ago, you should have received an email requesting your participation in a qualitative dissertation research study of school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational setting.

If you have already completed the survey, *thank you very much*!

<u>**Confidential Interviews are requested for completion of this important study**</u>!

Please consider offering your valuable information concerning this study as a school psychologist in a confidential interview & discussion forum format.
Submit your confidential contact information at   www.spstudy.org
Interviews: 30 minutes – 1 hour; Can be Online or Face-to-Face.
Discussion Forum: 10 - 15 minutes; All Online, Individual 'Follow-up' Responses.

<u>**If you have not completed the survey, please consider taking time to complete it.**</u>

For participation in this important study,
please launch the online survey from this link
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HQJQB2H
Proceed to the online survey and **select ACCEPT.**

As a <u>**Thank You**</u> incentive, **five** participants completing the online survey will be randomly selected to receive one of five **$20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com**!
Also, those participants expressing interest in being considered for a confidential interview at the end of the survey will gain an entry into the gift card giveaway contest. The survey will be open for up to three weeks.
At that time, the winners will be drawn and notified.

Your input is very valuable to the school psychology profession!

Thank you, in advance, for your time, consideration, and information!
Sharon Lyles, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP, VASP member
Doctoral candidate
Liberty University, School of Education
Contact information: (omitted)

IRB Code Number: 1713
IRB Expiration Date: 11-5-2014

APPENDIX F
Demographic Questionnaire for Interview

Demographic Data

1. Please indicate your gender:
   a. Female
   b. Male
2. Please indicate your age range:
   a. Under 25
   b. 25-35
   c. 36-45
   d. 46-55
   e. 56-65
   f. 66 and over
3. How many years of experience do you have working as a school psychologist?
   a. 1-2
   b. 3-4
   c. 5-10
   d. 11-15
   e. More than 15
4. Please indicate your highest degree level:
   a. Master's degree
   b. Education Specialist degree
   c. Doctoral degree
   d. Other
5. Please indicate your membership:
   a. VASP – Virginia Academy of School Psychologists
   b. NASP - National Association of School Psychologist
   c. Both VASP and NASP
   d. None, not a current member of either.
6. What is the main setting of your work place as a school psychologist?
   a. Public school
   b. Private school
   c. Hospital
   d. Private Practice/Consultant
   e. Other
7. Please estimate the total number of students at the school's that you serve:
   a. >50
   b. 51-100
   c. 101-1,000
   d. 1,001-5,000
   e. 5,000<
8. What is the main setting of your work place as a school psychologist?
   a. Rural/Suburban
   b. Urban/City

9. In what type of school are you mainly employed?
    a. Primary/Elementary
    b. Junior High/Middle School
    c. High School
    d. Multiple levels of school
10. What state do you work in as a school psychologist?
    a. Virginia
    b. Virginia and another state(s)
    c. Other (a different state other than Virginia)
11. In what general region of Virginia do you mainly practice?
    a. North/Northern area
    b. South/Central area
    c. East/Tidewater area
    d. West/Southwest area

APPENDIX G
Informed Consent Form for Interview/Discussion Forum participants

Consent Form
School psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment.
Sharon Lyles
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to participate in a qualitative dissertation research study of school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational setting. You were selected as a possible participant because you provided contact information at the end of the online survey indicating your interest on being interviewed and participating in the discussion forum. I ask that you read this consent form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by Sharon Lyles, a nationally certified, licensed school psychologist and doctoral candidate at Liberty University, School of Education.

Background Information:
The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 educational setting.

Definitions:
•   Teacher-to-student mistreatment will be generally defined as a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment.
•   The operational definition of observation is the point at which school psychologists become cognizant of the phenomenon through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day.
•   Areas of concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, include teachers' verbal communications toward and about students, as well as teachers' nonverbal communications, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language.
•   This study excludes the topics of the sexual and physical abuse.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
•   Sign and return this Informed Consent form.
•   Signed Inform Consent forms can be returned directly to me, or received by U.S. Mail, fax, or scanned document through email. All signed consent forms will be kept in a separate locked drawer from the data collected and pseudonyms will be provided to ensure confidentiality.
•   Participate in a one-time, confidential interview and brief discussion forum for follow-up questions. Pseudonyms will be provided.

- Give permission for audio recording of the interview for transcription purposes. Audio recordings will be deleted after transcription is complete.
- Interviews will be either in the online format with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or Face Time, or face-to-face at a convenient location such as a place of work, business or home. The interviewee will choose the mode and site that is most convenient, confidential, and comfortable.
- Completing the interview should take approximately thirty-sixty (30-60) minutes.
- The Discussion Forum will be in a convenient online format where the invited interviewee will connect briefly on the forum for checking of data gathered, clarification, follow-up, and feedback purposes.
- Completing the discussion forum questions should take approximately fifteen (15) minutes or less. The discussion forum website will be provided after the interview.
- This research study strives to discover school psychologists' perceptions of the phenomenon; it does not seek to isolate information on specific teachers or students.
- Your participation is completely voluntary and confidential.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
As participation in this survey is confidential, potential risk to you are minimal and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate.
- You may withdraw at any time with no penalty.
- If during the study, mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others are revealed, each case will be examined on an individual basis and addressed as required by law. The researcher will respond to these events by asking if the respondent reported such events as required by their school protocol and to extend an offer to help the interviewee find appropriate resources in his/her geographic area.
- Although there are no direct benefits to participation, there remains some benefit to society as a result of this study. It may increase the overall knowledge of issues surrounding the phenomenon experienced collectively by the school psychologist profession. Through acknowledgment of the phenomenon and the defining of school psychologists' experiences, there can emanate a resolution in a consolidated effort to advocate for and protect students.

Confidentiality:
- Your confidentiality is of utmost importance in this study. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times through this process. Your privacy and the research data will be kept confidential to the extent of the law.
- Neither the name of the school system, specific school building, nor participant name will be used. Every participant will be given a pseudonym: the real name of the participant will not be used.
- The data obtained from you will be combined with data from others. The published results will not include your name or any other information that would personally identify you in any way. The records of this study will be kept private. Audio recordings will be deleted after transcription is complete. Research records will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet, and only researcher will have access to the records. After the three

year time period for maintaining research data, all individual research-related data will be deleted, erased, and destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. Participation will not affect relations with the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists and the Virginia Department of Education. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Sharon Lyles, a licensed school psychologist and doctoral candidate at Liberty University, School of Education. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact her at (omitted). The research chair's name is Dr. Rita Schellenberg at (omitted),
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, (omitted), or email at irb@liberty.edu.
Please retain a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ Please check here to indicate permission for audio-recording of the Interview for transcription purposes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher:_____ Date: _____

Your input is very valuable to the school psychology profession!
Thank you very much for your participation.
Sharon Lyles, M.Ed., Ed.S., NCSP, VASP member
IRB Code Numbers: 1713
IRB Expiration Date: 11-5-2014

APPENDIX H
Interview Guide - Interview Questions

Hello, my name is Sharon Lyles. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research study.

- Before we begin the interview, please return the signed Informed Consent form (Appendix G). Signed inform consent forms can be returned directly to me, or received by U.S. Mail, fax, or scanned document through email. All signed consent forms will be kept in a separate locked drawer from the data collected and pseudonyms will be provided to ensure confidentiality.
- May I have permission to audio record the interview session? The purpose of recording the interview is for data transcription only. All audio recordings will be deleted after transcription is complete.
- I will also ask you to fill out a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F). Thank you.

Section A
RESEARCH QUESTION (Central question: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?)
Interview Sub-Questions
1. As a school psychologist, please share your story or experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. (Please do not include real names of people or schools.)
2. What is your response (i.e., feelings, internal reaction, external actions) when you become aware of teacher-to-student mistreatment?
3. How do you become aware (i.e., read, hear, observe) of teacher-to-student mistreatment?
4. Describe the characteristics and personality of teachers who mistreat students.
5. Describe the characteristics and personality of students who are mistreated.

Definitions:
- *Teacher-to-student mistreatment will be generally defined as a teacher's verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students as observed by school psychologists in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment.   Areas of concern addressed in this study, as observed by school psychologists, include teacher's verbal communication toward and about students, as well as teacher's nonverbal communication, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language. This study excludes the topics of the sexual and physical abuse.*
- *The operational definition of observation is the point at which school psychologists become cognizant of the phenomenon through formal and informal observation of teachers, conversations with colleagues, interactions with students, written school records, and during the normal course of the school day.*

Section B
RESEARCH QUESTION (First sub-question: What do school psychologists' perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?)
Interview Sub-Questions

6. What verbal teacher behaviors contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships?
7. What nonverbal teacher behaviors contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships?
8. What verbal teacher behaviors contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?
9. What nonverbal teacher behaviors contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?
10. Other than student misbehavior, what triggers a teacher's negative reactions toward a student? What patterns have you noticed?
11. What student behaviors may contribute to negative reactions in teachers?
12. Describe the relationship between a teacher and student in a mistreatment situation? What patterns have you noticed?
13. What is present in the school environment (i.e., climate, morale, building, practices) that may influence the teacher-student relationship in a negative way?

Definition:
- *An operational description of an adverse teacher-student relationship consists of teacher behaviors that are harmful, ineffective, and non-nurturing; behaviors that denigrate students, decreasing elements of respect, rapport, cooperation, and communication between the teacher and the student.*

Section C
RESEARCH QUESTION (Second sub-question: What is the language of school psychologists' in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?)
Interview Sub-Questions
14. How do you define teacher-to-student mistreatment?
15. What terms do you use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment?
16. How would teachers define teacher-to-student mistreatment?
17. What terms would teachers use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Section D
RESEARCH QUESTION (Third sub-question: How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?)
Interview Sub-Questions
18. Describe the short-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher.
19. Describe the long-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher.
20. How does teacher-to-student mistreatment impact the student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally?
21. In what way does teacher-to-student mistreatment cause mental and/or emotional damage on the student?
22. What are the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Definition:
- *The operational definition of adverse impact in this case is the result of short-term and/or long-term negative effects of inappropriate and harmful behavior by the teacher towards the student.*

Section E

RESEARCH QUESTION (Fourth sub-question: What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?)
Interview Sub-Questions
23. Why does teacher-to-student mistreatment happen?
24. What can teachers do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment?
25. What can school psychologists do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment?
26. What can school administrators do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment?
27. What school policies or procedures are in place to prohibit teacher-to-student mistreatment?
28. What professional repercussions do teachers encounter for mistreating students?

Section F
RESEARCH QUESTION (Fifth sub-question: How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?)
Interview Sub-Questions
29. How have your experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted your role as a school psychologist (e.g., job duties, ethical obligations, advocacy, training, stress level)?
30. How have these collective experiences affected your relationship with teachers and school administrators?
31. What conflicting decisions, values and beliefs (i.e., personal, professional, ethical) have you experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment?
32. Imagine you had the power to change the school psychology profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. What changes would you make?

Conclusion:
33. What else would you care to share with the researcher? The few minutes you may invest responding here will increase the researcher's insight into your experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon.

   The Discussion Forum is the final aspect of this study. It is an important step to provide triangulation of the data.
   • I will now provide you with the website address to the Discussion Forum (www.spstudy.org).
   • The Discussion Forum will be in a convenient online format where you will connect briefly for checking of data gathered, clarification, follow-up, and feedback purposes.
   • Completing the discussion forum questions should take approximately ten to fifteen minutes or less.
   • Please allow me one week to transcribe the interview so that information can be posted, and then you can review the data to check for accuracy of statements, and answer discussion forum questions.
   • If desired, in one week, I can send you a reminder email with the Discussion Forum website address, to remind you to participate in this last step of the study.
   • Feel free to contact me at any time with questions.
   Thank you!

Online Discussion Forum Questions

Discussion Forum
This online forum is an established and secure way to communicate with the researcher and anonymously with other select co-researchers, join discussions to share thoughts and experiences on specific topics, and to respond with feedback on data collected for member-checking purposes.

Participant1:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have there been any recent teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents or experiences that you would like to share?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant2:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have you observed any other teacher behavior's that would contribute to an adverse teacher-student relationship?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant3:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, do you have any other defining teacher-to-student mistreatment language or terms to share?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant4:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have you thought of any other short-term or long-term adverse impacts on students?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant5:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have you formed any other perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant6:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have there been any recent teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents or experiences that you would like to share?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant7:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have you observed any other teacher behavior's that would contribute to an adverse teacher-student relationship?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final

phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant8:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, do you have any other defining teacher-to-student mistreatment language or terms to share?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant9:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have you thought of any other short-term or long-term adverse impacts on students?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Participant10:
- Follow-up: Since this is a fluid topic, have you formed any other perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?
- Member-checking: Thank you, again, for allowing me to interview you. Attached you will find a summary of our conversation. I strived to capture your comments accurately. Please read over the summary and let me know immediately if you would like to make any clarifications, corrections or changes. By checking the information that you gave me during the interview, you will help verify that all statements are valid and trustworthy.
- Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience. Your valuable information and assistance in this final phase is instrumental in the triangulation of data for this research study. Thank you!

Conclusion:
After the online discussion forum is complete, the study's website and online survey will close indicating that the data collection process has ended. The data will be analyzed and coded to prepare for the writing of Chapters 4 and 5. This study will aid in vastly increasing educators' awareness and understanding of this phenomenon in schools, and the extent to which it contributes to other problems experienced by students.

APPENDIX J
Expert Review and Pilot Test Protocol

Expert Review: The expert review will occur before my proposal defense.
Evidence of the study's trustworthiness and transferability will be gathered through the use of an expert review panel consisting of my Chair and Committee members. These educational professionals have obtained a doctorate in their field of expertise and have an expressed interest in this research study. Each will review the study and offer comments and suggestions for improvement. All feedback will be considered and corrections made prior to my proposal defense.

Pilot Test: The pilot testing will occur after I receive IRB approval.
This research study and its questions will be pilot tested to assist in assessing the scale for understanding of content and response choices, wording of questions, and the total time needed to complete the survey. The purpose is not to collect research data but to refine the process and research questions. This simulated process discovers flaws and limitations not yet recognized by the researcher, and help to increase the potential success of the overall study. This refinement period is an essential task to obtain credibility on questions and procedures within this research study. Other areas examined, such as common grammatical mistakes, appropriateness of terminology on items, redundancy, presence of bias and general overall clarity, will be evaluated in the pilot test.

Participants: The information for the pilot test will be gathered through the use of one to five seasoned school psychologists.

Pilot Test Protocol
- Select one to five seasoned school psychologists with over three years' experience in their field that has direct knowledge with the phenomenon under study to participate in the pilot.

- Arrive early to the location of the school psychologist(s).

- Express gratitude for their willingness and consent to participate in the pilot test process and for their verbal feedback concerning their understanding and perceptions on items presented to them.

- Request permission to utilize and set up the audio recording device. Audio recording is for the researcher's feedback and clarification purposes only and will be deleted after making changes to the research study.

- Remind the school psychologist(s) the process may last approximately 45-90 minutes.

- Remind the school psychologist(s) to answer the questions honestly and there are not any "right" or "wrong" answers. The goal is not to gather data, but rather it is an evaluative process of each question's clarity and content.

- Remind the school psychologist(s) they have the right to end the process at any time or refuse to answer any question without penalty.

- Assure the school psychologist(s) in this pilot test process, their identity and responses will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be utilized.

- Remind the school psychologist(s) the data from this pilot test will be locked in a file cabinet in the home office of the researcher with only the researcher having access.

- Item evaluation:
  1. Rate each question: YES or NO
     - Understandable?
       - Was the meaning of the question clear and straightforward?
  2. Rate each question: YES or NO
     - Are the answer choices adequate? (i.e., agree…..disagree)
       - Were the answer choices adequate for an appropriate response?
  3. Rate each question: YES or NO
     - Could you answer in more than one way? (i.e. agree AND disagree)
       - Was the question written in a way that more than one answer would be applicable?
  4. Rate each question: YES or NO
     - Loaded question? (i.e. emotionally taxing, bias, offensive, inappropriate)
       - Is the question loaded that could cause concern for bias, emotionally taxing, offensive, or inappropriateness?

- Review each item that caused concern (i.e., Item evaluation ratings of NO on items one and two….and Item evaluation rating of YES on items three and four). Have the school psychologist explain their answer.

- Note how long each question takes to complete.

- Record any corrections or areas for clarification.

- Request school psychologist(s) for any final feedback from the experience. If needed, allow for the school psychologist(s) to perform a member-check to verify the information on the audio-recorded or transcribed interview document.
- Thank the school psychologist(s) again. End pilot test.

APPENDIX K
Selection of Results from Open-Ended Survey Questions

Survey Question # 22 As a professional school psychologist, please describe the worst teacher-to-student mistreatment experience ever observed in the educational setting.
Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.

- Berating a student in front of their peers with a loud voice and close physical proximity.
- Kindergarten teacher asked students who went to church, and told those who did not they had black hearts.
- A 4th grade teacher scolded a female student in the hallway until the student began to cry. It seemed that the goal of the teacher was to make the student cry. The teacher made the student return to class while still crying.
- A teacher (30+ years experience) was calling out questions, and when a student did not know, she made a series of sarcastic comments/questions that seemed aimed at making the student feel stupid (why don't you know? it's easy. how can you not know that?...)
- I can only think of times when I saw a teacher be short with a student, but never downright mean.
- A coach berating a student.
- Use of inappropriate sarcasm, put-downs of students.
- My office in one of my elementary schools is in the Kindergarten wing of the building. While there is certainly a lot of good happening, more often than not I hear teachers yelling, screaming, criticizing, and in general using harsh tone and language with these young, fresh, new learners. Across schools and grades, I have observed students being "handled" in very unprofessional and unsafe ways, often times unnecessarily so. Many staff are trained in CPI restraints if needed, but this is not often the technique I observe (I see students being pulled by their arms, carried, etc.). Teachers have been observed to single out children by yelling at them in front of the entire class, making rude and sarcastic remarks, and generally embarrassing and verbally abusing the child. It breaks my heart every time I see or hear it, and it happens more often than I care to believe.
- A teacher yelling at her whole class, telling them that they are the lowest class that she has ever had and that they cannot do anything.
- Teachers yelling at students, using over bearing voice tone and threatening tone of voice to get students attention or to make a point.
- Overuse and abuse of their power and authority as a teacher to verbally and non-verbally mistreat students as a classroom discipline technique.
- Teachers talking bad about students, using derogatory comments to other teachers and staff.
- Teachers writing negative demeaning things about students in IEPs, discipline referrals, or other educational paperwork.
- Teacher confronts a student about his/her behavior (rule breaking or inability to answer an academic question) with an angry voice, accompanied by statements such as, "Why did you do that?" "How would you like someone to do that to you?" etc. The element of abuse, in my view, is that the adult is trying to punish the student through humiliation or intimidation (which might be just what the student was doing to another student).

- I have heard of a teacher that would make snide comments to a student, such as "I can't believe that you were able to do that well."
- The school principal yelling and screaming in the faces of about 3 to 4 elementary school students brought to him for discipline. He was a tall, large man who loomed over the students. He also stomped his feet while yelling. His justification was that he was trying to give them a negative experience to discourage them from misbehaving and having to come to the principal's office in the future.
- Although I know it exists, particularly in the middle school and high school levels, I have not witnessed this in my schools at the elementary/primary level.
- Student with ADHD was standing at desk; Teacher took chair away for the entire day.
- Male fifth grade teacher seated students in rows designated as A-B-C-D and F and clearly told them what the rows meant. He would punish "good" students by moving them to the F row for the day. Harangued and threatened students verbally. Openly ridiculed the students in the D and F rows.
- I had worked in a situation where we had a Kindergarten teacher who had very poor classroom management and she was yelling at the students at a very high volume several times a week, telling the students that they were terrible kids and what is wrong with you that you cannot act normally. This resulted in having to remove students from the classroom and almost daily bouts of students crying and very upset.
- A kindergarten teacher "ostracizes" students at an isolation table for not answering in complete sentences or following directions (even ESL students) & encourages classmates to ignore them. A 4th grade teacher verbally lambastes students in front of the class for not completing h.w. "Billy has an excuse because he doesn't have a computer at home, but you have no excuse!" A sped teacher heard (through the walls) calling a student "stupid." (I reported this to administration.) Same kindergarten teacher above not allowing K students to stand when working (requiring developmentally inappropriate levels of behavior). Multiple instances of inappropriate use of sarcasm which the students do not understand…
- Teachers yelling at students, telling them they are the worse and lowest class she has ever had, verbally insulting students, telling them they are not trying when they have a disability that is impacting there learning, pointing out to students their weaknesses negatively.
- Five adults (2 teachers, 2 teaching assistants, 1 administrator) trying to get 1 autistic student to do 5 math problems while the rest of the class was out at recess. Each of the 5 adults were all taking turns telling the student to get him to do the 5 math problems. Student then proceeded to flip the desk, rip up his paper, throw all of his supplies around the room and threatened to blow up the school. Teachers denied any wrong doing and blamed the entire incident on the student because he wouldn't do 5 math problems.
- I can't narrow it to just one.

Survey Question # 30 As a school psychologist, what patterns of teacher behavior have you noticed that contribute to negative feelings toward a student (e.g., never smiles, refuses recommendations, lack of positive feedback or encouragement, always criticizes)?
Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.
- Refuses recommendations; has "tried everything"
- A generally "cold" demeanor lacking positive interactions.

- General crankiness. Little smiling, laughing, or encouragement.
- Constant criticism - teacher thinks this motivates
- I am also a county wide behavior specialist so I consult on the more extreme cases. A child that is a constant disruption to the class wears a teacher down and the teacher often loses perspective and can never see anything positive about the child. Things usually get worst because she begins ignoring the child and letting him/her do whatever they want in order to maintain peace in the classroom.
- Frustration; lack of empathy; lack of connection with students; yelling; pressure of maintaining academic pacing while disregarding students' emotional needs
- Always criticizes, lack strong teaching skills (academics and behavior), rigid, does not ask for help and/or is not willing to accept help, focuses on the negative
- 1) Lack of appropriate training, 2) Lack of support from administration, 3) Personality variables
- Teachers who are older and set in their ways and do not believe in new ideas or mental health
- Lack of positive feedback, making the student a "bad" example, publicly reprimanding, teasing/sarcasm without rapport and a lack of sensitivity to the student
- When the teacher can think of nothing positive to say about the student, the teacher immediately wants that student out of their classroom, the teacher does not want to attempt any strategies to improve the situation and the teacher indicates that there is no way to make the situation better.
- Shaming. Not accepting the uniqueness of each student, however "bad" he/she may seem to the teacher. Not showing sincere gratitude toward a student.
- Always critical, failure to recognize positives, lack of encouragement, reluctance to accept student strengths and use them to facilitate learning and compensate for weak areas
- I have not observed patterns of behavior. If there was a teacher who had negative interactions, administration took care of the situation.
- Failure to acknowledge positive behaviors
- Does not smile around student and often criticizes.
- My students have told me that they don't feel comfortable around teachers who "call them out" in front of the class or don't give them enough flexibility.
- Impatience, rigidity in expectations for rules/routine... tend to be older teachers, maybe feeling tired and burnt out or just old fashioned approaches to classroom management...
- Never smiles, minimal positive feedback, resistant to implement suggestions
- Always criticizing, constant complaining to student support staff, lack of positive feedback, isolating student (student sitting away from rest of group)
- Very critical, does not want to try anything new, does not like positive behavior support for students with more challenging behaviors, goes straight to yelling, fakes nice when admin is around
- Sarcasm is a big one. Some teachers can be very demeaning through their use of sarcasm. Sometimes the subtle things are what really do the harm, as well. Other students are very quick to perceive even very subtle nonverbal cues that indicate when a teacher does not like a student. Other students very quickly (especially in the elementary years) quickly mirror the teacher's view of their peer.

Survey Question # 31 What do you perceive as the negative student behaviors that may trigger or contribute to negative reactions in teachers?

Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.

- Oppositional, argumentative
- Lack of engagement and respect for teacher position.
- Calling out, out of seat, work refusal in a disrespectful manner, other disrespect, profanity, aggression
- Disrespect, threats towards teachers, cursing
- Arguing, challenging authority, extreme ADHD, unable to work independently and needing 1:1, demanding too much teacher attention or time.
- Difficulty comprehending, often off task, out of seat, does not complete work, does not follow teacher directions, comes to school without basic emotional and physical needs met (often hungry)
- Continuous refusal to perform task or activity, humorous statements made at the teachers expense
- Refusal to do schoolwork, participate, talk back to teacher
- Back talk.
- Annoying behaviors (e.g., ADHD-type behaviors), significant non-compliance, and oppositional defiance.
- Misbehavior
- Lack of respect for the teacher
- Students that are needy, students with excess energy and inattention, students that are "annoying"
- Lack of bonding with the teacher, talking back to the teacher, questioning the authority of the teacher, behaviors that a teacher finds personally offensive (varies according to teacher).
- Hyperactivity
- Failure to comply with rules
- Oppositional defiance, inattention, depression, kids who don't fit the teachers "mold" of what a student "should" look like, think like, and act like.
- Lack of impulse control
- Attention seeking, not following directions
- High activity level; low academic performance; in some cases, "perceived but unlabeled learning disability"; wasting class time; even stepping out of line in the hallway; talking in line; whining, etc.
- Defiance/oppositional behavior, hyperactivity and inattention (needing constant reminders), social and emotional problems, students with "outbursts" or those that tend to "shut down" when frustrated
- Negative attention seeking behaviors
- Noncompliance, talking, students become threatening especially if teachers try to take away their cell phones.

Survey Question # 32 How do you define teacher-to-student mistreatment?

Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.

- Treatment that is insensitive, nonproductive, disrespectful, and at times harmful
- The use of adult power to coax students into conformity.
- Negative verbal and/or nonverbal behavior that causes the student to feel upset.
- Negative behaviors from a teacher toward a student.
- Extreme negativity towards a child expressed in many ways. Certain there is no way to turn things around even a little.
- Lack of respect for the various learning styles or backgrounds found within a given classroom; singling out students based on behavior or low academics; engaging in harsh verbal reprimands or unnecessary punishment; criticizing in an unproductive manner
- This is like the word, "dyslexia," meaning that it doesn't mean the same thing to different people
- Occurs when a teacher uses his or her power or position to cause a student to feel coerced, demeaned or harassed without a means to address said behavior (feeling of powerlessness)
- Teacher to student mistreatment is a lack of respect for that individual's needs and concerns.
- Teachers make negative comments about a student's personal characteristics or express confidential information.
- Being verbally or psychologically abusive toward a student. Treating a student in a way that you would not want a teacher to treat your own child.
- Behavior that lacks a mutual respect.
- Inappropriate and abusive verbal and nonverbal comments, interactions, and power/authority   toward and with students.
- Trying to make the student feel ashamed in order to correct their behavior, which I believe does not work very well. The teacher does not attempt to establish a positive relationship with the student prior to correcting the student.
- Teacher to student mistreatment can be defined as teachers being disrespectful or hurtful to students through verbal or nonverbal behaviors.
- Negative comments to the student, lack of encouragement, sarcasm or teasing.
- Behavior that is used to bolster the teacher's feeling of power, but does nothing to improve learning in the student and may lead to student anger or resentment towards school.
- Since teachers are in a position of power over students, I define mistreatment as any negative interaction exhibited by the teacher toward the student regardless of the student's behavior.
- Teacher's overly negative verbal and nonverbal communication toward a student meant to shame or elicit a significant change in behavior.
- Inappropriate verbal or nonverbal actions by a teacher that target a particular student or group of students, which leads to poor self-esteem and concept, a lack of rapport, and often academic underachievement
- Any behavior directed towards the student by the teacher that is destructive rather than constructive.
- The creation of a hostile learning environment due to teacher's inappropriate verbalizations to student
- Teacher to student mistreatment is essentially bullying since there is a clear imbalance of

power, the teacher holds something over the student that he/she wants and is often trying to gain either the student's compliance or a sense of control or power.

- Cause too much stress for both teacher and student in relation to emotional distress, psychological abuse, physical abuse, and verbal and nonverbal abuse.
- Any action (verbal or nonverbal) that serves to harshly relay a teacher's feelings related to a student's performance, compliance, etc.,and does not serve to assist the student with rectifying the situation.
- Any teacher behavior - verbal, nonverbal, or combination thereof - which causes a student to feel inadequate, unacceptable, unempowered, incapable of learning, and/or undeserving of love, attention, and/or respect.
- When a teacher uses authority to intimidate a student
- When a teacher focuses only on the negative behavior of a student. When they verbally and nonverbally discredit them and diminish their self-esteem. When they are unable to think of a single redeeming quality about a student.
- When a teacher behaves in a way toward students that is demeaning, harsh, hurtful or disrespectful.
- Teachers misguided attempts to effectively handle misbehaving students. Most teachers do not see themselves as abusers, just implementing their version of discipline.
- Punishing a child for failing to understand what you are asking of him; yelling at a child in such a way the child is humiliated; being sarcastic to the point of the child feeling stupid and the other students laughing; yelling at the child for age-appropriate behaviors; over reacting to tiny behaviors; not responding to a child's innate needs because you think they are "purposefully trying to annoy;" seeing behaviors as "attention seeing" rather than observing the needs of the student; expecting too much from young children, talking about a child negatively in front of him/her.

Survey Question # 38 What are your perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?
Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.
- Teacher burn-out; lack of teacher training on behavior management
- Teacher expectations as to what is a compliant student and job frustration.
- Burn-out, personality traits of teacher
- Student misbehavior and teacher crankiness/impatience.
- Teacher burn-out, lack of support or services to help teacher with child.
- Lack of understanding of diversity; "kids these days don't act like how we did-- we minded our manners and listened to our elders;" EXTREME academic and pacing pressure; lack of support with so many kids in the classrooms; teacher's mental health
- I feel that some of the teachers have a need to control and use that as their method to keep students in line.
- Teacher frustration, teacher burn-out, poor classroom management skills, lack of empathy, poor understanding of sociocultural factors that might be impacting the student, poor understanding of the function of behaviors (may not realize that the child's behaviors are serving a purpose and that purpose needs to be addressed or may not understand that there might be something that they are doing as a teacher to increase the undesireable behaviors).

- Stressful school climate
- I think that teacher to student mistreatment happens when teachers have been treated similiarly in their past. I think that their stress and frustration in their lives and possibly with the student in the classroom may also contribute.
- Lack of knowledge to what student is dealing with in his environment,
- A teacher's lack of resources to deal with problematic student behavior.
- Lack of teacher pre-service behavior management training and resulting lack of skills; teacher frustration with student behaviors; teacher's personality; teacher's own physical and/or mental health status; and an overall negative school climate established or maintained by the administration.
- Frustration, lack of skills in dealing with students who do not conform
- Teachers who are no longer are positively invested in their students.
- Lack of understanding of students and lack of teacher skill
- I think one is that the teacher themself has some psychological issues or traumas that they may be playing out, maybe reliving their own histories as a student. I also think a lack of other strategies to employ is a major reason teachers use these tactics.
- Inherent characteristics of teacher (angry, resentful) and weak classroom management skills
- High demands/expectations placed on teachers can lead to transference of those expectations for student outcomes
- A myriad of pressures for the teacher to work miracles with minimal resources and limited parent involvement which leads to early burnout
- I believe it begins with a lack of knowledge or ability on the part of teachers to identify with a child and help them to achieve. Instead of seeking out information and resources that would change the teacher's perspective of the child, the teacher may place "blame" on the child as a way to preserve their own ego and/or beliefs. I also believe it depends on the moral climate of the school community and the messages that are sent about children from the building administrators. (A climate can be conducive to mistreatment of students.) A building that fosters collaboration, problem-solving and is focused on student growth more than test scores seems to have the least teacher-to-student mistreatment.
- Many times I don't feel like teachers know how to handle their frustrations.
- If the teacher does not have strong skills to start, a more challenging student makes the teacher feel incompetent.
- Students do not report the abuse. Are afraid of reporting it or administrators defend teachers when abuse is reported. Administrators have been heard saying they will defend teachers automatically in matter what.
- Teachers lose sight of why they teach. With all the pressures of the SOLs, teacher evaluations they forget that their students are children who are not perfect. They are often burnout.
- Unrealistic academic expectations on teachers by politicians and the socio-economic decline in our society in general.
- Teachers are put in difficult situations where students treat them poorly and it is difficult for them to remember that they are an adult and cannot respond to a student in a like manner. Some teachers have a negative attitude towards students and the student does not

provoke the disrespect that they are given. There is no excuse for mistreating a child. I do know that the children are allowed to do and say a lot of inappropriate things to teachers without any consequence, which is unfortunate.

- Teachers think that they are disciplining/helping/building character in a student and don't actually see it as abuse.
- Teachers become frustrated with students lack of performance and academic progress, especially given the high pressure they are under to have 100% of students pass the state tests.
- Usually poor classroom management issues on the part of the teacher. Also, not willing to change with changing demands in education that leaves more experienced teachers caught between how they have always done things (so I don't want to change) to I have to work 5 more years in order to retire.
- Over worked, under staffed teachers with little training in behavior modification or classroom management come work for the inner city school. They start out excited until they see the serious effects of poverty and poor education in our students. They become overwhelmed and have little support from administration. The majority of teachers want to help, but circumstances increase their frustration and negative behaviors.
- Because teachers lack the knowledge to change the perceived behavior of the student in a healthy, positive way.

Survey Question # 42 How have your experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted your overall professional role as a school psychologist?
Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.

- I was involved in many situations where consultation was needed to assist teachers in understanding their behavior and how it affected students.
- Little impact because I've not seen much of it
- Encourage teamwork with administrators
- I find it more difficult to take the teacher's word regarding certain students, as they are more likely to place blame on the student, when there are clearly many underlying factors contributing to a child's behavior or academics.
- Very little as the administration usually handles it
- It has been personally frustrating.
- I feel that classroom observations are an important piece of the evaluation process to see the entire picture and to determine what factors within the classroom setting might be leading the a child's struggles.
- I want all teachers to be comfortable having me in their classroom - can 't get a reputation as someone who "tattles" to administration. I have talked privately with administrators about the worse offenders - nothing happened!
- Extreme frustration. Want to leave profession due to no administrative support and no corrective action on the part of school administration.
- It has definitely put me in an awkward position in the past. I always let an adminstrator know if I witness anything that I feel is inappropriate.
- Sometimes it is very difficult to work with these teachers knowing how they treat students, especially when I am doing counseling with the students who are being mistreated.

- Made me really question the preparedness and professionalism of some educators.
- I try to work with students and teachers to minimize this.
- My role within a specific school has been questioned by a specific teacher.
- Educating and supporting teachers; acting as a resource and liaison to foster better student understanding and interactions; helping others to see the impact that they are having and assisting them in taking on other perspectives about the student and the student's behavior.
- It is something I keep in the back of my mind when evaluating situations that I may become involved in.
- I work with teachers with the premise that I am there for student success. That's how our interactions proceed.
- I am a strong student advocate and have learned to have discussions with teachers who have difficulty managing students appropriately. I make sure the teacher knows I am on the side of the student.
- To realize that many of these teachers and parents want their students in Special Education so they can take care of the problem.
- I have has some success getting people to collaborate for the betterment of children. I have also used the work of Marshall Rosenberg-Non-Violent Communication
- I often feel like the only one who feels the individual child is more important than the school's overall rating for achievement
- It has made consultation uncomfortable in some cases
- It is amazing what teachers can do and get away with it as it is next to impossible to fire a teacher. School division will even give them good reviews if they will go somewhere else. Different divisions then will tease each other with the poor teachers they get stuck with. I knew a speech therapist with nine years experience and all nine years were in different school divisions.
- Increases my work load and the number of referrals made to me.
- I attempt to redirect behaviors and provide positive behavior support for teachers under stress.
- Hard conversation to have with your peer about how their behavior contributing or causing behavior problems or worse
- I have largely tried to supportive and warm environments but schools are so political it's professionally better to not talk to the adults and try to emotionally support the children.
- I now see my role as providing "positive behavior supports" to both students AND teachers. It is important to work with administrators to keep a sense of balance.
- I have developed skills as an advocate for children. I have also become more aware of the underlying ways students may be mistreated and have tried to work with teachers to prevent frustration and negative feelings toward students and families.
- It is a very rare phenomenon at my school
- Reinforces my role as child advocate.
- Difficult position to be. Risky to intervene, but unacceptable to look away.
- I am more and more aware that when students are having a difficulty in school - academic, behavioral, or emotional - that the classroom environment needs to be considered and that it shouldn't be the assumption that the student is the problem.
- I'm more aware and conscious of the relationship between teacher and student when

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conducting my observations in classrooms
- I am much more aware of how teachers talk about their students.
- I take who the teacher is into consideration when looking at a child for special ed services--is it really the kid's issue or the teacher's?
- I try to place my students where I think they will be the most successful.
- They make it more difficult to work with those teachers, as they tend to be ones who are not open to suggestions about improving those students' behavior and academics.
- A few teachers are frosty towards me due to minor intervention.
- Made me more attentive to student complaints
- I have had to navigate student-teacher relationships when the particular student is in the process of being evaluated for special education services and the teacher constantly barrages me with complaints about the student.
- Increased my desire to advocate for students
- Certain teachers cause elevated levels of referrals among students who are emotionally vulnerable.
- I think that there have been times when I feel socially isolated due to standing up for a student or principals feel I am too nice to a student when the behaviors I have seen are so far out of the norm of any other place I have worked.
- I have found that it is much more difficult to work with some teachers than others because of the way that they perceive children.

Survey Question # 49 Complete this sentence: Sometimes I feel so frustrated with teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents, that …
Answers: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers.
- I talk to the school administrator for assistance
- I sit down and vent with the other behavior specialist.
- I just want to scoop up the children and take them home with me. So often they lack love and support and home, and then come to school and don't get their needs met either.
- I wonder why some teachers chose this profession.
- I think about running for the school board.
- I want to scream! I want to fire all teachers that act this way! I want to fire all school administrators that don't support students and reprimand teachers!
- I wonder why the teacher thinks his/her approach is likely to be useful.
- I wonder why these teachers decided to become a teacher.
- I question the administration's ability to manage these situations appropriately and change the climate of the school.
- I would love to have the authority to fire teachers on the spot!
- I want to yell at the teachers who are yelling
- I want to hold meetings with administration to address this topic.
- I have never felt this level of frustration.
- I would like to see chronic abusers dealt with in meaningful ways that sends a message to all teachers about their need to demonstrate respect toward students.
- I feel I cannot make a difference after all.
- I want administrators to take a more active role in addressing it
- I am demoralized and heartbroken for the children. I wonder where is the sense of

developmental perspective?

- I wish there was something more I could do.
- I am disappointed with the teacher
- I overeat.
- I wonder why that particular teacher chose this profession and why the administrator does not discipline the staff member.
- I would like them to walk away before they say something they regret. I would like the administrators to address the issue; however, sometimes the administrators are worse than the teachers.
- I wonder what could that teacher possibly be thinking.
- I question why the person became a teacher in the first place
- I wish I had more say in personnel issues.
- I feel it is time for the teachers who engage in it to retire.
- This does not occur that often, but when it does it is stressful
- I collaborate with my school's social worker to determine a better team-approach with which to address the teacher and situation.
- I want to pull the student out from the class.
- I would like to quit my job and do something else or stay home altogether.
- I feel the need to act.

APPENDIX L
Procedures for the Gift Card Giveaway

<u>Survey Question #63</u>
"As a Thank You incentive, five participants completing the online survey will be randomly selected to receive one of five $20.00 gift cards to Amazon.com!
Would you like to be included in the gift card giveaway contest?"
Answer:
Yes – (If yes, participants will be redirected to a separate survey where the email address can be entered. Email addresses will be separate from the survey answers to ensure anonymity).
No - I do not wish to be included in the gift card giveaway contest. (If no, the survey will close).

<u>Procedures - After the online survey is closed:</u>
Open the separate survey (WebLink to the "Gift Card giveaway" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q5LPL9C) to access email addresses.
Open the separate survey (WebLink to the "Contact Information" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WCS3JZ3) to include the email addresses for potential interview/discussion forum participants.
Import email addresses into an MS Excel spreadsheet.
Assign a number to each email address.
Utilize a random integer generator, such as www.random.org, to select five numbers.
Use five numbers generated to find corresponding assigned email address entry.
Notify five lucky winners that they won the gift card giveaway.
Provide gift card from Amazon.com to the five winners.
Delete MS Excel spreadsheet of imported email address entries.

APPENDIX M
Interview Transcript Selections

P2 – Response from Interview Question #1.
Researcher: As a school psychologist, please share your story or experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment.
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P2: I think in some areas there is a lack of understanding of how to deal with children and it has been my experience that places that say "we have always done it this way," that when someone new comes in, they may have gotten right out of college and you would expect them to be all bright and new ideas, and yet they seem to conform to 50 year old ways of doing things. You find kids being screamed at and the things that are said to the students blow me away sometimes. I feel that frequently I am on the opposite end of teaching staff of "Are you kidding me, you just said that to that student?" Once I used to work at a school with ED kids and they were spoken to better from teachers than another school I worked at with regular education students. I find myself thinking, "If parents only knew what happens in school." And also I am thinking how sometimes it is as if they do not know, and do parent really care? Because they are of the same mentality. And sometimes I think that there is such a lack of knowledge of the educational system. You don't even know what your rights really are. People, like teachers, get away with stuff anyway. There is not one worst instance, I've seen people trigger a kid, and constantly trigger a kid. One time I was in my office with the door closed, and I heard a regular education kindergarten teacher pull a kindergarten kid out of the classroom into the hallway. The day before, he had gotten in trouble for something and he forgot to bring a paper back signed to school. The regular education teacher was down the hall screaming and yelling at this kindergarten student about not bring the signed not back to school. And then the special education teacher was down the next hallway and she joined the regular education teacher, so now there are two teachers screaming at this kindergarten student, threatening him with an office referral, "We are calling your parents, you are not going to recess today, and you lost fun Friday." Hearing this, I almost walked around the corner and said to the teachers, "You forgot the death penalty," because it was just so absurd. He is just in kindergarten, and the teachers had given him four consequences for one behavior; it was just ridiculous. They were just bearing down on him. Another example, an autistic child was crying, and he was drug out of the room to be yelled at by the teacher. He had snot running out of his nose. The kid asked, "Can I have a tissue" and the teacher said, "No, you will wait until this interaction is over." To me, that is flat out abuse, and I just picked up a tissue and wiped the kids nose. The teacher said to me, "I said no", and I said, "I am very sorry, I thought you were asking for a tissue." You are not going to make him eat snot. This is just absurd, just because you have a power struggle. That is just dumb. That is the two biggies

P3 – Summary of P3's response from Interview Question #1.
Researcher: As a school psychologist, please share your story or experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment.
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P3: The majority of teacher to student mistreatment, I don't see it as much as mistreatment as I do see teachers getting into power struggles with students and escalating behavior that then

results in suspension or referral or that kind of thing. A teacher and student were in the cafeteria, it was time to leave, the student was not finished eating. The teacher wanted to hurry up, hurry up, said "You need to be done." The teacher picked up his food tray and threw it in the trash, which led to escalating in behavior because the student was hungry. So, it is more of teachers not thinking through what they are doing, rather than purposefully bullying students.

P4 – Summary of P4's response from Interview Question #10.
Researcher: Other than student misbehavior, what triggers a teacher's negative reactions toward a student?
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P4: It's negative expectations on the part of the teacher. I think some teachers are sometimes just predisposed to think that certain students will misbehave. And, thus the teacher will have a negative reaction.

P6 – Summary of P6's response from Interview Question #22.
Researcher: What are the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment?
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P6: First and foremost, it should not be tolerated, on any level. And, it should be dealt with. I think, in the past, it was just accepted. We are more sensitive to it now. But it shouldn't be just because it is an adult, or just because it is a teacher that has been here for 20 years or so. It should not be allowed on any level. They are setting an example for other kids that end up doing the same thing and targeting a child.

P7 – Summary of P7's response from Interview Question #13.
Researcher: What is present in the school environment (i.e., climate, morale, building, practices) that may influence the teacher-student relationship in a negative way?
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P7: Thinking back on that particular school, the climate in that building is very elitist, so if particular students don't seem to fit the mold, and that comes from the administration down, those students are set apart. It has become acceptable for teachers to discuss students in the teachers' lounge. That kind of behavior is never addressed or called into question. And that climate does not facilitate collaboration from colleague to colleague, so teachers don't feel psychologically safe talking about problems they are having with students or families and brainstorming that. They very much feel that every student should be acting in a certain way. And there is not a very big tolerance for the range of what a student needs. And the understanding of what a student might be dealing with outside of school. It is so focused on the instructional practices, that it does not leave a lot of room to collaborate about, "Do our students have a since of worth when they come to our school building?" particularly those students that are high need. "How are we working with those students? What support systems do we have in place?" We don't have a lot of tiers of support outside of what is generally offered to anyone. I think that tends to generally contribute to those negative relationships.

P8 – Summary of P8's response from Interview Question #1.
Researcher: As a school psychologist, please share your story or experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment.
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.

P8: This morning I was thinking about this. A second grade young man diagnosed with Non-Verbal Learning Disability was in the class with a teacher, who I found out did not believe kids have those special needs. This teacher believed that if kids just worked harder, if you had a good teacher and they work hard, that there would be no need for special education and that kind of thing. This child could be a real frustrating child, there is no doubt about it; He verbalized a lot during the day, he needed to stand up to work because it was more comfortable for him, he needed a lot of moving around the room and that sort of thing. She liked things to be very precisely done, like don't move the desks out of the row. When I went to visit the student in the classroom, the door opened on the other side, and she had him by the arm in a grip, and the minute I opened the door, and she saw me she thrust him at me, and said, "Good, Here, You deal with this!" You know, I thought, this is a really bright child, who does not understand why you are doing this to him. The really sad part of the situation is that the parents ultimately became so frustrated that they homeschooled him. Dad quit his job and telecommuted as a private consultant. Fortunately, he was able to do that and he is no longer in school. Because with him, in that situation, it was a long list of very similar stories. It was not just that teacher, it was every aide that dealt with him, every teacher that dealt with him; It was the same kind of thing. I had a situation recently where a parent called to complain that a resource teacher kept telling a young lady in the class, "You just need to grow up, Stop this foolishness and grow up", and that type of thing. I worked with a guy in a different state who was an Emotionally Disturbed special education teacher. He would get very, very frustrated and angry with some of the middle and high school boys and would actually get physical with them, shoving them against the wall, and get right in their face, and scream at them. He used other ways for school discipline by getting physical and verbally abusive toward them. In the case of the first teacher I mentioned, she clearly had knowledge of classroom management skills. If you were to put in the room regular second graders, she would produce the perfect classroom. It is that lack of understanding and lack of perspective taking. Teachers don't understand what you can do to a child, and what anxiety looks like in a classroom. An example of a narrow view, a teacher showed me a paper where a child, who has high level of anxiety, did two on the page and left three blank. The teachers take on that was, he did two and refused to do the others. I said, and pointed out, "Look at the erasures around this word and the erasures around this word. He erased his work four or five times. Is he trying to make this perfect? Did he run out of time, and he is not comfortable with what he produced? Or I am not going to attempt this anymore because I am just going to fail, I'm going to stop here, I'm so mentally exhausted to come up with another word."

APPENDIX N
Online Discussion Forum Transcript Selections

P7 – Response from Online Discussion Forum Transcript Question #1.
Researcher: Follow-Up: Since this is a fluid topic, have there been any recent teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents or experiences that you would like to share?
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P7: I have not encountered any new incidences but continue to monitor a past incidence; a specific situation involving anger toward a student and a negative perspective of a student with an intellectual disability from a special education teacher. I reported an additional concern regarding this situation to my administrator this week.

P7 – Response from Online Discussion Forum Transcript Question #3.
Researcher: Feedback: Please submit to me any feedback you may want to give from the survey questions and interview experience.
Note: No corrections were made to the following verbatim quotation from the co-researcher.
P7: I appreciate the format of the survey and the interview experience. I was glad for the opportunity to review the information I shared with you and to check for accuracy. Your easy-going manner and accommodating approach made me feel comfortable in sharing this information with you. I also thought the wording of your questions was helpful in that it allowed for additional thoughts and interpretation as a participant.

APPENDIX O
Themes by Research Question

Themes Supporting Research Questions

Themes supporting central question: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?

School psychologists' experiences

Themes from the co-researchers supporting the central research question:

1. Exists
2. Gap in perception
3. Lack of understanding
4. Nebulous topic
5. Occurrences vary
6. Personality types
7. Propensity for power struggles
8. Resilience of students
9. Tendency toward conformity

Sub-Themes from the co-researchers narrative stories of teacher-to-student mistreatment supporting the central research question:

1. Academically related comments/Low expectations
2. Disability related comments
3. Family related
4. Humiliation
5. In front of peers: Single-out/Whole-class
6. Intimidation
7. Isolation
8. Name calling
9. Power/Misuse of authority
10. Sarcasm
11. Verbal demeaning comments
12. Written demeaning comments
13. Yelling

Themes supporting first sub-question: What do school psychologists' perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?

Perceptions of negative teacher behaviors

Themes from the co-researchers supporting the first sub-question:

1. Damage
2. Negative reaction
3. Patterns and climate
4. Teacher-student connection/relationship
5. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors

Themes supporting second sub-question: What is the language of school psychologists' in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?

School psychologists' language

Themes from the co-researchers supporting the second sub-question:

1. Abuse
2. Adverse action that denigrates or degrades

3. Disrespect
4. Power
5. Variety of terms of mistreatment

Themes supporting third sub-question: How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?

<u>Adverse impact on students</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the third sub-question:</u>
1. Damages ability to trust
2. Life-long repercussions
3. Short-term and long-term impacts

Themes supporting fourth sub-question: What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?

<u>Why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the fourth sub-question:</u>
1. Personality
2. Power and control
3. Lack of awareness
4. Lack of behavioral management skills
5. Lack of connection
6. Lack of repercussions
7. Lack of understanding
8. Stress/Frustration/Burnout

Themes supporting fifth sub-question: How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?

<u>Impact on professional role</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the fifth sub-question:</u>
1. Advocacy and consultation increase
2. Desire to do more
3. Resource
4. Stressful and frustrating

Themes by Data Sources

Themes Supported by Data Sources (Survey data, Interview data, Discussion Forum data)

1. Teacher-to-student mistreatment exists
   1a. Occurrences vary

   1b. Student's resilience

   1c. Language/Definitions vary

   1d. Nebulous topic

2. Lack of understanding by teachers
   2a. How to deal with student behavior/Lack of behavioral management skills

   2b. Lack of understanding of disabilities and its impact

   2c. Lack of knowledge on impact of poverty and student's background/environmental factors

   2d. Lack of tolerance of conduct beyond the norm/normal expectation

   2e. Lack of awareness of teacher mistreatment behaviors

3. Reasons why vary
   3a. Power struggles/Misuse of power and authority

   3b. Personality

   3c. Pressured teaching climate & Stress/Frustration/Burnout

   3d. Lack of repercussions

   3e. Lack of teacher-student connection/healthy relationship building

4. Appearance of mistreatment
   4a. Verbal

   4b. Nonverbal

   4c. Academically/Socially/Emotionally/Mentally/Psychologically

5. Impact of damage
   5a. Short-term/Long-term

5b. Damages ability to trust

5c. Life-long repercussions

6. Impact on School Psychologist role
   6a. Advocacy/Consultation increase

   6b. Stress/Frustration

   6c. Reinforces resource role

   6d. Desire to do more/Glad to share information

APPENDIX Q

Audit Trail/Timeline/Researcher Reflection Selections

Provided below are selections from an audit trail/timeline and researcher reflection/memoing pages, which summarizes key dates corresponding to different aspects of the dissertation process and qualitative study and works to build dependability and trustworthiness.

Date and Event
December, 2012
- Passed EDUC 919 Comprehensive Exam

March, 2013
- Chair and Committee members secured

July, 2013
- Research proposal submitted to dissertation committee (Chapters 1-3)

September, 2013
- Expert review of proposal manuscript and survey/interview/discussion forum questions prior to Proposal Defense

October 24, 2013
- Successful Proposal Defense (in person) with dissertation committee

October 24, 2013
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) application submitted for review and approval

November 5, 2013
- IRB application full approval!
    - IRB Code Numbers: 1713
    - IRB Expiration Date: 11-5-2014
- Data collection began (technically).
- Updated data on the website and survey sites. Updated settings on discussion forum.

November 5, 2013
- As a fellow school psychologist who has observed and experienced the phenomenon under study, bracketing out any personal bias concerning the phenomenon will mean to "set aside prejudgments" and "preconceived ideas about things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). As the beginning of my duties as a researcher, I know, recognize, and acknowledge my previous experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment as a school psychologist over the past seven years potentially impacts my understanding of the study. My desire as a researcher is to readily accept the information brought forward by the co-researchers in the study without pre-judgment. As the human inquirer of this study, I disclose my personal bias from past associations and experiences up-front, therefore starting the bracketing process. Through use of constant bracketing and memoing techniques, I will

protect against allowing it to color the present data collection and analysis process. Putting routine methods in place will assist in safe-guarding the bracketing process. As noted in the Data Analysis section/chapter, bracketing techniques will consist of constant monitoring throughout the research process, use of a daily audit trail log, and multiple memoing techniques to separate fact from opinion.

November, 2013 - January, 2014
- Maintained a daily audit trail, timeline/schedule, and memoing through researcher annotated observations and reflections from the experience.
- REFLECTIVE NOTES: Used a personal electronic audio recorder for researcher reflection purposes to add additional feedback after each interview experience, as well as written researcher field notes to collect both descriptive and reflective notes.
- Memoing techniques used throughout the research process to capture co-researchers' nonverbal communication conveyed during the interview process, and help separate fact from opinion as anecdotal notes are collected of personal thoughts, ideas, and reactions occurring during the process. Transcribed audio recordings of interviews, researcher reflections, and field notes collectively utilized to gather data.

November 6, 2013
- Conducted Pilot Test with seasoned professional Psychologist's for review of survey/interview/discussion forum questions and made corrections. The purpose of the pilot study is not to collect research data but to refine and provide critical examination of each survey, interview, and discussion forum question.

November 7, 2013
- After Pilot Test: Made corrections as needed on my documentation and VASP application and Surveymonkey.com and website, etc. Posted changes to My Dissertation Sharepoint Portal.
- Changes made as a result of the pilot test are documented here:
  - Added "s" Psychologist on the Online Survey Question 6 answer choice "b."
  - Deleted apostrophe on the Online Survey Question 8 word "school's".
  - Deleted extra word "the" in the Online Survey Question 13.
  - Deleted question mark and added a period to the Online Survey Question 22.
  - Deleted "s" of the word "describes" on the Online Survey Question 33.

November 8, 2013
- Submitted by Email (11-8-13) and US Mail (11-8-13) the VASP Research Committee application for membership data
- Updated/Republish website.
- Backup website.
- Create a secure environment for Discussion Forum: Disabled non-members from browsing forum. Did not allow non-members to browse Discussion Forum. Cut-off automatic approval of new members.
- Awaited VASP approval list of member contact info (mailing addresses).

November 11, 2013

- Week 1: Reviewed "Surveymonkey.com's Email Invitation Collector" system for accuracy in message to be sent.
- Opened Surveymonkey.com survey for participants to answer survey questions https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HQJQB2H
- Opened two other surveys (WebLink to the "Contact Information" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WCS3JZ3 and WebLink to the "Gift Card giveaway" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q5LPL9C)

November 11, 2013
- Week 1: Emailed survey invitation letter and informed consent documentation to 636 School Psychologists on the VADOE listing through surveymonkey.com

November 14, 2013
- Week 1: VASP approval. Received VASP approval to access membership land/mail addresses.
- 11-20-13: Received addresses from VASP
- 11-20-13: Sent thank you Email to VASP for membership data.
- 11-20-13: Reviewed VADOE listing and removed those from the VASP list that had already been contacted through email.
- 11-20-13: Mailed, by US Mail, a survey invitation letter and informed consent documentation to 50 VASP members
- Total number of school psychologists invited to participate in the survey: 686.

November 15, 2013
- Examined perspective interview participants. View WebLink to the "Contact Information" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WCS3JZ3
- Use Criterion: Analyzed the responses given to the first three questions (Q 13, 14, 15) then (Q 11, 7, 22) on Part Two of the online survey.
- Eliminated co-researchers not meeting specified criteria
- Assigned pseudonyms to interviewees. Kept contact information/corresponding pseudonyms locked up.

- Began contacting potential interviewees to sign/return Informed Consent form.
- WebLink to the "Contact Information" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WCS3JZ3
- Asked how he/she wanted to participate: Either in the online format with face-to-face capabilities using Skype or Face Time, or face-to-face at a convenient location such as a place of work, business or home. The co-researcher chose the mode and site that was most convenient, confidential, and comfortable.
- Followed protocol using flexible interview guide approach.
- Used pseudonyms for interview and discussion forum.
- Remembered to audiotape and transcribe.
- Remembered to also give a demographic questionnaire to interview participants.
- Received signed Informed Consent form from potential Interviewees/Discussion Forum participants. Inform consent forms were returned directly to me, and/or received by U.S.

Mail, fax, or scanned document through email. All signed consent forms were kept in a separate locked drawer from the data collected and pseudonyms was provided to ensure confidentiality.

November 18, 2013
- As of 11-18-13 (7 days after opening the survey for participation), I have 100 survey participants and eight psychologists interested in interviews. Interviews scheduled with three school psychologists.

November 21, 2013 – December 20, 2013
- Interviews began and Discussion Forum opened for posts.
- Created Discussion Forum userid accounts/passwords. Provided website address to access Discussion Forum. Issued Discussion Forum site passwords to participants utilizing pseudonyms.
- Emailed all interview participants a reminder when the discussion forum was opened for review/feedback.

November 25, 2013
- Week 2: 14th day: Follow-up email sent to all co-researchers at the two-week mark.
- Began transcription for data analysis
- Deleted audio recordings after each transcription.

December 2, 2013
- Memoing/RESEARCHER REFLECTION/Thoughts – Do some male school psychologists think differently than female school psychologists on the teacher-to-student topic? Why do some males seem to have little to no report or are not forth coming with teacher-to-student mistreatment situations over the span of their career? Are female school psychologists more forthcoming or have more experiences to share? Do some males have a different problem solving approach or do some males believe teacher-to-student topic situation is appropriate?
- RESEARCHER REFLECTION (from Chapter 4 Findings) concerning nebulous topic:
  - An important theme that emerged in Chapter Four was that co-researchers made reference to the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment as a nebulous topic. The use of nebulous in this context means vague, cloudy, not clearly defined or easy to perceive or understand. Even though the interview question painstakingly defined and outlined the operational definition of the term teacher-to-student mistreatment, provided real world examples of behaviors, and gave exhaustive specimen lists of possible short-term and long-term impacts, some co-researchers still were uncertain in their opinion. The questions that were circulating in their mind were as follows: What is it? What are we actually talking about? How do I define it? Are we talking about power struggles? Can it be considered mistreatment? Where is the line? The latter question is the most important in this termed nebulous topic: Where is the line?
  - After some reflection to shed light on that question, I must forewarn the reader that the following answer may be biased because it awakens a personal point-of-view. But as a phenomenological researcher, I am one who seeks meaning and

arrives at understanding "through intuition, and reflection on conscious acts of experience, leading to ideas, concepts, judgments" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 58). Anyone can witness mistreatment happening, but someone must consciously decide that it has crossed an invisible line to consider it mistreatment. That is a personal decision that is based on one's own values and beliefs. That is where the blur begins and ends. The definition is clear to me, just as words printed on a page. The personal human consciousness, awareness, and interpretation are not so clear, and that is why this topic remains a nebulous one in some co-researchers' minds when it comes to this phenomenon. To other co-researchers, who are firm in their convictions and have reached a level of self-awareness, teacher-to-student mistreatment is clearly identifiable, without hesitation. When it is observed, it exists, and there is a duty to act accordingly.

December 16, 2013
- Closed Surveymonkey survey to all co-researchers.
- Purchased five $20 Amazon.com online gift cards.
- Quick statistics:
  - A total of 686 participants were invited to participate in the Survey.
  - A response rate of 20.3% was realized by 139 participants answering the survey questions.
    - There were 139 survey respondents, of which 66 (47.5%) completed the entire survey.
  - 10 participants offered their contact information for potential interview, of which 6 (60%) completed the interview.
  - 22 participants offered their email address as entry into a gift card drawing, of which 5 were selected randomly for the 5 prizes.

December 16, 2013
- Obtained email addresses for gift card giveaway.
- Followed protocol to select five winners of the gift card giveaway. WebLink to the "Gift Card giveaway" survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q5LPL9C
- Disbursed the five Amazon.com gift cards.

December 17, 2013
- Memoing/Researcher Reflection/Thoughts – This study would be good for use with school counselors and itinerants such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, educational specialists, and speech pathologists. These educators also have a large scope/overview of school systems that they work in but also an in-depth view of how teachers/staff interact students.

November/December, 2013
- Transcribed all interviews.
- Erased all remaining audio recordings from transcriptions.
- Imported all transcribed interviews into NVivo 10 for data analysis.

- Copy/Paste interview summaries into the Discussion Forum for member-checking.

November/December, 2013
- Transcribed all Memoing (researcher reflections, annotated observations, reflections from the experience).
- Imported all Memoing into NVivo 10 for data analysis.

January 1, 2014
- Closed online Discussion Forum.
- Disabled Discussion Forum account so no other postings could come in.
- Imported all Discussion Forum discussions into NVivo for data analysis

January 1, 2014
- Closed/Unpublish www.spstudy.org website to co-researchers.
- Imported all SurveyMonkey.com data into NVivo 10 for Data Analysis.
- Evaluated the situation: Did you get 10% survey reply? Did you get at least 3 to interview?

January 1, 2014
- Data gathered for data analysis.
- Quantitative data was used to record various demographic characteristics, including items such as the co-researchers age, gender, years of experience as a school psychologist, highest degree obtained, membership status, setting of employment, number students served, as well as descriptive Likert scale and multiple choice responses to questions concerning their level of experiences with the phenomenon.
- Descriptive statistics were generated to report overall group and individual means on each quantitative question. Similarly, individual survey responses was tabulated and grouped by each Likert scale and multiple choice questions through Surveymonkey.com, and results were exported for analysis.
- Analyzed results were reported in narrative form for a richer understanding of its detailed meaning.
- Qualitative data was gathered during survey, interviews, discussion forum, open-ended survey questions, and review researcher reflections, bracketing, memoing, and audit trail logs processes.

- Imported all data into NVivo 10 for data analysis. Open-ended survey data results from the online survey provider was collected, printed, and input into a qualitative data analysis computer software package (NVivo),
- Used NVivo 10 to run queries to visually break down the large amounts of information
- Data was analyzed according to strategies recommended in Moustakas (1994).
    - Bracketing – for personal experiences, reduce bias, routine methods
    - Horizonalization – record significant statements on experiences. Pick out Thematic statements. Code electronically.
    - Clustering & Coding of Meaning – Themes, thematic statem'ts (NVivo). Pick out themes. Code electronically.

- o Textural Description – "what" experienced
- o Structural Description - "how" experienced
- o Synthesized findings across all sets of data to reach the essence concerning the phenomenon.
- o Essence – composite, holistic, narrative account of the phenomenon using Textural and Structural descriptions. This described the essence of the experience, and represents the overall purpose and outcome of the study.

January 10-31, 2014
- Finished writing Chapters 4 and 5, and submitted chapters to my Chair for review and feedback.

February 10, 2014
- Chair approved submission of Chapters 4 and 5 to committee members

February 12, 2014
- Finished revising Chapters 1 to 3 and Appendix documents

February 18, 2014
- Began revising manuscript according to feedback from committee members

March 14, 2014
- Research Consultant review deadline
- Submit final dissertation to APA editor
- Prepare Powerpoint presentation for defense

April 11, 2014
- Oral Dissertation Defense deadline

May 10, 2014
- Liberty University Graduation

- Notify IRB within 30 days of the completion of the study.

- May, 2017 - After the three year time period for maintaining research data, all individual research-related data, including remaining audio recordings, will be deleted, erased, and destroyed.

QUOTE: "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and during those ripples builds a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and injustice." Robert F. Kennedy

VASP

VIRGINIA ACADEMY OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

www.vaspweb.org

May 10, 2013

Dear Liberty University Faculty and IRB committee members,

This letter confirms that **Sharon Lyles** has requested preliminary approval to access the Virginia Academy of School Psychologists' current membership data base. I serve as Chair of the VASP Research and Practice Committee. This committee is comprised of other VASP members (i.e., trainers and practitioners) who review and approve any requests for access to the membership for research purposes. Please note that our committee only reviews complete proposals. Complete proposals must include written IRB approval from the applicant's home institution.

We do look forward to a more thorough review of Sharon's proposal once she has institutional IRB approval. Certainly, her current project as forwarded to me seems valuable and should provide useful information to the discipline of school psychology.

Sincerely,

Tammy D. Gilligan, Ph.D.
Chair, VASP Research and Practice Committee

APPENDIX S
Permission from VADOE

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dear Ms. Lyles:

I am glad to give you access to the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) current list of school psychologists. While it's possible for any citizen to get access to this list through the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, I am delighted to work collaboratively and cooperatively with you on securing said access; I presume you will make judicious use of this information.

If there is anything else I can do to facilitate your efforts to get IRB approval for your study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wayne H. Barry
Student Services Specialist
Office of Student Services

Research Question Findings

Many themes (see Table 5, see Appendix O) were generated from the data analysis

process that both complimented and supported the research questions.

Table 5

Themes

Themes Supporting Research Questions

Themes supporting central question: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment?
School psychologists' experiences

Themes from the co-researchers supporting the central research question:
1. Exists
2. Gap in perception
3. Lack of understanding
4. Nebulous topic
5. Occurrences vary
6. Personality types
7. Propensity for power struggles
8. Resilience of students
9. Tendency toward conformity

Sub-Themes from the co-researchers narrative stories of teacher-to-student mistreatment supporting the central research question:
1. Academically related comments/Low expectations
2. Disability related comments
3. Family related
4. Humiliation
5. In front of peers: Single-out/Whole-class
6. Intimidation
7. Isolation
8. Name calling
9. Power/Misuse of authority
10. Sarcasm
11. Verbal demeaning comments
12. Written demeaning comments
13. Yelling

Themes supporting first sub-question: What do school psychologists' perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships?
Perceptions of negative teacher behaviors

Themes from the co-researchers supporting the first sub-question:
1. Damage
2. Negative reaction
3. Patterns and climate
4. Teacher-student connection/relationship
5. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors

Themes supporting second sub-question: What is the language of school psychologists' in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?

<u>School psychologists' language</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the second sub-question:</u>
1. Abuse
2. Adverse action that denigrates or degrades
3. Disrespect
4. Power
5. Variety of terms of mistreatment

Themes supporting third sub-question: How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher?

<u>Adverse impact on students</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the third sub-question:</u>
1. Damages ability to trust
2. Life-long repercussions
3. Short-term and long-term impacts

Themes supporting fourth sub-question: What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens?

<u>Why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the fourth sub-question:</u>
1. Personality
2. Power and control
3. Lack of awareness
4. Lack of behavioral management skills
5. Lack of connection
6. Lack of repercussions
7. Lack of understanding
8. Stress/Frustration/Burnout

Themes supporting fifth sub-question: How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist?

<u>Impact on professional role</u>

<u>Themes from the co-researchers supporting the fifth sub-question:</u>
1. Advocacy and consultation increase
2. Desire to do more
3. Resource
4. Stressful and frustrating

Synthesized below are the textural and structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994) in narrative form. School psychologist co-researchers' perceptions and experiences were depicted through thick descriptions that delivered the co-researchers' voices, actions, and feelings (Patton, 2002) to help provide an understanding of *what* the co-researchers experienced in terms of teacher-to-student mistreatment, referred to as textural descriptions, and *how* the co-researchers experienced the phenomenon, referred to as structural description (Moustakas, 1994). Textural and structural descriptions were formed and supported by significant statements from co-researchers' responses gathered during the data collection process. Because phenomenology is dedicated to descriptions, use of quotations and verbatim text from each co-researcher will be employed (Moustakas, 1994). Each description is incorporated into the sections of corresponding research questions below, which contain comprehensive survey findings and interview/discussion forum findings. The survey findings section is comprised of narrative descriptions of the scaled survey responses and vivid open-ended replies from co-researchers, supporting the corresponding research question. The interview/discussion forum findings section contains rich, thick descriptions of co-researchers' voices of experience with the phenomenon, using relevant verbatim excerpts in the individual interview question summaries. And finally, within the interview findings section is a composite summary of the interview and discussion forum responses provided in narrative form, augmenting the corresponding research question. Themes were extracted (see Table 5) to both organize the data analysis process and help generate answers to the research questions. The textural and structural descriptions combined guide the focus of the research toward the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Central Research Question

Survey Findings

Narrative description of the survey responses supporting the central research question: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment? Three key questions were asked on the online survey that directly relate to the central research question. The first key survey question asked respondents if teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment, to which 74.8% ($n = 89$) answered Yes, 8.4% ($n = 10$) answered No, and 16.8% ($n = 20$) answered Not Sure. Respondents rated how often they have observed incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment as a school psychologist: 2.5% ($n = 3$) answered Frequently, 31.9% ($n = 38$) answered Occasionally, 55.5% ($n = 66$) answered Rarely, and 10.1% ($n = 12$) answered Never. The third key survey question asked respondents to rate their level of concern for teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment: 24.4% ($n = 29$) answered Very Concerned, 54.6% ($n = 65$) answered Somewhat Concerned, and 21.0% ($n = 25$) answered Not Concerned.

The following are narrative descriptions to scaled survey questions #16 through #23.

- The co-researchers' responses to survey questions revealed that 88.1% ($n = 104$) of school psychologists believe that 1% - 24% of students are mistreated by a teacher. There were 4.2% of co-researchers who believe that 50% - 74% of students are mistreated, 5.1% of co-researchers believe that 25% - 49% are mistreated, and 2.5% of co-researchers believe that zero students are mistreated by a teacher.
- The majority of school psychologists (72.0%, $n = 85$) have never received any direct training on how to effectively deal with the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon.
- The majority (38.1%, $n = 45$) believe that when school psychologists and educators begin

a discussion, it is not usually difficult for them to recall situations where teachers bullied or mistreated students. And, 64.7% ($n = 77$) of school psychologists believe that there is a high degree of agreement among students on which teachers mistreat students.

- The majority of school psychologists' (73.7%, $n = 84$) responses on teacher-to-student mistreatment is a significant response, where they believe that it is everyone's problem, it is a form of abuse and needs attention, and bystanders are also impacted.
- When asked if school psychologists believe that when a teacher's authority to physically spank (i.e., corporal punishment) was made illegal, teachers' use of verbal abuse increased, the responses were mixed with 10.2% ($n = 12$) responding Yes, 69.5% ($n = 82$) responding Not Sure, and 20.3% ($n = 24$) responding No.
- When asked to recall their own Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 experiences, school psychologists replied with regard to whether they considered themselves a victim of teacher-to-student mistreatment. The majority answered No (59.7%, $n = 71$), 29.4% ($n = 35$) answered Yes, and 10.9% ($n = 13$) answered Not Sure.

Of the 139 survey respondents, 119 school psychologists provided their experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment situations in the educational setting. To accompany the thick accounts from co-researchers that makes it possible for truly descriptive meanings (Patton, 2002), various school psychologists' verbatim responses are provided below, in bullet format, to the open-ended survey question #22 that asked school psychologists to anonymously share their professional experiences with the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. Although no corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers, responses were grouped by similar statements.

Academically related comments/Low expectations.
- The worse mistreatment I have observed is when a teacher doesn't like a student or has low expectations for a student. This is rare though and usually the teacher is frustrated because they don't know what to do, or a student is making it very difficult for the teacher to like them. This gets back to teacher recruitment and teacher training.
- Often students that are "teacher pleaser" are treated better by teachers than students that may not understand how to portray the "teacher pleaser" behaviors. I have also seen many teachers developing a "profile" (bad kid, low IQ, lazy, oppositional) for a student and then not expecting anything outside of that "profile" from the student. In my experience many teachers are reluctant to look at their own behaviors and how they might be causing the student's behaviors.

Disability related comments.
- Autism related - teacher yelling out of frustration.
- Student with ADHD was standing at desk; Teacher took chair away for the entire day.
- Sarcasm directed towards students with disabilities making fun of their learning challenges.
- A teacher told a child with high-functioning autism that he would be "taken downtown & put in jail" and his parents would not be able to help him b/c they would not know where he was.
- I have also observed a teacher screaming at a child with an intellectual disability and saying, "Don't touch me. You're disgusting." I reported my concerns to the administration in both of these instances.
- Telling them they are not trying when they have a disability that is impacting there

learning, pointing out to students their weaknesses negatively.

- Five adults (2 teachers, 2 teaching assistants, 1 administrator) trying to get 1 autistic student to do 5 math problems while the rest of the class was out at recess. Each of the 5 adults were all taking turns telling the student to get him to do the 5 math problems. Student then proceeded to flip the desk, rip up his paper, throw all of his supplies around the room and threatened to blow up the school. Teachers denied any wrong doing and blamed the entire incident on the student because he wouldn't do 5 math problems.
- Teachers not supporting special needs (i.e., students with behavioral challenges) and being verbally harsh and punitive with them.
- Teachers speaking about students with disabilities as if they were not there.

Family related.
- I have primarily encountered teacher-to-student mistreatment in the form of negative talk about students and their families the reflect criticism and a lack of respect for the child as an individual.

Humiliation.
- Kindergarten teacher asked students who went to church, and told those who did not they had black hearts.
- Teacher confronts a student about his/her behavior (rule breaking or inability to answer an academic question) with an angry voice, accompanied by statements such as, "Why did you do that?" "How would you like someone to do that to you?" etc. The element of abuse, in my view, is that the adult is trying to punish the student through humiliation or intimidation (which might be just what the student was doing to another student).
- I have witnessed a few incidences where the teacher raised their voice at students or talked down to them in a way that I thought was rude and unnecessary.
- Male fifth grade teacher seated students in rows designated as A-B-C-D and F and clearly told them what the rows meant. He would punish "good" students by moving them to the F row for the day. Harangued and threatened students verbally. Openly ridiculed the students in the D and F rows.
- A high school student approached her teacher and asked him to explain how to complete the assignment. Initially, the teacher sent her back to her seat and said she didn't even try. After several minutes, the student returned to the teacher for assistance. The teacher rudely and loudly stated that he didn't have time to teacher her things she should have learned in elementary school. He continued his rant about how he is always given the dumb students that no one wants to deal with.
- One teacher locked a student outside the room for being late and was very verbal about keeping the student outside the class.
- A kindergarten teacher "ostracizes" students at an isolation table for not answering in complete sentences or following directions (even ESL students) & encourages classmates to ignore them. A 4th grade teacher verbally lambastes students in front of the class for not completing h.w. "Billy has an excuse because he doesn't have a computer at home, but you have no excuse!"

In front of peers/Single-out/Whole-class.
- Berating a student in front of their peers with a loud voice and close physical proximity.
- A 4th grade teacher scolded a female student in the hallway until the student began to cry. It seemed that the goal of the teacher was to make the student cry. The teacher made the student return to class while still crying.

- Teachers have been observed to single out children by yelling at them in front of the entire class, making rude and sarcastic remarks, and generally embarrassing and verbally abusing the child. It breaks my heart every time I see or hear it, and it happens more often than I care to believe.
- In front of peers - Demeaning tone of voice, demand for eye contact, demand for respect - with anxious student, belittling behavior, name calling, isolation.
- The worst was where I observed a student being basically told that their opinion was worthless by a third grade teacher. The teacher then went on to tell the student to shut up.
- Second grade teacher verbally bullying a student in front of the rest of the class. She tended to pick on him and single him out for things the other students were doing as well.

Intimidation: Verbal/Physical.
- Two teachers come to mind - older teachers, difficult-to-handle students, lost tempers, teachers bullying kids.

Isolation.
- She also seated this student separately from all of the others so that he was facing his classmates' backs. He was isolated physically and socially by this teacher.

Name calling.
- Calling students names (loser, stupid).
- PE teachers making hurtful comments about weight.
- A sped teacher heard (through the walls) calling a student "stupid ." (I reported this to administration.) Same kindergarten teacher above not allowing K students to stand when working (requiring developmentally inappropriate levels of behavior). Multiple instances of inappropriate use of sarcasm which the students do not understand…
- One of the recent experiences I encountered was a teacher that called a student a "spoiled brat" and said she could "not possibly name a strength for this child."

Power/Misuse of authority.
- Teacher uses authority as a means to punish student even when the behavior is within acceptable ranges as established by teacher despite students protest to the contrary. As the student is being sent out teacher angrily makes statements regarding their demeanor and behavior and tells them not to come back.
- I have seen that often teacher's sub-consciously take out their frustrations/stress on their students. I have seen teachers treating students that they may not like more harshly than other students in the class.
- Overuse and abuse of their power and authority as a teacher to verbally and non-verbally mistreat students as a classroom discipline technique.

Sarcasm.
- A teacher (30+ years experience) was calling out questions, and when a student did not know, she made a series of sarcastic comments/questions that seemed aimed at making the student feel stupid (why don't you know? it's easy. how can you not know that?...)
- Use of inappropriate sarcasm, put-downs of students.
- I have heard of a teacher that would make snide comments to a student, such as "I can't believe that you were able to do that well."
- The use of sarcasm in the classroom.

Verbal demeaning comments.
- Teachers talking bad about students to their face, demeaning them.

- Teachers talking bad about students, using derogatory comments to other teachers and staff.
- Teacher discussing negative behavior of specific student in front of that student and others .
- Demeaning their character as irresponsible when they don't attend to seemingly pointless academic demands.
- In a meeting, a teacher was talking about a student and how they weren't going to pass anyway and what a horrible person they were.
- It was more of an intolerance of a student's differences where the teacher expressed her frustration out loud regarding a student's anxieties.

Written demeaning comments.
- Teachers writing negative demeaning things about students in IEPs, discipline referrals, or other educational paperwork.

Yelling.
- A coach berating a student.
- My office in one of my elementary schools is in the Kindergarten wing of the building. While there is certainly a lot of good happening, more often than not I hear teachers yelling, screaming, criticizing, and in general using harsh tone and language with these young, fresh, new learners. Across schools and grades, I have observed students being "handled" in very unprofessional and unsafe ways, often times unnecessarily so. Many staff are trained in CPI restraints if needed, but this is not often the technique I observe (I see students being pulled by their arms, carried, etc.). Teachers have been observed to single out children by yelling at them in front of the entire class, making rude and sarcastic remarks, and generally embarrassing and verbally abusing the child. It breaks my heart every time I see or hear it, and it happens more often than I care to believe.
- A teacher yelling at her whole class, telling them that they are the lowest class that she has ever had and that they cannot do anything.
- Teachers yelling at students, using over bearing voice tone and threatening tone of voice to get students attention or to make a point.
- The school principal yelling and screaming in the faces of about 3 to 4 elementary school students brought to him for discipline. He was a tall, large man who loomed over the students. He also stomped his feet while yelling. His justification was that he was trying to give them a negative experience to discourage them from misbehaving and having to come to the principal's office in the future.
- The only incident of student mistreatment I can recall is when a teacher yelled at her class and then blamed individual students for her feelings.
- I had worked in a situation where we had a Kindergarten teacher who had very poor classroom management and she was yelling at the students at a very high volume several times a week, telling the students that they were terrible kids and what is wrong with you that you cannot act normally. This resulted in having to remove students from the classroom and almost daily bouts of students crying and very upset.
- Teachers yelling and calling children names for not demonstrating desired behaviors.
- I have a teacher in one school who constantly alternates between ignoring and yelling at her entire class. This teacher's general attitude and the entire climate of their classroom makes me and most other staff members who enter the classroom very uncomfortable. Myself and the guidance counselor have spoken to this teacher and reports have been

made to administration, but nothing has been done.

- Teacher screaming at a student in front of the rest of the group because did not understand what to do. It was many years ago, but I still remember.
- Intense yelling at a student.
- Teachers yelling at students, telling them they are the worse and lowest class she has ever had, verbally insulting students
- Just consistent yelling and negative statements, that made the classroom stressful.
- Mostly it is the yelling in the classroom at a large group of students, especially when there is poor classroom management.

To summarize, there were reoccurring categories of statements made by co-researchers. School psychologists' comments from this open-ended survey question were grouped in the following categories: Academically related comments/Low expectations, Disability related comments, Family related, Humiliation, In front of peers/Single-out/Whole-class, Intimidation/Verbal/Physical, Isolation, Name calling, Power/Misuse of authority, Sarcasm, Verbal demeaning comments, Written demeaning comments, and Yelling.

Interview Findings

Individual interview question summaries that support the central research question: What are school psychologists' experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment? Below are the individual interview question summaries for questions #1 through #5.

Interview Question #1. As a school psychologist, please share your story or experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. Co-researchers turned into interview participants who had personal stories and experiences to relay on the teacher-to-student phenomenon. Their recollections were strong, whether the occurrences were frequent or infrequent. Three main themes emerged from their collective narratives, including lack of understanding, conformity, and power struggles.

Lack of understanding. The theme of a lack of understanding of how to deal with children in diverse circumstances emerged from the majority of interview participants. Interview participant 2 commented that there was not just one worst instance of teacher-to-student mistreatment experience to share and that sometimes, "I find myself thinking, if parents only knew...what happens in school." Even though she does not encounter the phenomenon frequently, interview participant 7 said when she does, "It is something that I really think about and worry about. I typically see it with students who have behavioral problems in addition to learning problems, particularly students who have high frequency or high intensity behaviors." Participant7 spoke of an experience when a new student came into her school diagnosed with Downs Syndrome:

> This school was not really accustomed to having students with high needs . . .so it has been a really learning process on helping them put behavior supports in place. The teacher was very verbally aggressive towards the student and took advantage of the fact that the student could not understand the nuances of everything she was saying. And the way the teacher then talked to others about the student. It was very negative. It was very clear that the teacher did not want the student, and did not want the student in the class. Just a very bad situation over all.

A teacher's lack of understanding on how to interact appropriately with some children came in the form of intimidation stories given by interview participant 6. She said, "Certain types of teachers, they almost bully students to get them to do something or to intimidate them." Stories

of teachers who do not understand how to talk appropriately to students when frustrated led interview participant 8 to share, "A parent called to complain that a resource teacher kept telling a young lady in the class, 'You just need to grow up, stop this foolishness and grow up,' and that type of thing." He went on to explain that "It is that lack of understanding and lack of perspective-taking, when you don't understand what you can do to a child. Or, What anxiety looks like in a classroom." Participant 8 gave another example of a teacher with a narrow view:

> A teacher showed me a paper where a child, who has high level of anxiety, did two on the page and left three blank. The teacher's take on that was, he did two and refused to do the others. I said, and pointed out, "Look at the erasures around this word and the erasures around this word. He erased his work four or five times. Is he trying to make this perfect? Did he run out of time? Is he not comfortable with what he produced?" Or, I am not going to attempt this anymore because I am just going to fail. I'm going to stop here. I'm so mentally exhausted to come up with another word.

He explained that he attempted to reframe the teacher's perspective and explain what the student's actions were really telling the teacher in an effort to diffuse her aggravation. Interview participant 8 also shared,

> I was in the class with a teacher who I found out did not believe kids have those special needs. This teacher believed that if kids just worked harder, if you had a good teacher and they work hard, that there would be no need for special education and that kind of thing.

Participant 8 explained that this teacher was very rigid in what she liked and how she liked her classroom to be organized. This student needed special accommodations where "he needed to stand up to work because it was more comfortable for him, he needed a lot of moving around the room" which often disturbed the teacher's inflexible expectations. Participant 8 remarked that when he went to check on the student in the teacher's classroom:

> The door opened on the other side, and she had him by the arm in a grip, and the minute I opened the door, and she saw me, she thrust him at me, and said, "Good, Here, You deal with this!" You know, I thought, this is a really bright child, who does not understand why you are doing this to him. The really sad part of the situation is that the parents ultimately became so frustrated that they homeschooled him.

He closed by explaining that the father had to quit his full time job, and the student was no longer able to be a part of a regular school experience.

Conformity. The second theme that emerged from the interview process was one of conformity. The interview participants said they were surprised at the level of conformity that they have witnessed throughout their careers. They were especially surprised by new teachers, who in spite of all they have learned about behavioral management techniques, slid silently into conformity of classroom discipline methods that were not as effective and sometimes harmful. Interview participant 2 shared a story where previous school personnel held firm to the notion, "We have always done it this way," explaining,

> When someone new comes in, they may have gotten right out of college and you would expect them to be all bright with new ideas, and yet they seem to conform to 50 year old ways of doing things and you find kids being screamed at. And the things that are said to the students blow me away sometimes. I feel that frequently I am on the opposite end of the teaching staff, thinking, Are you kidding me? You just said that to that student?

Power struggles. The last theme that developed from the interview process was the topic of power struggles between a teacher and a student. This theme ran deep throughout the

phenomenon inquiry for this research study. Interview participant 2 shared a compelling story:

> I've seen teachers trigger a kid, and constantly trigger a kid. One time I was in my office with the door closed, and I heard a regular education kindergarten teacher pull a kindergarten kid out of the classroom into the hall way. The day before, he had gotten in trouble for something and he forgot to bring a signed paper back to school. The regular education teacher was down the hall screaming and yelling at this kindergarten student about not bringing the signed paper back to school. And then the special education teacher who was down the next hallway joined the regular education teacher. So now there are two teachers, screaming at this kindergarten student, threatening him with an office referral, "We are calling your parents, you are not going to recess today, and you lost fun Friday." Hearing this, I almost walked around the corner and said to the teachers, "You forgot the death penalty," because it was just so absurd. He is just in kindergarten, and the teachers had given him four consequences for one behavior. It was just ridiculous. They were just bearing down on him.

Participant 2 shared another experience with an older student with autism, who was crying in the hallway, being berated by a teacher:

> He was being yelled at by the teacher. He had snot running out of his nose. The kid asked, "Can I have a tissue?" and the teacher said, "No, you will wait until this interaction is over." To me, that is flat out abuse, and I just picked up a tissue and wiped the kids nose. The teacher said to me, "I said no," and I said, "I am very sorry, I thought you were asking for a tissue." I thought, you are not going to make him eat snot. This just absurd. Just because you have a power struggle. That is just dumb.

Interview participant 3 found that many times when teachers get into power struggles with students, the situation escalated, resulting in the student ultimately being punished by referrals or suspensions. She shared an experience:

> A teacher and student were in the cafeteria, it was time to leave, the student was not finished eating, the teacher wanted to hurry up, hurry up, and said, "You need to be done." The teacher picked up his food tray and threw it in the trash, which led to an escalation in behavior because the student was hungry.

The majority of the interview participants believed that many times teachers do not stop to think through what they are doing and saying, essentially feeding into a teacher-to-student mistreatment situation.

> ***Interview Question #2. What is your response (i.e., feelings, internal reaction, external actions) when you become aware of teacher-to-student mistreatment?*** School psychologist's responses when they become aware of teacher-to-student mistreatment, both internally and externally, are intense. These intense responses are practically automatic and are stemming from deep ingrained impressions of moral values. When the co-researchers see or hear something that is morally offensive to their core being, their internal or external response to take action is powerful. Interview participant 2 described,

> I react really pretty intense. Sometimes I will walk in and intervene. Sometimes I walk in and take the kid out of the classroom. I call down to the office. Sometimes I talk to administration. I don't have any problem being a rat. I'll go to the teacher. I knew she had lost her cool, and I am ok with the occasional "I've had it and I just lost it, and I know I did," than the daily, constant nastiness. I pulled the teacher aside and said "I want you to know what you just did and I don't know if you are even aware." I told her that she needed to know, and for her to go and tell on herself before I do. Depending on whom it

is and how they would respond. I have pulled a teacher aside and told her, "You are really loud today," even though they are loud every day, "I can hear you all the way down the hall," and I took that opportunity to ask her what was going on today. I do a lot of different things.

School psychologists' responses are reactions of shock and frustration. Interview participant 7 reported,

My first response is shock, because a lot of times, they are teachers that initially I would not have expected to have such a negative response to children, especially children with special needs. Because a lot of times, they are special education teachers, and it does not make sense to me. I start to feel angry and defensive about the child, and feel the need to monitor the situation very closely. I start thinking about who should I report this to, what can I do. Is it the teacher's stress level, and I go into problem solving mode.

All of the participants expressed a level of frustration and concern when the situation occurs, regardless of whether the mistreatment phenomenon happened often or infrequently. Interview participant 3 said after reporting the incident, she worked with administration to "problem solve as to how we can help and support this teacher to not get into power struggles. I engage in consultation and collaboration with the teacher." Interview participant 8 noted that she often tries to reframe the situation for the teacher to help expose another side of the circumstance and give a relatable example. But some situations can instill another level of concern and even anger for participant 8, who shared,

Sometimes I get very upset, frustrated, and sometimes very angry. In the case of the second grader, that really made me angry. Because I thought, he is a baby and you are manhandling this baby. You basically sent him a message that he is no good. And how is that going to have an impact on him for the rest of his life. And it will! And that really makes me angry.

Interview Question # 3. How do you become aware (i.e., read, hear, observe) of teacher-to-student mistreatment? All interview participants agree that they have each read, seen, heard, and observed various incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment. Many times they have heard a teacher discussing what they have done with a student to other staff members. When that happens, interview participant 2 commented she thinks to herself, "Are you dumb? You are telling this aloud." Other times, students will report mistreatment directly to the school psychologist or other teachers observe a teacher-to-student mistreatment incident and decide to share that information. Interview participant 2 explained,

They will come tell me because they know I will try and take care of it, they may be venting, there are lots of ways, or administration will ask me to intervene, go do a behavior plan on this student. I am a resource in the school. Some people will come to me, and some others won't use me because they feel I am a threat, which is ridiculous.

Interview participant 3 often discovered mistreatment situations in routine paperwork. She shared that she read it in discipline referrals, where "one teacher's referral was three pages long. It was basically a rant from a teacher on a student, listing everything that this student has ever done to pluck the last nerve of the teacher." During meetings, interview participant 8 said she often recognized it through discussions, saying,

I perceive it by intuition at meetings. I don't like to hear teachers say, "this child is lazy" because I don't believe kids are lazy. I believe that kids want to be successful. If the kid is presenting as, I am lazy, or I don't care, or I am a behavior problem, they are actually trying to say something else. If I hear those things in a meeting, it turns on a light bulb.

Interview Question #4. Describe the characteristics and personality of teachers who mistreat students. The characteristics and personality of a teacher who mistreats students were described as someone who is angry, cynical, has a low threshold for frustration, and one that employs power struggles as classroom management. Interview participant 2 said,

> Typically it is someone who is already angry, and who has no backbone of their own. Either they are a very strong character, that is how we are doing it in our group, or they are following along because they don't know any better.

This also refers to the idea of conformity mentioned in interview question one above. Interview participant 6 chuckled while recalling an experience with an older male physical education teacher who was described as "old-school, trying to toughen them up." Interview participant 7 said,

> It tends to be teachers that may have a low frustration tolerance, and for whatever reason, do not form a personal connection with the student, and tend to view possible solutions in a more punitive way. So maybe teachers who tend to be more pessimistic, I guess, and teachers that tend to have a high work load or those that feel that they don't have the resources or skills to cope with the behavior.

Many empathetic comments were made by the interview participants on how fast paced the curriculum objectives were for teachers, accompanied with the stress and pressures placed on educators from administration, and state and federal mandates. Interview participant 8 commented that many times she observes teachers who seem to be:

> Teaching curriculum and not students. Their goal is to get to page 300 by May 30th, and don't anybody get in the way of that. It is all SOL's, this is an SOL class. We can't have that. They are more focused on doing what they perceive as their sole responsibility, imparting that curriculum wisdom, and they don't tend to see the individual behaviors of children as something other than what they appear to be on the surface.

This is viewed by the participant as a teacher who does not have the time to connect with the student and work through relationship problems because the student's only objective is to learn and the teacher's only objective is to teach.

Interview Question #5. Describe the characteristics and personality of students who are mistreated. Interview participants each described the characteristics and personality of students who are mistreated. Many commented like interview participant 4, that it "varies upon the age of the student." Most participants described these students as those that do not match the norm population, including students with special needs, and those with high frequency or high intensity behaviors. Interview participant 3 said that it often included students with "behavior challenges and sometimes kids with learning challenges who are acting out behaviorally, and the teachers miss what is happening in their life." Interview participant 7 explained that she has seen a broad range of characteristics in students, but it was always, "those students who know how to push buttons. That tends to be a commonality." She followed up with it is "students who don't respond to typical management strategies or interventions." Interview participant 8 described the student as an underachiever, many times not putting forth any effort in class because they do not see a point in expending the energy. A comprehensive description was given by interview participant 2:

> It is the student that does not like to come to school. They don't learn at the same rate that they should be. They learn to disrespect other people, or they are so withdrawn and generally unhappy. Sometimes it is just a way of life and a culture, depending on if they have emotional issue from home, and seemingly emotionally disturbed or angry. If it is

an average kid that is getting mistreated, they are embarrassed and don't do anything.

Summary of interview and discussion forum responses by central research question. School psychologist interview participants became co-researchers, sharing their various professional experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Since they all had genuine experiences to share, each are witnesses to the fact that teacher-to-student mistreatment exists in the school environment. Collectively, participants had at least five years of experience to more than 15 years of experience to recollect, therefore some had more frequent experiences than others. As noted in the demographic section, each school psychologist currently works in a public school system located in the state of Virginia and their ages range from 25 – 65 years of age. Their stated occurrences of observing teacher-to-student mistreatment varied from rarely to frequently, which mirrored the discussion forum responses on the frequencies. However, the level of concern for teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment ranged from somewhat concerned to very concerned. School psychologists' recollections were strong regardless of the frequencies of the occurrences. Three main themes emerged from their teacher-to-student mistreatment collective narratives, including teachers' lack of understanding on how to work well with children in diverse circumstances, tendency toward conformity, and propensity for power struggles.

School psychologists' responses on the awareness of teacher-to-student mistreatment, both internally and externally, are intense. Their responses also include shock and frustration with teachers, who adopt an unspoken pledge to do no harm, but still mistreat students. All interview participants affirmed that they have each read, seen, heard, and observed various incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment throughout their career. They collectively portrayed the characteristics and personality of a teacher who mistreats students as someone who is angry, cynical, has a low threshold for frustration, and one that chooses to use inappropriate levels of power as his or her main source of classroom management. School psychologists also described the characteristics and personality of students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Although it varies by the developmental age of the student, common themes surfaced including descriptions of a student who does not fit in, has special needs, and/or students with high frequency or intensity behaviors in the classroom.

Another important theme that emerged was that co-researchers made reference to the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment as a nebulous topic. The use of nebulous in this context means vague, cloudy, not clearly defined or easy to perceive or understand. Even though the interview question painstakingly defined and outlined the operational definition of the term teacher-to-student mistreatment, provided real world examples of behaviors, and gave exhaustive specimen lists of possible short-term and long-term impacts, some co-researchers still were uncertain in their opinions. The questions that were circulating in their minds were as follows: What is it? What are we actually talking about? How do I define it? Are we talking about power struggles? Can it be considered mistreatment? Where is the line? The latter question is the most important in this termed nebulous topic: Where is the line?

<center>First Sub-Question</center>

Survey Findings

Narrative description of the survey responses supporting the first sub-question: What do school psychologists perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships? The following are narrative descriptions to scaled survey questions #24 through #29, and open-ended survey questions #30 and #31.

- The majority of school psychologists (98.1%, $n = 101$) answering the survey agreed that

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some teachers exhibit negative behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships.

- A total of 100 school psychologists identified different types of verbal and nonverbal negative behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships. The most outstanding verbal behaviors identified include yelling (78%), negative comparison (73%), putdowns/ridiculing/sarcasm/humiliation (68%), shaming (65%), excessive verbal punishment/reprimands (61%), negative prediction (55%), labeling (49%), and nonverbal behaviors identified as excessive discipline referrals (56%), isolation (48%), ignoring/shunning/rejecting (45%), and humiliation/diminish self-concept (44%).

- The top three verbal negative teacher behaviors most frequently observed as identified by school psychologists are yelling, excessive verbal punishment/reprimand, and labeling. The top three nonverbal negative teacher behaviors most frequently observed are excessive discipline referrals, humiliation/diminish self-concept, and ignoring/shunning/rejecting.

- A total of 82.5% ($n = 85$) school psychologists reported they believe that teachers who mistreat students have lost their sensitivity to the power of verbal remarks and the power and usefulness of nonverbal communication.

- School psychologists rated how often they have observed teachers using negative verbal and nonverbal behavior as a classroom management technique to maintain classroom discipline, resulting in Occasionally 49.5% ($n = 51$), Rarely 31.1% ($n = 32$), Frequently 16.5% ($n = 17$), and Never 2.9% ($n = 3$).

- The co-researchers offered 96 responses on various patterns of teacher behavior that contribute to negative feelings toward a student. Responses include a teacher's lack of positive feedback and encouragement, lack of empathy, lack of personal connection with the student, constant yelling, rigidity, focuses on the negative, rolling eyes, very critical/criticizes, demeaning sarcasm, old fashion approach to classroom management, personality issues, and not willing to accept help, change teacher practices, or implement recommendations or strategies to improve the situation.

- In relation, negative student behaviors that may trigger or contribute to negative reactions in teachers were identified by 99 co-researchers. Responses include oppositional, defiant, argumentative, disrespect, challenging authority, work refusal/noncompliance, power struggles, and lack of self-control.

Interview Findings

   Individual interview question summaries that support the first sub-question: What do school psychologists perceive as the negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships? Below are the individual interview question summaries for questions #6 through #13.

   Interview Question #6. What verbal teacher behaviors contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships? Praise, building healthy relationships, and positive feedback and encouragement are all themes that emerged from school psychologists' descriptions of verbal teacher behaviors that contributed to a healthy teacher-student relationship. Interview participant 2 spoke of the importance of constant praise, and interview participant 7 encouraged a teacher's use of five positives for every one negative correction. Participant 2 commented, "Unfortunately, a lot of people don't understand that when you are rewarding a child, you are not giving something they do not deserve." She spoke of the importance of being upbeat and positive as a teacher of children. Participant 7 noted that high-quality teachers are those "that are

always observant of their students and give immediate praise or feedback, and those teachers who bank time with a student who is struggling, to work on the relationship with the student. They see the relationship as important." These participants viewed the idea of teachers working to build a healthy relationship with a student as just as important as teaching the curriculum. Participant 3 said, "one of the phrases I have been using recently with teachers is, it is not about winning the argument, it is about how to build unity with the student." Investing time with students was a very important initiative with her entire school system, such that the administration "instituted the first week of school is not to be about instruction, but to be about building healthy relationships with students." The participants each expressed using verbal positive reinforcement and encouragement with children helps to bring out the best in them and supports healthy self-esteem. Participant 8 explained that those attempts made through kindness to bridge a personal connection with the student relays to the student, "You pay attention to me, you notice when I am not here, and you can tell when I am off my game." Building personal connections is a valuable goal for teachers of all students in any grade level. Participant 8 shared that, he told his high school students, "'You need to put that A on the refrigerator.' It brought back memories when school was easy and fun."

　　　　Interview Question #7. What nonverbal teacher behaviors contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships? Listening to the student, giving frequent eye contact, physical proximity, and offering positive gestures are common descriptions given by interview participants on various nonverbal teacher behaviors that contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships. Interview participant 2 explained that "smiling, nodding your head, listening, eye contact, walking around the room, sitting by them, getting down on their level," and acknowledging students' presence and efforts in the classroom all demonstrate that a teacher cares and is concerned. Participant 7 said it is important to remember to offer kids a "pat on the back or high five . . . and gain eye contact before giving instruction." She explicated that it is important for teachers to remember to have open body language and to face students, and not keep your back turned. Participant 8 further supported this idea by saying, "finding something good to say about that child or to that child is important, even if they are not succeeding. Maybe they are trying, maybe they are doing better than yesterday."

　　　　Interview Question #8. What verbal teacher behaviors contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships? The verbal teacher behaviors that the interview participants noted often contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships include yelling, using demeaning language to students and about students to co-workers, verbal intimidation, sarcasm, and engaging in verbal power struggles as a means to gain control. The entire group of interview participants witnessed teachers yelling at students of all ages and grade levels, which they convey is an unnecessary and ineffective way to get students' attention. A pressing topic for participant 7 included a teacher's frequent verbal correction in the classroom, and negative language about a student, both delivered directly to a student and talking about the student with another teacher. Participant 8 also found that "sometimes teachers look at students, and roll their eyes and sigh, and say things like, 'Wait until you get that one, that kids going to make your life miserable.'" He explained that using that type of negative behavior just continues "to pass on that legacy of, 'mistreat that kid.'" Participant 8 gave various examples of verbal teacher behaviors that contributed to adverse teacher-student relationships, such as, "'Why won't you grow up? What are you, stupid? I taught that yesterday. Why are you even asking me that question?' Or a kid raising their hand and the teacher says, 'You have one more question. Really?'" Participant 2 gave examples of experiences of teacher-to-student mistreatment where a teacher used demeaning language and

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isolation as a punishment. Participant 2 shared,

> I watched some teachers isolate a kid in the lunch room, all by herself at a table, for sucking the ketchup out of a packet. She probably does that at home. Maybe the kid was hungry, and does not have enough food at home. Whatever. So teach her not to, tell her. It takes five minutes to teach that, and then it is over. So teachers isolate, they say things like, you are disgusting, you are making others sick around you, and embarrassing kids in front of others.

Sarcasm was a topic of interest for interview participant 2, as she emphasized,

> I really don't like sarcasm. When you are in a classroom, things like that are very hurtful to a kid. I've seen teachers make fun of kids. I saw a teacher make fun of an autistic first grade kid who had his pants on backwards. The teacher pointed it out and the whole class laughed. Or when you point out that someone did something wrong, it is always so that the whole class can hear it. Or when you can walk into the class, the whole class knows who the bad child is, because they are all correcting the same child. If I walk into a classroom, I can tell you who the kid is, because all the kids are fussing at him, because they are allowed to.

 Participant 2 seemed very frustrated at the classroom teacher for allowing it to happen.

Participant 2 also spoke of teachers who engaged in inappropriate verbal power struggles that portray the teacher as, "'I am going to win the battle.' Most things don't need to be a battle at school. If a student does not do their work, you don't do your work. Teachers just need to get over it." Participant 3 poignantly noted that she frequently witnessed,

> Teachers drawing the line in the sand, "You will do this when I tell you to do this." And then when the kid does not, the teacher does not drop it. They don't look for a different way to solve the problem, they keep pushing and pushing, until the kid storms out or blows up.

Interview Question #9. What nonverbal teacher behaviors contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships? The nonverbal teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships as explained by the interview participants include frowning or not smiling, having an unfriendly stern expression, not making eye contact or rolling of their eyes, and keeping body language that is closed and gives the perception of negativity, which shouts, "I don't care and I am not approachable." Participant 2 talked passionately about her experience that "teachers frown all the time," firmly stating,

> Future prediction of success is social skills, not academics, not straight A's. It is social skills, social behavior. And yet, if you watch in the hallway, teachers walk down the hall with scowls. They don't speak to each other. I'll walk down and no one speaks. Greeting others is a social skill. If you go for an interview, that is the first thing that they will notice. So we are not even teaching kids how to greet each other, a social skill, and how to be socially appropriate, how to be quiet. So there is always a scowl.

She also pointed out that she witnessed teachers "gritting teeth, pointing, snapping of the fingers," which she said can turn students off. Participant 3 expressed, it is all about the student's perception of what nonverbal behaviors the teacher is doing, "the way the teacher made the student feel inside." Participant 4 explained that it can be, "anything from body posture during communication to inappropriate touching." Participant 6 revealed it can be "just looking like they are not interested."

Interview Question #10. Other than student misbehavior, what triggers a teacher's negative reactions toward a student? What patterns have you noticed? Other than student

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misbehavior, triggers and patterns were identified by interview participants concerning a teacher's negative reactions toward a student. Things like not completing work quickly, not comprehending concepts fast enough, not following directions, a student's parents, and the effects of poverty, are all areas indicated by the interview participants. Participants 2 and 8 both talked about how frantic teachers are about rushing though curriculum, many times leaving students behind. Participant 2 noted that, "I've seen a kid getting their color moved for not taking their backpack off fast enough." Other triggers for a teacher's negative reactions toward a student include missing class, making mistakes, not being prepared or organized, not having supplies, and making a mess. Participant 4 commented that it is a lot about the negative expectations of the teacher. He believes "some teachers are sometimes just predisposed to think that certain students will misbehave. And, thus the teacher will have a negative reaction." Three participants commented on how parents can often be triggers for negative teacher reactions toward a student. Participant 3 saw a pattern of teachers taking their frustrations out on the student that stem from an interaction with the child's parent(s). Participant 7 clarified that if the "student's parent is also a difficult parent sometimes that will carry over to the student even if the student is not doing anything wrong. That perception of the parent or the family tends to trickle into those interactions." Participant 8 explained in detail that especially in a small county:

> Teachers know the parents, because they grew up here, graduated from school here, knows everyone in the family, they have a very long history here. They know all the parents and grandparents. They can have a particular attitude about a particular family. And anybody with that last name has to be trouble, because five generations ago, this person was trouble, that kind of a thing.

Participant 3 found patterns of a teacher's negative reactions toward a student stem from the effects of poverty. She said that students living in "poverty are more likely to have a harder time with teachers, because they don't do their homework, they are tired, they are grouchy, sleepy, hungry, dirty. It puts them at a higher risk than some kids."

Interview Question 11. What student behaviors may contribute to negative reactions in teachers? The student behaviors that the interview participants stated may contribute to negative reactions in teachers are misbehavior, arguing, noncompliance, and overtly defiant behaviors that interrupt instruction. Sometimes it is a skill deficit versus performance deficit problem. Participant 2 explained, some students seem more capable than they really are:

> If the student has some decent processing skills, you compensate. Maybe they really can't do it. It is not always oppositional behavior. Sometimes the work is just too much, it takes them a long time, and they can't do it. They get distracted, which is a big one.

Participant 3 spoke of arguments between the teacher and student, when the student chooses to not complete an assignment, "which crawls all over some teachers. I say to teachers a lot, 'They have the right to fail. He can choose the right to fail.'"

Interview Question #12. Describe the relationship between a teacher and student in a mistreatment situation? What patterns have you noticed? The interview participants were asked to describe the relationship between a teacher and student in a mistreatment situation. Their responses revealed patterns of power struggles, personality differences, and the persistence of past damage.

Power struggles. Four interview participants spoke of the pattern of power struggles in the relationship between a teacher and student. Participant 3 commented that teachers battle when "the kids are trying to gain power and it takes two to tango." Participant 4 confirmed that in a power struggle, "I think that it is more magnified in a mistreatment situation. The student

may feel he or she has little impetus to change the situation." Participant 8 described the relationship:

> Sometimes, it is almost like a bullying thing. "I have the power and you are going to do what I want you to do. I had your brother, and your brother was a rotten kid too so why wouldn't you be as rotten as your brother." Or, "Everyone in your family has been like this too." Comments like that.

Personality conflicts. The relationship can be strained by frustration and personality conflicts. Participant 7 expressed that the relationship begins with the teacher trying to build that relationship:

> I see the pattern of the teacher distancing themselves from the student, and now from the problems. No longer is it our problem, now it is something that the student is doing. And "I can't deal with this. I don't have the resources to deal with it. I don't have time. I have 28 other students." Those types of comments. Now, everything the student does becomes reframed into this negative view and the teacher starts to become unwilling to do anything different or implement any changes to help.

Persistence of past damage. Two of the interview participants shared their experiences with the persistence of past damage of conflict between a teacher and a student which can irreparably harm the relationship. Participant 2 and 5 described situations where the teacher was never able to resolve the conflict of the past involving the student and that memory lingered on, affecting the future relationship. Participant 6 reinforced that idea by stating some teachers "have not been able to get past it. Once the damage is there, I've not seen somebody remediate that and go on. It progresses and happens from year to year to year." Participant 2's statement supported the pattern:

> If a student comes in with paperwork that says they are a problem, teachers assume they will be a problem this year, if they were a problem last year. I have heard a teacher say, "I heard I am going to get this student coming up from kindergarten to first grade and we should be prepared." I say, "No, it is just October, he'll be fine." A lot of times if you do a behavior plan, teachers will automatically say "It will not work, nothing works, no incentives work, he does not like anything or respond to anything, no consequences work." Once they have done enough to make the teachers mad, that's it. There is no going back. It is hard to reverse once it starts.

Interview Question #13. What is present in the school environment (i.e., climate, morale, building, practices) that may influence the teacher-student relationship in a negative way? The interview participants gave responses to what they believe is present in the school environment that may influence the teacher-student relationship in a negative way. Responses included morale, climate, and level of support from administration. The expectations of staff and how well or poorly teachers are treated by administration, parents, students, and the community were noted as having an effect on the overall morale, and in turn the teacher-student relationship. If teachers are not recognized in a positive way, and only given negative feedback for not making progress according to SOL test scores, morale will decrease. Some teachers' negative attitudes are passed down in the form of frustration, feeding into the teacher-student relationship. Constant levels of fear and intimidation from administration can wear on teachers, according to Participant 2, who added, "administration has a lot to do with morale and climate. If teachers are afraid of getting into trouble all the time, it tends to be worse." Too many unfunded mandates due to budget cuts and not enough staff to cover all of teachers' tasks, negatively impacts teachers who have to work in multiple roles throughout the day. Participant 3 reiterated,

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One of our biggest challenges right now with budget cuts is we just don't have the staffing. It's one teacher managing a bigger number of students. We don't have the resources to help facilitate how we are going to build the relationship between the teacher and student, because of time, etc.

The responses from participant 7 were quite passionate, who explained,

It has become acceptable for teachers to discuss students in the teachers' lounge. That kind of behavior is never addressed or called into question. And that climate does not facilitate collaboration from colleague to colleague, so teachers don't feel psychologically safe talking about problems they are having with students or families and brainstorming that. They very much feel that every student should be acting in a certain way, and there is not a very big tolerance for the range of what a student needs, and the understanding of what a student might be dealing with outside of school. It is so focused on the instructional practices, that it does not leave a lot of room to collaborate about such things as, "Do our students have a sense of worth when they come to our school building, particularly those students that are high need? How are we working with those students, what support systems do we have in place?" We don't have a lot of tiers of support outside of what is generally offered to anyone. I think that tends to generally contribute to those negative relationships.

Participant 6 made an interesting comment that the local school system has implemented a Responsive Classroom Approach as a school wide initiative, but there is a tendency with "special teachers, that are not classroom teachers, they don't buy into or feel part of . . . and not really vested into that" even though they interact with students on a daily basis. Participant 4 made a relatable statement that trouble often occurs, "if in the school building the climate was one that did not encourage teachers to value students." Support from the administration is important to positive teacher-student relationships because reinforcement is offered from the top down to the bottom creating that strong foundation for the key stakeholders. The experience of participant 8 gives a good example:

If you are in a situation where you are working for someone, and nobody ever says "You really did a good job there," or "I know you are having trouble with that particular child, but I like the fact that you are trying to work with him to make things change." Very few people in this particular district ever hear positives about anything. Once a week we get an email blast that says, "Thank you for everything you do for kids." It is not from the superintendent but from a secretary. It is every Friday, so it has no value.

Summary of interview and discussion forum responses by first sub-question.

Before stating the interview participant co-researchers' negative teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships, it is equally important to indicate the healthy verbal and nonverbal teacher behaviors that contribute to the positive relationship experience. School psychologists indicated that through their experiences, elements of praise, building healthy relationships, and positive feedback and encouragement are themes of good verbal behaviors, and techniques of listening to the student, giving frequent eye contact, physical proximity, and offering positive gestures are common nonverbal teacher behaviors that contribute to healthy teacher-student relationships. The verbal teacher behaviors that the interview participants noted often contribute to an adverse teacher-student relationship include yelling, using demeaning language to students and about students to co-workers, verbal intimidation, sarcasm, and engaging in verbal power struggles as a means to gain control. The related nonverbal teacher behaviors that contribute to adverse teacher-student relationships include frowning or not

smiling, having an unfriendly stern expression, not making eye contact or rolling of their eyes, and keeping body language that is closed that gives the perception of negativity, which shouts, "I don't care and I am not approachable." Other than student misbehavior, triggers and patterns that were identified by interview participants of a teacher's negative reactions toward a student include, things like not completing work quickly, not comprehending concepts fast enough, not following directions, a student's parents, and the effects of poverty. The student behaviors recognized by interview participants that may contribute to negative reactions in teachers are misbehavior, arguing, noncompliance, and overtly defiant behaviors that interrupt instruction. Presenting a description of the relationship between a teacher and student in a mistreatment situation, the interview participants revealed patterns of power struggles, personality differences, and the persistence of past damage. Finally, school psychologists provided replies to what they believe is present in the school environment that may influence the teacher-student relationship in a negative way, which involved overall morale, climate, and level of support from administration.

Second Sub-Question

Survey Findings

　　Narrative description of the survey responses supporting the second sub-question: **What is the language of school psychologists in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?** The following is a narrative description for the scaled survey question #33.

- The top four terms that school psychologists' felt best described the teacher-to-student phenomenon in the educational setting included emotionally distressing, mistreatment, abuse, and psychologically damaging.

　　Open-ended survey question #32 provided a platform for 89 school psychologists to provide their definition of teacher-to-student mistreatment. Although no corrections were made to the verbatim quotations gathered from co-researchers, responses were grouped by similar statements.

　　Abuse.

- Negative verbal and/or nonverbal behavior that causes the student to feel upset
- Any action, verbal or nonverbal, that serves to harshly relay a teacher's feelings related to a student's performance, compliance, and does not serve to assist the student with rectifying the situation

　　Adverse action that denigrates or degrades.

- Any behavior directed towards the student by the teacher that is destructive rather than constructive
- Any teacher behavior, verbal or nonverbal or combination thereof, which causes a student to feel inadequate, unacceptable, unempowered, incapable of learning, and/or undeserving of love, attention, and/or respect
- Teachers' overly negative verbal and nonverbal communication toward a student meant to shame or elicit a significant change in behavior
- The treatment of a student by a teacher which makes that student feel unloved, unimportant, and worthless

　　Disrespect.

- Treatment that is insensitive, nonproductive, disrespectful, and at times, harmful
- Treating a student in a way that you would not want a teacher to treat your own child
- A teacher taking out their own life frustrations on students, often in a "socially acceptable" manner

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- Verbal or nonverbal behavior that results in a deflated self-affect on the part of the student or diminishes the teacher-student rapport/relationship
  Power.
- The use of adult power to coax students into conformity
- Teacher-to-student mistreatment occurs when a teacher uses his or her power or position to cause a student to feel coerced, demeaned, or harassed without a means to address said behavior (feeling of powerlessness)
- Inappropriate and abusive verbal and nonverbal comments, interactions, and power/authority toward and with students
- Behavior that is used to bolster the teacher's feeling of power, but does nothing to improve learning in the student and may lead to student anger or resentment towards school
- When a teacher purposefully uses the power and leverage as a teacher to coerce a student into performing a desired behavior or stop an undesired behavior

To summarize, there were reoccurring categories of statements made by co-researchers. School psychologist comments from this open-ended survey question were grouped in the following categories: Abuse, Adverse action that denigrates or degrades, Disrespect, and Power.

Interview Findings

Individual interview question summaries that support the second sub-question: **What is the language of school psychologists in terms of defining teacher-to-student mistreatment?** Below are the individual interview question summaries for questions #14 through #17.

Interview Question #14. How do you define teacher-to-student mistreatment? The interview participants' collective definition of teacher-to-student mistreatment is any adverse action by a teacher that denigrates or degrades a student. A supporting description offered by participant 2 is any action that "makes a student feel like they can't learn, or are less than a person, or inferior to anyone around them," which refers to teachers' "maladaptive behaviors" mentioned in participant 4's response. Participant 7 gave a more vivid answer:

> Any verbal or nonverbal, direct or indirect action, that would negatively affect the student in some way. Even talking negatively about a student, with the student not present, does influence the way the student perceives their own capabilities and the way they perceive if the teacher likes them or not. It can range from that perception to directly putting down the student.

Characterizations of negative putdowns mentioned by participant 6 refer to "making a child feel bad about themselves," which relates to participant 8's statement, "any time a teacher who is an adult deals with a student in any way that undermines that student's personhood or esteem in anyway, that is mistreatment."

Interview Question #15. What terms do you use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment? Different terms were offered by the interview participants to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment, including bullying, harassment, sarcasm, yelling, ridicule, putdowns, and power struggles. Participant 8 blatantly and confidently provided the term "bullying," explaining that too many times "teachers dump their frustrations out on kids" in the school environment. Participant 2 stated, "I am not talking about occasional comments. But in general, if you are yelling every day, or isolating one kid, or constantly yelling at the same kid every day for the same behavior," that is a problem. Participant 3 reflected that she sees the mistreatment happen in the "heat of the moment. When I think of bullying, I think of someone who is purposefully

trying to hurt or gain power, put themselves up and put others down. And I don't see that being the teacher's purpose." Participant 4 more strongly defined his term to explain teacher-to-student mistreatment as, "the teacher engages in intentionally harmful behaviors towards the student." In the same vein, participant 7 felt it best termed, "harassment. I think about it in a similar way we would typically think about abuse or mistreatment. It could be explicit but it could also be neglect in a way, neglecting whether it be the academic, social or emotional" needs of the student.

Interview Question #16. How would teachers define teacher-to-student mistreatment? After a moment of reflection, school psychologist participants were then asked to express how teachers would define teacher-to-student mistreatment. Responses included disrespect, defiance, and treating the student inappropriately. Participant 2 said teachers would probably define it "a lot more severe, like picking on the student, calling names, and verbal abuse." Participant 8 said in his experience:

> Teachers justify it. A.) It is not really just mistreatment, and B.) I was just trying to get them to do what they need to do, and C.) Everything I have ever told you about this child, it is true. It is never about me, the teacher, but about him.

Interview Question #17. What terms would teachers use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment? Similarly, the school psychologists were asked what terms teachers would use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment. Terms given were verbal abuse, gross misconduct, and bullying. Participant 2 noted that, "it might be more severe than what a school psychologist would say." A follow-up comment from participant 8 included, "bullying is such a buzz word right now; that would probably come up."

Summary of interview and discussion forum responses by second sub-question. In support of the second research sub-question, the interview participants' collective definition of teacher-to-student mistreatment is any adverse action by a teacher that denigrates or degrades a student. Different terms were offered by the participants to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment, including bullying, harassment, sarcasm, yelling, ridicule, putdowns, and power struggles. After a moment of reflection, school psychologist interview participants were then asked to express how teachers would define teacher-to-student mistreatment. Responses included disrespect, defiance, and treating the student inappropriately. Similarly, the school psychologists were asked what terms teachers would use to describe teacher-to-student mistreatment. Terms given were verbal abuse, gross misconduct, and bullying.

<center>Third Sub-Question</center>

Survey Findings

Narrative description of the scaled survey responses supporting the third sub-question: How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher? The following are narrative descriptions for scaled survey questions #34 through #37.

- All school psychologists answering the survey believed that teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively impacted a student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally, with answers of Occasionally 42.4% ($n = 36$), Frequently 41.2% ($n = 35$), Rarely 16.5% ($n = 14$), and zero answering Never.
- When ranking these areas, school psychologists ranked emotionally as the area most frequently adversely impacted by teacher-to-student mistreatment, followed by academically, psychologically, and then socially, as the area least frequently adversely impacted.

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- School psychologists identified short-term impacts observed in students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment. The top ten short-term impacts identified were: Behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, anger, conduct disorder, disruptiveness, inattention, hostility) (90.4%, $n = 75$); Academic problems (e.g., failing grades, school avoidance, truancy, depressed learning, lack of academic progress) (84.3%, $n = 70$); Declining school morale/atmosphere/climate (60.2%, $n = 50$); Emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability) (59.0%, $n = 49$); Resentment/Poor attitude (57.8%, $n = 48$); Confusion (56.6%, $n = 47$); Withdrawal/Give-up/Lack of motivation (55.4%, $n = 46$); Humiliation (54.2%, $n = 45$); Stress/Tension (51.8%, $n = 43$); Psychological trauma (e.g., psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual self-doubt) (45.8%, $n = 38$).
- School psychologists identified long-term impacts observed in students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment. The top ten long-term impacts identified were: Behavioral problems (e.g., aggression, anger, conduct disorder, disruptiveness, inattention, hostility) (85.5%, $n = 65$); Academic problems (e.g., failing grades, school avoidance, truancy, depressed learning, lack of academic progress) (80.3%, $n = 61$); Withdrawal/Give-up/Lack of motivation (60.5%, $n = 46$); Resentment/Poor attitude (52.6%, $n = 40$); Emotional distress (e.g., emotional disorder, emotional instability) (50.0%, $n = 38$); Declining school morale/atmosphere/climate (50.0%, $n = 38$); Psychological trauma (e.g., psychological disorder, mental distress, decreased self-confidence, low self-esteem, individual self-doubt) (44.7%, $n = 34$); Humiliation (42.1%, $n = 32$); Depression/Sad/Crying/Anxious (40.8%, $n = 31$); Excessive worrying (40.8%, $n = 31$).

Interview Findings

Individual interview question summaries that support the third sub-question: How do school psychologists describe the adverse impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher? Below are the individual interview question summaries for questions #18 through #22.

Interview Question #18. Describe the short-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. School psychologist interview participants were asked to describe the short-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Short-term impacts were listed as withdrawal or declined engagement in the classroom, behavioral escalations, suspensions, academic decline, absences, tardiness, poor grades, truancy, and a desire to be removed from the classroom. Participant 2 shared from her experience that the short-term impacts from mistreatment makes her students feel like the teacher does not like them and in turn, makes the students "not want to come to school, or being unhappy temporarily, feeling isolated from their peers." Escalation in behavioral problems and a decline in academic achievement are visible in the short-term. Similar comments originated from participant 3 who stated, the student will cease "cooperating with the instruction," and participant 8 noted that "with my kids, they want out of the class, they are angry, they don't want to work for the teacher, saying I want a different teacher."

Interview Question #19. Describe the long-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. The interview participants were asked to describe the long-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Their collective experiences provided many responses, including enduring disengagement and academic difficulties, interpersonal problems, lack of self-confidence, depression, truancy, drop out, and lasting internalization. Participant 8 quickly replied to the question, "That is what I fear the most. Kids can lose heart very easily. It

bothers me that the comments a teacher makes can dishearten a child, attack their esteem, and trust." All participants said that each student is different in their response to mistreatment because of the individual resilience of the child's personality, and the severity of the mistreatment. Participant 2 noted,

> Everybody has their own personality, one child may let it roll off of their back and get over it, whereas another child might really internalize it and not get over it. It might be a life-long, creating the thought of, I might not be good enough.

Relationship difficulties between the teacher and student can be internalized and have lasting effects. Participant 7 stated,

> I have seen some kids who have had a very poor teacher or a poor relationship with a teacher a year prior, and then these kids are referred to me a year or two later, and that effect has still been with them. In terms with their confidence on even approaching or trying working on skills that are difficult for them, some of these kids give up very quickly because they view it as, why bother to try, I can't do it anyway.

Parents also are witnesses of long-term effects upon students. In many cases, participant 7 said the parent will state, "Second grade was a really rough year for them, the teacher really did not take the time or they just did not get along, it was a mismatch. I hear those same kinds of phrases over and over again."

Interview Question #20. How does teacher-to-student mistreatment impact the student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally? All interview participants reported on how teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively impacts the student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. Responses included components of depression and anxiety, internal injury to the student's feelings and perception of self, a tenacious reduction in motivation and academic engagement, an emotional detachment from interpersonal relationships, and devastation to the expected bond of trust between the teacher and student. Participant 2 described how it can attack the student's self-esteem and self-worth:

> It can make you feel less of a person. It can really affect your self-esteem and self-worth, short-term and long-term. Academically, you are going to be less attentive, because you will be rethinking of what was just said to you, so you will miss out on academic things.

Participant 7 added that she has experience with this from a previous place of employment:

> I worked with some kids that are clinically depressed, and it seems to tie in all of those pieces. With my more introspective students, they have actually said, "Well Mrs. So-and-so hates me. I don't want to come to school, because I know that whatever I do she is not going to like it." So, it is that pervasive anxiety about school or depression about school. These kids are not just depressed at school, it carries over to home.

The negative indicators of low self-confidence, the lack of desire to take academic risks in class, and lack of motivation due to embarrassment, were comments from participant 6. Participant 7 noted that all these interconnected areas impacts the way student's "view themselves and their capability, and their doing and learning, and having relationships." Participant 2 expressed real concern that some students who have been mistreated, "might just grow up to be that same kind of person, and believe that is what school is about" and want to drop out. Regarding the social aspect of the student, participant 3 remarked that "If you are not careful, the other kids see it, if there is a teacher who repeatedly picks on a student" which might inspire a peer-on-peer bullying situation. The significant topic of diminishing trust was emphasized in a statement by participant 8, who confirmed that teacher-to-student mistreatment:

> Has the potential for damaging their ability to trust in authority figures and the ability to

interact in appropriate ways with authority figures. Depending on the student, if the student who has a long history of adults mistreating or abandoning, it supports the vision that has already been established.

Interview Question #21. In what way does teacher-to-student mistreatment cause mental and/or emotional damage on the student? The participants responded on ways teacher-to-student mistreatment can cause mental and/or emotional damage on the student. Each participant noted that it depends on the student's personality, the situation, and the student's level of resilience in difficult circumstances. Responses contained answers of fear, anxiety, withdrawal, rumination, and discouragement. Participant 8 disclosed his personal long-term effects with fear from a high school educational experience, sharing, "I am a probably a good example of this myself. I am afraid of higher levels of math. Math is an area of weakness for me because I had a teacher in high school that would not help me." Anxiety is a common mental and/or emotional impact according to participant 3, who revealed that her students often exhibit, "that perfectionistic need to not get things wrong, and that becomes too overwhelming for the kid." Participant 7 said that students often experience, "withdrawal or lack of participation, having anxiety that seems more significant than any given situation would warrant." Participant 2 articulated,

> If you are the one being isolated for the mistreatment, it can cause a lot more damage. If you are ridiculed occasionally, and you are a roll-off-your-back kind of a person, that day just might be a bad day. If you are the type who obsesses constantly, like a school psychologist, you will probably worry about it for weeks, until the next ridicule comes, and then you will obsess about that one, so you will be affected long-term. Emotionally, you will have some anxiety, and will be waiting for that next one.

Interview Question #22. What are the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment? School psychologists provided their perspectives on the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment. All answers surrounded the viewpoint that ethically and morally it is inappropriate, and the repercussions can be life-long for the student. Participant 6 vehemently asserted,

> First and foremost, it should not be tolerated, on any level. And, it should be dealt with. I think in the past, it was just accepted. We are more sensitive to it now. But it shouldn't be just because it is an adult, or just because it is a teacher that has been here for 20 years or so. It should not be allowed on any level. They are setting an example for other kids that end up doing the same thing and targeting a child.

The response from participant 8 was parallel:

> Absolutely. Teachers are charged with a moral and ethical responsibility not only to educate that student, but don't harm the kid while you teach them. We are supposed to be preparing these students, not to pass a SOL test, but we are supposed to be preparing the student to take a role in society, as citizens who can contribute to society overall. We are supposed to be keeping that cycle of community moving, and we have a lot of power in that. When teachers mistreat kids, that is a horribly immoral and unethical act.

Participant 2 shared that "ethically, it is just inappropriate. There is no way around that. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any consequences for it, unless you go way too far." Teacher-to-student mistreatment has some definite ethical repercussions according to participant 4, due to the fact that "teachers are in a position of authority over the student." Participant 7 said during her years of professional experience, she believes:

> It is a lot of moral repercussions for these students in the way that they then perceive

education and learning and the value of that. That will be lifelong repercussion for that child. I don't know what the ethical repercussion would be, because in my experience, mistreatment is not addressed. So I don't know that A.) People realize it is mistreatment and that it is not right, and B.) There does not seem to be a method of consequences or learning from those experiences.

Summary of interview and discussion forum responses by third sub-question. In support of the third research sub-question, school psychologist interview participants described the short-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Short-term impacts listed were withdrawal or declined engagement in the classroom, behavioral escalations, suspensions, academic decline, absences, tardiness, poor grades, truancy, and a desire to be removed from the classroom. The interview participants also described the long-term impact on students who have been mistreated by a teacher. Their collective experiences provided many responses, including persistent disengagement and academic difficulties, interpersonal problems, lack of self-confidence, depression, truancy, drop out, and lasting internalization. All interview participants reported on how teacher-to-student mistreatment negatively impacted the student psychologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. Responses included components of depression and anxiety, internal injury to the student's feelings and perception of self, a tenacious reduction in motivation and academic engagement, an emotional detachment from interpersonal relationships, and devastation to the expected bond of trust between the teacher and student. The participants responded on ways teacher-to-student mistreatment caused mental and/or emotional damage on the student. Each participant noted that it depends on the student's personality, the situation, and the student's level of resilience in difficult circumstances. Responses contained answers of fear, anxiety, withdrawal, rumination, and discouragement. Lastly, school psychologists provided their perspectives on the ethical and moral repercussions of teacher-to-student mistreatment. All answers surrounded the viewpoint that ethically and morally teacher-to-student mistreatment is inappropriate, and the repercussions can be enduring for the student.

Fourth Sub-Question

Survey Findings

Narrative description of the survey responses supporting the fourth sub-question: What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens? The following are scaled survey questions #39 through #41, followed by narrative descriptions for open-ended survey question #38.

- School psychologists indicated various situations they believe may influence teacher-to-student mistreatment in the classroom. The co-researchers ranked the top four situations, to include lack of teacher skill in classroom management/ behavior management, teacher personality characteristics (angry/resentful attitude), teacher burnout, and student misbehavior.
- The question of school system policies was posed to the co-researchers. Of the 79 responses, 55.7% ($n = 44$) reported that their school system did not have any policy in place that specifically addresses, discourages, or prohibits teacher-to-student mistreatment, or indicates the consequence or punishment for teacher-to-student mistreatment. There were 17 (21.5%) who responded that their school systems did have a policy that indicated consequences for mistreatment.
- Of the 82 co-researchers who responded to this survey question, 61 (74.4%) agreed that it would be beneficial for school systems to have a policy in place that outlines teacher-to-

student mistreatment and delineates the penalty for those educators who violate the policy. There were 19 (23.2%) that indicated they were not sure, and 2 (2.4%) disagreed that it would not be beneficial to have a policy in place.

Open-ended survey question #38 asked school psychologists' what their perceptions were on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens. There were 82 responds from co-researchers. Although no corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers, responses were grouped by similar statements.

Lack of awareness.
- Teachers think that they are disciplining/helping/building character in a student and don't actually see it as abuse

Lack of behavioral management skills.
- Lack of teacher training and skills on behavioral management
- Teacher lack of knowledge on appropriate classroom management/discipline techniques
- Teachers don't have the tools to address their own triggers in a safe manner
- Lack of support or services to help the teacher with the student
- Lack of skills dealing with students who do not conform
- Lack of skill in redirecting student behavior, punishment is still a focus rather than positive behavior support
- If teachers lack the training or skills in managing student's maladaptive behaviors they may respond with their own maladaptive behaviors and find themselves in a never ending cycle

Lack of connection.
- It begins with a lack of knowledge or ability on the part of teachers to identify with a child and help them to achieve, instead of seeking out information and resources that would change the teacher's perspective of the child, the teacher may place blame on the child as a way to preserve their own ego and/or beliefs

Lack of repercussions.
- Administration failure to fire ineffective or abusive teachers
- Overall negative school climate established or maintained by the administration
- Students do not report the abuse and are afraid of reporting it and administrators defend teachers when abuse is reported, administrators have been heard saying they will defend teachers automatically no matter what
- Lack of administrative support for disciplinary consequences resulting in teachers to address/punish the behavior as they see fit
- It depends on the moral climate of the school community and the messages that are sent about children from the building administration, a climate can be conducive to mistreatment of students, a building that fosters collaboration, problem-solving and is focused on student growth more than test scores seems to have the least teacher-to-student mistreatment

Lack of understanding.
- Teacher frustration with student behaviors
- Lack of understanding of diversity
- Poor understanding of sociocultural factors that might be impacting the student
- Poor understanding of the function of behaviors (may not realize that the child's behaviors are serving another purpose and that purpose needs to be addressed or may not

understand that there might be something that they are doing as a teacher to increase the undesirable behaviors
- Misunderstanding of what having a controlled educational environment actually means

Personality.
- Personality traits of the teacher
- Teacher was treated the same way by their parents or teachers
- Inherent characteristics of the teacher (angry, resentful)
- Teachers who are no longer positively invested in their students
- Teachers lose sight of why they teach
- Tired of teaching
- Lack of compassion and empathy

Power and control.
- Teachers have a need to control and use that as their method to keep students in line
- Maintain a sense of power and control
- Teachers engage children in power struggles

Stress/Frustration/Burnout.
- Teacher burnout
- Stressful school climate
- A myriad of pressures for the teacher to work miracles with minimal resources and limited parent involvement which leads to early burnout
- High demands/expectations placed on teachers can lead to transference of those expectations for student outcomes
- Teachers are frustrated and their tolerance for behaviors reduces as time goes by, teachers have so much paperwork and so many students and so many curriculum objectives to cover that they don't have time/patience for misbehavior
- Overworked, understaffed teachers start out excited until they see the serious effects of poverty and poor education in our students, become overwhelmed and have little support from administration, the majority of teachers want to help but circumstances increase their frustration and negative behaviors
- Increased class sizes decreased morale due to increased work and no compensation, high stakes testing, teachers are frustrated with students and do not feel supported and often time their frustration is taken out on the student

    To summarize, there were reoccurring categories of statements made by co-researchers. School psychologist comments from this open-ended survey question were grouped in the following categories: Lack of awareness, Lack of behavioral management skills, Lack of connection, Lack of repercussions, Lack of understanding, Personality, Power and control, and Stress/Frustration/Burnout.

Interview Findings

Individual interview question summaries that support the fourth sub-question: What conceptualizations are formed from school psychologists' perceptions on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens? Below are the individual interview question summaries for questions #23 through #28.

Interview Question #23. Why does teacher-to-student mistreatment happen? School psychologist co-researchers who were interviewed reported on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens in the school environment. Responses surrounded the concepts of power

struggles/lack of skills, personality types, and the teacher's personal stress and frustration.

Power struggles/lack of skills. There were several participants that spoke of frequent power struggles witnessed between the teacher and the student. Participant 2 spoke at length explaining why mistreatment occurs:

> Teachers feel that they have to have the kids under control all the time and if they don't, there will be chaos, they will not learn. It is becoming increasingly stressful that everyone has to pass this test, so teachers have to get this done quickly, and if anyone is out of line, I am going to miss the whole lesson. Look at snow days. Teachers exaggerate and get upset that they will miss a whole day of instruction. The teacher was furious with me for taking a kid out of the reading classroom for counseling. She was mad, stating that, "He was missing instruction." Some teachers are angry, and some people have no insight into themselves, and they really don't see they are doing anything wrong. Teachers argue over not wanting to reward kids. Teachers complain that the other kids will see this kid getting a reward and it is not fair. I cannot tell you how many times teachers complain and say, "it is not fair." I ask the teacher, "Are you taking the wheel chair or glasses from a kid? Because, the other kids don't have wheel chair. And do you make the kid take off their glasses?" I explained the others don't need this, but this kid does. It is just a mentality that, they did not have it as a kid and I turned out fine. They don't understand. They feel like you are paying them to do what they are already supposed to do. We have gone from one extreme to another. People get stuck and believe they need to do this to maintain order.

The topic of a teacher's behavioral management skills came up in participant 3's response. Her experiences as a school psychologist witnessing various teacher-to-student mistreatment situations often involved the topic of power struggles, which were a part of most of her answers. Participant 3 remarked,

> 9/10th of it is power struggles. I think teacher education programs don't spend a lot of time on behavior management. Teachers come in with the expectation that students will sit in nice little rows, saying "yes ma'am" and "no ma'am" all day, and that is not what they are confronted with and they don't have the toolset to really know what to do.

Personality type. A teacher's personality style can contribute to the phenomenon of teacher-to-student mistreatment according to participant 6. She said that "what I've seen, it is fundamentally part of who they are. It is part of their personality in general. They do it with staff members and other kids" just the same.

Personal stress and frustration. She also has witnessed various teachers' levels of personal stress and frustration during mistreatment situations, stating teachers "seem stressed out and snap or do something . . . they are just frustrated." Participant 7's statement corroborates this idea:

> I think teachers' stress levels are so high, and sometimes it spills on to those kids that require the most energy. Those students that would challenge any master teacher's repertoire, in some teachers they don't see it as a positive challenge; they see it as, "Oh great, now I have to deal with this all year." I think the climate of public education contributes to this because it is so standards driven. There is not a lot of room for developmental differences, or an understanding that some of this stuff needs to be explicitly taught. Some teachers just really get off on the power of their position, and they are psychological fed by having power over another person, even if it is a child. And, sometimes the students with higher needs are more vulnerable to that, and get

caught up in that.

Interview Question #24. What can teachers do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment? School psychologist interview participants listed ways teachers can prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment. The list of prevention activities consisted of ideas on self-awareness, self-reflection, self-care, as well as being open to feedback, constructive criticism, and recommendations for change. Making a connection with the student, finding something with which you can connect to build the healthy relationship with the student was also an important piece to the prevention solution, according to the majority of the interview participants. Participant 2 noted that "I think everyone has to take a step back and look at themselves, and give each other feedback. But until they have a safe climate and safe environment" to do this in, no one will talk about teacher-to-student mistreatment for fear of persecution. Participant 7 suggested to teachers that the concept of "good self-care would be a priority. You need to keep up your own resources to deal with any challenges, and have greater collaboration and the time to collaborate, and use the support to put in place some intervention." Participant 6 agreed that stress is hard to deal with but you must take care of yourself, stating, "In general, we don't do a good job of taking care of ourselves, or working on our own school climate with the staff." Being open to feedback and recommendations is essential, according to participant 3, who said, "Have an open dialogue with anyone that can help you, whether it is the school psychologist or principal. Get all the help you can get instead of thinking you have to manage it all by yourself." And, after all the self-awareness, reflection, and care, participant 4 said, "remind themselves of those boundaries." Participant 8 expressed, "some just need to quit, retire, or try a new line of work."

Interview Question #25. What can school psychologists do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment? The interview participants were then asked to list what professional school psychologists could do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment. The main areas emphasized include becoming more involved, recognize mistreatment for what it is early and intervene, and educate. Participant 2 stated,

> Most school psychologists, all they do is test, and that is their sole function and sole role and no one even knows them. Most of my jobs, I have been much more involved and do other things. I try to get in the classroom and write behavior plans, and do all this other stuff. I point mistreatment out and work with administration . . . sometimes, people who can't give praise to their students, cannot hear praise either. It is really hard. School psychologists are limited to what they can do because administration has their way of doing things. There are only so many toes that you can walk on. It is a fine line to walk all the time. I tell the administration when I see good things too; the good with the bad.

Participant 7 stressed the importance of, "Hopefully, we can recognize it early, and try to consult and collaborate with that teacher to give them the skills they need to then build the relationship with that child to counteract any mistreatment." Participant 8 stated, "I think that education makes a difference." Recommendation provided by participant 8 was that all school psychologists should strive to:

> Point it out, educate the staff on the disabilities, provide staff with handouts on the student's disabilities, put notes in the I.E.P. like, meet with the psychologist at the beginning of school to discuss this student, encourage them to have meetings with the parents, mediate with the teacher and the student and see if they can find the difficulty and can come to some common ground or understanding, or at least empower the student to open up to the teacher, like this is what I feel like when you say these things to me, you

embarrass when you call on me and you know I don't have the answer.
Participant 8 went on to say, "I like to pull kids and teachers together and have them see if they can work it out. I have seen teachers with more experience mistreat students" which indicates that education is important, not only for teachers' degree aspirations, but for building high-quality relationships with students and behavioral management skills in the classroom. Setting up a whole school education process, like a responsive classroom, is a duty that participant 6 has been involved in for many years. Similarly, the use of positive behavior intervention is common in the district of participant 3, and the education and training that she has offered has been beneficial, leading to her comment, "It really is surprising sometimes. I often assume everybody knows what I know as a school psychologist, and sometimes I get teachers amazed at the information I share."

Interview Question #26. What can school administrators do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment? School psychologists were asked their ideas on how school administrators could prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment. Co-researchers' answers came swiftly and confidently, providing three areas of responses, including acknowledge it, act on it, and actively prevent it. Participant 8 delivered concise answers to this prompt, stating "Acknowledge it in the first place. Deal with it. Don't pass it off as, it is the student's fault or it is the parent's fault. Acknowledge it. You should not be treating this child that way." Participant 2 was also very passionate about this inquiry, giving straight forward recommendations for school administrators:

> They need to say, "We are not doing this. I don't want to hear any yelling, I don't want to hear you degrading students." You really have to take that one hard. And say, "That is not accepted, here is what we are going to do." They need to hire some people to say, "This is the way it is going to be done."

Commandeering a hard stand on mistreatment that is reported is a vital administrative role that only school administrators have the power to do, according to participant 6, which must be taken seriously and dealt with without delay. Taking a robust stance against mistreatment through active prevention efforts is also an essential step, as stated by participant 3. Continuing, participant 3 shared that school administrators need to be:

> Putting things in place that keep it from getting to the point of mistreatment, being in the classrooms and not behind their desks, and having mentoring teachers. A lot of in and out of the classrooms, so that everyone knows what is going on and who needs help. Having teachers who are open to help from others, being willing to do anything and everything to try to make it work, and make a difference. Be open to ideas even with challenges, having teachers who are willing to see the positives in a meeting of negatives.

A statement by participant 7 communicates what all other participants recognized through this interview process:

> I don't think it is something that is ever talked about. There is very little awareness about it. I would like school administrators to create a climate where it would be unacceptable, bottom line unacceptable, even if you are a really difficult parent or a really difficult student. And to address it straight-out, out-right, instead of just saying, oh well, we just need to give her some time. I would like them to actually have real conversations about it.

Interview Question #27. What school policies or procedures are in place to prohibit teacher-to-student mistreatment? The interview participants were asked to discuss any known school policies or procedures that are in place to prohibit teacher-to-student mistreatment. No

participant was able to list any school policy or procedure that directly prohibited teacher-to-student mistreatment. Many stated that they do not believe a policy exists. They discussed knowing the obvious prohibition against physical and sexual abuse but not any other policy that addressed verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students by teachers in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment, which includes a teacher's verbal communication toward and about students, as well as a teacher's nonverbal communication, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language. Participant 7 summed up the sentiment of all other participants by conveying that many times the verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors by teachers are considered "more low level verbal mistreatment, and that kind of thing does not get addressed."

     Interview Question #28. What professional repercussions do teachers encounter for mistreating students? School psychologists were asked to recall any professional repercussions that teachers encountered for mistreating students. After a moment to think, each participant could only speculate, since they have never observed any teacher endure professional repercussions for mistreatment, even though they each have witnessed teachers mistreating students throughout their careers. Similar answers to participant 2's statement of, "To my knowledge, it does not appear that there are very many. It seems as if once you have tenure, you are good to go." Participant 8 responded, "Again, unless it is something that is in direct violation of some law, there are no professional repercussions. Except, losing my respect."

     Summary of interview and discussion forum responses by fourth sub-question. School psychologist interview participants reported on why teacher-to-student mistreatment happens in the school environment. Responses surrounded the concepts of power struggles/lack of skills, personality types, and teacher's personal stress and frustration. Relevant to these concepts disclosed in the interview process were comments made in the discussion forum. Discussion forum co-researchers confirmed continued incidents of teacher-to-student mistreatment, citing a teacher's anger and frustration with students, and a teacher who displayed a negative perspective toward a student with an intellectual disability. There were several participants that spoke of frequent power struggles witnessed between the teacher and the student. The interview participants listed ways teachers could prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment. An inventory of prevention ideas consisted of self-awareness, self-reflection, self-care, as well as to be open to feedback, constructive criticism, and recommendations for change. Making a connection with the student, finding something with which you can connect to build the healthy relationship with the student was also listed as an important piece to the prevention solution. The interview participants provided details on what professional school psychologists could do to prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment in the school environment. Themes emphasized included becoming more involved, recognizing mistreatment for what it is early and intervene, and educate. School psychologists provided thoughts on how school administrators could prevent teacher-to-student mistreatment. Co-researchers' answers came swiftly and confidently, providing three areas of responses, including acknowledge it, act on it, and actively prevent it. Participants were then asked to disclose any known school policies or procedures in place to prohibit teacher-to-student mistreatment. No participant was able to list any school policy or procedure that directly prohibited teacher-to-student mistreatment. Many stated that they do not believe a policy exists. They each discussed knowing laws against physical and sexual abuse but were unaware of any other policy that addressed verbal and nonverbal bullying behaviors directed toward students by teachers in the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 environment, which includes a teacher's verbal communication toward and about students, as

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well as a teacher's nonverbal communication, including emotional mistreatment and intimidation through gestures and body language. School psychologists were challenged to recall any professional repercussions that teachers encountered for mistreating students. After a moment to ponder, each participant could only speculate, since they have never observed any teacher endure professional repercussions for mistreatment, even though they have each witnessed teachers mistreating students throughout their careers. Many answers consisted of, "to my knowledge, it does not appear that there are very many" as participant 2 stated. Participant 8 poignantly responded, "unless it is something that is in direct violation of some law, there are no professional repercussions. Except, losing my respect."

Fifth Sub-Question

Survey Findings

      Narrative description of the survey responses supporting the fifth sub-question: How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist? The following are narrative descriptions for scaled survey questions #43 through #61, followed by open-ended survey questions # 42 and #49.

- School psychologists indicated how often they advocated for students due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, resulting in responses of Occasionally 41.0% ($n = 32$), Frequently 35.9% ($n = 28$), Rarely 19.2% ($n = 15$), and Never 3.8% ($n = 3$).
- Due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, school psychologists rated how often they counseled or consulted with teachers about their behavior toward or interactions with students. Responses were Rarely 46.2% ($n = 36$), Occasionally 41.0% ($n = 32$), Frequently 6.4% ($n = 5$), and Never 6.4% ($n = 5$).
- The majority of school psychologists (69.6%, $n = 55$) reported that they have never provided in-service training or offered professional development concerning the teacher-to-student mistreatment topic.
- Mixed responses were obtained from school psychologists when asked if due to teacher-to-student mistreatment situations, they sought out personal coping strategies due to stress. Answered included Yes (28.2%, $n = 22$), Not sure (20.5%, $n = 16$), and No (51.3%, $n = 40$).
- When asked to rate how often does their normal routine get disrupted to address the repercussions of a teacher-to-student mistreatment situation, the school psychologist co-researchers responded Rarely (50.6%, $n = 40$), Occasionally (26.6%, $n = 21$), Never (21.5%, $n = 17$), and Frequently (1.3%, $n = 1$).
- School psychologists were asked if teacher-to-student mistreatment situations were so frequent in their current job, that they find themselves questioning if school psychology was the right career path. Of the 80 responding, there were 5 (6.3%) that answered Yes, 4 (5.0%) that answered Not sure, and 71 (88.8%) that answered No.
- School psychologists were asked if they believed that teacher-to-student mistreatment incidents have increased during their career. Responses included Yes (10.1%, $n = 8$), Not sure (36.7%, $n = 29$), and No (53.2%, $n = 42$).
- The co-researchers were asked to rate how often they discussed teacher-to-student mistreatment situations with other trusted school psychologists/co-workers. Responses included Occasionally (44.9%, $n = 35$), Rarely (33.3%, $n = 26$), Never (14.1%, $n = 11$), and Frequently (7.7%, $n = 6$).
- School psychologists were asked to rate how often they reported teacher-to-student mistreatment situations to school administrators in a school year. Responses included

Rarely (48.1%, $n = 38$), Occasionally (39.2%, $n = 31$), Never (11.4%, $n = 9$), and Frequently (1.3%, $n = 1$).

- Of those reported to school administration, the co-researchers were asked to rate how often the teacher-to-student mistreatment situation was addressed with the teacher in question or investigated. Responses included Rarely (32.9%, $n = 25$), Occasionally (31.6%, $n = 24$), Frequently (26.3%, $n = 20$), and Never (9.2%, $n = 7$).

- School psychologists were asked to rate their belief on the school administrations' level of concern on the mistreatment situation. Responses included Somewhat concerned (58.7%, $n = 44$), Very concerned (34.7%, $n = 26$), and Not concerned at all (6.7%, $n = 5$).

- The co-researchers were asked if they felt that school administration took their reports seriously. Responses included Yes (61.3%, $n = 46$), Not sure (32.0%, $n = 24$), and No (6.7%, 5).

- When asked to rate how often they felt that they could not go to school administration to report or discuss teacher-to-student mistreatment, for fear of retaliation, undue judgment, or repercussions, the co-researchers answered Never (48.1%, $n = 38$), Rarely (22.8%, $n = 18$), Occasionally (16.5%, $n = 13$), and Frequently (12.7%, $n = 10$).

- School psychologists were asked if they felt that school administration would not listen or respond in the way they want them to, which further discourages them to report or discuss teacher-to-student mistreatment. Responses included No (60.0%, $n = 48$), Yes (22.5%, $n = 18$), and Not sure (17.5%, $n = 14$).

- Co-researchers were asked about the level of reporting of teacher-to-student mistreatment during their career. Of the 79 responding, answers included Not sure (81.0%, $n = 64$), Increased (12.7%, $n = 10$), and Decreased (6.3%, $n = 5$), in reference to student reporting. They answered Not sure (55.7%, $n = 44$), Increased (41.8%, $n = 33$), and Decreased (2.5%, $n = 2$), in reference to parent reporting.

- School psychologists were asked if during their careers, they ever encouraged a parent/guardian to report a teacher-to-student mistreatment situation. Responses included to the school administration (55.7%, $n = 44$), none (41.8%, $n = 33$), and both the school administration and the Virginia Department of Education (2.5%, $n = 2$). Zero encouraged a parent/guardian to report the mistreatment situation solely to the Virginia Department of Education.

- Of the 79 responding, a total of 72 (91.1%) school psychologists reported that during their career, they never have reported teacher-to-student mistreatment to the local school superintendent or school board, the Virginia Department of Education, other advocacy group or other state agency or federal agency. There were 5 (6.3%) school psychologists who responded they have reported mistreatment situations to the local school superintendent or school board during their career, and 3 (3.8%) co-researchers reported to other state or federal agency, and 1 (1.3%) to the Virginia Department of Education.

Open-ended survey question #42 asked school psychologists' to relay how experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted their overall professional role. There were 75 experiences shared by co-researchers. Although no corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers, responses were grouped by similar statements.

Resource.

- It reminds me of how important it is to use positive approaches to behavior problems
- Educating and supporting teachers, acting as a resource and liaison to foster better student understanding and interactions, helping teachers see the impact that they are having and

assisting them in taking on other perspectives about the student and the student's behavior

- I now see my role as providing positive behavioral supports to both students and teachers
  Stressful/Frustrating.
- Finding it more difficult to take the teacher's word regarding certain students as they are more likely to place blame on the student when there are clearly many underlying factors contributing to a child's behavior or academics
- It has been personally frustrating
- Want to leave the profession due to no administrative support and no corrective action on part of school administration
- Made me really question the preparedness and professionalism of some educators
- My role within a specific school has been questioned by an offending teacher
- I often feel like the only one who feels the individual child is more important than the school's overall rating for achievement
- Made it a hard conversation to have with your peer about how their behavior contributes
- There have been times when I feel socially isolated due to standing up for a student
- I have largely tried to be supportive and warm but schools are so political it is professionally better to not talk to the adults and try to emotionally support the children
  Advocacy/Consultation increase.
- I am more and more aware that when students are having difficulty in school (academic, behavioral, emotional) that they classroom environment needs to be considered and that it shouldn't be the assumption that the student is the problem
- Involved in many situations where consultation was needed to assist teachers in understanding their behavior and how it affected students
- It has made consultation uncomfortable in some cases
- Increases my workload and the number of referrals made to me
- Sometimes it is very difficult to work with the teacher knowing how they treat students especially when I am doing counseling with the students who are being mistreated
- It is something that I keep in the back of my mind when evaluating situations that I may become involved in
- Reinforces my role as a child advocate
- More counseling time required
- I am more aware and conscious of the relationship between the teacher and student when conducting my observations in the classroom
  Desire to do more.
- Difficult position to be in: risky to intervene but unacceptable to look away
  Unique responses were provided by 69 co-researchers on open-ended survey question

#49. This question asked school psychologists to complete this prompt: Sometimes I feel so frustrated with teacher-to-student mistreatments incidents that… Although no corrections were made to the following verbatim quotations from co-researchers, responses were grouped by similar statements.

Resource.
- I feel that I cannot make a difference after all
  Stressful/Frustrating.
- I sit down and vent with the other behavior specialist

- I want to yell at the teachers who are yelling
- I want to scream
- I want to fire all teachers who act this way
- I want to fire all school administrators that don't support students and don't reprimand teachers
- I wonder why these teachers decided to become a teacher
- I wonder what could that teacher possibly be thinking
- I would like to quit my job and do something else
- I am demoralized and heartbroken for the children
  Advocacy/Consultation increase.
- I just want to scoop up the children and take them home with me, so often they lack love and support at home, and then come to school and don't get their needs met either
- I want to pull the student out from the class
  Desire to do more.
- I talk to the school administrator for assistance
- I think about running for the school board
- I question the administration's ability to manage these situations appropriately and change the climate of the school
- I wish I had more to say in personnel issues
- I wish there was something more I could do
- I believe in the power of prayer

To summarize, there were reoccurring categories of statements made by co-researchers. School psychologist comments from these two open-ended survey questions were grouped in the following categories: Resource, Stressful/Frustrating, Advocacy/Consultation increase, Desire to do more.

Interview Findings

Individual interview question summaries that support the fifth sub-question: How have experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted the professional role of a school psychologist? Below are the individual interview question summaries for questions #29 through #32.

Interview Question #29. How have your experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment impacted your role as a school psychologist (e.g., job duties, ethical obligations, advocacy, training, stress level)? School psychologist interview participants are co-researchers who shared their experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment and the manner in which it has impacted their roles as school psychologists. Responses included an increase in their advocacy, consultation, and collaboration duties, as well as elevated stress levels resulting in a number of considerations to change careers due to teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational environment. The participants spoke at length on how their advocacy efforts have increased, echoing participant 2's statement of "Someone has to be an advocate." Some advocate through increased training and supports of teachers, and some advocate at meetings contending with their peers on behalf of the student, prompting participant 6 to share, "My ethical obligation is to stand up to my peers, which is hard to do, but that is the right thing to do." Half of the participants have endured great stress and have considered changing careers due to their experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment as a professional school psychologist. Participant 2 made me laugh when she blurted out:

If I could put valium in my veins, I would! I get really intense now. I say to myself, "Really! Did that just happen?" I find myself getting really upset. There are always a few incidents. Some people I confide in comment they think that I am just lying because it is sometimes so preposterous. It is very frustrating. It has made me want to get out of the field, honestly. But then I feel like, I am here because somebody has to be, someone has to take care of it. There are not many people that can take it, and not take it personally. Someone has to be an advocate.

The stress level for participant 7 was described as huge:

I have been in some very difficult ethical obligations or ethical conundrums . . . It is very difficult to work with a teacher that just flat out dislikes a student. It has really called into question my own beliefs about trying to still be in a position to help the teacher but feeling like I am upset on behalf of the student. I feel like it has really increased the stress level in those situations. I do feel like I have had to step up my advocacy on behalf of students. There have been some instances where I felt it was just me against teachers and administration because of the way the student was being treated.

Participant 7 went on to explain that it has been frustrating to know:

Even after that situation has passed, and even if the student is still in the building, now that student has to finish up their elementary career with a stigma. And if they ever do anything, they are under a microscope more than the average kid would be. The repercussions always come back on the student instead of reflecting on that teacher's practices.

Participant 8 also agreed that teacher-to-student mistreatment has impacted his role as school psychologist:

Oh boy, my stress level is high. I do trainings and one of the things I do early in the year is help teachers understand the baggage that kids come in with. And, I do things like if there is a specific disability category that is potentially going to create issues, I make sure the teachers have information. I meet with teachers to talk about specific kid's behaviors.

The school psychologist went on to share that his position in the school system is:

Probably the one person who is most responsible for advocating for that child. And if a teacher is wrong, I am going to tell them that they are wrong, and I am going to tell them why they are wrong, and I am going to tell them how to make what is wrong right. I see that as my ethical responsibility.

Interview Question #30. How have these collective experiences affected your relationship with teachers and school administrators? The interview participants shared how these collective experiences have affected their relationships with teachers and school administrators. Mixed reactions were reported, as they recalled their career experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Some revealed challenging situations, but all indicated that they have always been viewed as a resource within the school environment. Participant 6 shared, "With the exception of the perpetrator, it has strengthened my relationship with the administration and the support staff, like the special education teachers and other teachers who are looking out for that child." Over the span of her more than 15 year career, participant 2 remarked,

Typically, with the more problematic things that I see, there have been a few issues with administrators because I feel that they allow things to occur. I don't do very well with just living with it. Those kinds of problems cause problems between me and that person.

With challenging situations, participant 7 shared,

It is the "us and them" mentality at times. As a school psychologist, we don't really report to the administrators but we are there to provide a service directly for the student. Sometimes we are just not all on the same page about how we see the student. It is hard, because you want to have good relationships with them, and you want them to like you, the teachers and administrators. Sometimes it is just not possible; you have to go out on a limb for that child. That has been a hard lesson to learn.

Participant 3 emphasized that her school system firmly looks at her as "a resource, an invaluable resource . . . I am a go-to person." She went on to say that she works as a team with the administration, who often asks her opinion on certain teacher situations and how to best build that healthy relationship between the student and teacher. Participant 8 candidly stated,

I am not sure what other people think of me. I do know that there are a great many people here who are very glad for the honesty and openness that I provide. And some teachers say, You are the only person here who is willing to say what others are thinking. And sometimes it needs to be said, but I am sure there are those people that are offended by that.

Participant 8 reaffirmed the statement by noting that he does not let that stop him from being a resource to many educators.

Interview Question #31. What conflicting decisions, values and beliefs (i.e., personal, professional, ethical) have you experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment? School psychologists reflected on the conflicting decisions, values, and beliefs experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Experiences encompassed overcoming hard encounters with the opposition, sometimes getting reprimanded for what they believe in, and consultation with trusted colleagues or supervisors when needed. School psychologists are naturally introspective people, who analyze each situation from multiple viewpoints. Participant 6 shared, "Other than it just being hard knowing that there is always fallout, it is still the right thing to do. We train our kids to speak up, so I have to lead that way." Conflicting decisions, values, and beliefs have made it hard for participant 2:

There are days that it is very hard for me to not just walk away. Some days I don't know what to do. I don't know how to solve it. Most of it is not life or death, but constant. But makes me wonder, how do you do this to kids? As long as I feel like that some folks are fighting the good fight for kids, but there have been times in the past, that I felt like no one was. Then I questioned, what do I do with this, how do I resolve it, it is just that I can't do this anymore. I have talked to others about going into private practice.

Participant 8 shared a conflicting experience in the school environment:

I have historically seen a child with large behavioral problems grow and improve over time, and that knowledge and opinion conflicted with others' beliefs and decisions at a meeting. I was reprimanded for that. I thought, ok. I am not going to compromise my ethics, beliefs or values, to come in here to speak the party line. That is not me, I can't work like that. I have to be honest.

School psychologists confer with trusted colleagues when confronted with difficult situations. Participant 7 shared her experience:

Personally, it has been hard because sometimes I will have a personal relationship with a teacher, and then they will do something that I see that is on the mistreatment lines and it is questionable, and it has been hard to personally figure out a way to address that without fracturing my relationship with them. I have to weigh the value of my having a relationship with them and continue be a support to them in order to benefit students,

versus, leading to then say, no, you can't do that and I need to put my foot down about this and let others know about it.

Interview Question #32. Imagine you had the power to change the school psychology profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon. What changes would you make? In the field of psychology, it is common to use an imagine question to get the client to open up his or her mind to the world of possibilities. The school psychologist interview participants were invited to imagine they had the power to change the school psychology profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student mistreatment phenomenon, and then were asked to convey what changes they would make. Responses ranged from a desire for the professional role of a school psychologist to be widened to a more administrative role, instead of being restricted to a teacher/support staff role, to help make systemic decisions and to be utilized more frequently to prevent problems before they begin, more time in the classroom to consult and collaborate with teachers instead of being bound to a testing role, and finally, to create a system-wide policy for all teachers to be more knowledgeable on disabilities, behavior management, and the personal baggage that many students bring into the academic environment, with an overall goal to encourage teacher empathy for those students who rest outside of their normal expectations. Many suggestions were given on how the school psychology role should be changed, including participant 2's response:

> I would put us more in the administrative circle, to help make decisions, to make decisions on discipline hearings, and make decisions with the Director of Special Education. I would put us a little over principals, because I think we have a better understanding, and we can think outside of the box a little better. Principals get stuck in their little rule book, thinking this behavior is 5 days, this behavior is 10 days.

Participant 2 went on to explain that having an extended role of authority in the school district would allow school psychologists to not only recognize instantly that the environment needs more positive energy, but "To say ok, this is what we need, we need to find a program, and enforce that it happens, and not just be testers." Participant 7 reflected,

> I would like to see school psychologists be utilized more frequently to prevent. Many times, we are referred to these cases when there already is a history of some negative behavior or interactions, whether it is just with the student or parent. And I would like to see school staff utilize school psychologists better to come in on the front end of that. Even at the beginning of the school year, they could meet with the teacher that knows that they have some challenging students, and work out a plan for how often should we check in on these kids. How can I help you? Would you like me to check in on the parents and offer them any resources? I would love to see school psychologists be more proactive instead of reactive, because I think that reactivity really feeds into any developing mistreatment.

More time in the classroom for consultation and collaboration activities was important to participant 3, who shared a desire to assist certain students or "help with class climate, and provide more Mandt training, a behavioral management training system, on healthy relationships, communication, conflict resolution, and doing that on a regular basis versus a one-time-a-year booster, to be much more hands-on than worrying about what someone's IQ is." Participants 6 and 8 both shared the same idea to create a system wide policy for all teachers to be more knowledgeable on disabilities, increase their behavioral management skillset, and to be open to make home visits to get to know students better, which would create that essential personal connection with the students and their families, creating a more holistic understanding

of their students. Participant 6's desire would be for each teacher to know their students'

> Own strengths, their fears, they would have made a home visit, they would know all their children inside and out from day one. And, they would have to say five things positive to one negative or redirection. I think that would go a long way. I am very much into positive reinforcement. I don't know that people really get to know their children in general. There are some great teachers, but some teachers just come for the job. I think it can be eye opening for those teachers, the ones that do take the time before they start school in August, to make a home visit and who have gotten to know the family and see where they come from, and they know their strengths, talents, goals, hopes, dreams. Some teachers are passionate and want to do the right thing for their kids and love their kids, but then time and testing, and other things get in the way. If you don't take care of that emotional side of the student first, then they will not be ready to learn, or be open to feedback and redirection, if you don't build that relationship first.

Participant 8 closed with, "More knowledge. Knowledge is better."

Summary of interview and discussion forum responses by fifth sub-question. School psychologist interview participants are co-researches who openly shared their experiences with teacher-to-student mistreatment and the way it has impacted their roles as school psychologists. Responses included an increase in their advocacy, consultation, and collaboration duties, as well as elevated stress levels resulting in a number of considerations to change careers due to teacher-to-student mistreatment in the educational environment. The interview participants shared how these collective experiences have affected their relationships with teachers and school administrators. Mixed reactions were shared as they recalled their career experiences with mistreatment. Some revealed challenging situations, but all indicated that they are viewed as a resource professional within the school environment. School psychologists also reflected on the conflicting decisions, values, and beliefs experienced when dealing with teacher-to-student mistreatment. Experiences encompassed overcoming hard encounters with the perceived opposition, sometimes getting reprimanded for what they believe in, and consultation with trusted colleagues or supervisors when needed. In the field of psychology, it is common to use an imagine question to get the client to open up their minds to the world of possibilities. The school psychologist interview participants were invited to imagine they had the power to change the school psychology profession to help eliminate the teacher-to-student phenomenon, and then were asked to convey what changes they would make. Responses ranged from a desire for the professional role of a school psychologist to be widened to a more administrative role, instead of being restricted to a teacher/support staff role, to help make systemic decisions and to be utilized more frequently to prevent problems before they begin, more time in the classroom to consult and collaborate with teachers instead of being bound to a testing role, and finally to create a system-wide policy for all teachers to be more knowledgeable on disabilities, behavior management, and the personal baggage that many students bring into the academic environment, with an overall goal to encourage teacher empathy for those students who rest outside of their normal expectations. Responses from the discussion forum included a desire for the field of school psychology to provide a standard definition of the phenomenon, a clearer picture of concerning behaviors, and at what point school psychologists are to intervene.