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SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES

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BEING A TARGET AND A WITNESS: EXPLORING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES

By

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ABSTRACT

BEING A TARGET AND A WITNESS: EXPLORING
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES

By

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School-based peer sexual harassment among youth emerged as an issue of significant concern in the early 1990s. As a developing field, this literature has several notable gaps. The current study extends previous research by: 1) exploring the under-studied experiences of middle school students, 2) assessing students' experiences *witnessing* sexual harassment, and 3) evaluating how sexual harassment affects students' emotional well-being using a standardized psychological distress measure. Findings indicate that the vast majority of middle school students experience sexual harassment, with 94% of participants reporting at least one incident of direct sexual harassment (i.e., they were the target of the harassment) and 96% reporting witnessing at least one incident in the previous school year. Using structural equation modeling, the relationship among direct sexual harassment, witnessing sexual harassment, and psychological well-being was assessed. Results suggest that students are significantly negatively impacted by direct sexual harassment experiences. No significant relationship was found between witnessing sexual harassment and psychological distress symptomatology, despite a significant positive correlation. These findings and their implications for research, practice, and interventions are discussed.

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Overview

Previous research has found that four out of five students experience direct sexual harassment, defined as unwanted sexual behaviors that interfere with a student's life, prior to graduating high school. As a result of these experiences, youth report negative psychological effects such as feeling upset, worthless, and hopeless. These studies suggest that sexual harassment is a common occurrence in the lives of students with serious negative consequences for those victimized. In developing theory and interventions, it is critical that researchers and practitioners understand the full scope and impact of sexual harassment in student populations. However, the study of sexual harassment among youth is a developing field with several notable gaps. This study extends previous research by: 1) exploring the experiences of a particularly under-studied population, namely middle school youth, 2) assessing students' experiences *witnessing* sexual harassment, and 3) evaluating how sexual harassment affects students' emotional well-being using a standardized measure of psychological distress symptomatology. A brief rationale for each of these three research foci is presented below.

Research suggests that sexual harassment emerges in late childhood and early adolescence (i.e., late elementary and early middle school). However, the majority of research on youth experiences of sexual harassment has focused almost exclusively on high school students' experiences. Middle school marks a unique stage in development during which youth are experiencing psychological, social, and physical changes, many of which focus on peer interaction and gender distinction. Given these changes and the variable degree of success and rates at which youth experience them, it is probable that sexual harassment at this stage may manifest in unique ways compared to the experiences

of the more developed high school students. Therefore, one purpose of this study was to explore the sexual harassment experiences of the understudied middle school population.

Second, extant research on peer sexual harassment among youth focuses exclusively on the experience and impact of *direct* sexual harassment. This approach fails to account for the experience and impact of *witnessing* the sexual harassment of another student (i.e., ambient harassment, bystander harassment). Research on adult sexual harassment has found that this form of sexual harassment has unique psychological consequences above and beyond that of direct victimization. Youth describe sexual harassment as a common behavior happening in highly visible, public spaces (e.g., hallways, cafeterias, classrooms), suggesting that youth most likely witness the sexual harassment of their peers. Therefore, the second purpose of this study was to expand the conceptualization of youth sexual harassment to include an exploration of witnessing sexual harassment.

Finally, this study utilized a new approach for assessing psychological distress. In previous research, distress was typically measured by asking participants to rate their degree of upset resulting from specific instances of sexual harassment using Likert-scale response categories (e.g., from 0= not upset to 3= very upset). Such a measure of distress is problematic because participants may not link their degree of upset to a specific harassment experience and therefore would not report any distress. Furthermore, the term "upset" is ambiguous. It is unknown how any single participant might interpret the term upset (e.g., upset could mean angry, sad, or embarrassed), which may influence whether he/she would report distress linked to specific experiences of sexual harassment. In addition, qualitative research on youth experiences suggests that psychological distress

manifests in a variety of ways (e.g., fear, anger, sadness, sense of helplessness) which suggests the need for a more comprehensive distress measure. Therefore, in this study the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), a standardized measure of global distress that includes nine dimensions of psychological distress (i.e., anxiety, depression, somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism), was administered to supplement the traditional individual item "upset" measure. The inclusion of the BSI provided a more refined indication of negative psychological outcomes resulting from experiences of sexual harassment.

To address these gaps in the literature, the current study used quantitative methods to answer the following research questions: 1) What are middle school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment? 2) What are middle school students' experiences of witnessing sexual harassment? 3) What is the relationship between sexual harassment (both direct and witnessing harassment) and psychological distress symptoms?

Literature Review

This literature review begins with a brief overview of the adult sexual harassment research. This literature provides important background information for understanding the youth sexual harassment research. Specifically, this review focuses on sexual harassment definitions, measurement, frequency, and impact (i.e., distress) for both adult and youth sexual harassment targets.

Adult Sexual Harassment

Defining and Measuring Adult Sexual Harassment. After more than two decades of adult sexual harassment research, researchers have developed a nuanced understanding sensitive to the unique factors that affect its perpetration and impact on targets. This understanding emerged from a legal standard established as a result of a 1976 Supreme Court (*Williams v. Saxbe*, 1976) ruling that sexual harassment was a form of sex discrimination and therefore violates Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) focused on two components when defining sexual harassment: quid pro quo and hostile environment. Quid pro quo refers to the use of coercive tactics to threaten employment in exchange for sexual cooperation. Hostile environment includes offensive acts that create an unmanageable or uncomfortable work environment for targets (EEOC, 1980). Since 1980, sexual harassment researchers have expanded the legal definition to increase its precision and utility for harassment targets, organizations, and researchers. Fitzgerald, Swan, and Magley (1997) define sexual harassment as, "unwanted sex-related behavior at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being (p. 15)."

Adult sexual harassment has been objectively measured through behavioral quantitative survey methods, most commonly using the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ), a highly validated and well respected measure of adult sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995). The SEQ is an 18-item self-report inventory that has been deemed the most "theoretically and psychometrically sophisticated instrument available" (p. 428) for assessing sexual harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). Participants respond to behavioral items using a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "most of the time" to indicate the frequency at which they have experienced each behavior. This measure was developed based on Till's (1980) qualitative research with college women who had experienced sexual harassment which illuminated five thematic dimensions to sexual harassment: 1) gender harassment (i.e., generalized sexist remarks and behavior), 2) seductive behavior (i.e., inappropriate and offensive sexual advances), 3) sexual bribery (i.e., solicitation of sexual activity by promise of reward) 4) sexual coercion (i.e., coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment), 5) sexual assault (i.e., gross sexual imposition or assault). This grounded development of the items explicitly built in content validity (Fitzgerald, Swan et al., 1997).

The SEQ has been used in a variety of settings including educational, occupational, and organizational settings, and it has been found across studies to be both reliable and valid (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). This measure possesses sufficient reliability (Cronbach's alpha= .86; Fitzgerald et al., 1988), generalizability, and stability (test-retest stability analysis= .86; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) for use in research. Factor analysis of this scale has revealed three distinct subtypes of harassment: 1) sexual coercion (i.e., threat of

punishment or promise of reward used to persuade compliance to sexual demands), 2) unwanted sexual attention (i.e., seductive behaviors), and 3) gender harassment (i.e., sex-related hostile remarks, gestures, or behaviors; Fitzgerald & Shullman, 1993). The SEQ therefore has three subscales including: sexual coercion (coefficient alpha= .82; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997), unwanted sexual attention (coefficient alpha= .41 – low due to very low endorsement; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, et al., 1997), and gender harassment (coefficient alpha= .81; Fitzgerald, Drasgow, et al., 1997). When scoring response items, indices can be computed for the subscales as well as a total harassment experience score for an individual (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

Using the SEQ, estimates of the occurrence of sexual harassment on average suggest that approximately 50% of women experience at least one incident of sexual harassment in the workplace (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Cortina, Swan, Fitzgerald, & Waldo 1998). Incidence rates for men tend to be considerably lower, around 5% (Fitzgerald et al., 1988). Similar patterns have been found utilizing other measures of sexual harassment (Loy & Stewart, 1984). It appears that sexual harassment in the adult population is a much more prevalent experience for women than for men. Thus, the adult sexual harassment research has focused almost exclusively on women.

Using standardized measures of well-being along with the SEQ, researchers have explored the negative impact of sexual harassment. As a result of sexual harassment victimization, research has found that 75% of women experience symptoms of emotional and physical distress (Fitzgerald et al., 1997; Loy & Stewart, 1984). In general, consequences of harassment in the workplace are substantial including job turnover, reduced productivity, and absenteeism (O'Donohue, Downs, & Yeater, 1998). Given the

seriousness of these consequences and the frequency with which women experience them, researchers continue exploring sexual harassment in an effort to understand this phenomenon and the full scope of its impact.

Expanded Conceptualization: Indirect Sexual Harassment. Adult sexual harassment researchers have begun exploring indirect forms of harassment (i.e., watching, hearing, or knowing about the sexual harassment of members of one's work group) known as ambient sexual harassment (Glomb et al., 1997; Richman-Hirsch & Glomb, 2002) or bystander sexual harassment (Hitlan & Schneider, in preparation; Kraiger & Chrobot-Mason, 2000). As an emerging construct, measurement of this phenomenon varies across studies. Indirect sexual harassment has been defined and operationalized as both a group and individual level variable measured through others' frequency of experience (Glomb et al., 1997), beliefs about organizational climate (Kraiger & Chrobot-Mason, 2000), and actual instances of observing or hearing about the sexual harassment of others (Hitlan and Schneider, in preparation).

Glomb and colleagues (1997) adopted the concept of ambient stress stimuli in their expanded conceptualization of sexual harassment. Ambient stress stimuli are defined as pervasive stimuli within an environment that will potentially impact any group member (Hackman, 1992). Glomb et al. conceptualize ambient sexual harassment as a group level variable accounting for the general level of sexual harassment in a work group as measured by the frequency of sexually harassing behaviors experienced by others in a work group. Using responses to the SEQ, the researchers compute individual's degree of indirect exposure to harassment by computing the average SEQ score of all

employees in the work group, excluding the focal individual's score. This procedure provides an estimate of the general (ambient) level of sexual harassment in a work group.

Glomb and colleagues (1997) hypothesized that "over and above the stress experienced by an individual target of sexual harassment, an incident of sexual harassment may create a generally stressful environment that is experienced by others in the work group" (p. 311). The researchers indeed found that, even after accounting for the effects of direct sexual harassment, there were severe negative outcomes of indirect exposure to sexual harassment. Specifically, ambient sexual harassment led to greater psychological distress. This approach to measuring indirect sexual harassment is limited however in that it does not account for individual awareness of the harassment. Documenting the rates of harassment across members of a work group does not indicate that individuals have actually been indirectly harassed, that is watched, heard or knew about the sexual harassment of members of their work group. It is important to test empirically the presumption that individuals are aware of the harassment occurring in the workplace in order to accurately understand the impact of indirect harassment at a group level.

By contrast, Kraiger and Chrobot-Mason (2000) refer to indirect sexual harassment as bystander sexual harassment, which they define as an individual level "perceptual construct" focusing on worker beliefs about sexual harassment occurrences in her/his organization. Using items from the SEQ, Kraiger and Chrobot-Mason asked 135 female federal employee participants how often they believed certain situations had occurred between co-workers or supervisors. They found that 70% of participants believed sexual harassment occurred in the past 24 months. In contrast, 26% of

participants reported directly experiencing sexual harassment in the previous 24 months. This comparison indicates that women believed more harassment was occurring than they themselves directly experienced.

While this conceptualization of bystander harassment is interesting to explore in that it provides insight into individuals' perceptions of their organization, it is questionable whether these beliefs are valid indicators that indirect sexual harassment is actually occurring. Given the intangible and amorphous nature of beliefs, neither researchers nor organizations can reliably infer that beliefs indicate actual occurrences. Both researchers and organizations can most effectively and consistently evaluate and respond to behaviors *actually* experienced by individuals. This measure provides no direct insight into *actual* behaviors occurring; therefore is limited in its ability to inform researchers or organizations about employee behavior.

Similar to Kraiger and Chrobot-Mason (2000), Hitlan and Schneider (in preparation) refer to indirect sexual harassment as bystander harassment and define it as an individual level variable. Their conceptualization of this phenomenon focuses exclusively on the sexual harassment of others in the workplace that one directly observes or knows about. This was measured by adapting SEQ items to target indirect sexual harassment experiences. For example, one item in the SEQ measuring direct victimization is, "During the past 24 months have you been in a situation where any of your male supervisors or co-workers habitually told suggestive stories or offensive jokes." The bystander harassment adaptation reads, "During the past 24 months, have you observed any of your male supervisors or co-workers habitually telling suggestive stories or offensive jokes that were directed toward someone at your organization (i.e., other

than yourself)." These basic adaptations were made to all SEQ items. Hitlan and Schneider found that 72% of the 121 female respondents had observed the sexual harassment of others' within their organization. Seventy-four percent of participants also indicated they had experienced direct sexual harassment. This finding indicates an overlap of sexual harassment experiences including both direct and indirect forms.

Hitlan and Schneider's approach to measuring indirect sexual harassment provides a clear indication of the types of behaviors occurring in a setting. It provides a more precise indication of harassment occurrences when compared to the other measures of sexual harassment and therefore allows for more informed policy and training decisions within organizations. Furthermore, by so closely adapting the validated and reliable SEQ and focusing on actual behavioral occurrences rather than perceptions, researchers using this approach may have increased certainty they are measuring the intended construct.

Despite the differences in measurement across studies, these findings suggest that sexual harassment is more than just direct victimization. This phenomenon appears to be a complex system in which one is impacted by the effect of both direct and indirect victimization. The nature of the system and its impact on victims as yet has not been researched enough to make any definitive statements, however findings point to indirect sexual harassment accounting for negative effects on victims above and beyond the effects of direct victimization.

Youth Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment behavior among adults is a learned behavior that develops over time. To explore the development of these behaviors across the lifespan, researchers have

begun investigating youth experiences of sexual harassment. Research on school-based peer sexual harassment among youth (i.e., minors) emerged in the early 1990's (AAUW, 1993) and remains in the preliminary stages of development. While much of the initial work on youth sexual harassment was grounded in the adult sexual harassment literature, it is important to acknowledge the distinction between these phenomena. Specifically, the context in which the harassment occurs is quite different, that is the adult sexual harassment literature focuses on workplace harassment where as youth sexual harassment research focuses on school-based harassment. In school, students are learning the skills that prepare them for later life. Any behavior that disrupts this process may have a cumulative negative effect on later life functioning. This is not to minimize the effects of workplace sexual harassment, but to acknowledge the distinction between the contexts in which these behaviors occur.

The age and developmental stage differences between adults and youth further highlight the distinction between these phenomena. Specifically, youth are in the midst of dramatic psychological (e.g., increased emotionality, self-conceptualization), social (e.g., negotiating peer groups, experiencing acceptance or rejection), and physical (e.g., puberty) development (Steinberg & Morris, 2001), whereas adults experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace are not typically experiencing such psychological, social, and physical shifts. This dramatic development among youth may uniquely impact how they interpret and respond to sexual harassment experiences.

Despite these differences, the adult sexual harassment literature's evolution can inform the development of youth sexual harassment research. For example, the approach to measurement utilized in adult research (i.e., SEQ) and the inclusion of indirect sexual

harassment can facilitate the identification of methods and areas of research to pursue regarding youth experiences of sexual harassment. In presenting the youth sexual harassment research, aspects that are influenced or could be influenced by the adult research will be highlighted.

Defining Youth Sexual Harassment. Definitions are inconsistent across studies of youth sexual harassment (McMaster, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2002; Murnen & Smolak, 2000, Roscoe, Strouse, & Goodwin, 1994). For example, some definitions focus on the infringement on the legal rights of those targeted, while others focus exclusively on the emotional impact of the experience on the individual. More specifically, Lacasse, Purdy, and Mendelson (2003) incorporated Stein's (1999) definition that states that a behavior is harassing if it interferes with the right to receive equal educational opportunity. This definition emphasizes sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination and a violation of Title IX (i.e., right to equal educational opportunity), thereby framing the construct from a legal perspective. Other researchers have emphasized the importance of the targets' perception and interpretation of the harassing behavior in defining sexual harassment. This perspective is based on the definition provided by the American Association of University Women (AAUW; 1993) which conducted the first national study of youth sexual harassment. This organization broadly defined sexual harassment as "unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with a student's life" (AAUW, 1993, 2001). This definition has been adopted in the majority of subsequent studies of youth sexual harassment (e.g., Bryant, 1993; Fineran & Bennett, 1999; McMaster et al., 2002; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996).

When operationalizing the behavior, youth school-based peer sexual harassment researchers often refer to the EEOC (1980) and adult sexual harassment researchers' definitions of sexual harassment (e.g., Fineran & Bennett, 1998; Fineran, 2002; Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Lee, Croninger, Linn, & Chen, 1996; Yaffe, 1995). Given that power differentials between youth are often not as salient as those between employer and employee in the workplace, researchers on youth sexual harassment tend to focus on forms of harassment that create a hostile environment, rather than quid pro quo. The influence of the hostile environment dimension as well as the unwanted sexual attention subset of harassment is evident in the behavioral items specified by researchers surveying youth participants about harassment experiences (e.g., Hostile environment: made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures; showed, gave or left sexual pictures, photographs, messages, or notes; spread sexual rumors; Unwanted sexual attention: touched, grabbed or pinched in a sexual way; intentionally brushed up against you in a sexual way; forced you to kiss him/her). Similar to the early stages of adult sexual harassment research, youth researchers' operationalizations exclusively focus on direct victimization. The extant research on youth has not begun to investigate indirect sexual harassment as identified in research on adult, workplace harassment (Glomb et al., 1997; Hitlan & Schneider, in preparation; Kraiger & Chrobot-Mason, 2000; Richman-Hirsch & Glomb, 2002).

Measuring Youth Sexual Harassment. Youth sexual harassment has been measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. Although less frequent, qualitative methods utilized include interviews (Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Shakeshaft, Mandel, & Johnson, 1997) and focus groups (Berman, McKenna, Arnold, Taylor, & MacQuarrie,

2000; Grover & Nangle, 2003). The majority of existing studies have investigated youth sexual harassment using quantitative survey measures (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Lacasse et al., 2003; Lee et al., 1996; McMaster et al., 2002; Ohio Department of Education, 1999; Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin, 2001; "Sexual Harassment," 1995; Roscoe et al., 1994; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). These are behavior frequency measures that ask participants to indicate the number of times (e.g., from never to three or more times) they have experienced a variety of sexually harassing behaviors. Across studies, the behaviors included are consistent, often with only single item additions or deletions (the variation most often involves the more severe forms of harassment, such as sexual assault). As with the definition, the majority of measures utilized by researchers are adaptations of the original measure developed by AAUW (1993). This measure is limited, however, given that the authors of the AAUW report (1993) fail to disclose both the means by which items were created and the psychometric properties of the measure. The Sexual Experiences Questionnaire – High School Version (SEQ-High School), developed by Collinsworth and Fitzgerald (unpublished research scale), is the only existing quantitative measure that is not an adaptation of the AAUW measure. The SEQ-High School is an adaptation of the highly validated and well respected adult sexual harassment measure, the SEQ (Fitzgerald et al., 1988; Fitzgerald et al., 1995), and has been used twice to date (Collinsworth, Fitzgerald, & Magley, unpublished manuscript; Lacasse et al., 2003).

Prevalence & Types of Youth Sexual Harassment. Prevalence data regarding youth sexual harassment indicates that it is a pervasive phenomenon. Youth harassment has been found to be more common than adult, work-related sexual harassment with 75

to 80 percent of male and female students experiencing at least one form of sexual harassment before graduating high school (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Lacasse et al., 2003; Lee et al., 1996; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Ohio Department of Education, 1999; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). Research also suggests that sexual harassment is not an isolated experience, that in fact youth are typically victimized multiple times, with 58 percent of victimized youth reporting that they experience it "often" or "occasionally" (AAUW, 1993, 2001). Students indicate the normalization of such behaviors through their qualitative responses (e.g., perceive harassment as "more usual than unusual," "a way of life," Shakeshaft et al., 1997; "that's the way the world...goes;" Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). This normalization suggests that harassment occurs with at least moderate frequency. Research has also shown that the majority of youth harassment occurs in public spaces such as hallways, classrooms, and cafeterias (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996) making this a highly visible form of victimization. These findings indicate that sexual harassment is a common occurrence in the lives of students.

Research indicates that sexual harassment may become a part of students' school lives as early as elementary school. Across studies, the majority of participants report that their first peer sexual harassment experience occurred in middle school, although some report first incidents occurring in elementary school (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Stein, 1996; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). The 2001 AAUW study found that approximately one-third of their national sample of 2,064 public school students (grades eight through eleven) had their first harassment experience before sixth grade. The 1993 AAUW national study found a similar pattern of first experience. Furthermore,

Murnen and Smolak (2000) utilized an elementary school aged sample (mean age of 10.44), the majority of which had already experienced some form of sexual harassment. These findings suggest that first harassment experiences occur sometime in elementary school (i.e., kindergarten through fifth grade) or early in middle school (i.e., sixth through eighth grade).

Despite the findings that sexual harassment emerges in late elementary or early middle school, the majority of research on youth sexual harassment focuses on secondary school youth or retrospective accounts of experiences that occurred during secondary school (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Heritage, Denton, & West, 1996; Lacasse, et al., 2003; Ohio Depart of Education, 1999; "Sexual Harassment," 1995; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). Of studies primarily focusing on secondary school-aged adolescents that included a younger sample, the youngest participants were in eighth grade (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). Other studies that included primarily younger participants either were qualitative studies (Shakeshaft et al., 1997), failed to differentiate findings regarding the experiences of 11-year olds from that of 16-year old participants (Roscoe et al., 1994), or included a sample of only one grade from a middle school (i.e., eighth grade; Polce-Lynch et al., 2001). Little research has assessed the experiences of students in late childhood (e.g., Murnen & Smolak, 2000) or early adolescents, with only one study providing frequency and impact data focused on a middle school population (grades six through eight; McMaster et al., 2002).

The types of harassment that are experienced by youth range from staring to sexual assault. It was found across studies that non-physical, verbal forms of harassment (e.g., sexual comments, jokes, and name calling) are most common (AAUW, 1993, 2001;

Hand & Sanchez, 2000; Ohio Department of Education, 1999; Roscoe et al., 1994; Shakeshaft et al., 1997; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). The specific content of the most frequent verbal harassment however is variable. Among 342 urban high school students, Fineran and Bennett (1999) found negative comments about body, weight, or clothing to be most common. Hand and Sanchez (2002) found that among eighth through eleventh graders a general "sexual comment" was the most common form of sexual harassment experienced. McMaster and colleagues (2002) found that among middle school students sexual comments, jokes, gestures or looks (combined as one item) were the most commonly reported form of harassment. Beyond the most frequent, study similarities regarding type of harassment experienced stop. For example, across different studies it was reported that the second most frequently experienced type of sexual harassment included being called "fag," "dyke," lesie," or "queer" (McMaster et al., 2002), being pressured for a date (Fineran & Bennett, 1999), and being touched sexually (Hand & Sanchez, 2002).

Measuring Impact of Sexual Harassment on Youth. Some studies of youth sexual harassment have explored the impact of these experiences on youth. The measurement of impact typically focuses on psychological distress (AAUW 1993, 2001; Berman et al., 2000; Fineran & Bennett, 1999; Lacasse et al., 2003; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Shakeshaft et al., 1997; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). Psychological impact has been assessed both qualitatively (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Berman et al., 2000; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Shakeshaft et al., 1997; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996) and quantitatively (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Collinsworth & Fitzgerald, in preparation; Lacasse et al., 2003; Fineran & Bennett, 1999). Qualitative data on degree of distress has been collected

through either entirely qualitative studies (Berman et al., 2000; Murnen & Smolak, 2000; Shakeshaft et al., 1997) or studies with open-ended questions regarding how participants felt after being harassed (AAUW, 1993, 2001; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996). Qualitative findings illuminate the varying ways in which youth are distressed by their experiences including feeling embarrassed, angry, fearful, sad, worthless or helpless against the harassment.

Quantitative measurement of psychological impact varies across studies. In some quantitative studies, degree of distress, or "upset" as it is most frequently labeled, is measured in response to individual behavioral items, typically with a response range from not upset (zero) to very upset (three; Collinsworth et al., unpublished manuscript; Lacasse et al., 2003; Fineran & Bennett, 1999). Any time a participant indicates she/he has experienced a particular harassing behavior (e.g., being called sexual names) the participant then is asked to indicate to what degree she/he was upset by the experience. In other quantitative studies, it appears participants provided a more global assessment of the degree to which a harassment experience distressed them in relation to specific manifestations of distress (e.g., On a scale of one to five, in general, how embarrassed were you by the harassment you experienced; AAUW 1993, 2001). However, the understanding of this measure of distress is limited because the exact items and response scale used to measure distress in these studies were not disclosed. Standardized measures of psychological outcomes have not been included in studies of this phenomenon.

Impact of Youth Sexual Harassment. Youth targeted by sexual harassment report a myriad of negative consequences. As a result of sexual harassment, youth describe experiencing negative psychological outcomes (AAUW 1993, 2001; Lacasse et al., 2003;

Shakeshaft et al., 1997; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996) such as feeling moderately upset (AAUW 1993, 2001), feeling worthless, feeling helpless against the harassment (Shakeshaft et al., 1997; Trigg & Wittenstrom, 1996), and feeling afraid (AAUW, 1993, 2001). Furthermore, harassed students identify feeling embarrassed (four in ten students), self-conscious (one in three students), and less confident (one in four students) as a result of harassment experiences (AAUW, 2001). In a particularly salient example, a student reported an incident in which a male student informed her that he was going to rape her. She stated that after that, "If they touch me, I'm afraid they're going to carry through if I say no. And I'm scared shitless of that..." (Berman et al., 2000, p. 41).

It is clear from both the qualitative and quantitative findings that experiencing sexual harassment is distressing for youth. It also appears that the negative psychological impact manifests in varying ways (e.g., embarrassment, anger, fear). It is important to note that the two ways in which distress has quantitatively been measured (i.e., itemized upset measure, global ratings pertaining to select manifestations) do not account for the varying ways in which distress can manifest as indicated by qualitative findings.

Current Study

The current study extended previous research by exploring middle school students' experiences with direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment, and how these encounters affect their well-being, as measured by a standardized psychological distress scale. Three research questions guided this study: 1) What are middle school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment? 2) What are middle school students' experiences of witnessing sexual harassment? 3) What is the relationship between sexual harassment (both direct and witnessing harassment) and psychological distress symptoms? The rationale for each of these research questions is presented below.

Being a Target: Exploring Middle School Students' Direct Sexual Harassment Experiences

The majority of research on youth sexual harassment focuses on high school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment, despite findings that sexual harassment emerges as early as elementary school. Developmental differences between high school and middle school youth suggest the need to study the distinct experience and impact of direct sexual harassment among middle school students. Middle school marks the beginning of adolescence, a unique stage in development at which time individuals experience dramatic changes psychologically, socially, and physically (Berk, 2003; Malina & Bouchard, 1991; Steinberg & Morris, 2001; Tanner, 1990). During this transitional stage, youth are attempting to navigate newly developing bodies and sexuality, while at the same time coping with emotional instability (Buchanan, Eccles, & Becker, 1992 as cited in Berk 2003; Nottelmann et al., 1990 as cited in Berk 2003; Paikoff, Brooks-Gunn, & Warren, 1991 as cited in Berk 2003) and attempting to find

where they "fit in" among their peers (Berk, 2003; Haynie, 2001; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). High school students on the other hand are moving toward developmental stability, with research consistently finding better overall functioning and adaptability when comparing individuals in early adolescence to those in middle or late adolescence on similar domains (e.g., parent-child conflict, successful attainment of social status, stability of self-esteem; Steinberg & Morris, 2001). This research suggests that the nature and impact of sexual harassment may differ between high school and middle school youth. To assess middle school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment, this study used an adapted version of the SEQ-High School (see Measures section for details regarding the adaptation).

Being a Witness: Exploring Middle School Students' Witnessing Sexual Harassment Experiences

The extant literature on youth sexual harassment focuses exclusively on direct victimization experiences, finding that 75 to 80% of youth directly experience it prior to graduating high school. Research has found that over half of youth who are victims of sexual harassment experience it "often" or "occasionally," thus suggesting that it is not an isolated experience. These behaviors are perpetrated in public spaces such as hallways, classrooms, and cafeterias making this a highly visible form of victimization. In their own words, youth describe sexual harassment as "more usual than unusual" and "a way of life" thus indicating the normalization of this behavior. Given the proportion of youth that are victimized, the frequency of the perpetration, and the location in which it occurs; it is probable that students witness the victimization of others. Therefore, this study explored youth experiences of both direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment.

In order to measure witnessing sexual harassment experiences, items in the SEQ-High School were adapted to reframe the questions to ask only about those behaviors students witnessed. Consistent with recent trends in the victimology literature, students were also asked to complete an incident report describing the most salient sexual harassment incident they witnessed in the past year. This incident report collected contextual details regarding the behaviors students witness (e.g., type of sexual harassment, gender of victim and perpetrator, number of victims and perpetrators, location of harassment). The incident report provided insight into the details of incidents of sexual harassment from the perspective of those witnessing it.

The Relationship between Sexual Harassment and Psychological Distress

Extant research indicates that youth are negatively impacted (i.e., psychologically distressed) by sexual harassment experiences. In qualitative research youth reports suggest that the negative psychological impact of sexual harassment manifests in a variety of ways such as embarrassment, fear, sadness, and anger. The majority of quantitative research exploring the psychological impact of sexual harassment on youth, however, has not accounted for these manifestations. Distress is most frequently measured quantitatively through participant reports of degree of "upset" resulting from specific instances of sexual harassment using Likert-scale response categories. Given the ambiguity of the term "upset," it is unknown how any single participant interprets it (e.g., upset could mean angry, sad, or embarrassed). It is possible that a youth who was distressed by a sexual harassment experience would not identify with the term upset. Furthermore, it is possible that participants may not link their degree of distress to a specific harassment experience. While a youth may be able to identify certain distress symptoms, s/he may not identify

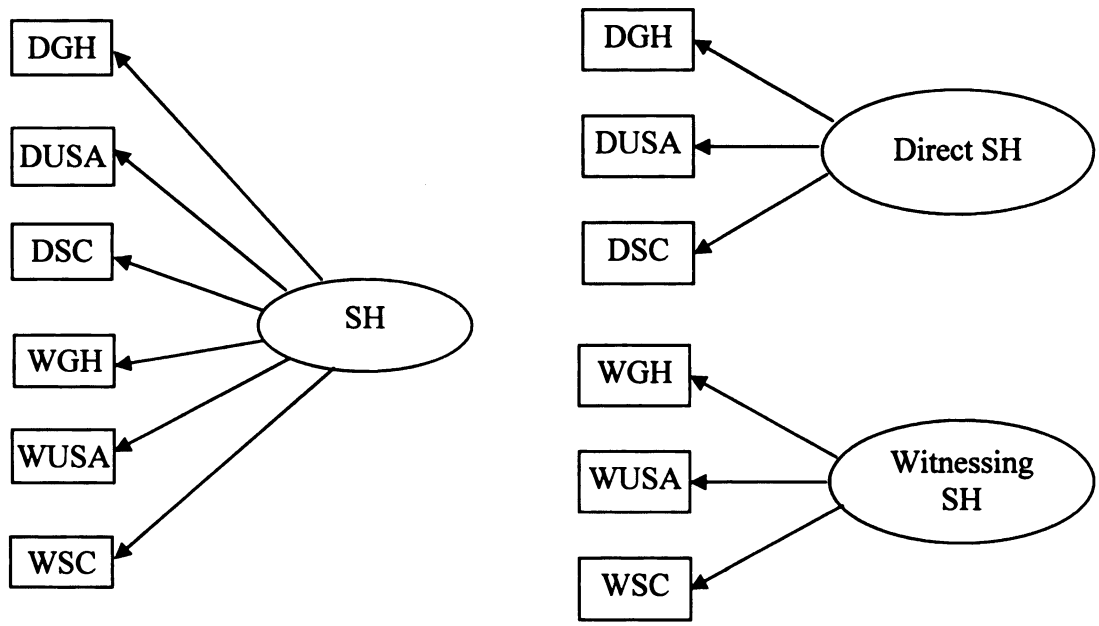
sexual harassment as the etiology of those symptoms. Therefore the distress these participants are experiencing would not be accounted for using this measure.

Despite limitations, the itemized measure of distress was included in this study because it indicates the degree of upset in relation to specific harassment experiences. This is informative regarding how different forms of harassment may differentially affect individuals or how different types of harassment are perceived as more or less upsetting. Yet, because there are several limitations to this method of measuring distress, in this study the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983), a standardized measure of global distress that assesses nine dimensions of psychological distress, was also administered to supplement the itemized upset measure. The BSI better accounts for the varying manifestations of distress youth may experience as a result of sexual harassment without requiring the cognitive awareness of the source of the distress (i.e., that the distress resulted from sexual harassment).

To examine the relationship between sexual harassment and psychological distress, structural equation modeling was used. First, two measurement models were evaluated to determine whether direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment were indeed separate constructs. Findings from the adult literature suggest direct and witnessing sexual harassment are distinct phenomena and could differentially impact one's degree of psychological distress, but this assumption needed to be empirically tested. Figure 1 shows the two measurement models that were compared. One model includes only one latent construct, meaning that there is no empirical distinction between direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment. The other model depicts two latent constructs whereby direct and witnessing sexual harassment are

Figure 1

Two Models of Sexual Harassment



NOTE: DGH=Direct Gender Harassment, DUSA=Direct Unwanted Sexual Attention, DSC=Direct Sexual Coercion, WGH= Witnessing Gender Harassment, WUSA= Witnessing Unwanted Sexual Attention, WSC= Witnessing Sexual Coercion, SH= Sexual Harassment

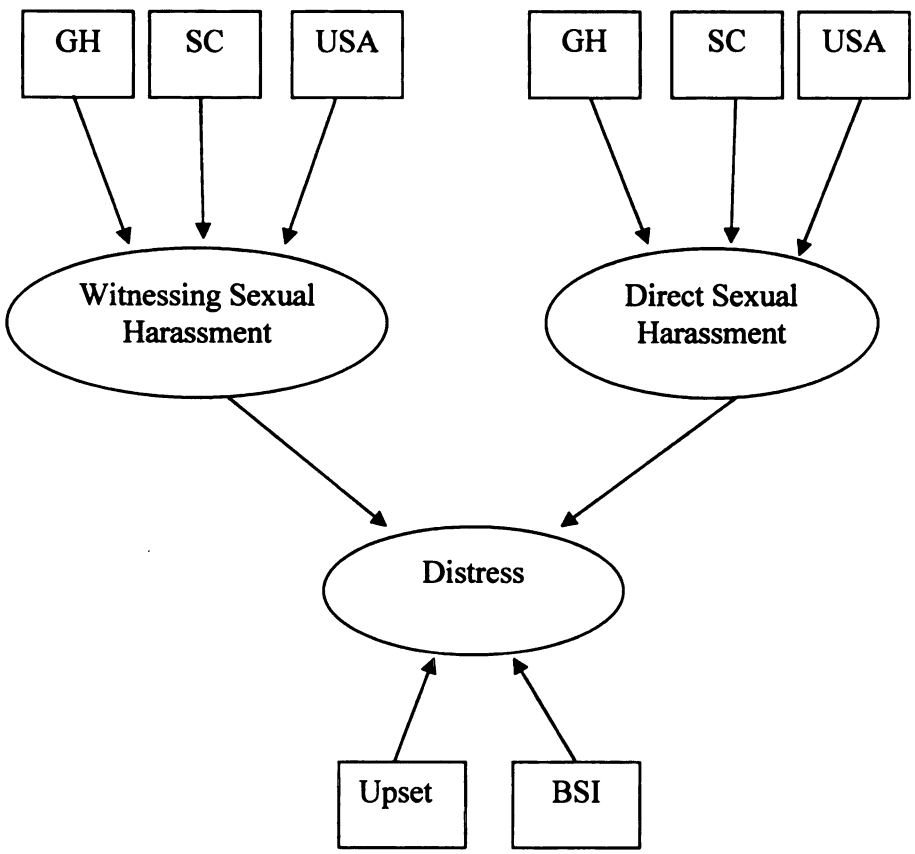
distinct constructs. It was hypothesized that the two latent constructs model would be a better fit of the data.

Once the best fitting measurement model was resolved, a full model was tested that linked sexual harassment to psychological distress. Figure 2 depicts the hypothesized structural relationships using the two latent constructs model of sexual harassment. This model includes direct sexual harassment, witnessing sexual harassment, and psychological distress as latent constructs. The direct and witnessing sexual harassment constructs each had three indicators (i.e., the gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion subscales from the SEQ-High School), and psychological distress had two indicators (i.e., the Brief Symptom Inventory and the itemized degree of

upset measure). It was hypothesized that the pathways from direct sexual harassment to distress and witnessing sexual harassment to distress would be positive and significant.

Figure 2

Model of the Relationship between Sexual Harassment and Psychological Distress



Method

Research Site and Sample

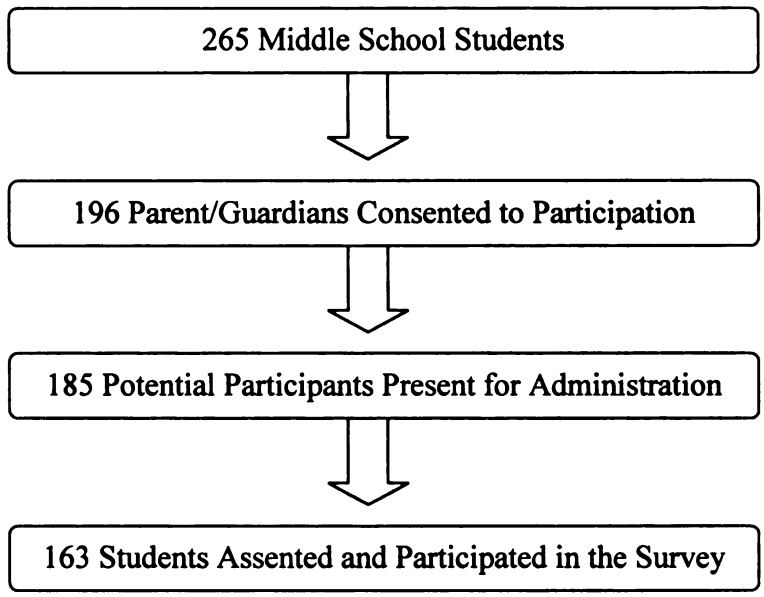
A Midwestern middle school (grades six through eight) was selected as the data collection site for this study. On average, middle schools in the state in which this school is located have approximately 560 students (Hoffman, 2003). Two hundred and sixty five students were enrolled in this school, indicating it is a smaller school compared to other schools in the state. This school's district includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. This middle school was selected based on an existing working relationship between the researcher and the community that facilitated a trusting and productive research environment. However, it is important to note that demographically this school is not entirely representative of the state in which it is located. It is representative of state levels of Asian and Latinos; however it is over representative of white students by 20% and under representative of African American students by 15%. Furthermore, only 22% of their students receive free or reduced price lunches as opposed to the state average of 31% indicating that the socio-economic status of this sample of students is not representative of average state levels.

All 265 students in the middle school were invited to participate in this study. After completing the multiphase process of seeking parental consent (see Procedures section for description), 196 consent forms and 27 refusal forms were returned, thus responses were obtained from 223 out of the 265 originally contacted with an 84.15% response rate and a 73.96% consent rate. One hundred and eight five students with parental consent were present on the day of survey administration, and 163 (61.51%) had

sufficiently complete data for analysis. Figure 3 presents the number of middle school students at each phase of the consent process.

Figure 3

Number of Middle School Students at Each Stage of the Consent Process



On average, these participants were approximately 12.5 years old (M=12.57, SD=.99) ranging from 11 to 15 years old. Fifty-eight participants (35.6%) were in sixth grade, 57 (35.0%) were in seventh grade, and 48 (29.4%) were in eighth grade. Regarding gender, 71 participants (43.6%) were male and 89 (54.6%) were female, with three participants not indicating their gender. Participants were asked to indicate all ethnic/racial groups that they identify as part of their background, thus the sum of the ethnic backgrounds does not equal the number of participants as there were bi- and multi-racial participants who selected multiple categories. One hundred forty four participants (88.3%) indicated they were white/Caucasian, 7 participants (4.3%) indicated they were black/African American, 10 participants (6.1%) indicated they were Latino/Hispanic, 11

participants (6.7%) indicated they were Native American, 5 participants (3.1%) indicated they were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3 participants (1.8%) indicated they were of some other ethnic background than those listed. Seven participants did not report their ethnic background.

Procedures

Parental/guardian consent was sought via multiple mailings and phone contact. Using contact information provided by the school, consent packets addressed to the parent/guardian(s) were mailed to the home address of all middle school students. The packets contained a study endorsement letter from the middle school principal, a project description letter from the researcher, two copies of the consent form, one copy of a refuse participation form, and a pre-paid envelope pre-addressed to the researcher. Parents/guardians were provided one copy of the consent form to sign and send back to the researcher in the envelope and the second copy for their records. The use of a refuse participation form facilitated targeted follow-up contacts by clearly distinguishing those parents/guardians that were not giving consent (those that returned the refuse participation form) from those that simply had not yet responded to the mailing and thus should be re-contacted.

Multiple methods were utilized to maximize the parent/guardian response rate. First, in order to increase the probability that the initial mailing would not get "lost in the shuffle," prior to the consent packet mailing parents/guardians received a postcard briefly informing them of the study, its purpose, and that consent materials would be arriving via mail the following week. Second, an incentive to respond was incorporated into the consent process. Parents/guardians were informed that the advisory class (similar to a

homeroom) that had the most consent or refuse participation forms returned would receive a pizza party. The incentive encouraged any form of response, either consent to allow their child to participate or refusal to allow participation, thus not coercing consent. In an effort to further increase the response rate, the middle school principal made regular announcements to the students about the pizza party in hopes that students would encourage their parent/guardian to send in either the consent or refuse participation form. Information about the pizza party was included in all forms of contact with parents/guardians.

After the postcard and initial consent mailing, telephone contact was attempted with all parents/guardians from whom no response had been received. During this contact, parents/ guardians were asked if they had received the consent materials, were briefly informed about the intent of the project, and were asked if they had any questions about the project. After attempting telephone contact with all non-responsive parents/guardians, a second consent packet was mailed. The letters from the school and researcher were altered to emphasize the importance of this study to the school community, as the deadline for the pizza party had passed. Also included in this mailing was a one sentence note informing the parents/guardians that they were receiving this second consent packet mailing because a consent or refuse participation form had not been received by the date of the mailing, and if one had been sent it was requested another be mailed. In addition to the direct contacts, the school made announcements about the project at parent-teacher nights and an announcement was included in the school newsletter distributed to all parents/guardians. These efforts resulted in an 84% parent/guardian response rate.

Prior to the day of survey administration, packets were created for each student for whom parent/guardian consent was received. These packets contained two copies of the assent form (one to sign and one for the participant's records) and one copy of the survey. All packet materials were placed in individual envelopes. To assist in distributing the packets and ensuring only students with parent/guardian consent received survey materials, affixed to each envelope was a removable label with the name of the student to whom the packet was assigned. These labels were removed and destroyed (shredded) at the completion of survey administration.

Surveys were administered during the advisory hour (first hour) and second hour of the day. Survey administration occurred in a single day to prevent discussion of the survey among former and future participants. The administration took place in the school auditorium. All sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students with parent/guardian consent were dismissed to the auditorium at the start of the first hour. Trained undergraduate and graduate assistants were stationed at three separate tables in the auditorium lobby, one for each grade level, and distributed the prepared survey packets to students. In instances where a student had come to the lobby but there was not a prepared packet, her/his name was checked against a full list of students with parent/guardian consent. All students who were not on the list were sent back to class (this occurred with four students, there were no students that were on the consent list that did not have a packet). As the assistants distributed packets they told the students not to open the packet until instructed to do so and to take a seat in the auditorium with one seat between themselves and any other student.

Once all students were seated in the auditorium, the school social worker followed a standardized script to introduce the study's purpose and procedures to participants, explicitly highlighting the option to refuse participation as well as the anonymity of their data. At this time students were given the opportunity to ask questions. Multiple students asked questions pertaining to the anonymity of their data. It was evident that students were genuinely concerned about who would know what they said and if it could be traced back to them. Despite being informed that the surveys would be separated from the envelopes upon leaving the school, some students elected to cross out their names from the label on their envelopes. Additional explanation of the use and assignment of the unique ID number (given that the number was not already on their surveys) was also required. Although it appeared all questions were satisfactorily answered, it is possible some students elected not to participate based on concern for anonymity.

Students interested in participating were instructed to sign the assent form; those not interested in participating were asked to sit quietly at their seat until all students completed their surveys. Participants in the harassment survey were instructed to place their signed assent forms in the envelope and complete the survey. Participation took approximately 45 minutes. Upon completion, participants placed their completed surveys in their individual envelopes with their signed assent forms. Once all students were done, the packets were collected by the research assistants. Research assistants then distributed debriefing materials to the participants. This included a debrief form and a pamphlet titled "You're Not Alone: Harassment Hurts." This pamphlet contained basic prevalence information regarding harassment as well as suggestions for responding to the behavior if

it occurs. This pamphlet was adapted from the AAUW Harassment-Free Hallways guide for students, parents, and schools (AAUW, 2004). The primary researcher led a brief discussion addressing the information included in the "You're Not Alone: Harassment Hurts" pamphlet. The school's social worker was identified as a resource if youth had further questions or would like to speak with someone about their experiences.

At the completion of data collection, all assent forms were separated from the surveys to ensure the anonymity of participant responses. This occurred after verifying that all participating students had the consent of their parents to be included in the research. The assent forms were checked against the list of students that did and did not have parental consent. No surveys were completed by a student that did not have parent/guardian consent.

Next, completed surveys were separated from incomplete surveys. For a survey to be included in analysis the participant had to complete at least 75% of each measure. Ten surveys had already been removed because the students assigned to them were absent on the day of administration. Of the 186 students present on the day of administration, 163 completed enough of the survey for their data to be included in analysis. Surveys excluded from analyses were destroyed (shredded). The remaining surveys were then assigned unique ID numbers. No information linking participant names to their ID numbers was kept. Survey data were entered into an SPSS database by a trained research assistant. The accuracy of data entry was verified by checking every survey against what was entered into the database.

Measures

Measures were selected to assess direct sexual harassment, witnessing sexual harassment, and psychological distress. Specifically, one measure was selected for direct sexual harassment, two measures were selected for witnessing sexual harassment, and two measures were selected for psychological distress. An additional measure was included to assess significant life events that occurred in the previous year that may have distressed participants (a control variable in the analyses). Basic demographic information was also collected. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

Direct Sexual Harassment. The SEQ-HS was used to measure direct sexual harassment experiences. The SEQ-HS is an adapted version of the SEQ. Collinsworth and Fitzgerald (in preparation) altered the SEQ items to reflect the language of youth, the unique circumstances in a secondary school setting as opposed to a work environment (e.g., coworker becomes another student), and the unique nature of social rewards and punishments adolescents hold over one another as opposed to traditional workplace quid pro quo harassment (e.g., threatening to spread sexual rumors versus threatening to fire someone).

The SEQ-HS was selected as the most appropriate measure for this study (as compared to the AAUW 1993 measure) for a variety of reasons. The items included in the SEQ-HS and the approach to administration are similar to the AAUW (1993, 2001) survey, the most frequently adapted measure of youth sexual harassment. Face validity indicates that these two surveys are measuring the same construct. However, it is unclear how the AAUW survey was constructed or conceptualized. No information has been published regarding the psychometric properties of that measure or any of its

reincarnations in other studies. Furthermore, the AAUW measure was utilized to explore student experiences with both student-to-student and teacher-to-student sexual harassment thereby further distinguishing it from the purposes of this study. Therefore, the SEQ-HS was selected in this study given that it is conceptually and psychometrically grounded in the SEQ. However, little has been published on the SEQ-HS and nothing on an entirely middle school population, therefore this study acted as another reliability test of the SEQ-HS.

Similar to the adult SEQ, the SEQ-HS asks participants to report the frequency at which they experienced a variety of sexual harassment behaviors, from "0" meaning never to "2+" meaning twice or more. The original SEQ-HS included 27 items. After examining the properties of the instrument, Collinsworth and Fitzgerald specified it as a 20-item scale, with a seven-item gender harassment subscale (Alpha= .84), an eight-item unwanted sexual attention subscale (Alpha= .86), and a five-item sexual coercion subscale (Alpha= .72; Collinsworth et al., unpublished manuscript). Since that administration, Collinsworth and Fitzgerald have expanded this scale to include 31 items, all of which were considered for use in this study.

For this study, the SEQ-HS was adapted in eight ways in order to measure direct sexual harassment. First, the direct nature of the harassment (i.e., "done to you") was emphasized to clearly distinguish the assessment of direct versus witnessing sexual harassment. Second, examples were added or adapted as needed to best reflect the language of youth in this district (based on the researcher's observational field experiences in that district and input from the middle school principal and school social worker). Third, items that were duplicates or close variations of other items were deleted

(five items). Fourth, one double barreled item was broken into two items (i.e., "made sexual remarks about you to others or called you sexual names" became two items). Fifth, the term "offensive" in one item was changed to "hurtful" and a second item was created using the term "sexually explicit." This was done to address the ambiguity of the term "offensive" (i.e., "said offensive things about your body or how you looked" became 1) said hurtful things, and 2) said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked). Sixth, one item was added to address another dimension of gender harassment (i.e., "made fun of you for not acting like enough of a boy or girl"). Seventh, one item (i.e., "worn T-shirts or hats that had sexually offensive words or pictures") was deleted because it was viewed by the researcher as a witnessing sexual harassment experience, which was measured separately.

As a final adaptation, the length of time about which participants were responding was shortened. In the original SEQ-HS students were asked to report their experiences based on their entire time at their current school. For the purpose of this study, students were asked to report experiences that occurred only within the last year of school. This was done for two reasons: 1) to bound the time frame about which students were referencing thereby decreasing probability of biased memories and 2) to increase the probability that behaviors reported are occurring at the middle school level, and therefore are behaviors the middle school can address. After these adaptations, a 29-item direct sexual harassment scale remained.

The direct sexual harassment items were scaled in two ways: 1) the average frequency with which participants experienced the behaviors and 2) summed harassment experiences (i.e., the total number of behaviors experienced). The average frequency of

direct sexual harassment experiences scale reflects the mean of all items, with possible scores ranging from 0-2. In this sample, Cronbach's Alpha was .88, with satisfactory corrected item-total correlations (CITC) ranging from .14 to .59. Four items (i.e., Items 4, 26, 28, 29) had low CITCs ranging from .14 to .30, but these were low occurrence behaviors relative to others and the items were retained so that the final scale represented both typical and less typical behaviors. Additionally, if these items were deleted, the alpha would not significantly change, further supporting the decision to retain these items in the measure.

The summed harassment experiences scale reflects the total number of different harassment experiences a participant reported, with possible scores ranging from 0-29. To compute this scale, all items were dichotomized with zero meaning the participant never experienced the behavior and one meaning the participant experienced the behavior at least once. All items were then summed to create the overall scale. A Cronbach's Alpha of .86 was obtained, with satisfactory CITCs ranging from .20 to .58. Five items had low CITCs (i.e., Items 1, 4, 26, 28, 29) reflecting the infrequency of their occurrence and these were retained for conceptual completeness of the scale. Four of these items had similarly low CITCs with the average frequency scaling. Table 1 provides item statistics and psychometric properties for the overall average frequency and summed experiences scales.

These total scales (frequency and summed) provide useful descriptive information, but for the structural equation analyses the total scales needed to be divided into subscales to create multiple indicators of each latent construct (direct and witnessing sexual harassment). The 29 items in the total scale were subdivided into subscales

following Fitzgerald's model of sexual harassment, including a 14-item gender harassment subscale, 8-item unwanted sexual attention subscale, and 7-item sexual coercion subscale. For each subscale, a frequency and summed experiences scale was computed. For the gender harassment average frequency scale, an alpha of .83 and CITCs ranging from .31 to .57 were obtained. The gender harassment summed experiences scale resulted in an Alpha of .80 and CITCs ranging from .22 to .51. For the unwanted sexual attention average frequency scale, an alpha of .70 and CITCs ranging from .32 to .56 were obtained. The unwanted sexual attention summed experiences scale resulted in an Alpha of .67 and CITCs ranging from .27 to .56. For the sexual coercion average frequency scale, an alpha of .58 and CITCs ranging from .04 to .54 were obtained. The sexual coercion summed experiences scale resulted in an Alpha of .55 and CITCs ranging from .15 to .50. Tables 2-4 present item statistics and psychometric properties for each subscale.

Table 1

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Direct Sexual Harassment Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Scales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
.39	.33	.88	6.59	.50	.86

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
1. showed, used, or handed sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to you	.31	.56	.39	.27	.44	.23
2. told sexual stories or jokes to you that you didn't want to hear	.47	.73	.44	.33	.47	.40
3. made sexual or obscene gestures to you	.51	.81	.57	.31	.46	.52
4. said hurtful things about your body or how you looked	.90	.88	.30	.56	.50	.28
5. said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked	.56	.81	.51	.36	.48	.48
6. called you sexual names	.47	.74	.45	.32	.47	.41
7. called you a bad name	1.14	.89	.52	.66	.47	.49
8. made sexual remarks about you to others	.47	.73	.52	.33	.47	.52
9. spread sexual rumors about you	.32	.65	.59	.22	.42	.54
10. called you a name for a homosexual to insult you	.58	.84	.38	.35	.48	.31
11. said things to put you down because you were male or female	.36	.65	.38	.26	.44	.40
12. made fun of you for not acting like enough of a boy/girl	.36	.69	.37	.24	.43	.31
13. made sexual remarks about your gender	.33	.67	.52	.22	.41	.43

Table 1 (Continued)

14. given you sexual notes or letters that you didn't want	.10	.38	.39	.07	.26	.35
15. given you any sexual attention you did not want	.12	.42	.51	.08	.28	.49
16. stared at you or parts of your body	.57	.82	.61	.36	.48	.58
17. cornered, leaned over or followed you	.31	.65	.51	.20	.40	.45
18. tried to stroke your leg or other body part when you didn't want him/her to	.16	.50	.55	.10	.31	.53
19. touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	.17	.44	.45	.14	.35	.37
20. kissed or hugged you when you did not want it	.14	.50	.46	.08	.27	.44
21. pulled your clothing down or off	.08	.35	.37	.06	.24	.34
22. kept asking you out even after you said "no"	.70	.83	.32	.46	.50	.32
23. hinted or said that something special would happen if you went along with something sexual	.12	.40	.48	.09	.29	.38
24. hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual	.06	.30	.53	.05	.22	.48
25. treated you badly for refusing to have sex	.05	.25	.35	.04	.20	.38
26. made forceful attempts to have sex with you	.06	.29	.21	.04	.20	.21
27. tried to get sex by pressuring or arguing with you, but did NOT succeed	.09	.35	.53	.07	.26	.51
28. had sex with you without your consent or against your will	.02	.19	.14	.01	.12	.20
29. sexually assaulted you	.08	.29	.27	.07	.26	.27

Table 2

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Direct Gender Harassment Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Subscales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	A
.54	.43	.83	4.85	3.37	.80

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
1. showed, used, or handed sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to you	.31	.56	.31	.26	.44	.22
2. told sexual stories or jokes to you that you didn't want to hear	.46	.72	.44	.33	.47	.37
3. made obscene gestures to you	.52	.82	.55	.31	.46	.51
4. said hurtful things about your body or how you looked	.89	.88	.31	.55	.50	.31
5. said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked	.55	.80	.50	.36	.48	.48
6. called you sexual names	.48	.75	.51	.33	.47	.46
7. called you a bad name	1.13	.90	.57	.66	.48	.54
8. made sexual remarks about you to others	.48	.73	.49	.34	.47	.47
9. spread sexual rumors about you	.32	.65	.55	.22	.42	.50
10. called you a name for a homosexual to insult you	.58	.84	.41	.35	.48	.36
11. said things to put you down because you were male or female	.36	.66	.35	.26	.44	.36
12. made fun of you for not acting like enough of a boy/girl	.36	.69	.37	.23	.43	.33
13. made sexual remarks about your gender	.33	.67	.53	.21	.41	.44
16. stared at you or parts of your body	.58	.82	.55	.37	.48	.51

Table 3

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Direct Unwanted Sexual Attention Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Subscales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
.25	.32	.70	1.32	1.53	.67

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
14. given you sexual notes or letters that you didn't want	.11	.40	.39	.08	.27	.40
15. given you any sexual attention you did not want	.14	.45	.48	.09	.29	.49
17. cornered, leaned over or followed you	.31	.65	.40	.21	.41	.31
18. tried to stroke your leg or other body part when you didn't want him/her to	.20	.55	.56	.13	.34	.56
19. touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	.21	.52	.39	.16	.37	.32
20. kissed or hugged you when you did not want it	.12	.47	.45	.07	.25	.42
21. pulled your clothing down or off	.09	.37	.32	.07	.25	.27
22. kept asking you out even after you said "no"	.73	.84	.32	.48	.50	.28

Table 4

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Direct Sexual Coercion Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Subscales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
.08	.17	.58	.42	.85	.55

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
23. hinted or said that something special would happen if you went along with something sexual	.14	.45	.31	.10	.30	.26
24. hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual	.08	.34	.54	.06	.25	.50
25. treated you badly for refusing to have sex	.05	.25	.41	.05	.21	.34
26. made forceful attempts to have sex with you	.05	.27	.24	.04	.19	.20
27. tried to get sex by pressuring or arguing with you, but did NOT succeed	.08	.34	.47	.06	.25	.38
28. had sex with you without your consent or against your will	.02	.18	.04	.01	.11	.15
29. sexually assaulted you	.11	.37	.11	.09	.29	.16

Witnessing Sexual Harassment. Following the approach of Hitlan and Schneider (in preparation) for measuring adult experiences of witnessing sexual harassment, the SEQ-HS was adapted to measure witnessing sexual harassment experiences. The SEQ-HS items were modified in nine ways to assess witnessing sexual harassment experiences. First, all items were altered to make the wording appropriately reflect witnessing sexual harassment instead of direct victimization. For example, one item measuring direct victimization read "has any other student pulled your clothing down or off." This item was changed to read "have you witnessed any other student pulling another student's clothing down or off." Second, the item regarding t-shirts with sexually explicit words or pictures that was removed from the direct sexual harassment measure was added. The remaining changes focused on the items' wording, examples, and clarity. These changes directly follow those described for the direct sexual harassment experiences measure (e.g., language adaptations to reflect the language of youth in this district, deleting duplicate items, breaking apart double-barreled items). After these adaptations, a 25-item witnessing sexual harassment scale remained. Finally, one item, "have you seen any students making obscene gestures at other student(s)," was removed from analysis based on extensive missing data. After all modifications, a 24-item measure of witnessing sexual harassment remained.

The witnessing sexual harassment items were scaled in two ways: 1) average frequency of experience and 2) summed harassment experiences. The average frequency of witnessing sexual harassment scale reflects the mean of all items, with possible scores ranging from 0-2. A Cronbach's Alpha of .92 was obtained, with satisfactory CITC ranging from .30 to .70. The summed harassment experiences scale reflects the total

number of different types of harassment a participant reported witnessing, with possible scores ranging from 0-24. To compute this scale, all items were dichotomized with zero meaning the participant never witnessed the behavior and one meaning the participant witnessed the behavior at least once. All items were then summed to create the overall scale. A Cronbach's Alpha of .91 was obtained, with satisfactory CITCs ranging from .34 to .64. Table 5 provides item statistics and psychometric properties for the overall average frequency and summed experiences scales.

For the structural equation modeling analyses, subscales were computed following Fitzgerald's model of sexual harassment including a 14-item gender harassment subscale, a 6-item unwanted sexual attention subscale, and a 3-item sexual coercion subscale. For each subscale an average frequency and summed experiences scale was computed. For the gender harassment average frequency scale, an alpha of .91 and CITCs ranging from .44 to .77 were obtained. The gender harassment summed experiences scale resulted in an Alpha of .88 and CITCs ranging from .43 to .68. For the unwanted sexual attention average frequency scale, an alpha of .68 and CITCs ranging from .26 to .46 were obtained. The unwanted sexual attention summed experiences scale resulted in an Alpha of .66 and CITCs ranging from .34 to .43. For the sexual coercion average frequency scale, an alpha of .66 and CITCs ranging from .28 to .66 were obtained. The sexual coercion summed experiences scale resulted in an Alpha of .62 and CITCs ranging from .28 to .56. Tables 6-8 present item statistics and psychometric properties for each subscale.

Table 5

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Witnessing Sexual Harassment Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Scales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
.78	.45	.92	11.50	5.98	.91

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
1. wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures	.63	.80	.57	.42	.50	.52
2. showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to other student(s)	.42	.71	.48	.30	.46	.47
4. telling sexual stories or jokes that the other student(s) clearly didn't want to hear	.70	.83	.50	.47	.50	.47
5. saying hurtful things about a student(s) body or how (s)he looked	1.55	.71	.58	.88	.33	.45
6. saying sexually explicit things about a student(s) body or how(s)he looked	1.00	.89	.60	.60	.49	.63
7. calling a student sexual names	1.38	.83	.70	.78	.42	.62
8. calling a student bad names	1.57	.74	.68	.85	.35	.56
9. making sexual remarks about a student to others	1.26	.86	.65	.73	.45	.57
10. spreading sexual rumors about a student(s)	.80	.89	.63	.49	.50	.61
11. calling a student(s) a name for a homosexual to insult him/her	1.46	.78	.67	.82	.39	.55
12. saying things to put a student(s) down because (s)he was male or female	.78	.84	.50	.51	.50	.48

Table 5 (continued)

13. making fun of a student(s) for not acting enough like a boy/girl	1.15	.85	.57	.71	.46	.43
14. making sexual remarks about a student's gender	.74	.83	.67	.50	.50	.64
15. giving a student(s) any sexual attention (s)he did not want	.38	.69	.56	.26	.44	.52
16. giving a student(s) sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want	.33	.62	.44	.24	.43	.46
17. repeatedly asking a student out even after (s)he said "no"	1.12	.86	.55	.69	.47	.49
18. hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student didn't go along with something sexual	.37	.69	.54	.25	.43	.56
19. hinting or saying that something special would happen if a student went along with something sexual	.30	.59	.51	.23	.42	.48
20. cornering, leaning over or following a student(s)	.51	.75	.53	.36	.48	.50
21. staring at a student or parts of a student's body	1.06	.92	.65	.61	.49	.59
22. touching a student in a way that it was clear made him or her uncomfortable	.44	.70	.55	.33	.47	.56
23. kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it	.20	.52	.30	.15	.35	.37
24. pulling a student's clothing down or off	.52	.74	.49	.38	.49	.42
25. making forceful attempts to have sex with a student	.10	.38	.31	.07	.26	.34

Table 6

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Witnessing Gender Harassment Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Subscales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
1.04	.55	.91	8.59	3.92	.88

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
1. wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures	.62	.80	.53	.42	.50	.49
2. showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories or cartoons	.42	.70	.44	.30	.46	.43
4. telling sexual stories or jokes that the other student(s) clearly didn't want to hear	.71	.84	.49	.47	.50	.45
5. saying hurtful things about a student(s) body or how (s)he looked	1.55	.70	.64	.88	.33	.52
6. saying sexually explicit things about a student(s) body or how(s)he looked	1.00	.90	.64	.60	.49	.65
7. calling a student sexual names	1.39	.82	.77	.78	.41	.68
8. calling a student bad names	1.58	.73	.73	.86	.35	.62
9. making sexual remarks about a student to others	1.26	.86	.70	.73	.45	.63
10. spreading sexual rumors	.80	.89	.56	.49	.50	.54
11. calling a student(s) a name for a homosexual to insult him/her	1.47	.78	.71	.82	.38	.56
12. saying things to put a student(s) down because (s)he was male or female	.80	.85	.49	.52	.50	.48
13. making fun of a student(s) for not acting enough like a boy/girl	1.16	.85	.58	.71	.46	.45
14. making sexual remarks about a student's gender	.74	.83	.61	.50	.50	.61
21. staring at a student or parts of a student's body	1.07	.92	.63	.62	.49	.58

Table 7

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Witnessing Unwanted Sexual Attention Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Subscales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
.50	.43	.68	2.03	1.61	.66

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
15. giving a student(s) any sexual attention (s)he did not want	.40	.70	.46	.28	.45	.39
16. giving a student(s) sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want	.31	.62	.41	.23	.42	.43
17. repeatedly asking a student out even after (s)he said "no"	1.09	.86	.45	.67	.47	.41
20. cornering, leaning over or following a student(s)	.51	.75	.44	.36	.48	.39
23. kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it	.18	.50	.26	.13	.34	.34
24. pulling a student's clothing down or off	.50	.73	.42	.36	.48	.39

Table 8

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Witnessing Sexual Coercion Average Frequency and Summed Experiences Subscales

Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
M	SD	α	M	SD	α
.26	.44	.66	.55	.85	.62

Scale Items	Average Frequency			Summed Experiences		
	Mean	SD	CITC	Mean	SD	CITC
18. hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student didn't go along with something sexual	.37	.69	.57	.25	.43	.51
19. hinting or saying that something special would happen if a student went along with something sexual	.30	.59	.66	.23	.42	.56
25. making forceful attempts to have sex with a student	.09	.36	.28	.06	.24	.28

Incident Report. To capture more contextual details about students' experiences witnessing sexual harassment, participants were asked to report about the single incident of sexual harassment they saw in the past year that stood out most in their mind. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate the gender of the victim and perpetrator (i.e., boy= 1, girl=2, both =3), the number of victims and perpetrators (i.e., 1=one, 2=two, 3+=three or more), the location of the incident (i.e., a list of locations was provided and participants circled the location the harassment occurred, with the option of writing in an alternative location not listed) , and who else witnessed the incident (i.e., participants were asked to circle yes=1 or no=0 whether or not other students, teachers, or administrators witnessed the event; if yes, participants were asked to indicate the number of people from that category were present: 1=one, 2=two, 3+=three or more; participants also were able to write in someone else who was present that was not represented by these three groups). They also were asked if the incident was reported to school officials (i.e., no=0, yes=1). No scales were created with data collected from this portion of the survey. Findings from the incident report included here are reported descriptively (e.g., percentages, means).

Distress. In this study, two measures of distress were used. First, the SEQ-HS included a degree of upset measure linked to each behavioral item. For each behavioral item that participants experienced at least once, they indicated the degree to which that experience upset them using response categories ranging from zero (not upset) to three (very upset). Since these items were completed only if the student endorsed experiencing the behavior, there was extensive not applicable data on the upset items (i.e., if a student had not experienced the referenced behavior, s/he could not answer the degree of upset

question making it "not applicable" to that student). This lack of data resulted in a restriction of range prohibiting the use of the upset measure in the structural model. Therefore, information collected from the upset items was only used descriptively to document students' self-reported degree of upset and was not used in the structural equation modeling analyses (see Results section for a description of how the model was modified in light of these not applicable data).*

Second, the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), a standardized measure of psychological distress, was administered. The 53-item BSI assesses levels of anxiety, depression, somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. The BSI also provides three global indices of distress: General Severity Index (GSI; single best indicator of current distress levels), Positive Symptom Distress Index (PSDI; pure intensity measure, measure of response style – whether the "patient" is augmenting or attenuating distress), and Positive Symptom Total (PST; count of symptoms which "patient" reports experiencing to any degree).

The BSI was specifically selected because it is sensitive to a variety of distress manifestations, is well validated and highly reliable (on the nine symptom dimensions ranging from .71 on Psychoticism to .85 on Depression, not available for three Global Indices; Derogatis, 1983), is stable (test-retest reliability for nine dimensions from .68 on Somatization to .91 Phobic Anxiety; for the three Global Indices from .87 on PSDI to .90 on GSI; Derogatis, 1983), has been used in studies of victimization similar to sexual harassment (Koss, Figueredo, & Prince, 2002; Moradi & Subich, 2002), and has been

* Appendix B contains a table displaying the number of participants for which each item in the sexual harassment measures was not applicable.

repeatedly used with youth matching the middle school age range (Al-Krenawi, Slonim-Nevo, Maymon, & Al-Krenawi, 2001; Kalter et al., 2002; Leonard, 2001; McCaskill, Toro, & Wolfe, 1998). It has also been normed on non-patient adolescents (age 13) and requires a sixth grade reading level (Derogatis, 1993). In this study, the BSI was used to compute a mean distress score for each participant. The specific manifestations (e.g., levels on the nine symptom dimensions) of each person's distress were not explored. Participants indicated the degree to which they experienced each distress symptom over the previous month using a scale from zero meaning "not at all" and four meaning "extremely." A Cronbach's Alpha of .97 was obtained with this sample. CITCs ranged from .27 to .78. Table 9 presents the item statistics and psychometric properties of the BSI.

Significant Life Events. A 9-item significant life events scale measured events that happened in the previous year that may account for participants' distress levels. Participants indicated whether they had experienced the described event (yes or no). A Cronbach's Alpha of .63 was obtained with CITCs ranging from .20 to .45. Table 10 presents item statistics and psychometric properties for the scale.

Table 9

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Brief Symptom Inventory

Mean= .67 SD= .66 α=.97

Scale Items	Mean	SD	CITC
1. Nervousness or shakiness inside	.97	1.03	.47
2. Faintness or dizziness	.51	.88	.47
3. The idea that someone else can control your thoughts	.29	.84	.61
4. Feeling others are to blame for most of your problems	.76	1.18	.59
5. Trouble remembering things	1.29	1.34	.45
6. Feeling easily annoyed or irritated	1.49	1.31	.55
7. Pains in heart or chest	.52	1.08	.47
8. Feeling afraid in open spaces	.24	.79	.68
9. Thoughts of ending your life	.43	1.00	.57
10. Feeling that most people cannot be trusted	1.02	1.33	.64
11. Trouble falling asleep	.97	1.37	.59
12. Suddenly scared for no reason	.35	.86	.67
13. Temper outbursts that you could not control	.57	1.12	.60
14. Feeling lonely even when you are with people	.72	1.09	.68
15. Feeling like you can't get things done	.90	1.14	.69
16. Feeling lonely	.76	1.17	.75
17. Feeling blue	.65	1.12	.72
18. Feeling no interest in things	.77	1.21	.78
19. Feeling fearful	.32	.75	.68
20. Your feelings being easily hurt	.70	1.06	.52
21. Feeling that people are unfriendly or dislike you	1.00	1.18	.63
22. Feeling inferior to others	.32	.82	.60
23. Nausea or upset stomach	.67	1.10	.52
24. Feeling you are watched or talked about by others	1.21	1.37	.66
25. Loss of appetite	.50	.97	.57
26. Having to check and double-check what you do	.54	.89	.45
27. Difficulty making decisions	.74	.98	.60
28. Feeling afraid to travel on buses, subways or trains	.18	.69	.42

Table 9 (Continued)

29. Trouble getting your breath	.38	.85	.42
30. Hot or cold flashes	.35	.85	.48
31. Having to avoid certain things, places, or activities because they frighten you	.25	.66	.48
32. Your mind going blank	.65	1.07	.62
33. Numbness or tingling in parts of your body	.48	.98	.59
34. The idea that you should be punished for your sins	.30	.78	.27
35. Feeling hopeless about the future	.49	1.03	.74
36. Trouble concentrating	1.10	1.25	.55
37. Feeling weak in parts of your body	.65	1.09	.58
38. Feeling tense or keyed up	.40	.89	.67
39. Thoughts of death and dying	.64	1.23	.65
40. Having urges to beat, injure, or harm someone	.58	1.08	.45
41. Having urges to break or smash things	.80	1.20	.62
42. Feeling very self-conscious with others	.58	.99	.63
43. Feeling uneasy in crowds	.42	.92	.63
44. Never feeling close to another person	.46	1.10	.59
45. Feelings of terror or panic	.23	.70	.63
46. Getting into frequent arguments	.91	1.29	.62
47. Feeling nervous when you are alone	.53	1.08	.70
48. Others not giving the credit you deserve to your achievements	.82	1.12	.61
49. Feeling so restless you could not sit still	.56	1.07	.60
50. Feelings of worthlessness	.49	1.04	.72
51. Feeling that people will take advantage of you if you let them	.62	1.08	.67
52. Feelings of guilt	.49	.96	.47
53. The idea that something is wrong with your mind	.45	.94	.62

Table 10

Item Statistics and Psychometric Properties of the Significant Life Events Scale

Mean= 1.45 SD= 1.54 α=.63

Scale Items	Mean	SD	CITC
1. Your parents got divorced	.08	.27	.39
2. You experienced the death of a family member or someone close to you	.46	.50	.29
3. You were involved in a life-threatening accident or illness	.06	.23	.36
4. You were involved in a fire, flood, or natural disaster	.04	.21	.26
5. You witnessed someone being badly injured or killed	.10	.30	.43
6. You were seriously physically attacked or assaulted	.05	.22	.36
7. You were threatened with a weapon, held captive, or kidnapped	.07	.25	.30
8. You suffered a great shock because one of the events on this list happened to someone close to you.	.23	.42	.45
9. You experienced any other significant event in your life not on this list that was upsetting to you.	.35	.48	.20

Demographics. Gender, age, grade, ethnic background, and current grades were collected from each participant.

Analyses

Descriptive statistics were used to answer the first and second research questions (i.e., What are middle school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment? What are middle school students' experiences of witnessing sexual harassment?). Structural equation modeling was used to answer the third question (i.e., What is the relationship between sexual harassment and psychological distress symptoms). To have sufficient power (.80) to detect medium effect sizes (f^2 [standardized effect size] = .15, equivalent to a multivariate R^2 = .40 and multiple R^2 =.13; Cohen, 1988), a minimum of 150 participants was required and obtained for this test.

All models were run using both the average frequency (i.e., mean across all items) and summed experiences (i.e., sum of dichotomized items) scaling. To increase the clarity of the findings, only one scaling will be presented in the Results section. Table 11 compares the goodness of fit statistics for the full structural models with average frequency and summed experiences scaling. The fit indices indicate the average frequency scaling is marginally better than (Chi-Square test, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, Non-Normed Fit Index, and Comparative Fit Index) or equal to (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) the summed experiences scaling. Based on the reliability statistics presented in Tables 1-8, the two methods of scaling are virtually indistinguishable. Therefore, in the interest of parsimony, only findings using the average frequency scaling are presented.

Table 11

Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Average Frequency and Total Experiences Models of Sexual Harassment

Goodness of Fit Statistics	Average Frequency	Summed Experiences
Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square	63.60	73.03
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.11	.12
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	.94	.92
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	.06	.06
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.96	.95

df=23

NOTE: Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square= Values should be small and non-significant; RMSEA= Values less than .10 indicate a good fit; NNFI= Values greater than .90 indicate good fit; SRMR= Values less than .10 indicate good fit; CFI= Values greater than .90 indicate good fit

Results

What are middle school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment?

On average, students reported experiencing 7 of the 29 (SD=5.01) direct sexual harassment behaviors measured. The maximum different types of harassment any participant reported experiencing directly was 26 (i.e., one participant endorsed experiencing 26 out of 29 items on the direct sexual harassment measure), and only 11 participants reported never being the target of sexual harassment in the previous school year (i.e., they did not endorse any of the direct sexual harassment items). Regarding frequency, students reported on a scale of zero meaning they "never" experienced the behavior to two meaning they experienced the behavior "twice or more." On average, students were experiencing direct sexual harassment with a frequency of .39 (SD=.33). Participants also reported the degree to which they found each of their sexual harassment experiences to be upsetting (i.e., on a scale of zero meaning not at all upsetting to three meaning very upsetting). Direct sexual harassment experiences resulted in a mean upset rating of 1.28 (SD=.88).

Table 12 lists the direct sexual harassment behaviors in order from highest to lowest frequency (i.e., percentage of participants reporting experiencing the behavior at least once) along with the mean upset rating for each item. The five most frequently reported items were primarily forms of verbal harassment and fell into the gender harassment and unwanted sexual attention subsets of sexual harassment. They included: 1) called you a bad name (66.9% experienced at least once), 2) said hurtful things about your body or how you looked (57.1%), 3) kept asking you out even after you said "no" (48.5%), 4) stared at you or parts of your body (37.4%), and 5) called you a name for a

homosexual to insult you (36%). The five least frequently reported items included: 1) had sex with you against your consent or against your will (1.2%), 2) made forceful attempts to have sex with you (3.7%), 3) treated you badly for refusing to have sex (4.9%), 4) hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual (6.1%), and 5) kissed or hugged you when you did not want it (6.7%). These behaviors were more physical in nature than the most frequent forms of harassment and fell into the categories of unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion.

The five direct sexual harassment behaviors participants reported to be most upsetting included: 1) tried to get sex by pressuring or arguing with you, but did not succeed (M=2.44, SD=.88), 2) sexually assaulted you (M=2.15, SD=1.28), 3) hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual (M=2.10, SD=.88), 4) said things to put you down because you were male or female (M=1.89, SD=.92), and 5) called you sexual names (M=1.87, SD=1.09). The five behaviors participants reported to be least upsetting included: 1) had sex with you against your consent or against your will (M=.50, SD=.71), 2) showed, used, or handed sexual pictures, stories, or cartoons to you (M=.59, SD=.89), 3) said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked (M=.72, SD=1.00), 4) made sexual remarks about you to others (M=.76, SD=1.00), and 5) stared at you or parts of your body (M=1.11, SD=1.11).

It is interesting to note that the most upsetting behaviors are not the most frequently experienced forms of harassment. Additionally, the most upsetting behaviors include both physical and verbal forms of harassment spanning gender harassment and sexual coercion. Similarly, the least upsetting forms of harassment included both physical

and verbal forms of harassment and encompassed gender harassment and sexual coercion; however, some of the least upsetting forms of harassment were among the most frequently experienced forms of harassment. These findings suggest that the relative frequency of a behavior was not the determinant of an upsetting appraisal, that some other factor(s) influences what students deem most upsetting.

Table 12

Percent Experienced and Mean Upset Ratings for Direct Sexual Harassment

Scale Items	Never	Once	Twice or more	Mean Upset Rating
7. called you a bad name (e.g., "bitch")	33.1	19.4	47.5	1.40
4. said hurtful things about your body or how you looked (e.g., "fat," "ugly")	42.9	21.7	35.4	1.76
22. kept asking you out even after you said "no"	51.5	22.7	25.8	1.16
16. stared at you or parts of your body	62.6	14.7	22.7	1.11
10. called you a name for a homosexual to insult you (e.g., "fag" or "dyke")	64.0	13.0	23.0	1.70
5. said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked (e.g., said you have a "nice butt" or "I want your body")	64.4	16.0	19.6	.72
8. made sexual remarks about you to others (e.g., told others you have a "hot body")	65.0	17.8	17.2	.76
6. called you sexual names (e.g., "slut," "tease," "whore")	66.0	16.7	17.3	1.87
2. told sexual stories or jokes to you that you didn't want to hear	67.5	17.8	14.7	1.23
3. made sexual or obscene gestures to you	69.8	9.4	20.8	1.30
11. said things to put you down because you were male or female (e.g., said you can't do something because of your sex)	71.6	17.3	11.1	1.89
1. showed, used, or handed sexual pictures, stories, or cartoons to you	73.5	21.0	5.6	.59
12. made fun of you for not acting like enough of a boy/girl (e.g., called you a "tomboy," "fag," "sissy")	74.7	13.6	11.7	1.49
9. spread sexual rumors about you	76.7	12.3	11.0	1.97
17. cornered, leaned over or followed you	77.9	11.7	10.4	1.41
13. made sexual remarks about your gender (e.g., "girls are sluts" or "boys are dicks")	79.1	10.4	10.4	1.28
19. touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	83.4	11.0	5.5	1.38
18. tried to stroke your leg or other body part when you didn't want him/her to	87.0	6.2	6.8	1.70
23. hinted or said that something special would happen if you went along with something special (e.g., get a date or gain popularity)	90.2	6.1	3.7	1.63
29. sexually assaulted you	90.8	7.4	1.8	2.15
14. given you sexual notes or letters that you didn't want	91.4	5.5	3.1	1.00

Table 12 (Continued)

21. pulled your clothing down or off	92.6	4.9	2.5	1.33
27. tried to get sex by pressuring or arguing with you, but did not succeed	93.1	5.0	1.9	2.44
20. kissed or hugged you when you did not want it	93.3	1.2	5.5	1.27
24. hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual (e.g., that you would lose friends or rumors would be spread about you)	93.9	4.3	1.8	2.10
25. treated you badly for refusing to have sex	95.1	4.3	.6	1.86
26. made forceful attempts to have sex with you	96.3	2.5	1.2	1.33
28. had sex with you against your consent or against your will	98.8	.6	.6	.50

What are middle school students' experiences of witnessing sexual harassment?

On average, students reported experiencing 12 of the 24 witnessing sexual harassment behaviors (SD=5.98). The maximum different types of sexual harassment a single participant witnessed was 24 (i.e., one participant endorsed witnessing all 24 of behaviors included on the witnessing sexual harassment measure), and only six participants reported never witnessing sexual harassment in the previous school year. Regarding frequency, students reported on a scale of zero meaning they "never" experienced the behavior to two meaning they experienced the behavior "twice or more." On average, students witnessed sexual harassment with a frequency of .78 (SD=.45). Participants also reported the degree to which they found witnessing sexual harassment to be upsetting. Witnessing sexual harassment resulted in a mean upset rating of 1.04 (SD=.71).

Table 13 lists the items from the witnessed sexual harassment measure in order from highest to lowest frequency (i.e., percentage of participants reporting experiencing the behavior at least once) along with the mean upset rating for that item. The five most frequently witnessed behaviors were entirely forms of verbal harassment and fell into the gender harassment subset of sexual harassment. They included: 1) saying hurtful things about a student's body or how (s)he looked (88.1% experienced it at least once), 2) calling a student bad names (85.6%) 3) calling a student a name for a homosexual to insult him/her (82.8%), 4) calling a student sexual names (79.5%), and 5) making sexual remarks about a student to others (72%). The five least frequently reported behaviors included: 1) making forceful attempts to have sex with a student (6.2%), 2) kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it (13.5%), 3) hinting or saying that something

special would happen if a student went along with something sexual (23.5%), 4) giving a student(s) sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want (23.5%), and 5) hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student didn't go along with something sexual (24.2%). These behaviors were more physical in nature than the most frequent forms of witnessed harassment and fell into the categories of unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion.

The five sexual harassment behaviors participants reported as most upsetting to witness included: 1) saying hurtful things about a student body or how (s)he looked (M=1.51, SD=1.10), 2) kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it (M=1.38, SD=1.16), 3) saying things to put a student down because (s)he was male or female (M=1.34, SD=1.08), 4) spreading sexual rumors about a student (M=1.34, SD=1.03), and 5) making forceful attempts to have sex with a student (M=1.33, SD=1.22). The five sexual harassment behaviors participants reported least upsetting to witness included: 1) wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures (M=.15, SD=.40), 2) making sexual remarks about a student to others (M=.57, SD=.79), 3) showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories, or cartoons to other student(s) (M=.63, SD=.77), 4) saying sexually explicit things about a student body or how(s)he looked (M=.75, SD=.83), and 5) giving a student(s) sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want (M=.83, SD=.94).

Contrary to what was found for direct sexual harassment, some the most upsetting witnessed behaviors were also among the most frequently witnessed, although some of the most upsetting behaviors were still among the least frequent. The most upsetting behaviors to witness included both physical and verbal forms of harassment spanning all

three categories of sexual harassment. The least upsetting forms of harassment were exclusively verbal and reflected the gender harassment subset of sexual harassment.

Table 13

Percent Experienced and Mean Upset Ratings for Witnessing Sexual Harassment

Scale Items	Never	Once	Twice or more	Mean Upset Rating
5. saying hurtful things about a student body or how (s)he looked (e.g., calling a student "fat," "ugly," or "flat-chested")	11.9	20.0	68.1	1.51
8. calling a student bad names (e.g., "bitch")	14.4	12.5	73.1	1.27
11. calling a student a name for a homosexual to insult him/her (e.g., "fag" or "dyke")	17.2	16.6	66.3	1.28
7. calling a student sexual names (e.g., "slut," "tease," "whore")	21.5	18.4	60.1	1.24
9. making sexual remarks about a student to others (e.g., saying to others that a student has a "hot body")	28.0	20.5	51.6	.57
13. making fun of a student for not acting enough like a boy/girl (e.g., calling a student a "tomboy," "fag," "sissy")	28.2	25.8	46.0	.97
17. repeatedly asking a student out even after (s)he said "no"	32.5	25.2	42.3	.95
21. staring at a student or parts of a student's body	39.1	16.8	44.1	.96
6. saying sexually explicit things about a student body or how(s)he looked (e.g., "Nice butt" or "I want your body")	39.9	20.2	39.9	.75
12. saying things to put a student down because (s)he was male or female (e.g., said he can't do something because he's a boy OR she can't do something because she's a girl)	47.2	25.5	27.3	1.34
14. making sexual remarks about a student's gender (e.g., "girls are sluts" or "boys are dicks")	50.0	24.7	46.0	1.12
10. spreading sexual rumors about a student	50.9	17.4	31.7	1.34
4. telling sexual stories or jokes that the other student(s) clearly didn't want to hear	54.7	20.5	24.8	1.25
1. wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures	61.1	19.8	19.1	.15
20. cornering, leaning over or following a student	64.4	19.6	16.0	.91
24. pulling a students clothing down or off	64.4	22.1	13.5	1.14
22. touching a student in a way that it was clear made him/her uncomfortable	66.3	22.1	11.7	1.09
2. showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories, or cartoons to other student(s)	69.9	17.8	12.3	.63
15. giving a student(s) any sexual attention (s)he did not want	72.0	15.5	12.4	.93

Table 13 (Continued)

18. hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student didn't go along with something sexual (e.g., that (s)he would lose friends or rumors would be spread about him or her)	74.8	12.9	12.3	1.51
16. giving a student(s) sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want	76.5	14.8	8.6	.83
19. hinting or saying that something special would happen if a student went along with something sexual (e.g., get a date or gain popularity)	76.5	16.7	6.8	1.20
23. kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it	86.5	8.6	4.9	1.38
25. making forceful attempts to have sex with a student	93.8	3.7	2.5	1.33

Students also reported on the context of the most memorable sexual harassment incident they witnessed (i.e., the incident reports). Table 14 provides information on the gender and number of perpetrators and targets. Most participants indicated that boys were the perpetrators, with either three or more perpetrators or one perpetrator involved in the incident. Girls were most often reported to be the targets of the witnessed harassment, with either one or three or more girls being targeted in a given incident.

Table 14

Witnessing Sexual Harassment: Gender and Number of Perpetrators and Targets

	Gender			Number		
	Boys	Girls	Boys & Girls	One	Two	Three or More
Perpetrators	43.9	18.7	37.4	39.7	19.8	40.5
Targets	30.9	39.0	30.1	42.1	18.2	39.7

Regarding location of sexual harassment, participants most often reported the sexual harassment they witnessed occurred in the hallway (41.8%), although to a lesser extent it was witnessed in the cafeteria (23.0%), classrooms (19.7%), and gym class (17.2%). Less than 14% of participants indicated they had witnessed sexual harassment occurring in the locker room, at recess, or on the bus. It is also important to note that rather than circling the provided answer choices, a number of participants instead wrote in that it happens "every where."

Participants also reported who else witnessed the incident. They were asked about other students, teachers, and administrators. Eighty percent of participants indicated that other students witnessed the incident, with the majority (69.4%) reporting three or more students saw the incident (not including the participant). Only 10.8% of participants

indicated teachers witnessed the incident. Of this 10.8 percent, 61.5% reported that there was only one teacher that witnessed the harassment, 23.1% indicated two teachers witnessed it, and 15.4% reported three or more teachers witnessed the incident. Only three participants reported that an administrator witnessed the incident, with two indicating there was one administrator and one participant indicating two administrators witnessed the incident. Finally, when asked if the incident was reported to school officials (to their knowledge), 84.7% of participants indicated the incident was not reported to school officials.

What is the relationship between sexual harassment (both direct and witnessing harassment) and psychological distress symptoms?

Structural equation modeling was used to examine this research question, but a number of preparatory analyses were completed to inform the final structural model, including: 1) conducting partial correlations, 2) testing and modifying the sexual harassment measurement model, and 3) testing the full structural model.

Partial correlations. Table 15 presents the partial correlation matrix for direct sexual harassment, witnessing sexual harassment, and the brief symptom inventory controlling for significant events occurring in the previous year. All correlations were significant at $p<.05$ suggesting positive relationships between direct sexual harassment and distress, witnessing sexual harassment and distress, and between direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment. The Cohen and Cohen (1983) test for significant differences between correlations indicates that the correlation between direct sexual harassment and distress is stronger than the relationship between witnessing sexual harassment and distress ($t= 5.31$; df= 156; Critical Value=1.97; $p<.05$). Intuitively,

one would expect such a finding in that people would be most upset by their direct experiences than by what they witness. Additionally, these findings reflect the dependency of witnessing sexual harassment on the occurrence of direct sexual harassment. That is, if no students were experiencing direct sexual harassment, then no students could witness direct sexual harassment.

Table 15

Partial Correlation for Direct Sexual Harassment, Witnessing Sexual Harassment, and the BSI

	1	2	3
Direct Sexual Harassment	–		
Witnessing Sexual Harassment	.59**	–	
BSI	.43**	.22**	–

** Significant at $p<.01$

Testing and Modifying the Sexual Harassment Measurement Model. Two measurement models of sexual harassment were assessed: 1) a single latent construct model, which did not distinguish direct and witnessing sexual harassment as separate constructs (i.e., they indicate a "global" sexual harassment construct); and 2) a two latent constructs model that conceptualizes direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment as separate constructs (see Figure 1, page 23). Both models contain six indicators, including the three sexual harassment subscales from the direct sexual harassment measure (i.e., gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) and the three sexual harassment subscales from the witnessing sexual harassment measure. The key difference between these models was whether these six indicators were conceptualized as measuring one or two latent constructs. Figure 3 presents the model coefficients. As evident from the fit indices presented in Table 16 and

through a Chi-square Difference test, there was a significant improvement in model fit with the two latent constructs model (χ^2_{change}=67.55; df=1; Critical Value=3.84; p<.05). Therefore, it was determined that sexual harassment is best modeled as two distinct latent constructs: direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment.

Examination of the two latent construct model's standardized residuals (SR) revealed an underestimation of the covariance between direct gender harassment and witnessing gender harassment (SR=6.04). Conceptually it is possible that when one witnesses certain forms of gender harassment it is similar to directly experiencing it. Therefore, the error covariance between these indicators was freed, resulting in a significantly improved fit of the data (χ^2_{change}=37.19; df=1; Critical Value=3.84; p<.05).

Figure 4

Two Models of Sexual Harassment

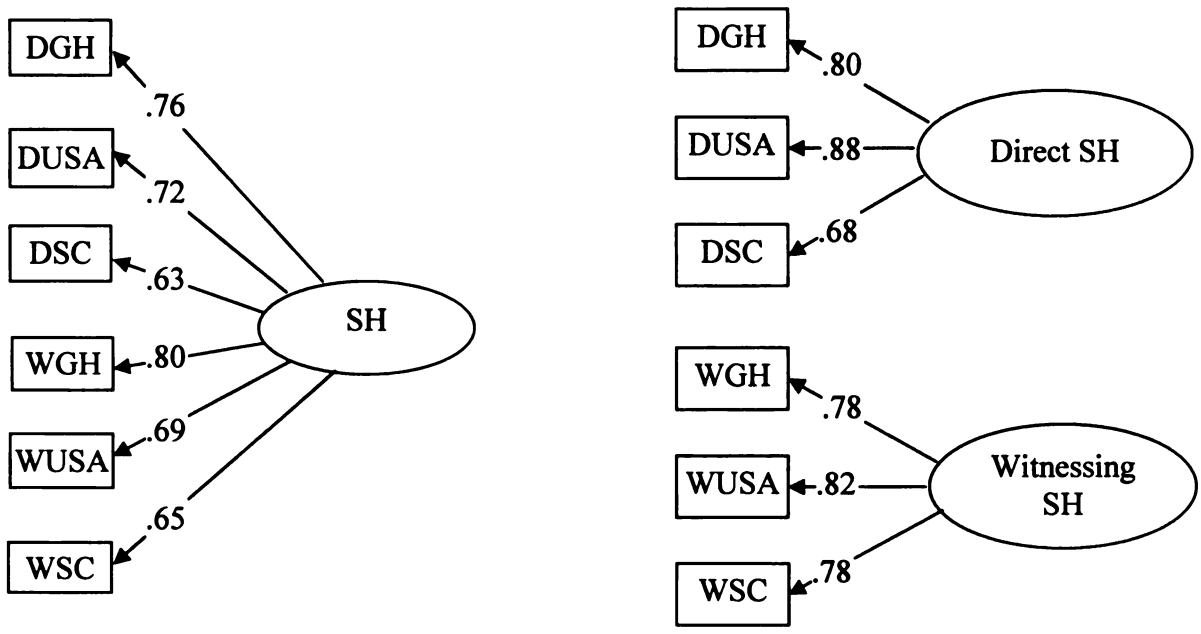


Table 16

Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Sexual Harassment Measurement Models

Goodness of Fit Statistic	One Latent Constructs df= 9	Two Latent Constructs df=8	Two Latent Constructs (Modified) df=7
Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square	126.26	58.71	21.52
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	.29	.18	.11
Non-Normed Fit Index	.69	.85	.94
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	.10	.07	.06
Comparative Fit Index	.81	.92	.97

Testing the Full Structural Model. Because the analyses testing the measurement model indicated that the two latent constructs model was a better fit of the data, the full structural model, which examined the relationship between sexual harassment and psychological distress, was evaluated with direct and witnessing sexual harassment as separate latent variables. As noted previously in the Measures section, there was extensive missing data on the "upset" measure of distress, so it could not be used in the full model analyses. Therefore, the revised full model contained nine indicators and three latent constructs. The three sexual harassment subscales acted as indicators for the direct and witnessing sexual harassment latent constructs (three subscales each). Items from the BSI were randomly divided into three parcels, which function as the indicators of the distress latent construct. Table 17 presents the partial correlation matrix for all indicators entered into the full model, controlling for significant life events participants reported occurred in the previous year. All variables were positively correlated with only two non-significant correlations: 1) witnessing unwanted sexual attention and BSI parcel 1 (r=.09, p=.24) and 2) witnessing unwanted sexual attention and BSI parcel 2 (r=.15, p=.06).

Table 17

Partial Correlations between Indicators of Sexual Harassment and Psychological Distress

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
WGH	–								
WUSA	.70**	–							
WSC	.45**	.60**	–						
DGH	.61**	.42**	.38**	–					
DUSA	.32**	.38**	.28**	.53**	–				
DSC	.29**	.27**	.31**	.52**	.60**	–			
BSI Parcel 1	.18*	.09	.23**	.42**	.35**	.25**	–		
BSI Parcel 2	.19*	.15	.20*	.37**	.30**	.17*	.89**	–	
BSI Parcel 3	.23**	.16*	.28**	.42**	.26**	.20*	.89**	.90**	–

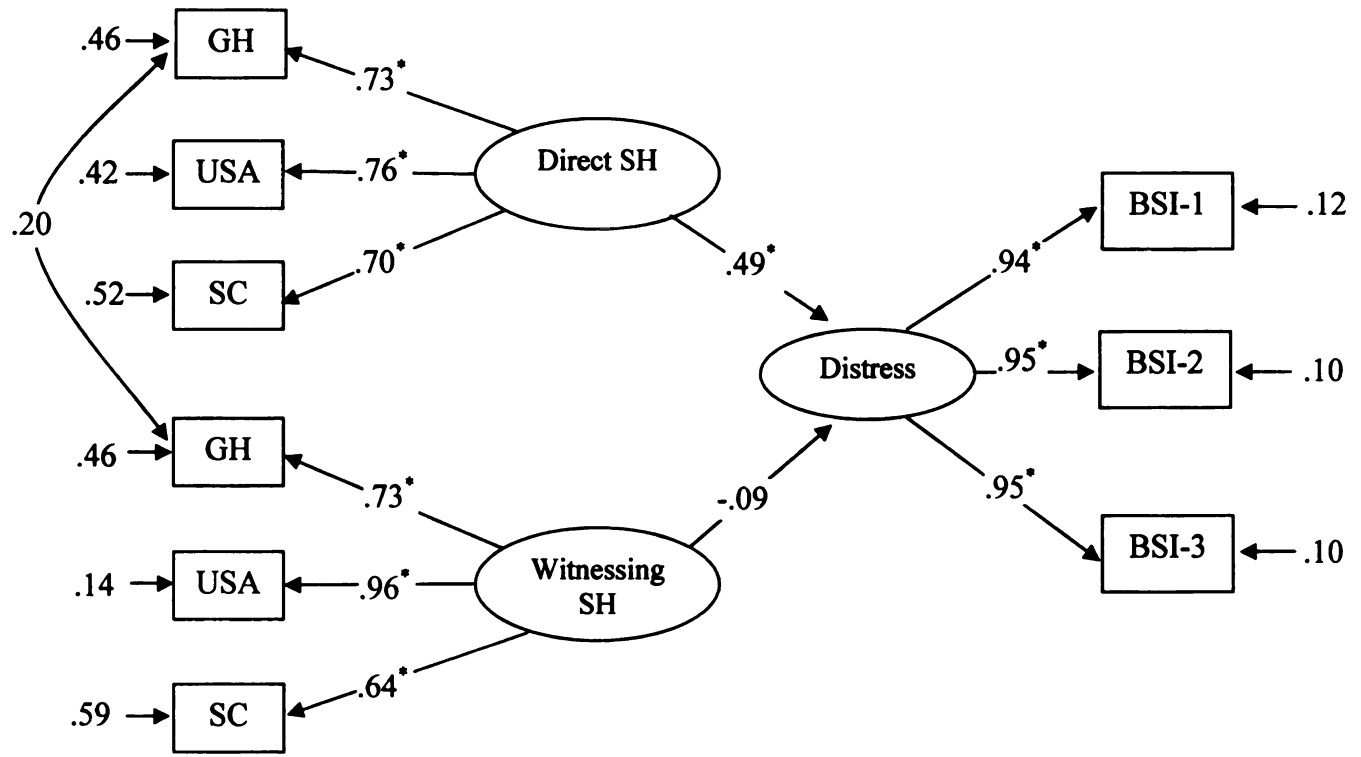
*p<.05; **p<.01; N=159; Controlled for Significant Life Events

Regarding the overall model fit, the goodness of fit statistics suggested the model was a good fit of the data with only the Chi-Square value (63.60, df= 7) and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation value (.11) indicating a marginal fit. The Non-Normed Fit Index value for this model was .94, above the .90 value deemed an indicator of a good fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual value for this model was .06, with anything below .10 indicating of a good fit. Finally, the Comparative Fit Index also indicated a good fit with a value of .96, well above the .90 needed to indicate a good fit.

Figure 4 presents the full model with the standardized path coefficients. This model suggests that the frequency of experiencing gender harassment (path coefficient= .73, t=10.01, $p<.05$), unwanted sexual attention (path coefficient= .76, t=10.16, $p<.05$), and sexual coercion (path coefficient= .70, t=9.05, $p<.05$) were significant indicators of overall direct sexual harassment experiences. Similarly, frequency of witnessing gender harassment (path coefficient=.73, t=10.12, $p<.05$), unwanted sexual attention (path coefficient= .93, t=13.13, $p<.05$), and sexual coercion (path coefficient= .64, t=8.41, $p<.05$) were significant indicators of overall witnessing sexual harassment experiences. Direct sexual harassment experiences were found to have a positive direct effect on distress, such that participants who experienced direct sexual harassment experienced significantly higher levels of distress symptoms as well (path coefficient=.49 t= 4.44, $p<.05$). Witnessing sexual harassment was not found to significantly effect distress with a standardized path coefficient of -.09 (t= -.89, $p<.05$). This indicates that participants who witness sexual harassment do not experience higher levels of distress symptoms as measured by the BSI.

Figure 5

Model of the Effect of Direct Sexual Harassment and Witnessing Sexual Harassment on Distress



*p<.05

Discussion

This study expanded the developing literature on youth sexual harassment by exploring middle school students' experiences of direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment. Findings from this study indicate that middle school students are not only experiencing sexual harassment, but that they are experiencing it at higher rates than their high school counterparts. Previous research with high school students has found that approximately 80% experienced direct sexual harassment, whereas 94% of the middle school students surveyed in this study were directly harassed in the previous year. Beyond these differential rates of sexual harassment, a number of similarities were observed between middle and high school student experiences.

First, consistent with the findings for high school students, verbal harassment, such as sexual comments about one's body or appearance, was the most common form of harassment experienced among middle school students. Second, participants by and large reported that sexual harassment among middle school students occurs in public spaces, such as hallways, classrooms, and cafeterias, similar to the locations of harassment among high school students. Taken as a whole, the findings from this study suggest that direct sexual harassment is generally similar among high school and middle school students; however, it seems that sexual harassment may be more prevalent among middle school students than high school students. More research with middle school students is necessary before such statements can be made definitively.

The results of this study also highlight the importance of exploring students' experiences witnessing sexual harassment. Over 96% (157/163) of students reported witnessing a peer being sexually harassed in the past year. This finding suggests that

more students are witnessing sexual harassment than are directly experiencing sexual harassment. Of students that witnessed and/or directly experienced sexual harassment, participants reported witnessing sexual harassment more frequently than they were directly sexual harassed (i.e., M= .78 and M= .39 respectively). Additionally, students reported witnessing more diverse types of harassment (i.e., endorsed witnessing more of the items on the witnessing sexual harassment measure, with each item reflecting a different type of harassment) than they directly experienced, with students reporting on average that they witnessed half (12/24) of the different types of sexual harassment measured whereas they directly experienced only one-quarter (7/29) of the different types of sexual harassment measured. These results indicate that witnessing sexual harassment is a common experience among students, perhaps more common than direct sexual harassment. While this finding may seem counter intuitive (i.e., how can students witness something occurring more frequently than it is reported to occur directly?), one must keep in mind the *context* of sexual harassment as described by these participants. Specifically, students reported that multiple students were present (i.e., as witnesses) when direct sexual harassment occurred. Thus, when asked about witnessing sexual harassment, multiple students may have experienced and thus report on the same incident. This suggests that sexual harassment is not simply a dyadic phenomenon involving solely perpetrators and targets, but instead extends to others in the setting, particularly witnesses.

This study also expanded upon previous research findings by examining how both direct sexual harassment and witnessing sexual harassment affect middle school students' psychological well-being. Other studies descriptively indicate that experiencing sexual

harassment is detrimental to students' well-being. This study used a standardized psychological distress symptomatology measure, which allowed for an exploration of the predictive relationship between sexual harassment (direct and witnessing) and psychological distress. Findings from structural equation modeling indicate that direct sexual harassment experiences predict increased psychological distress. However, no significant relationship was found between witnessing sexual harassment and psychological distress, despite the significant positive relationship observed through partial correlations ($r=.22$, $p<.01$). The size of this correlation would suggest that the relationship between witnessing sexual harassment and distress is perhaps "small" thus requiring more power (a larger sample) than was available in this study (i.e., this sample barely surpassed the minimum 150 participants needed to detect medium to large effects).

It is also possible that because students witness sexual harassment so frequently, it has become a normalized part of life, and thus does not predict distress symptoms. Due to this normalization, students may be cognitively processing the witnessed sexual harassment as informative regarding appropriate gendered behavior rather than reacting emotionally to the event. Social cognition theory suggests that we learn from and adopt others' behaviors through a four phase process involving 1) attention (i.e., observing the characteristics of the actor, the environment, and the behavior relevant to the observed behavior), 2) retention (i.e., encoding the pertinent information about the observed behavior), 3) reproduction (i.e., recalling and reproducing the observed behavior in a manner consistent with the principles and characteristics initially observed), and finally 4) motivation (i.e., the observer must encounter circumstances that motivate the reproduction of the behavior before it will be adopted). This theory indicates that as one

is encoding behavioral elements of an observed event, s/he is simultaneously learning the principles underlying those behaviors and the reaction of the environment to those behaviors. If the environmental reactions do not reflect those the individual is seeking, then s/he will not adopt the behavior. Observer may also modify her/his existing behavior repertoire if the observed behavior resulting in the undesirable environmental reaction is deemed connected or related to one's own behavior (Bandura, 1986; 2001). Taken in the context of sexual harassment, it is possible that youth are encoding the environmental consequence of certain gendered behavior (i.e., sexual harassment as the consequence), and thus use the witnessing experience to learn what behaviors result in harassment. Therefore, the witnesses of sexual harassment are primarily learning from, rather than emotionally processing, observed events; thus, witnessing sexual harassment would not result in psychological distress.

Alternatively, it is possible that only sexual harassment targeting something that a witness identifies as a characteristic s/he could also be targeted for results in distress symptoms. In this case, the distress reflects the realization that one could also be targeted for the behavior/characteristic for which the victim of the witnessed sexual harassment was targeted. This suggests the relationship between witnessing sexual harassment and distress symptoms would be mediated by one's identification with the target of the witnessed harassment. Because of limited sample size and methods, such relationships could not be assessed.

While these findings provide useful insight into the sexual harassment experiences of middle school youth, there are some limitations to this study. First, the generalizability is hindered by the sampling. Data were collected from students at only

one middle school, which contained a fairly racially homogeneous student population. Furthermore, the school district from which this sample was drawn contained only one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. This suggests that, by and large, the student population of this district does not change from grade level to grade level, thus constraining the social organization of students within the school because there is not the influx of a more heterogeneous population at each of the major educational transitions (i.e., transitions to middle and high school). It is possible that sexual harassment among more diverse, less socially constrained students occurs at different rates and in different ways (e.g., context, type of harassment). Additionally, it is possible that school level effects, which were not measured in this study, influence the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment (e.g., tolerance for sexual harassment, comprehensiveness and enforcement of sexual harassment and gender discrimination policies, training of teachers to intervene on sexual harassment incidents and their intent to do so). Additional research is needed at more diverse middle schools to assess such effects.

This study also only provides limited information on the impact of sexual harassment. By only addressing psychological distress symptomatology, no insight into the academic, cognitive, and behavioral consequences was obtained. Research with high school students indicates that targets of sexual harassment experience academic consequences, such as withdrawal from school (AAUW, 1993; 2001). Additionally, given that middle school-based sexual harassment is occurring during a time of significant psychological and social development, it is possible that harassment experiences (both witnessing and directly experiencing) shape adolescents' attitudes,

perceptions, and beliefs about gender as well as their future behavior (e.g., what it means to be masculine/feminine, acceptable gender behavior, acceptable across-gender interaction). Social cognition theory supports this idea and would suggest that experiences of sexual harassment very well may result in vicarious learning of gender roles and "appropriate" behavior (Bandura, 1986; Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This study provided no information regarding the affect of sexual harassment on academic, cognitive, or behavioral functioning. Future research on youth sexual harassment should expand our understanding of the individual-level consequences of sexual harassment to include outcomes beyond psychological distress.

Lastly, this study paints a limited picture of the context of sexual harassment (i.e., location, gender and number of perpetrators and targets, who witnessed it). For contextual information to inform intervention development (e.g., identifying points of intervention), more detail is needed, such as the relationship between perpetrators and targets (e.g., is this happening among friends, dating partners, enemies, or all of the above), the motivation to use or the purpose of sexual harassment (e.g., are students using it as an expression of sexual interest or as a mechanism of hierarchical social restructuring), and the relationship between sexual harassment and development (e.g., are there stages in development at which sexual harassment is less normative, thus making it a prime point of intervention). Daily incident reports could be used in future research to gain more detailed contextual information. A sample of students in the school trained as observational researchers could document incidents of sexual harassment they witness and directly experience. Such immediate documentation would provide richer contextual information than retrospective accounts of incidents that may have happened months

prior. Additionally, longitudinal research documenting patterns of sexual harassment over time would provide much information to inform the timing of interventions.

Despite these limitations, this study provides useful information regarding sexual harassment in middle schools and can inform interventions. It is important to note that Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects students from sexual harassment because it is a form of sex discrimination that interferes with students' rights to an education. Schools are required by law to address and prevent instances of sexual harassment and can be held liable if they are found negligent in this responsibility (Stein, 1999; Yaffe, 1995). Therefore, identifying effective intervention methods not only can improve the school culture, but also protect schools against potentially costly lawsuits.

The contextual information collected in this study points to one change in the schools' physical space that might impact sexual harassment: more teacher/adult presence in the hallways. Recall that despite the public nature of these events, students reported that virtually no teachers were present for these incidents, that most often only other students were the only witnesses to the harassment. If teachers or other adults are not present, they cannot intervene on instances of harassment, and, with 84% of incidents described not being reported to school officials, it does not appear these events are being brought to the attention of the school by the students involved or those witnessing the incidents. To address this lack of adult presence, schools could create hall monitoring schedules, with designated times during which specific teachers are responsible for "patrolling" the hallways. However, with public educations' depleted resources and teachers losing their planning periods, this may not be a reasonable expectation.

This study highlights another resource in intervening on sexual harassment instances: the student witnesses. With nearly 100% of students witnessing sexual harassment, they represent a significant resource pool that could be trained to intervene in peer-to-peer harassment. The use of peer bystanders in intervening on gendered forms of violence has shown promise among college students (Banyard, Plante, & Moynihan, 2005). Schools could adopt the approaches of other programs to develop the skills and motivation of bystanders to intervene. This approach would encourage students to become involved in the prevention/intervention process, empowering them to impact the behavior of their peers.

In summary, this study provided a preliminary examination of the sexual harassment experiences of middle school students and a first look at the distinct concept of witnessing sexual harassment among youth. Findings indicate that the vast majority of middle school students are directly harassed and witness harassment, suggesting sexual harassment is a normative behavior among youth. Furthermore, this study found that direct sexual harassment experiences are related to increased psychological distress. Additional research in diverse settings that investigates a wider array of outcomes and collects in depth contextual information is needed to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the direct and witnessing sexual harassment experiences of youth.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Peer Interaction Survey

Peer Interaction Survey

Read the directions below carefully!

The questions on the next page ask about things you may have seen happen to other students AT Bath Middle School since school started this year (For example, if you are in sixth grade, then we are interested in what you saw as a sixth grader). We are interested in two things:

1) HOW OFTEN you have seen certain things happen to a classmate(s). We are only interested in things that happened to someone else, not things that happened to you. For each question on the next page, please circle:
   0 if you have *never* seen it happen to someone else;
   1 if you have seen it happen to someone else *once*;
   2+ if you have seen it happen to someone else *twice or more*.
   If you circle 0 (*never*), you move on to the next question.

For example, if you have never seen a student make an obscene gesture to another student then you would circle 0 for "how often" and not circle anything for "how upset."

	How often?			How upset were you?			
	Never	Once	Twice or more	Not Upset	Slightly Upset	Moderate-ly Upset	Very Upset
3. making sexual or obscene gestures at a student	(0)	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3

2) If you have seen the things described happen at least once (if you circled 1 or 2 for "How Often"), please indicate how much it UPSET you (by the word "upset," we mean bothered, angry or frightened) by circling*:
   0 if you were not upset at all;
   1 if you were slightly upset;
   2 if you were moderately upset;
   3 if you were very upset.

*If this situation happened more than once, please circle the answer that best describes your *general* reaction.

For example, if you have seen another student making obscene gestures at other students three times and you were moderately upset by it then you would circle 2+ to indicate "how often" and 2 to indicate "how upset" you were.

	How often?			How upset were you?			
	Never	Once	Twice or more	Not Upset	Slightly Upset	Moderate-ly Upset	Very Upset
3. making sexual or obscene gestures at a student	0	1	(2+)	0	1	(2)	3

If you have questions about how to fill out the survey, raise your hand and an assistant will help you.

Questions begin on the next page...

These questions refer to behaviors you may or may not have seen done to OTHER students AT Bath Middle School.

Since school started this year, have you seen any student(s)...

	How often?			How upset were you?			
	Never	Once	Twice or more	Not Upset	Slightly Upset	Moderat-ely Upset	Very Upset
1. wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
2. showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to other student	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
3. making sexual or obscene gestures at a student	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
4. telling sexual stories or jokes that the other student(s) clearly didn't want to hear	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
5. saying hurtful things about a student body or how (s)he looked (for example, calling a student "fat," "ugly," or "flat-chested")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
6. saying sexually explicit things about a student body or how(s)he looked (for example, "Nice butt" or "I want your body")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
7. calling a student sexual names (for example, "slut," "tease," "whore")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
8. calling a student bad names (for example, "bitch")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
9. making sexual remarks about a student to others (for example, saying to others that a student has a "hot body")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
10. spreading sexual rumors about a student	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
11. calling a student a name for a homosexual (e.g., "fag" or "dyke") to insult him/her	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
12. saying things to put a student down because (s)he was male or female (for example, said he can't do something because he's a boy OR she can't do something because she's a girl)	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
13. making fun of a student for not acting enough like a boy/girl (for example, calling a student a "tomboy," "fag," "sissy")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3

14. making sexual remarks about a student's gender (for example, "girls are sluts" or "boys are dicks")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
15. giving a student any sexual attention (s)he did not want	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
16. giving a student sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
17. repeatedly asking a student out even after (s)he said "no"	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
18. hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student didn't go along with something sexual (for example, that (s)he would lose friends or rumors would be spread about him or her)	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
19. hinting or saying that something special would happen if a student went along with something sexual (for example, get a date or gain popularity)	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
20. cornering, leaning over or following a student	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
21. staring at a student or parts of a student's body	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
22. touching a student (for example, put an arm around his or her shoulder) in a way that it was clear made him or her uncomfortable	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
23. kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
24. pulling a student's clothing down or off	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
25. making forceful attempts to have sex with a student	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3

Read the directions below carefully!

The following questions ask about your experiences with other students AT Bath Middle School since school started this year.

As you did before, for each of the behaviors below please indicate HOW OFTEN things have happened to you in the past year and if you have experienced this at least once (circled 1 or 2), please indicate how much it UPSET you.

These questions refer to experiences you may or may not have had with other students AT Bath Middle School. Please CIRCLE your response.

Since school started this year has any other student(s)...

	How often?			How upset were you?			
	Never	Once	Twice or more	Not Upset	Slightly Upset	Moderat-ely Upset	Very Upset
1. showed, used, or handed sexual pictures stories or cartoons to you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
2. told sexual stories or jokes to you that you didn't want to hear	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
3. made sexual or obscene gestures to you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
4. said hurtful things about your body or how you looked (for example, "fat," "ugly")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
5. said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked (for example, sai you have a "nice butt" or "I want your body")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
6. called you sexual names (for example, "slut," "tease," "whore")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
7. called you a bad name (for example, "bitch")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
8. made sexual remarks about you to others (for example, told others you have a "hot body")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
9. spread sexual rumors about you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
10. called you a name for a homosexual (for example, "fag" or "dyke") to insult you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
11. said things to put you down because you were male or female (for example, said you can't do something because of your sex)	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
12. made fun of you for not acting like enough of a boy/girl (for example, called you a "tomboy," "fag," "sissy")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3

13. made sexual remarks about your gender (for example, "girls are sluts" or "boys are dicks")	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
14. given you sexual notes or letters that you didn't want	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
15. given you any sexual attention you did not want	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
16. stared at you or parts of your body	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
17. cornered, leaned over or followed you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
18. tried to stroke your leg or other body part when you didn't want him/her to	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
19. touched you (for example, put an arm around your shoulder) in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
20. kissed or hugged you when you did no want it	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
21. pulled your clothing down or off	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
22. kept asking you out even after you sai "no"	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
23. hinted or said that something special would happen if you went along with something sexual (for example, get a date or gain popularity)	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
24. hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual (for example, that you would lose friends or rumors would be spread about you)	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
25. treated you badly for refusing to have sex	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
26. made forceful attempts to have sex with you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
27. tried to get sex by pressuring or arguing with you, but did NOT succeed	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
28. had sex with you without your consent or against your will	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3
29. sexually assaulted you	0	1	2+ →	0	1	2	3

Go on to the next page...

Please read the list of behaviors below.

- Wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures
- Showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to other student(s)
- Making sexual or obscene gestures at a student(s)
- Telling sexual stories or jokes that the other student(s) clearly didn't want to hear
- Saying sexual things to others
- Saying hurtful things about a student's body or how (s)he looked (for example, calling a student "fat", "flat-chested")
- Saying sexually explicit things about another student's body or how (s)he looked (for example, saying "nice butt" or "I want your body")
- Calling a student(s) sexual names (e.g., slut, easy)
- Making sexual remarks about a student(s) to others (for example, saying to others that a student has a "hot body")
- Spreading sexual rumors about a student(s)
- Calling a student(s) an offensive name for a homosexual (for example, fag, dyke) to insult him/her
- Saying things to put a student(s) down because (s)he was male or female (for example, saying (s)he shouldn't be doing something because of his or her sex)
- Making sexual remarks about a student's gender (for example, "all girls are sluts" or "all boys are dicks")
- Giving a student(s) sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want
- Giving a student(s) any sexual attention (s)he did not want
- Repeatedly asking a student(s) out even after (s)he said "no"
- Hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student(s) didn't go along with something sexual (for example, that (s)he would lose friendships or rumors would be spread about him or her)
- Hinting or saying that something special would happen if a student(s) went along with something sexual (for example, get a date or gain popularity)
- Cornering, leaning over or following another student(s)
- Staring at a student(s) or parts of a student's body
- Touching a student(s) (for example, put an arm around your shoulder) in a way that it was clear made him/her feel uncomfortable
- Kissing or hugging a student(s) when (s)he did not want it
- Pulling a student's clothing down or off
- Making forceful attempts to have sex with a student(s)

For the next set of questions, think about a time since school started this year you saw a student(s) doing one of these behaviors or something similar to another student(s) at Bath Middle School. It could be a time that you saw a student doing one or more of the behaviors on the list or a similar behavior not on the list.

We are interested in what you saw done to another student(s), not something that happened to you.

Pick the event that stands out most in your mind and try to remember as many details about this event as you can. Now answer the questions on the next page.

Please answer the following questions about what you saw happen to another student(s) since school started this year. Provide as much detail as you are able (you may write on the back of the page).

1. Please describe what you saw in as much detail as you remember.

For questions 2 through 7 please CIRCLE your response.

2.	Who was doing this behavior to the student(s):	Boy	Girl	Both
3.	How many students were doing this behavior to the student(s):	1	2	3+
4.	Who was this behavior done to:	Boy	Girl	Both
5.	How many people was this behavior done to:	1	2	3+

6. Where did this event happen (CIRCLE one):

Hallway	Recess
Classroom	Gym class
Cafeteria	Locker room
Bus	Other _____

7. Who else saw this event?

7. Did Other student(s) see it? No Yes
If Yes, how many students? 1 2 3+

8. Did Teacher(s) see it? No Yes
If Yes, how many teachers? 1 2 3+

9. Did Administrator(s) see it? No Yes
(for example principal, vice principal)
If Yes, how many administrators? 1 2 3+

Did Someone else (for example secretary, janitor, hall monitor) see it? Please describe below.

10. What did the people who saw it (including yourself) do in response to the incident (for example, ignored it, laughed, tried to stop it)? If you were not the only person who saw the incident, please write the position of the person with their response.

For example: Female cafeteria worker – tried to stop it,
Male student– tried to stop it,
Female teacher – ignored it,
I – laughed

11. What do you think of the way people responded to this incident?

12. To your knowledge, was this incident ever reported to school officials? No Yes

13. How do you feel about what you saw?

Go on to the next page...

Read the directions below carefully!

The next set of items list different behaviors, feelings, and ideas. For each behavior, feeling and idea, please indicate how much you have experienced it in the past month.

Specifically, please CIRCLE: 0 if you did "not at all" experience it
1 if you experienced it "a little"
2 if you experienced it "somewhat"
3 if you experienced it "quite a bit"
4 if you experienced it "extremely" or "a lot"

For each item listed below please indicate how much you have experienced it in the past month.

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Nervousness or shakiness inside	0	1	2	3	4
2. Faintness or dizziness	0	1	2	3	4
3. The idea that someone else can control your thoughts	0	1	2	3	4
4. Feeling others are to blame for most of your problems	0	1	2	3	4
5. Trouble remembering things	0	1	2	3	4
6. Feeling easily annoyed or irritated	0	1	2	3	4
7. Pains in heart or chest	0	1	2	3	4
8. Feeling afraid in open spaces	0	1	2	3	4
9. Thoughts of ending your life	0	1	2	3	4
10. Feeling that most people cannot be trusted	0	1	2	3	4
11. Trouble falling asleep	0	1	2	3	4
12. Suddenly scared for no reason	0	1	2	3	4
13. Temper outbursts that you could not control	0	1	2	3	4
14. Feeling lonely even when you are with people	0	1	2	3	4
15. Feeling like you can't get things done	0	1	2	3	4
16. Feeling lonely	0	1	2	3	4
17. Feeling blue	0	1	2	3	4
18. Feeling no interest in things	0	1	2	3	4
19. Feeling fearful	0	1	2	3	4
20. Your feelings being easily hurt	0	1	2	3	4
21. Feeling that people are unfriendly or dislike you	0	1	2	3	4
22. Feeling inferior to others	0	1	2	3	4
23. Nausea or upset stomach	0	1	2	3	4
24. Feeling you are watched or talked about by others	0	1	2	3	4
25. Loss of appetite	0	1	2	3	4
26. Having to check and double-check what you do	0	1	2	3	4

27. Difficulty making decisions	0	1	2	3	4
28. Feeling afraid to travel on buses, subways or trains	0	1	2	3	4
29. Trouble getting your breath	0	1	2	3	4
30. Hot or cold flashes	0	1	2	3	4
31. Having to avoid certain things, places, or activities because they frighten you	0	1	2	3	4
32. Your mind going blank	0	1	2	3	4
33. Numbness or tingling in parts of your body	0	1	2	3	4
34. The idea that you should be punished for your sins	0	1	2	3	4
35. Feeling hopeless about the future	0	1	2	3	4
36. Trouble concentrating	0	1	2	3	4
37. Feeling weak in parts of your body	0	1	2	3	4
38. Feeling tense or keyed up	0	1	2	3	4
39. Thoughts of death and dying	0	1	2	3	4
40. Having urges to beat, injure, or harm someone	0	1	2	3	4
41. Having urges to break or smash things	0	1	2	3	4
42. Feeling very self-conscious with others	0	1	2	3	4
43. Feeling uneasy in crowds	0	1	2	3	4
44. Never feeling close to another person	0	1	2	3	4
45. Feelings of terror or panic	0	1	2	3	4
46. Getting into frequent arguments	0	1	2	3	4
47. Feeling nervous when you are alone	0	1	2	3	4
48. Others not giving the credit you deserve to your achievements	0	1	2	3	4
49. Feeling so restless you could not sit still	0	1	2	3	4
50. Feelings of worthlessness	0	1	2	3	4
51. Feeling that people will take advantage of you if you let them	0	1	2	3	4
52. Feelings of guilt	0	1	2	3	4
53.The idea that something is wrong with your mind	0	1	2	3	4

Read the directions below carefully!

In this next section is a list of events that may or may not have happened to you since school started this year.

Please circle "yes" if the event described has happened to you since the school started this year or circle "no" if the event described has NOT happened to you since school started this year.

1. Your parents got divorced	Yes	No
2. You experienced the death of a family member or someone close to you	Yes	No
3. You were involved in a life-threatening accident or illness	Yes	No
4. You were involved in a fire, flood, or natural disaster	Yes	No
5. You witnessed someone being badly injured or killed	Yes	No
6. You were seriously physically attacked or assaulted	Yes	No
7. You were threatened with a weapon, held captive, or kidnapped	Yes	No
8. You suffered a great shock because one of the events on this list happened to someone close to you.	Yes	No
9. You experienced any other significant event in your life not on this list that was upsetting to you.	Yes	No

Go on to the next page...

Please tell me a little about yourself.

Age: _____ years

What grade are you in?: _____

What is your gender?: _____

What is your Ethnic Background (Please check your particular ethnic group(s). Check as many categories as apply)?:

_____ White/ Caucasian
_____ Black/ African American
_____ Latino/a/ Hispanic
_____ American Indian/ Native American
_____ Asian/Pacific Islander
_____ Other (Please Describe
_____)

What are your grades like?

On your last report card, how many...

A's/Excellent did you get? _____
B's/Very Good did you get? _____
C's/Good did you get? _____
D's/Satisfactory did you get? _____
E's/F's/Poor did you get? _____

You are now done with the questionnaire!

Please put it back in the envelope with the assent form and
sit quietly until you are given further instructions.

Thank you!

Appendix B

Tables: Missing Data for the Direct and Witnessing Sexual Harassment Degree of Upset Measures

Table 18

Number of Participants for whom the Direct Sexual Harassment Degree of Upset Questions were Not Applicable

Scale Items	Not Applicable
1. showed, used, or handed sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to you	119
2. told sexual stories or jokes to you that you didn't want to hear	110
3. made sexual or obscene gestures to you	111
4. said hurtful things about your body or how you looked	69
5. said sexually explicit things about your body or how you looked	105
6. called you sexual names	107
7. called you a bad name	53
8. made sexual remarks about you to others	106
9. spread sexual rumors about you	125
10. called you a name for a homosexual to insult you	103
11. said things to put you down because you were male or female	116
12. made fun of you for not acting like enough of a boy/girl	121
13. made sexual remarks about your gender	129
14. given you sexual notes or letters that you didn't want	149
15. given you any sexual attention you did not want	147
16. stared at you or parts of your body	102
17. cornered, leaned over or followed you	127
18. tried to stroke your leg or other body part when you didn't want him/her to	141
19. touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable	136
20. kissed or hugged you when you did not want it	152
21. pulled your clothing down or off	151
22. kept asking you out even after you said "no"	85
23. hinted or said that something special would happen if you went along with something sexual	146
24. hinted or said something bad would happen if you didn't go along with something sexual	153
25. treated you badly for refusing to have sex	155
26. made forceful attempts to have sex with you	149
27. tried to get sex by pressuring or arguing with you, but did NOT succeed	149
28. had sex with you without your consent or against your will	160
29. sexually assaulted you	148

Table 19

Number of Participants for Whom the Witnessing Sexual Harassment Degree of Upset Questions Were Not Applicable

Scale Items	Not Applicable
1. wearing T-shirts or hats that had sexually explicit words or pictures	99
2. showing, using, or handing out sexual pictures, stories or cartoons to other student	114
4. telling sexual stories or jokes that the other student(s) clearly didn't want to hear	88
5. saying hurtful things about a student body or how (s)he looked	19
6. saying sexually explicit things about a student body or how(s)he looked	65
7. calling a student sexual names	35
8. calling a student bad names	23
9. making sexual remarks about a student to others	45
10. spreading sexual rumors about a student	82
11. calling a student a name for a homosexual to insult him/her	28
12. saying things to put a student down because (s)he was male or female	77
13. making fun of a student for not acting enough like a boy/girl	46
14. making sexual remarks about a student's gender	81
15. giving a student any sexual attention (s)he did not want	116
16. giving a student sexual notes or letters that (s)he didn't want	124
17. repeatedly asking a student out even after (s)he said "no"	53
18. hinting or saying something bad would happen if a student didn't go along with something sexual	122
19. hinting or saying that something special would happen if a student went along with something sexual	124
20. cornering, leaning over or following a student	105
21. staring at a student or parts of a student's body	63
22. touching a student in a way that it was clear made him or her uncomfortable	108
23. kissing or hugging a student when (s)he did not want it	141
24. pulling a student's clothing down or off	105
25. making forceful attempts to have sex with a student	151

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