FACTORS RELATED TO THE PERCEIVED
EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceived educational experiences of Newfoundland junior high school students to determine how gender, age, academic ability, grade level, grade retention, parental education, parental occupation, and area of residence related to those experiences.

The research sample was 676 students in grades 7 (34%), 8 (31%), and 9 (35%). Urban and rural areas were represented equally, and 45% were male and 55% female. They represented 41 classes, 14 schools, and nine school board districts.

The instruments used were a four part student survey questionnaire, and a teacher form on which student academic ability and performance were reported. The internal consistency of the student form was .92.

The Statistical Social Science Computer Program, SPSSX, was used to analyze data collected. The procedures employed were: (a) one-way analysis of variance followed by the Student Newman-Keuls post hoc multiple comparisons procedure, (b) generation of a correlation matrix, (c) stepwise multiple regression analysis, and (d) descriptive statistics.

The factors found to influence students' perceived educational experiences, as identified by research questions posed, were: (a) academic ability, (b) parental education, (c) gender, (d) age, and (e) area of residence. The factors found to have little influence were: (a) grade level, (b) grade

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retention, and (c) parental occupation. A need for changes to school climate, teaching methods, extracurricular offerings, and other areas for school improvement were identified by descriptive statistics' procedures. Significant relationships among aspects of students' perceived educational experiences, as represented by categories of the dependent variable, also were identified using multiple regression analysis.

Findings of the study resulted in 20 recommendations for practice in junior high schools, three recommendations for policy, and suggested eight areas for further research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents the rationale for and significance of the study. The eight research questions investigated are stated and key terms used in the study are defined. Lastly, generalizability of the findings is suggested.

In the study a representative sample of Newfoundland school students in grades 7, 8, and 9 were surveyed to determine how gender, age, academic ability, grade level, grade retention, parental education, parental occupation, and area of residence related to educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students.

Rationale

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students and to determine how gender, age, academic ability, grade level, grade retention, parental education, parental occupation, and area of residence related to those experiences. Martin (1985a) maintained that there is little empirical evidence of students' educational experiences and that " ... the student perspective on schooling is a neglected topic in educational research in

general, and in Newfoundland and Labrador in particular" (p. 15). Wehlage and Rutter (1986) further focused on the need to consider how school-related factors influenced students' educational success with a view to establishing a foundation for school-based reform. They explained the importance of gaining further insight into students' school experiences in order to identify areas in which intervention and change are necessary to ensure a high student success rate. The Department of Education (1990b) also emphasized the importance of meeting the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador students by providing a learning climate in which all students may develop to their potential.

Murray (1938, cited in Anderson, 1982) hypothesized that people respond differently to the salient features of an environment according to their individual needs which influence their perceptions. Halpin and Croft (1963, cited in Anderson, 1982), in their research of school climate, assumed that perception controls people's responses and suggested that the consensus of participants may constitute a good measure of school effectiveness. Martin (1985b) also applied these ideas to education and explained that because the efforts of schooling are intended to benefit students, and because students' subjective interpretations underlie their plans and their actions, it is important that educators better understand how students perceive the schooling process. If the educational system is to more effectively help them develop and

learn to their potential, it is necessary to understand and to consider the student perspective (Martin, 1985b; O'Reilly, 1989). Martin further maintained that different aspects of schooling have meaning for students which is developed and modified through interaction within schools. Therefore, students' experiences and subjective interpretations are important determiners of their level of attachment to school.

This study focused on the education of junior high school students through their related experiences. Information about these experiences was obtained by surveying a representative sample from that group. Thus, the information presented is current, appropriate, and relevant to outlining and meeting students' needs for educational experiences which are most beneficial to them.

In Newfoundland and Labrador the incidence of early school leaving is high, and it is generally accepted that students who leave school before graduating do not benefit fully from the educational system. The Department of Education (1989) showed the dropout rate as ranging from 35 to 40%, and estimated that in each of the previous five years approximately 2,000 students limited their future options by leaving school early; of those, 19% had completed grade 9 and 35% had completed less than grade 9. Furthermore, the Department of Education (1991a) showed that the numbers of students leaving early were not declining; a total of 1,976 left early during the 1989-90 school year.

Research with early school leavers in the United States has shown that students have often reported factors in the school experience, particularly receiving poor grades, boredom, and not liking school as reasons for leaving (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Tidwell, 1988). Similarly, in Newfoundland and Labrador many students reported boredom, others viewed school as "... a waste of time..." (Martin, 1985a, p. 149), and some planned to quit; Martin further noted that a shortage of extracurricular activities resulted in boredom for some students. The reasons reported most frequently for early school leaving among Newfoundland and Labrador students have been lack of interest, difficulty with the academic program, and academic failure ("Leaving Early," 1984; Department of Education, 1989).

Research has also shown that retention--the practice of requiring students to repeat grades, is strongly associated with early leaving. Keeping (1988), in a British Columbia study, found that 75% of those who left school early had repeated subjects and grades. Traditionally in Newfoundland and Labrador very high numbers of students have been required to repeat grades. Furthermore, "Leaving Early" (1984) found that approximately 70% of early leavers were at least one grade behind for age, and that students were most likely to experience failure in grades 7 and 8. The Department of Education (1990a) also reported that Annual General Returns showed that approximately 6,700 kindergarten to grade 9

students had repeated at least one grade in the three school years between September of 1987 and June of 1990. In addition, statistics from the last two of those years showed that approximately 65% of those students were retained at the junior high level, and that approximately 68% of them were male.

Other factors related to early school leaving have included an absence of definitive educational goals such as plans for post-secondary education (Fisher, 1986), limited involvement in extra-curricular activities, disruptive behavior, above average or below average intellectual ability (Florida Department of Education, 1986, cited in Department of Education, 1989), learning difficulties necessitating remedial assistance (Keeping, 1988), different learning style preferences particularly those involving variety and active participation (Gadwa & Griggs, 1985), pregnancy (Department of Education, 1987, 1989, 1991a; "Leaving Early," 1984), to secure employment (Department of Education, 1991a), and low socio-economic family background indicated by low income and low levels of parental education (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986).

Tseng (1972, cited in Wiseman, 1982) found that as well as having lower socio-economic family backgrounds early leavers were less likely to receive parental encouragement regarding their education than were other students. Keeping (1988) also found that parental involvement in students' education, family cohesiveness, and family income were related to early leaving. Keeping noted that: (a) only 20% of parents of early leavers

attended parent-teacher interviews, (b) only 24% of early leavers lived with their natural parents, and (c) only 33% of early leavers came from high income family backgrounds, compared with 52% of stay-ins. Ekstrom et al. (1986) also noted that early leavers tended to have family backgrounds with weak educational support systems. The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education (1990b) emphasized the importance of ensuring that students, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who are often losers in the current system, receive the maximum benefit from schooling. Holland and Andre (1987) further contended that schools can contribute to the development of each adolescent through extracurricular activities, and that such activities appear to be particularly important for students from smaller communities and from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Williams (1972, cited in Shave, 1984) found that parents, followed by teachers, most strongly influenced the educational goals of students. Furthermore, "Leaving Early" (1984) findings indicated that although the majority of Newfoundland and Labrador parents disapproved of students' decisions to leave school early, both the family and the school were more likely to encourage males than females to stay. Two possible factors suggested for this were the traditional view that education is more important for males than for females, and that students who became pregnant were often not encouraged to stay in, or to return to, school.

In addition, gender appeared to be interrelated with area of residence in influencing early leaving among Newfoundland and Labrador school students. "Leaving Early" (1984) found that students in rural areas were more likely to leave early than were students in urban areas, and the Department of Education (1989) also noted that area of residence was related to early leaving. In addition, the rate of teenage pregnancy has been higher in Newfoundland and Labrador than in the rest of Canada, and the incidence has been found to be even higher among teenagers in rural areas of the province (Krishnamoni & Jain, 1983; Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990, cited in Younghusband, 1990).

However, although teenage pregnancy accounted for approximately 11% of the Newfoundland and Labrador female early leavers during the 1986-87 school year, of the total number of students who have left early 14% ("Leaving Early," 1984) to 20% (Department of Education, 1989) more have been male than female. In addition, the Department of Education (1991a) reported that of the students who left early during the 1989-90 school year, 1,275 (65%) were male and 701 (35%) were female. Furthermore, when teachers were asked to identify potential school dropouts at the grade 6 and 7 levels, they identified male students almost three times more often than female students (O'Reilly, 1989). These statistics indicated significant differences in the educational experiences of male and female school students.

In the United States nearly one half of all early leavers and more than one half of male early leavers reported school-related reasons for leaving; males reported disliking school more often than females did, and were more likely to be suspended or expelled (Rumberger, 1987). As well, male students' perceptions of school life have been found to differ significantly from those of female students at the grade 6 and 7 levels in Newfoundland, with male students' views of teachers, school discipline, school work, and school success being more negative (O'Reilly, 1989).

Gender differences in the perceived educational experiences of students can be attributed, at least in part, to socialization into traditional sex roles which have prescribed different expectations for male and female people. These gender-specific expectations pertain not only to activities considered appropriate but also to personal and social characteristics (Spence & Helmreich, 1978, cited in Crockett, 1991; Bem, 1974, 1981, cited in Crockett, 1991). The traditionally accepted male sex role included the attributes of independence, high activity, competitiveness, and aggressiveness which have been similar to the acting out domain of school behavior and inconsistent with student role expectations; whereas the traditionally accepted female sex role included the attributes of cooperativeness, dependence, passivity, and conformity which have been similar to and consistent with traditional student role expectations (Brophy

& Good, 1974, cited in Kedar-Voivodas, 1983; Lee & Kedar-Voivodas, 1977, cited in Kedar-Voivodas, 1983). Furthermore, Crockett (1991) cited research showing that gender-specific attributes have generally been reinforced both at home and at school.

Consequently, role conflict, resulting from socialization into conventional sex roles on the one hand and the expectations of schooling on the other, appears to be more problematic for male students than for female students (Kedar-Voivodas, 1983). Based on a review of relevant literature, Kedar-Voivodas (1983) concluded that "...interactions between teachers' attitudes and school and sex roles suggest that school experiences are more negative for boys than for girls" (p. 432). The findings of Bulcock, Whitt, and Beebe (1991) indicated that male students in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador also found their schooling experiences less satisfying than did female students. Therefore, it is important to further identify areas of the educational process that are perceived to be significantly different by male students with a view to providing them with more positive experiences, possibly leading to an increased school retention rate.

Students' school experiences also appear to be related to their ability to perform and achieve in academic areas such that those who do not have an aptitude for academic tasks receive lower performance expectations and less positive

feedback (Weinstein, Marshall, Sharp, & Botkin, 1987, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989). Based on a review of relevant literature, Stipek and Mac Iver (1989) concluded that as children progress through the grades, student-teacher interaction becomes more impersonal and that more emphasis is placed on individual student differences in performance. Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult for students of average and below-average ability to maintain high levels of self-confidence. Furthermore, students' perceptions of ability and competence appear to be influenced by institutional practices related to activity type, evaluation practices, and ability grouping (Stipek & Daniels, 1988, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989).

Weinstein et al. (1987, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989) found that during the elementary school years students realized that they were treated differently depending on ability because high ability students were less likely to receive help and more likely to be given privileges, freedom, and opportunities to participate. Helton and Oakland (1977, cited in Kedar-Voivodas, 1983) found that teachers were most strongly attached to conforming students of high ability; similarly, Kedar-Voivodas concluded that in terms of student-teacher relationships, teachers were more attached to students who showed above average achievement and who exhibited good work skills and attitudes. Conversely, teachers were more likely to be indifferent toward low-ability and low-achieving students,

and less likely to interact with them. Wehlage and Rutter (1986) further noted that it is not clear to what extent characteristics such as educational aspiration, school attitudes, and self-esteem are intrinsic and how much they are influenced by school experiences. It is, however, likely that they are interrelated such that the amount and type of assistance and feedback provide to students by teachers influence how they perceive their school experiences. In addition, Tom, Cooper, and McGraw (1984) cited research showing that teacher expectations significantly influence student performance.

Since April 1, 1987 the legal school-leaving age in Newfoundland and Labrador has been 16, but most early leavers "...become alienated and drop out psychologically long before they are able to do so physically" (Department of Education, 1989, p. 16). The final break usually results from the cumulative interaction of many factors over an extended period. Therefore, in order for educators to better facilitate students' completion of the secondary school program, the related factors particularly those pertaining to educational experiences from the student perspective, need further investigation.

Herr and Cramer (1992) recognized that in addition to influencing educational achievement students' educational experiences influence career awareness, exploration, and planning, areas which potentially either limit or enhance

future options. Thus, Herr and Cramer emphasized school based developmental career education programs; they pointed out that to benefit all students such programs must be continuous and cumulative, so implementation before and during the junior high school years is necessary. Such programs are particularly important to young people who permanently remove themselves from formal education through early leaving. The changing work environment, particularly due to increased and sophisticated technology, which requires more highly educated and skilled workers, limits the opportunities of early school leavers to secure meaningful employment and adequate incomes (Rumberger, 1987). Thus, young people need to fully understand the importance and reality of the workplace, and if potential early leavers were to view a career goal as a purpose of continued schooling it would likely serve as an added incentive to stay (Fisher, 1986; Rumberger, 1987).

Career education activities are important during the junior high school years because students at this stage of development are generally liberal in their attitudes toward occupational choices (Labour Canada, 1986). In addition, Fisher (1986) found that the majority of Newfoundland and Labrador students who completed the high school program made the decision to pursue post-secondary education or training before senior high school, and that females were more definite than males about their plans to finish high school and to attend post-secondary institutions.

Early career education appears to be particularly important for females. Herr and Cramer (1992) cited research indicating that females mature at a faster rate than males in their attitudes toward career choice. In addition, while females comprise over 40% of the paid Canadian work force (Labour Canada, 1986), more than half of them are employed in clerical, sales, and service jobs which are characterized by monotony, low pay, and little recognition (De Muth Allensworth & Byrne, 1982; Robertson, 1988). Women who work for pay in Canada continue to earn substantially less, on average, than men; approximately 32% less in 1990 (Statistics Canada, 1990). This is largely because men continue to dominate the more prestigious and highly paid occupational fields including the industrial trades, business, science, and politics (Tyler, McLean, & Yolande, 1985; Robertson, 1988).

Although young people report a belief in equal opportunities for women and men, as well as equal pay for equal work (Posterski & Bibby, 1989), their beliefs do not reflect the reality of the workplace or their own career aspirations and choices. As Crockett (1991) noted "apparently, the importance attached to sex-role adherence is strong enough to override the abstract knowledge that many activities are appropriate for both genders" (p. 1012). In addition, research has shown that women, including those with full-time paid employment, continue to shoulder much more than an equal share of the unpaid, yet very important, work and responsibility

associated with child care and a home (Fredian, 1981; Oskarsdottir, 1988; Posterski & Bibby, 1989).

Students continue to enter occupational areas traditional for their gender, reflecting sex-role stereotyping--a pattern that is reinforced by the types of courses that they enrol in (Department of Education, 1991a; Fisher, 1986; Lips & Colwill, 1988; Oskarsdottir, 1988; Robertson, 1988). Valli (1986, cited in Boak & Boak, 1988) also noted that male and female students study substantially different curricula, especially at the high school level, which contributes to the reproduction of a division of labor based on gender. Statistics for the 1990-91 school year, as discussed in chapter II, showed that with little exception this was the case for Newfoundland and Labrador (Department of Education, 1991a). Thus, career education programs for junior high school students must help them to understand the importance of curricular choices to their future options (Herr & Cramer, 1992).

In addition to typically selecting traditional occupational choices, Baker (1985, cited in Lips & Colwill, 1988) found that teenage females were less likely than teenage males to express confidence that they would reach their occupational goals. As well, the reported career aspirations of female students were often not followed by action needed to achieve the desired goals (Labour Canada, 1986; Robertson, 1988). Of special concern was the low female participation rate in the sciences and related occupational fields because as

Robertson (1988) noted, scientific literacy is "... vital to students' participation in the workplace of the future" (p. 1). It is also noteworthy that in some parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in rural areas, all students lose out because some subjects, including advanced mathematics, physics, chemistry, and computer science are not available (Riggs, 1987). Students so affected not only lose career opportunities but their potential to contribute to society is limited as well (Robertson, 1988).

In addition, research has shown males to be more confident of their abilities in mathematics and in the sciences than females. Damon (1991), for example, cited research showing that adolescent females perceived mathematics as being more difficult than did adolescent males, and that they had lower expectations for success, even when they performed equally well. A Newfoundland and Labrador study showed that although 88% of the female early adolescents surveyed felt that mathematics was the most important subject, 39% of them expected to fail it (Committee on Young Women's Issues, 1987).

Furthermore, King, Beazley, Warren, Hankins, Robertson, and Radford (1989) found that, in each age group surveyed, fewer females than males reported confidence in themselves, and that significantly fewer females than males reported satisfaction with their physical attributes. Damon (1991) and Duke-Duncan (1991) cited research showing that personal appearance strongly influences adolescent self-esteem, with

physical appearance tending to be less problematic for males than for females. Therefore, female students who perceive themselves as falling short of the unrealistic female ideal portrayed in popular media likely have lower overall levels of self-esteem and self-confidence than their male peers (Biehler & Hudson, 1986). In addition, this apparent lack of confidence among female students may be an important underlying reason for their lower participation rate in mathematics and in the sciences (Robertson, 1988). Lack of encouragement and positive feedback are also likely contributing factors.

Frey and Ruble (1987) found that among primary and elementary school students females were more likely than males to make critical comments about their performances and to contribute their perceived failures to ability. In addition, for students of both sexes the likelihood of expressing self-criticism was found to increase with grade and the likelihood of expressing self-congratulatory comments to decrease with grade (Frey & Ruble, 1987). Marini (1978, cited in Crockett, 1991) further found that, whereas the educational aspirations of males tended to increase during the high school years, the educational aspirations of females tended to decrease. After examining several studies Delamont (1980, cited in Boak & Boak, 1988) concluded that females were more likely than males to see success as having negative consequences and to attribute success to luck rather than to their own abilities and efforts.

These findings support the idea that even though more female students report positive future plans, and fewer females than males leave school early, young females are more likely to internalize feelings of inadequacy and passivity eventually leading to choices and actions, or failure to choose and to act, which result in their occupying a disadvantaged position in society (Robertson, 1988). Smith (1987, cited in Robertson, 1988) further contended that because of lower levels of self-confidence females are less willing than males to take risks.

The well-established tendency of females to fear success appears to be strongly influenced by a conflict between the need to experience educational and career success and the need to be accepted socially, particularly by members of the opposite sex (Biehler & Hudson, 1986). Biehler and Hudson maintained that the number of young females whose educational and career aspirations are higher than their expectations is evidence of this. In addition, Overton and Meehan (1982) explained "learned helplessness" often found among females as a perceived lack of control over response outcomes resulting in lower performance on achievement tasks, an idea that is related to Crandall's locus-of-control theory; it explains achievement in terms of the extent to which people perceive themselves to be in control of events and outcomes as a result of their own behavior (Shaffer, 1989). The resulting expectations of success and failure help to determine achievement, and those perceptions of ability to succeed are related to socialization

experiences. Therefore, because schoo.s play an important role in socialization, it is important to determine which, if any, of students' educational experiences may contribute to expectations of low levels of achievement or failure, independent of ability; for example, as with lower expectations of mathematics achievement among females.

Robertson (1990) claimed that little has been done to address the concerns and the realities of adolescent females. In addition, research has indicated that schools have supported and promoted traditional gender roles through such aspects of schooling as disciplinary practices, reinforcement patterns, teacher expectations, student-teacher interaction, and sex-biased language (Allen-Meares, 1982; LaFrance, 1985). In Newfoundland and Labrador, for example, female students have reported that teachers expected less from them and were less likely to spend time helping them than male students (Committee on Young Women's Issues, 1987). Croll (1985) reasoned that male students received more teacher attention on average because a higher proportion of them had been identified as having learning and behavioral difficulties. However, when special needs were accounted for, some male students still received much more teacher attention than other students, a pattern not evident for female students.

It appears that female school students are "... often simply ignored, neither exposed to the glow of praise nor the opportunity to live with and grow from criticism" (Robertson,

1988, p. 9).   Sadker and Sadker (1986) found that female students received significantly less praise, remediation, and criticism than male students.   Furthermore, although male students were eight times as likely to demand a teacher's attention by calling out, female students were more likely to be admonished for doing so.   Sadker and Sadker claimed that schools train males to be assertive, and females to be passive --to be spectators of the action rather than participants. This detracts from their drive to succeed in educational and occupational areas where attributes associated with the traditionally accepted male sex role such as confidence, independence, competitiveness, and assertiveness, sometimes bordering on aggression, are important indicators and determiners of success (Fredian, 1981). Thus, the traditionally accepted female sex role, consistent with accepted and valued school behavior, may facilitate the retention of female students in the school system, but appears to limit the extent to which they reach their potential, particularly in the world of paid work.

In addition, area of residence and socio-economic background appear to contribute to and influence students' perceptions of their suitability for particular careers.   In their pilot study of Newfoundland and Labrador female high school students, Boak and Boak (1989) found that students from urban communities felt suited for higher socio-economic status careers than those from rural communities.   Students from rural

communities also chose from a narrower range of career options
when considering suitability, possibly due to limited course
offerings and to limited exposure to occupations in their
everyday lives. Crocker (1989) found that students in urban
areas were also more likely than students in rural areas to
have well educated parents who were employed in high status
occupations. Labour Canada (1986) reported a significant
positive correlation between the socio-economic level of the
father's occupation and the first career choice of both male
and female students with the relationship being three times
higher for males. Auster and Auster (1981, cited in Wiseman,
1982) further proposed that non-traditional career preferences
of females were associated with high socio-economic background
and other factors including small family size, two parents who
were occupational role models, and parental support of career
preference.

Career education programs need to prepare students for
careers based on suitability and interest independent of
incidental factors such as gender, socio-economic status, and
area of residence. If students are to be provided with equal
opportunities to contribute to and to benefit from society, it
is important that educators continue to question and work to
change the attitudes and social structures that perpetuate the
status quo. As Allen-Meares (1982) pointed out, the school is
a key institution through which socialization takes place
because it touches the lives of almost every person during the

most formative years. The school complements the family and instills values, skills, and roles that young people take to adulthood; therefore, it can be an important instrument of positive change.

Significance

The educational experiences of students influence the types of adults that they will be and the extent to which they will benefit from and contribute to society (Department of Education, 1974; Darcy, 1987; Martin, 1985a). Therefore, schooling must be changed to more effectively meet their needs. Possible areas for change leading to more beneficial experiences for junior high school students include student participation, curriculum content, teaching methods, teacher expectations, feedback provided, extracurricular offerings, parental involvement, and the overall atmosphere of schools.

This study investigated whether there were significant differences for gender, age, academic ability, grade level, grade retention, parental education, parental occupation, and area of residence influencing students' perceived educational experiences during the junior high school years that may relate to patterns of student behavior and to research findings previously discussed. The goal was to identify, outline, and discuss factors contributing to students' perceived educational experiences which influence the extent to which students

achieve to their potential, and to make suggestions based on those findings.

Information obtained by the study, integrated with information from current literature, contributes to a better understanding of educational experiences from the student perspective. It presents a picture of the current experiences of junior high school students and identifies areas of need related to students' reported perceptions, experiences, and preferences. The findings obtained and suggestions made contribute to knowledge which may lead to change providing students with more positive educational experiences and therefore, more effectively meeting their needs.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Are there significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by male and female junior high school students?

2. Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students of different ages?

3. Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have different levels of academic ability?

4. Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9 school students?

5. Are educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have been retained in a grade, or grades, significantly different from those of students who have not been retained?

6. Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different levels of parental education?

7. Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different parental occupational areas?

8. Are there significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who live in urban areas and those who live in rural areas?

Definition of Terms

<u>Gender</u>: Male, Female

<u>Age</u>: Present age of student.

<u>Academic Ability</u>:   Student   ability   to   achieve academically.

<u>Grade Level</u>: Present grade placement of student.

<u>Grade Retention</u>: The practice of requiring students to repeat school grades.

<u>Parental Education</u>: Highest level of education attained by students' parents.

<u>Parental Occupation</u>:   Current occupational areas of students' parents.

<u>Area of Residence</u>: Urban, Rural.

<u>Urban</u>:   The   Department   of   Education   (1991a)   used Statistics Canada information which classified urban areas as Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA), Census Agglomerations (CA), and other communities of 5,000 and over.

<u>Rural</u>:   The   Department   of   Education   (1991a)   used Statistics Canada information which classified rural areas as communities   of   less   than   5,000   which   were   not   census subdivisions of a CMA or a CA.

<u>Educational Experiences</u>: Students' reported experiences in and perceptions of their educational environment.

<u>Junior High School Students</u>:   Students registered in grades 7, 8, and 9.

<u>Early School Leavers</u>: Students who withdrew from school without completing the senior high program (presently grade 12 in Newfoundland and Labrador).

<u>Sex Roles</u>: Differential expectations held for males and females in a given society (Crockett, 1991).

Generalizability of Findings

This study sampled grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9 students in urban and rural schools in Newfoundland. The results can likely be generalized to the population of students in Newfoundland and Labrador with similar characteristics.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In order to conduct a study of the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students and to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the findings, the examiner found it necessary to research literature related to the development and characteristics of early adolescents as well as literature related to different aspects of students' educational experiences. Literature related to decision making was also considered. The researcher deemed it important to consider students' perceived educational experiences in view of their development as persons.

This chapter presents a review of literature related to early adolescent development and a review of literature related to educational experiences. A brief review of literature related to decision making is also presented.

Literature related to early adolescent development is presented first under the following headings: (a) introduction, (b) physical development, (c) cognitive development, (d) personality development, and (e) social development. Literature related to junior high school students' educational experiences is presented next under the following headings: (a) transition to junior high school, (b)

curriculum content and instruction, (c) academic achievement, (d) school rules and discipline, (e) career education, (f) sexuality education, and (g) extracurricular participation. This is followed by literature related to decision making.

Early Adolescent Development

The Meaning of Adolescence

Adolescence refers to the developmental period of transition between childhood and early adulthood, and early adolescence to the period covering the ages of approximately 10 to 15 which usually coincide with the onset of puberty and the junior high school years (Santrock, 1988). However, as Proefrock (1981) pointed out, although children grow into biological adulthood, adolescence as a period of human development is a psychological concept and a relatively new phenomenon that is still nonexistent in some parts of the world, particularly those which are not industrialized. Thus, adolescence is to an extent imposed by the culture in which a person lives.

In industrialized areas of the world, adolescence is viewed as a distinct stage of life with which certain developmental tasks are associated. According to Robert J. Havighurst (1972, cited in Hooker, 1991) the eight developmental tasks of adolescence arising from the interaction

among maturation, social processes, and the personal values and goals of individuals are:

1. Achievement of new and more mature relations with peers of both sexes.

2. Adoption of a socially approved masculine or feminine role.

3. Acceptance of one's physical self.

4. Economic and emotional independence from parents and other significant adults.

5. Preparation for marriage and family life.

6. Selection of and preparation for a suitable occupation.

7. Acquisition of a socially acceptable set of personal values to guide behavior.

8. Acceptance and display of socially acceptable behavior.

Adolescence is a period of continuous change with considerable variability both between and within individuals, and during the early adolescence period new abilities are acquired which facilitate children's approaching autonomy (Santrock, 1986). However, as Hill (1983, cited in Santrock, 1988) pointed out, society tends to stereotype adolescents by emphasizing their rebelliousness and deviance thus penalizing them to the extent that the diversity of their thoughts, feelings, and actions are often overlooked when, in fact, many of them are "... plugging along efficiently and competently

toward mature adulthood" (p. 505). C. A. Harris (1986) also noted the importance of focusing on adolescents' strengths rather than on their weaknesses; strengths which include energy, adaptability, and resilience in times of crises.

Physical Development

Physical change occurs rapidly during pubertal development and, as Tanner (1970, cited in Semon Dubas, 1991) noted, there is greater variability among the physical growth characteristics of adolescents than among individuals of any other age group. Physical growth and the beginning of sexual maturation result in the adolescent becoming more adult-like in body form and facial appearance (Biehler & Hudson, 1986).

Females reach puberty earlier than males, on average, with the average age of sexual maturity for females in North America being 12.5 and the average age for males being 14 (Biehler & Hudson, 1986). Physical changes during early adolescence include a growth spurt that lasts for approximately two years, and occurs approximately two years earlier, on average, in females than in males (Santrock, 1986); the female growth spurt begins at about age 10.5 and the male growth spurt begins at about age 12.5 (Tanner, 1970, cited in Santrock, 1986). However, the changes associated with puberty vary among individuals to the extent that, given a group of children of the same chronological age, some appear to have almost

completed the pubertal stage while others appear to have not begun (Santrock, 1986).

Cognitive Development

The cognitive development of early adolescents involves increased intellectual capacity and thought processes which Jean Piaget (1969, cited in Santrock, 1986) termed the formal operational stage. During this stage the move away from thought based on concrete experience begins, and the ability to think abstractly and to reason logically, particularly in the area of verbal problem solving, starts to develop. A second important aspect of cognitive development, social cognition, which involves the use of more advanced thought processes to interact with people and organizations also begins during the early adolescent period (Santrock, 1986).

It is crucial that educators of early adolescents understand the characteristics of abstract thinking. They include: (a) hypothetical-deductive reasoning, enabling young people to develop hypotheses about solutions to problems, to test them using carefully chosen questions, and to decide on solutions; (b) contrary-to-fact reasoning, involving the use of imagination to counter reality; (c) idealism, enabling young people to consider ideals and to compare themselves and others with standards; and (d) an understanding of metaphor, enabling young people to use symbols and the abstract meanings of words to make comparisons when thinking about people and situations

(Santrock, 1986). As those new intellectual abilities develop young people become capable of dealing with more complex situations and tasks.

As in the area of physical development, however, there appear to be individual differences in cognitive development such that while many early adolescents have begun using formal-operational thought processes, others are still primarily concrete thinkers (Santrock, 1986). Biehler and Hudson (1986) pointed out that analyses of Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggest that the transition from concrete to abstract thinking is gradual rather than abrupt, and that cognition is influenced by educational and cultural factors.

Social cognition, the second important aspect of cognitive development, includes: (a) the monitoring of social thoughts, (b) egocentricism, and (c) generation of a theory of personality (Santrock, 1986). Early adolescents begin to think about people and organizations and to monitor social thoughts by checking impressions and appraising incoming information. They become more aware of what others are thinking and doing; such perspective taking enables young people to recognize that others have differing views from theirs and to consider those views (Santrock, 1988). David Elkind (1967, cited in C. A. Harris, 1986) noted that early adolescents also begin to realize the discrepancy between reality and the ideal which often results in their tendency to be critical of people and of social institutions.

Elkind (1968, cited in Biehler & Hudson, 1986) described adolescent egocentrism as a tendency of adolescents to be extremely concerned about the reactions of others, particularly peers, causing many to become introspective, very self-conscious, and preoccupied with themselves. Although Shantz (1983, cited in Keating, 1991) noted that there is little research which establishes the validity of adolescent egocentricism which puts them at "... the desired and dreaded center of attention" (p. 124), young people often engage in social comparison whereby they compare their personal attributes to those of others, particularly peers, as a means of self-evaluation--the outcome of which can be either negative or positive (Santrock, 1988). Furthermore, they often act as if other people are as critical of and centered on them as they are themselves. This gives adolescents the impression of being "on stage" and may help to account for their attention-seeking behavior (Santrock, 1988). However, as time passes and their experiences broaden, adolescents are forced to confront reality; consequently, their egocentricity and idealism are gradually relinquished (C. A. Harris, 1986).

The aspect of social cognition, termed "implicit personality theory," is a way of thinking about the self and others which involves going beyond surface traits to consider the interacting factors underlying personality. It includes consideration of previously acquired information, recognition that behavior is often context specific, and that it is not

always consistent (Santrock, 1986). The adolescent is more likely than a younger child to consider both external and internal factors when attempting to understand or to explain the behavior of self or others, and is more likely to integrate various features of the problem rather than centering on one aspect of it (Keating, 1991).

Moral reasoning is another area that develops further during the early adolescent period. Early adolescents have a strong sense of justice and are quick to question decisions and rules. They begin to move away from imposed values to those based on personal understanding (Department of Education, 1986). Features of formal thought make possible this shift from the need for external constraint to internalized control which allows for active participation and cooperation in rule making. Early adolescents are usually able to consider the viewpoints of others, to think of different aspects of situations, and sometimes to take extenuating circumstances into account (Biehler & Hudson, 1986). Furthermore, as adolescents continue to mature and acquire a better understanding of behavior they realize that they are beginning to attain equality with adults; and, they develop the healthy attitude that they are capable of making decisions and of taking control of their own behaviour (Biehler & Hudson 1986; Santrock, 1986).

Personality Development

Personality development during early adolescence centers primarily around identity formation as explained by Eric Erikson. The fifth of Erikson's eight stages of the life cycle, identity versus role confusion, coincides with adolescence, and the successful resolution of this stage occurs with an inherent understanding of "... who one is and what one is all about as a person" (Santrock, 1988, p. 590). Erikson (1968, cited in C. A. Harris, 1986) proposed that puberty marks the beginning of extensive individual re-evaluation often resulting in dramatic changes leading to a new sense of personal identity. During this time existing self-perceptions, goals, and values are modified and new ones adopted.

Erikson (1968, cited in Santrock, 1986) viewed adolescence as a period during which the person lets go of the security of childhood and strives toward the autonomy of approaching adulthood--a process that Erikson termed "psychological moratorium." Erikson (1968, cited in Biehler & Hudson, 1986) contended that most adolescents experience an identity crisis as they try out different roles from the surrounding culture in their struggle to achieve a more mature sense of self. Young people who do not successfully resolve this crisis experience what Erikson termed identity confusion or diffusion. This can result in either withdrawal from peers and family or identification with the crowd sometimes to the extent that the individual's identity is lost (Santrock, 1986). Erikson (1968,

cited in Santrock, 1986) believed that in order to successfully resolve the identity crisis young people need opportunities to explore and experiment with a variety of personal characteristics and social roles, particularly during the early adolescent period before theories of self become well-established. James Marcia (1966, cited in Santrock, 1986) viewed the period of identity formation as one during which "... the adolescent is choosing among meaningful alternatives" (p. 382), and proposed that this happens gradually. In addition, Edmund Bourne (1978, cited in Santrock, 1988) pointed out that although identity development is intrapersonal it forms as young people interact with others. Thus, peers and adults with whom adolescents interact and the amount and type of feedback provided to them by those significant others are important because they influence how adolescents view themselves.

Erikson (1968, cited in Santrock, 1988) also identified exploration of a variety of career paths as an important facet of identity formation. Erikson proposed that if an occupational goal is selected during adolescence the person develops confidence, otherwise feelings of confusion may result, particularly during late adolescence.

Social Development

Social development is facilitated by newly acquired abilities in physical, cognitive, and personality areas.

Achievement of a more adult physical form and appearance, the search for a personal identity, the push for autonomy, and more advanced cognitive skills making independent thinking possible result in changes in the social lives of adolescents (Santrock, 1986, 1988).

   Peer Group Relationships.

   For early adolescents much of the experimentation in dealing with the changes taking place in their lives is done in the peer group which is a source of comparison for personal abilities and attributes. Because peer pressure is strong, conformity to the behavior of others increases with early adolescents being more likely to model peers perceived as being more powerful, particularly those who are older and those who are viewed as leaders (Santrock, 1988). However, while adolescent females generally appear to be more concerned about peer acceptance than are adolescent males, adolescent females are less likely to conform to peer pressure to engage in antisocial behavior (Santrock, 1988).

   Relationships with same-sex peers are very important to both males and females during early adolescence, and most want to have one or two best friends. Best friends usually have in common characteristics such as age, school grade, gender, socio-economic status, and ethnic background and these are often accompanied by similarities in behavior, values, and interests (Hartup, 1978, cited in C. A. Harris, 1986). Douvan

and Adelson (1966, cited in Biehler & Hudson, 1986) further found that girls were more concerned than boys about having a sensitive, sympathetic person with whom to talk, and that boys were more interested in having a buddy with whom to participate in activities--a difference that has been traced to socialization.

Youniss and Smollar (1986, cited in Hartup & Overhauser, 1991) found that adolescents perceive their friends as supportive and that they go to them for discussion of and support in everyday concerns more often than they go to family members and adults. In addition, intimate friendships are important for self-esteem and identity development. Research has shown that early adolescents with close friendships have higher levels of self-esteem than those whose friendships are less intimate, and that they view themselves as being more competent in social and cognitive areas (Bukowski & Newcombe, 1986, cited in Hartup & Overhauser, 1991; Mannarino, 1978, cited in Hartup & Overhauser, 1991).

Closely related to best friend relationships are those that develop with members of the opposite sex as adolescents mature. Dating, which usually begins around age 14 provides young people with an introduction to opposite sex relationships; however, if begun too early, it may interfere with social development by limiting relationships with same-sex peers and by focusing on superficial relationships with peers of the opposite sex (Douvan & Adelson, 1966, cited in Biehler

& Hudson, 1986). Another dating-related concern is that early maturing girls may be susceptible to peer pressure to take part in antisocial activities when dating older boys (Steinberg, 1985, cited in Padgham & Blyth, 1991).

Peer influence, however, seems to be domain specific and the popular image of peer influence being more powerful than parental guidance appears to be inaccurate (Camarena, 1991). Immediate choices and identity needs seem more likely to be influenced by peers than values and decisions that have implications for the future; those are more likely to be influenced by parents and other significant adults. Camarena (1991) and Biehler and Hudson (1986) cited research showing that while peers are likely to strongly influence areas in which young people are struggling to establish their uniqueness such as through appearance, favorite musical groups, and leisure activities, parents are likely to strongly influence young .eoples' values, political beliefs, and future plans such as those relating to career choice.

Family Factors.

Independence from family control begins during early adolescence as young people develop as individuals and realize their separateness from parents. Many early adolescents are rebellious, and parent-child conflict tends to increase around such issues as dress, chores, homework, sibling relationships, and curfew (Montemayor, 1982, cited in Santrock, 1986).

However, this conflict serves an important developmental function through which young people gradually achieve independence as well as control of and responsibility for their own decisions and actions (Santrock, 1986). This occurs as adolescents question and resist rules outlined by parents and counter them with viable alternatives; because parents no longer have the unquestioned compliance of their children, negotiation and compromise are necessary (Baumrind, 1975, cited in C. A. Harris, 1986). However, while adolescents may protest parental restrictions on their behavior, parental control is important because it represents love and concern, and adolescents need the security and sense of belonging that "... a stable home base ..." (C. A. Harris, 1986, p. 631) provides.

This was supported by Elder (1962, cited in Biehler & Hudson, 1986) who found that the democratic parenting style in which adolescents have input into family discussions with final decisions being made by parents is viewed positively by adolescents and seems to foster young peoples' confidence and independence. Therefore, firm guiding adult involvement, rather than restrictive approaches, appears to benefit young people most as they push for autonomy. It further appears that although the arguments and ideas of adolescents may seem radical and irrational, young people need encouragement to think and to explore rather than having ideas and decisions imposed (Heisler & Friedman, 1980).

Because of the importance of parental influence, it is encouraging that King et al. (1989) found that most Canadian youth had good relationships with their parents. However, when compared with young people in the rest of Canada, fewer Newfoundland and Labrador grade 9 students asked their parents for advice on serious matters and more of them reported instances when they would like to leave home. In addition, fewer Newfoundland and Labrador grade 11 students felt understood by their parents or sought their advice on important matters.

Young people tend to model the thinking and behavior of significant adults, and as Keisler and Friedman (1980) contended adolescents "... reflect what their parents are and what their culture is" (p. 383). Parental factors which strongly influence adolescents include: (a) economic status, (b) educational and occupational levels, (c) health, and (d) level of marital satisfaction. As well, family structure appears to influence the overall achievement levels of students; and there is evidence that students from single-parent families are more likely to become early leavers than are students from two-parent families (OERI Urban Superintendents Network, 1987, cited in Goertz, Ekstrom, & Rock, 1991). In addition, divorce is a highly stressful and painful experience which leaves a lasting impact on the lives of young people (Santrock, 1988), and in Canada, where approximately 40% of marriages end in divorce many school

students have to deal with its effects. Coffman and Roark (1988) maintained that divorce is a crisis situation ranking second only to death in the family and that only 25% of children receive any type of help in dealing with it; thus, schools should provide support and guidance for children who experience divorce.

Summary of Development

Students bring with them a range of developmental and social characteristics which form the basis of their adjustment to the school environment. Thus, it is incumbent upon educators to keep all aspects of adolescent development and adjustment patterns foremost in mind when planning and implementing educational experiences for junior high school students.

Educational Considerations

Transition to Junior High School

The transition from elementary to junior high school is often a sudden change for students. The move from a small intimate environment to a larger more impersonal one is sometimes accompanied by a sense of anonymity, of "... knowing nobody and being known by no one" (Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987, p. 1220). In addition, students are affected by the "top-dog" phenomenon whereby they move from

being the oldest and most powerful at the elementary level to the youngest and least powerful at the junior high level (Blyth, Simmons, & Carlton-Ford, 1983 cited in Santrock, 1988). Cluett (1984), in a Newfoundland study, found that 38% of grade 7 students reported being worried about older students and their influence; specifically, some students expressed a fear of being hurt physically while others were concerned about being coerced into taking part in undesirable activities. Parental concern for their children regarding academics and the influence of older students also increased after the transition to junior high school. However, on a positive note, Cluett (1984) found that even though they were no longer the oldest in their schools, grade 7 students viewed themselves as being more mature than they were in grade 6 and felt that their teachers treated them so.

Because of problems often encountered Simmons et al. (1987) suggested that grade 7 may be too early for a major shift in school environment because it may negatively affect students' self-concepts. In making this suggestion they referred to Coleman's focal theory of change and to the developmental readiness hypothesis proposed by Simmons and Blyth which suggest that change can happen too early for individuals because "an arena of comfort" is necessary for successful adjustment. Simmons et al. (1987) further noted that some individuals experience considerable discomfort if change takes place too quickly. They reasoned that this may

happen if there is a lack of continuity with prior experience, if the person is not ready cognitively and emotionally, and if too many important life changes occur at the same time.

Simmons and Blyth (1987, cited in Eccles, 1991b) further suggested that the interaction between the stress of changes occurring naturally during early adolescence and the changes associated with school transition often result in decreased motivation. Eccles (1991b) cited research showing that early adolescent students reported higher levels of test anxiety, more self-consciousness, and more worry about their performance than younger children; and that early adolescents generally had lower levels of achievement motivation after the transition to junior high school. Self-esteem also appears to influence academic performance, and research has shown academic self-esteem to decrease at the grade 7 level, particularly for females (Simmons et al., 1987; Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989).

Feldlaufer, Midgley, and Eccles (1988, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989) reported that students used social comparison more after the transition to junior high school, as indicated by such activities as comparing grades on report cards. Stipek and Mac Iver (1989) further noted that performance expectations increase at the junior high school level, and that because performance has been evaluated primarily through written tests there has been little opportunity for students to compensate for low grades. Furthermore, although student performance on cognitive and achievement tests generally improves at the

junior high level, they often receive lower grades and competency ratings from teachers, indicating stringent evaluation practices (Nottlemann, 1987, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989; Reuman, Mac Iver, Eccles, & Wigfield, 1987, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989).

Cluett (1984) found that many Newfoundland students experienced the grade 7 program as being more demanding than they had expected and that many were not doing as well academically as they had expected to. Contributing factors indicated by those students were: (a) more courses to take, (b) more homework and study to do, (c) mid-term and final exams, and (d) more teachers to work with. Cluett suggested that such factors contribute to a drop in academic performance for many students and are likely to cause considerable difficulty for lower ability and for poorly motivated students. Larson (1982, cited in Eccles, 1991b) also reported that students' satisfaction with school and with teachers declined across grades 6 to 8. Simmons and Blyth (1987, cited in Eccles, 1991b) further suggested that this overall drop may signal a downward turn in school performance and in school attachment which ends in failure and early school leaving for some students.

In addition, the transition to junior high school often coincides with other important life changes such as early dating, residential mobility, and family disruption. Simmons et al. (1987) noted that grade-point average appeared to be

sensitive to life changes, particularly to parental marital disruption. They also found that grade-point average and extracurricular participation decreased as the number of life changes increased, and that males appeared to be more at risk if too many changes occurred at once. In addition, they found that females who had experienced recent life changes had lower levels of self-esteem, lower club participation, and lower grade-point averages. Overall, early adolescent students who were coping with a variety of life changes appeared to be more likely to experience difficulty at school.

Therefore, it is important for educators to understand life from the student perspective so that potentially harmful practices can be avoided. Eccles and Midgley (1989, cited in Eccles, 1991b) contended that many junior high schools

> ... emphasize competition, social comparison, and
> ability self-assessment at a time of heightened
> self-focus; they decrease decision making and choice
> at a time when the desire for control is growing;
> they emphasize lower cognitive strategies at a time
> when ability to use higher level strategies is
> increasing; and they disrupt social networks at a
> time when adolescents are especially concerned with
> peer relationships and may be in special need of
> close adult friendships. (p. 679)

Santrock (1983) pointed out that teachers of early adolescents need a sound knowledge of their developmental characteristics

and a keen awareness of the amount of variation among them. Lispitt (1983, cited in Santrock, 1988) further found that effective schools for early adolescents adapted practices and policies to the individual differences of students by considering their needs from a developmental perspective and by enhancing social and personality development as well as intellectual development. Cluett (1984) found that the most positive aspects of schooling reported by grade 7 students were friends, other people, sports, other activities, and the physical environment. Cluett's findings indicated that friendships are facilitated in junior high schools with 67% of grade 7 students reporting that they had made more and new friends including many from grades 8 and 9. Overall, it appears that "... students generally dislike the academic aspects of schooling and react much more favorably to the social aspects of the program" (Cluett, 1984, p. 222). Therefore, socialization activities may help students identify with school more closely.

Curriculum Content and Instruction

The implementation of meaningful curriculum content contributes significantly to an effective learning environment for students (Department of Education, 1989). Experiences provided should be suited to students' level of cognitive development and take into consideration familiarity, aptitude, and interest in the subject matter (Hammes & Duryea, 1986).

Martin (1985a) noted that many Newfoundland and Labrador senior high school students expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of school curricula. Students viewed much of the information in school subjects as unnecessary and as being not relevant; they did not identify with curriculum content because of the lack of local material and lack of connection between what they were learning and their plans for further education and careers. Robertson (1990) reported that female students emphasized the need for subject content to be more relevant and meaningful to their lives and to their futures. In addition, some students surveyed felt that classes were too focused on facts and information and that insufficient time was available for discussion.

Another concern expressed by students was the failure of schools to help them understand and deal with social issues (Martin 1985b); for example, they felt that issues related to sexuality were not well understood by young people and that schools could better meet this need. Martin's findings suggested that students generally felt that they were not being well prepared for life after school.

Brophy, Rohrkemper, Rashid, and Goldberger (1983, cited in Blumenfeld & Meece, 1985) found that teachers rarely explained the importance or usefulness of lessons and that students were often not rewarded for their work. Blumenfeld and Meece (1985) cited additional research showing that students viewed schools as places to work where activities were completed rather than

as places where learning took place, and that they were motivated to perform to avoid failure rather than to acquire new knowledge and skills. Martin (1985b) suggested that schools need to help students understand the purpose and importance of the curriculum content to be learned.

The methods and strategies used to facilitate learning complement curriculum content. Instructional methods can generally be classified as traditional, cooperative, or open with the type of interaction and approach to learning being somewhat different in each. The traditional approach is teacher directed and teacher centered with limited interaction among students (Bossert, 1989). Cooperative learning involves group activities, with students being rewarded for cooperating and working together. Student are expected to make suggestions, to help others, to gather information and opinions, and to be a part of group processes (Cohen, 1986, cited in Bossert, 1989; Johnson, Johnson, Johnson Holubec & Roy, 1988). Thus, Bossert concluded that classrooms employing cooperative learning activities foster positive interpersonal relations, self-esteem, and motivation, and that student achievement appears to be as high as in classrooms where traditional approaches are used.

Open educational approaches, as outlined by Giaconia and Hedges (1982), are characterized by the active involvement of students in guiding their own learning, diagnostic evaluation, manipulative learning materials, individualized and small group

instruction, integration of curriculum areas, open space, and team teaching. Giaconia and Hedges (1982) cited research showing that open educational approaches have positive influences on self-concept, creativity, and attitude toward school. The four features most likely to produce those results were the active involvement of the student, diagnostic evaluation, manipulative learning materials, and individualized instruction. Cohen (1986, cited in Bossert, 1989) further suggested that children benefit significantly from multi-dimensional classrooms because they facilitate the development of various academic and social skills.

In addition to providing students with relevant knowledge and skills to live in today's society the fact that students differ in their needs, aptitudes, learning styles, and in personal and career goals must be considered when planning curricula (Department of Education, 1986). Knowledge of individual growth patterns has prompted some educators to suggest that curricular materials and instructional methods provided to adolescents are often not well suited to their developmental needs (Santrock, 1986). The individual growth patterns of early adolescents necessitate instructional methods which consider the wide range of cognitive abilities among students as they move from concrete to abstract thinking. As well, awareness of the skill level of students and the need for consolidation of basic skills are important so that more advanced learning may be facilitated (Department of Education,

1986). In addition, educators have suggested discovery learning and resource based approaches which encourage students to become active participants in the learning process and further facilitates individualized and independent learning by teaching them skills in locating, processing, and presenting information (Department of Education, 1990a, 1992a; Santrock, 1986).

Active student involvement and interaction appear to be important features of effective learning processes. However, Sadker and Sadker (1986) found that while 10% of the students in fourth, sixth, and eighth grade classrooms interacted with the teacher more than three times their share, 25% of students did not interact with the teacher at all. Kostash (1987) contended that for many students classes involve "... sitting at the back and never saying a word and maybe getting two minutes of the teacher's time in a week, of learning to regurgitate the teacher's opinions ..." (p. 76). Kostash further indicated that this leads to student boredom, discontent, and withdrawal.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education (1990a) pointed out the importance of encouraging all students to answer questions and of discouraging those who tend to dominate classroom discussion from doing so; teachers need to interact with all students and encourage them to take turns when speaking. Strategies for enhancing students' learning and

thinking skills summarized by Nucci and Gordon (1979, cited in C. A. Harris, 1986) were:

1. Coordination of subject content and students' ability to comprehend.

2. Relevance of subject content to students' lives and futures.

3. Interaction among students which allows for questioning, exchange of ideas, and challenge.

4. Student involvement through activities such as discussions, debates, and laboratory activities.

5. Encouragement of students to monitor their own thinking and to ask questions to help them resolve issues at a level beyond their present understanding.

6. Evaluation of students' cognitive skills considering both answers and the reasoning behind them.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is a serious concern because it is an indicator of individual student success, making high school completion one of the most important tasks facing adolescents as they begin to prepare for adult life (Eccles, 1991a). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the myriad of factors which influence students' school-related behavior, academic performance, and academic achievement (Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988).

Majoribanks (1976) examined the relationships among student attitudes, ability, and achievement, and found that higher cognitive ability and attitude scores were related to increased achievement. Furthermore, Bandura (1982, cited in Stipek & Mac Iver, 1989) contended that student self-perception of ability was an important aspect of achievement motivation.

Students receive feedback about their ability from a variety of sources including group placement, work displayed on bulletin boards, types of questions asked of students, specific students to whom teachers offer help, and symbolic feedback such as stickers and grades (Weinstein & Middlestadt, 1979, cited in Stipek and Mac Iver, 1989). In addition, the positive impact of teacher monitoring of student work and of teacher feedback on work completed is well documented. Denham and Liberman (1980, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) found that frequently providing students with feedback correlates positively with achievement. Stallings, Cory, Fairweather, and Needles (1977, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) further found that support and corrective feedback provided to students when they did not respond correctly, related positively to achievement, and Anderson, Evertson, and Brophy (1982, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) suggested that correction is more beneficial than criticism; they noted that when criticism is necessary, teachers need to be specific and to provide information about the appropriate response or behavior expected.

Emmer, Evertson, and Brophy (1979, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) found that teachers who were considered most successful had frequent, short contacts with students during seat work time. As well, in classrooms where student achievement was high, students were expected to complete their work carefully, teachers checked students' work, and additional instruction and assignments were provided when necessary. In addition, in classes with students from low soci -economic backgrounds, it was found to be particularly important that teachers ensure the completion of assigned work (Brophy & Evertson, 1976 cited in Department of Education, 1990a). Furthermore, the Department of Education (1990a) cited research showing that teacher praise of student responses correlated positively with achievement. Brophy (1981, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) suggested, however, that the quality of praise was more important than the frequency, and proposed that systematic praise be given contingent upon effort, actual work completed, and good performance.

Student effort, as would be expected, correlates with academic achievement. Crocker (1989) reported that in Newfoundland and Labrador students who worked hard, who attended school regularly, and who had help at home tended to have higher levels of achievement. This is consistent with Keith's (1982) finding that intellectual ability had the strongest effect on the school grades of high school seniors, but that for all ability levels a strong positive relationship

existed between grades and time spent on homework. Keith (1982) further proposed that typical low ability students who do one to three hours of homework per week can achieve grades as high as those of average ability students who do no homework.

Ekstrom et al. (1986) proposed that motivation to succeed is more important than ability in predicting early school leaving because the gap between students who leave school early and those who stay is greater in the area of academic performance, as measured by grades, than in tested achievement. They also found that early leavers were more likely to skip classes and to report doing less homework than were students who remained in school (Ekstrom et al., 1986) In a related study, Wentzel (1989) found that students' grade-point averages were significantly and positively related to students' efforts to be conscienticus and successful. Notably, in Wentzel's study, only 33% of students with high grade-point averages reported that they always tried to have fun at school, whereas 69% of students with low grade-point averages reported that they always tried to have fun at school. Thus, it appeared that high achieving students were primarily concerned with social responsibility and learning goals, and that low performing students were more concerned with social interaction goals. However, students with low grade-point averages rarely reported that they tried to win the approval of others (Wentzel, 1989).

Achievement differences related to gender have been noted generally in North America. The pattern has been one in which females have scored equal to or higher than males on standardized achievement tests in the early grades, but by the end of the high school grades males have scored higher (Sadker & Sadker, 1986). Results of the Canadian Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) reported by Crocker (1989) and the Department of Education (1991b) showed that in grades 4, 6, and 8 scores tended to favor females on all subtests, but that by grade 12 males out performed females on all but the written expression subtest. The most pronounced difference at the grade 12 level was in mathematics, where males out performed females by more than 10 percentile points. This finding may be related to research findings, mentioned in chapter I, that males are more confident of their ability to perform in mathematics and the sciences than are females (Linn & Hyde, 1991). However, while achievement levels in mathematics and the sciences have been consistently low in Newfoundland and Labrador when compared with standards in the rest of Canada and internationally, gender differences in high school mathematics and science performance levels have generally been small in the province (Bulcock & Mendoza, 1988, cited in Bulcock et al., 1991; Crocker, 1989).

The search for an explanation of the findings discussed above continues, and differences in ability between male and female people appear not to account for them. Linn and Hyde

(1991) cited research showing that gender differences in performance on cognitive and psychosocial tasks involving verbal, spatial, computational, and quantitative skills have always been small and are still declining. An area worth considering is the amount of teacher attention and remedial assistance provided to students. Kedar-Voivodas (1983) cited research showing that: (a) teachers were more sensitive to the different ability levels and learning difficulties of males than of females, (b) significantly more males than females were referred to special education classes, and (c) significantly more males than females were identified as exhibiting behavior problems. Furthermore, Croll and Moses (1985, cited in Croll, 1985) showed that males identified as having special needs outnumbered females by almost 2 to 1. May, Boone, and Hopkins (1988, cited in Bulcock et al., 1991) reported that 66% of special education students in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador were male. Thus, it appears that male students have received more attention and remediation for their difficulties than have females students.

There is some evidence that remedial help may enhance self-esteem, with the increased amount of pupil-teacher interaction and feedback likely being key factors (Gurney, 1989); if this is the case male students also benefit more than female students in this area because more of them receive remedial help. Such findings have prompted some educators to question why females' special needs are not identified and

remediated more often, for example, in the area of mathematics where achievement levels generally drop (Shakeshaft, 1986, cited in Robertson, 1988), and others to conclude that "the most valuable resource in the classroom is the teacher's attention. If the teacher is giving more of that valuable resource to one group, it should come as no surprise that that group shows greater educational gains" (Sadkar & Sadkar, 1986, p. 514).

An additional issue of concern related to achievement is tracking by ability grouping or by streaming students into academic, general, and vocational curriculum programs. Oakes (1985, cited in Ekstrom, 1991) found that many schools did not have a policy on grouping, and that only about a quarter of the schools surveyed informed parents about placement criteria and differences in the educational programs offered. These criteria often included speech patterns and patterns of social interaction, which are influenced by race and by socio-economic class as well as by factors related to academic performance and ability (Oakes, 1985, cited in Ekstrom, 1991). Another factor determining placement was access to guidance counselor services, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds were found to be significantly less likely to receive guidance (Lee & Ekstrom, 1987, cited in Ekstrom, 1991). Consequently, it is likely that many students are not placed in the learning environment that is best suited to their ability and to meeting their needs.

Oakes (1985, cited in Ekstrom, 1991) and Metz (1978, cited in Games, 1991) also contended that teaching methods vary considerably among different educational programs with critical thinking and problem solving skills emphasized more in high ability tracts, and memorization, repetition of answers learned, and seat work designed to keep students quiet emphasized more in lower ability tracts. Games (1991) cited research suggesting that teachers prefer high tract classes, and that the most experienced and successful teachers are assigned to the higher tracts.

Oakes (1985, cited in Crocker, 1989) further suggested that grouping children based on perceived ability may have detrimental effects on students because it often leads to lower expectations and lower performance levels for those placed in the lower tracts. Furthermore, Schwartz (1981, cited in Games, 1991) reported that low performing students often discourage other students in the group from striving for higher grades. Therefore, Goodlad (1984, cited in Ekstrom, 1991) concluded that tracking appeared not to positively influence student achievement and that there was lower self-esteem, more misbehavior, and a higher drop-out rate among students in the lower tracts.

However, while there are negative consequences of tracking there appears not to be a clear consensus on its overall effects. For example, Eccles and Wigfield (1985, cited in Mac Iver, 1988) pointed out that in classes of students with wide

ranges of ability, lower ability students may develop low self-concepts by comparing themselves to high ability students which may result in lower motivational levels. In addition, Bossert (1979, cited in Mac Iver, 1988) noted that low achieving students were often isolated within their classrooms because academic status was an important factor when friendships and groups were formed. Those considerations have prompted some educators to suggest that instead of placing lower ability students in classroom environments where attention is likely to focus on ability differences, they should be placed in classroom environments suited to their educational needs with the focus on problem solving, task completion, and achievement (Mac Iver, 1988). Overall, it appears that the number and type of courses taken by students, and the instructional methods used to facilitate learning, rather than tracking per se, impacts most strongly upon student achievement (Ekstrom, 1991).

Another achievement-related concern is grade retention. It has been widely believed that if students repeated grades their achievement in basic skill areas would improve, and that their chances of future academic success would be higher (Department of Education, 1990a); however, research has indicated that rather than improving in basic skill areas some students fell further behind in the year that they were retained (Holmes & Matthews, 1984). This may relate to teacher expectations for student achievement and to student motivation and confidence which are influenced by students' past school

experiences (Department of Education, 1990b). Frey and Ruble (1987) cited research showing that cumulative failure influenced future expectations with students becoming increasingly responsive to failure and that females were affected more than males. Based upon a review of relevant research, Holmes and Matthews (1984) concluded that retaining pupils in elementary and junior high school grades does not improve their academic achievement, personal adjustment, attitudes toward school, behavior, nor attendance; and that the outcome is more positive for students who are promoted than for those who are retained.

In addition, academic failure and consequent grade retention have been strongly associated with early school leaving. Hammack (1986, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) found that students who were retained in one or more grades were at greater risk of leaving school early. This been substantiated by research, presented in chapter I, showing that 70 to 75% of students who left school early in the provinces of British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador had repeated school grades. Furthermore, Smith and Shepard (1987, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) recognized that even though retention may be valuable in a small number of cases, it is very difficult to predict and identify which students will benefit. Schuyer (1985, cited in Department of Education, 1990a) suggested that, for most students, any short-term benefits of retention are not maintained over the long-term.

Therefore, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education has insisted that, in future, the consideration of requiring students to repeat grades be weighed carefully; factors to consider include: (a) the extent to which students' needs would be met, (b) students' feelings about the decision, (c) parental input, and (d) whether students could be satisfactorily accommodated in the next grade (Department of Education, 1990a).

School climate characterized by the dominant features of the school environment also impacts upon student achievement. Anderson (1982) cited research indicating that school climate influences students' self-concept, sense of belonging, and level of achievement. Anderson (1982) and the Department of Education (1990b) identified specific characteristics of schools in which student achievement was high. Anderson reported that the characteristics of high achieving schools identified most often were: (a) effective principal leadership, (b) staff commitment, (c) high expectations, (d) effective discipline, and (e) parental involvement; the factors identified most often as influencing student academic achievement and aspiration differences were: (a) teacher attitudes and expectations, (b) teacher education, (c) student participation, and (d) parental involvement.

The Department of Education (1990b) also summarized six salient aspects of effective schools. They were:

1. Positive administrator and teacher expectations for and attitudes toward each other and students.

2. Principal leadership characteristics which facilitate conditions for a positive school climate and for school improvement.

3. A school environment in which academic and social learning skills are integrated such that purposeful learning and development take place.

4. An emphasis on academic learning and recognition of student achievement.

5. Reasonable and consistent behavioral expectations.

6. A system for monitoring and evaluating student performance in relation to instructional objectives which provides students with direct and immediate feedback.

As mentioned in chapter I, Murray (1938, cited in Anderson, 1982) suggested that people react differently to salient features of the environment according to their individual needs; and Edmonds and Fredericksen (1978, cited in Anderson, 1982) pointed out that schools are not equally effective for all groups of students. In Newfoundland and Labrador for example, differences in the educational opportunities of students by area of residence and by school size appear to influence achievement and attitudinal differences. Results of public examinations have provided some evidence that differences between achievement levels of students are more pronounced between school districts, by

approximately 25%, than between schools in urban and rural settings (Crocker, 1989). However, in science and mathematics achievement, students from larger communities, particularly those on the Avalon Peninsula, have tended to score higher than those from smaller communities. More students from the larger centres also intended to attend university (Crocker, 1989). In addition, a strong positive correlation has been found between school size and student achievement as measured by Canadian Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) scores with students in larger schools outperforming students in smaller schools, with few exceptions, at all grade levels; for example, the 1990 grade 12 CTBS results showed an overall difference of 25 percentile points in favor of large schools (Department of Education, 1991b).

Riggs (1987) further found that students in smaller Newfoundland and Labrador communities were more negative in their attitudes toward schooling, tended to be less positive about the importance of schooling, received less encouragement, and were more likely to plan to quit before completing high school. In addition, Crocker (1989) noted that more students from larger communities had home backgrounds in which parents were more highly educated and had higher occupational levels than did students from smaller communities. In a United States study, Kurdek and Sinclair (1988) found that students' school grades were positively related to family backgrounds in which achievement and intellectual activities were valued. In

addition to familial factors, students who attended small Newfoundland and Labrador schools generally had fewer academic choices available to them, a smaller variety of reading materials, and were more likely to be taught in multi-grade classrooms by teachers with very heavy workloads (Riggs, 1987). Small schools were also less likely than large ones to have satisfactory library, physical education, home economics, and science facilities; approximately 20% of small high schools had no library, and approximately 15% had no science laboratory (Riggs, 1987). Furthermore, because major educational and cultural facilities and services are located primarily in urban centers most students in rural communities do not have access to them.

Thus, as a result of a combination of community, school, familial, and personal factors identified above and in chapter I approximately 35 to 40% of Newfoundland and Labrador students have ended their academic achievement by physically removing themselves from the educational setting through early leaving (Department of Education, 1989). Students who chose, or who saw no other alternative than, this route apparently often without a consideration of consequences, headed toward a lifestyle that was generally very different from that of their counterparts who viewed continued education as a way of securing a rewarding future.

Many students who have left school early have desired to live what they perceived to be a less restricted life on the

outside (Martin, 1985a). This view appeared not to be tempered by the consideration that their freedom may, in the long term, be restricted by a lack of options, particularly in the world of work and financial renumeration. Some economic consequences of early leaving as outlined by Wilcox and Vincent (1987, cited in Goertz et al., 1991) were: (a) lower rates of participation in the labor force, (b) higher unemployment, and (c) lower earnings. Therefore, the Council of Chief State School Officers (1987, cited in Goertz et al., 1991) proposed that to reduce the drop-out rate in the United States more emphasis should be placed on early intervention and prevention. After reviewing 14 intervention programs Orr (1987, cited in Goertz et al., 1991) concluded that basic skills remediation, exposure to the world of work, personal development, and support services must be key components of any program designed to prevent early school leaving.

School Rules and Discipline

In addition to academic curricula, instruction, and achievement the school environment includes organizational and social experiences, which Jackson (1968, cited in Kedar-Voivodas, 1983) termed "the hidden curriculum," characterized by extensive and intense social contact, compulsory attendance, a sometimes involuntary clientele, and a structure in which teachers are more powerful than students. Consequently, it

appears that students have little input into what and how they learn.

Martin (1985b) asserted that some features of the school environment have a negative pushing out effect while others have a positive holding effect. Two aspects of schooling often perceived negatively by students, and which may have a pushing out effect, are school rules and disciplinary practices. Martin (1985b) pointed out that most students recognize the need for rules, but that school rules often go beyond guidelines for behavior and create tension between students and teachers. Consequently, students often perceive rules as rigid and as encroaching upon their freedom. In addition, junior high school students are likely to try to understand the purpose of school rules rather than accepting them at face value; and it appears that autonomy development can be facilitated by involving students in rule development and in planning learning activities rather than by imposing them (Blumenfeld & Meece, 1985; Department of Education, 1986). Students seem to learn best when they have autonomy and input into the learning process. This is supported by the approach of alternate schools, set up for children who do not succeed in the regular system, which involve students more in the running of the school, thus providing them with a sense of control and more satisfying experiences (Kostash, 1987). Consensus between staff and students on school rules is also important; Anderson (1982) cited research showing that student involvement in

decision-making led to improved behavior and acceptance of school norms.

Disciplinary practices are also sometimes seen by students as ineffective and unfair (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Martin (1985b) found that many Newfoundland and Labrador students expressed concern for fairness toward and equal treatment of students by teachers because they perceived some teachers as treating students differently depending upon whether they were "teachers pets" or "class victims." Martin (1985b) also contended that those who felt "... victims of a lack of teacher understanding of students" (p. 42) were likely to become bored and discouraged. Silberman (1971, cited in Kedar-Voivodas, 1983) further pointed out that students who experience rejection by teachers are usually those who display inappropriate behavior, and that teachers are more likely to react negatively to students whose behavior causes them to feel overwhelmed.

Males appear to perceive being treated unfairly more often than females, possibly because they are more likely to exhibit defiant and aggressive behavior which is less favored in the school setting (Kedar-Voivodas, 1983). Kurdek and Sinclair (1988) noted that male grade 8 students were given detention more often than their female counterparts for such actions as physical aggression to fellow students, obscene language, skipping class, talking in class, throwing paper, and chewing gum. Ekstrom et al. (1986) further found that males were more

than twice as likely as females to report leaving school because of difficulty getting along with teachers and because of being suspended or expelled. Thus, it appears that, as Kedar-Voivodas (1983) suggested, male students socialized into the traditional male sex role are more likely to exhibit unacceptable behavior in the school setting than are female students socialized into the traditional female sex role.

Furthermore, as Deci and Ryan (1985, cited in Wentzel, 1989) pointed out, academic achievement has a behavioral as well as an ability component. Students who do not view academic tasks as interesting or challenging often experience difficulty complying to classroom rules and teacher expectations, yet such compliance is very important to their academic achievement. Consequently, students who do not conform to classroom norms are likely to have difficulty adjusting and achieving academically (Wentzel, 1989). Wehlage and Rutter (1986) concluded that students often view schools as places in which they get into trouble rather than as places to learn and that, overall, students who leave school early are not satisfied with their schooling. They further suggested that "... schools in performing their sorting function for society may be unnecessarily harsh and discouraging to many students" (p. 389).

Teachers are facilitators of learning and mediators in classroom situations; therefore, their personal characteristics and skills are very important. Martin (1985b) found that

students viewed positive student-teacher interaction as an important aspect of schooling and that they valued friendly, helpful, and understanding teachers. Furthermore, teachers' ability to discipline effectively is associated with students' acceptance of school norms, appropriate behavior, and academic achievement (Brophy, 1983a, cited in Blumenfeld & Meece, 1985; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980, cited in Anderson, 1982; Wynne, 1980 cited in Anderson, 1982).

In addition, consistent behavioral expectations need to be accompanied by encouragement of student self-discipline; students must learn to control and to take responsibility for their own behavior (Anderson, 1982; Department of Education, 1986). Furthermore, when disciplining students it is important for teachers to realize and to communicate the distinction between problematic behaviors and personal worth so as not to damage students' levels of self-esteem (Department of Education, 1986). Effective teaching is generally characterized by polite and pleasant interactions between teachers and students, and by a pervading atmosphere of mutual respect (Department of Education, 1990b).

Career Education

Continuous and cumulative career education programs are also important. Herr and Cramer (1992) suggested that career awareness and exploration are particularly important at the junior high level because knowledge, attitudes, and skills

gained form the basis for successful and satisfying experiences during the senior high years and beyond; they further pointed out that many early adolescent students begin to shift their focus to the future, therefore opportunities to explore alternatives are important. In addition, because work values and impressions about work appear to be established by the beginning of the early adolescent years, there is a need for early exposure to role models in and information about the world of work (Hutchings, 1980).

Herr and Cramer (1992) noted that because many junior high school students are out of touch psychologically and because others remove themselves physically by leaving early, it is necessary to encourage students to remain in school; one way that this can be done is by making schooling experience more meaningful through job-related knowledge and hands-on work experience, because for many students "... purely academic content holds no appeal ..." (p. 254). Participation in organized work-study programs would likely motivate some students.

Herr and Cramer (1992) also pointed out the need for career education programs to help junior high school students understand the importance of course choices to their future options. Lips and Colwill (1988) contended that students are being prepared for entry into traditional occupations via course selections at the high school level. Statistics for the 1990-91 school year supported this contention (Department of

Education, 1991a). They showed that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, while approximately the same percentage of male and female students enroled in mathematics and the sciences, gender appeared to strongly influence enrolment in business education, family studies, and industrial education. In the area of business education, females significantly outnumbered males enroled in Typing 1102 and Typing 2102; in the area of family studies, females significantly outnumbered males enroled in all courses except Family Living 2200 where the enrolment was still slightly higher for females; and in the area of industrial education, males significantly outnumbered females enroled in all courses except Food Services 2105 and Textile Crafts 2106 where the percentage of females enroled was significantly higher (Appendix A).

Students need to be encouraged to choose knowledgeably from the full range of available courses and career options. For females this appears to necessitate increased participation in courses leading to entry into more highly paid and prestigious occupations in scientific research, technology, business, and the industrial trades--areas which remain strongly male dominated (Labour Canada, 1986). For males it may mean more participation in courses leading to increased family involvement and occupational areas such as nursing and secretarial work which have traditionally been female dominated (Fredian, 1981).

As noted in chapter I, the career plans of both male and female students in Newfoundland and Labrador reflect gender role stereotyping. Fisher (1986) also found that most students in their final year of senior high school who had made plans for post-secondary attendance had chosen to pursue areas traditional for their gender. Few females intended to enter marine science, construction, or computer science; few males intended to enter medical technology or service trades; and none of the male students intended to enter a school of nursing. Using a sample of school students ages 6 to 14, Labour Canada (1986) found that the sex difference in the traditionality of career choice was significant at the .001 level. When asked to consider a first career choice: (a) 32% of girls and 93% of boys identified occupations which were traditional for their gender, (b) 43% of girls identified occupations which were less than 40% female, but only 10% of boys chose traditionally female occupations, and (c) 25% of girls and 6% of boys chose occupations in which neither sex made up more than 60%.

While the above figures indicate that females may enter non-traditional occupations at a faster rate than males, the reported career aspirations of female students are often not followed by actions needed to achieve their desired goals (Robertson, 1988). Furthermore, as Yu (1976) pointed out, a shortage of role models limits the occupational knowledge of young females because most of the great achievers that they see

are male. In addition, although most students appeared to recognize that it is possible for young people to enter non-traditional occupations, most still expected to enter those traditional for their gender (Labour Canada, 1986). Therefore, it is important to expose all students to people employed in occupations non-traditional for their gender (Herr & Cramer, 1992).

Kendall (1983, cited in Boak & Boak, 1988) voiced a concern for students who enter non-traditional occupations only to experience greater stress in the workplace, fewer job opportunities, and less support from families and colleagues than their counterparts in occupations traditional for their gender; this suggests that efforts to encourage entry into non-traditional occupations must be accompanied by the necessary preparation and support to help individuals meet the challenges involved in breaking new ground (Oskarsdottir, 1988). In addition, because parents strongly influence students' career decisions they need to be encouraged to become more knowledgable about careers and more involved in helping their children make career choices (Block, Denker, & Tittle, 1981, cited in Darcy, 1987).

As noted in chapter I, young men have traditionally pursued, and later dominated highly paid, prestigious, and powerful positions in law, politics, business, science, and technology; this trend is changing, but slowly (Dahl, Baker, & Harrison, 1961; Lips & Colwil, 1988; Robertson, 1988; Tyler et

al., 1985). More than half of Canada's employed females
continue to work in low paying, often mundane clerical, sales,
and service jobs--an occupational cluster that Statistics
Canada (1987, cited in Robertson, 1988) called "the pink collar
ghetto" (p. 6). As mentioned in chapter I, on average, female
workers in Canada, who comprise over 40% of the paid work
force, earn substantially less than males--approximately 32
cents less for every dollar in 1990 (Labour Canada, 1986;
Robertson, 1988; Statistics Canada, 1990; Tyler et al., 1985).
Furthermore, it is estimated that today's young women will
participate in the paid Canadian work force for an average of
30 years (Robertson, 1988).

In addition to paid labor is the equally demanding,
largely unpaid, and undervalued labor of childcare and domestic
work (Fredian, 1981; Tyler et al., 1985) which in the past was
considered "women's work" with females accepting responsibility
for practically all of it. Females, including those who have
full-time paid employment, continue to shoulder much more than
an equal share of the work and responsibility associated with
child care and a home. In a survey of Canadians 15 to 24 years
old, Posterski and Bibby (1989) found that when those in a
committed relationship considered domestic tasks, they reported
that 46% of females did most or all of it, 4% of males did most
or all of it, and 50% shared equally. Consequently, when men's
and women's paid and unpaid work are combined, women work
considerably more hours (Fredian, 1981; Oskarsdottir, 1988).

In addition, although Posterski and Bibby (1989) found that almost all of the 2,100 young people surveyed reported a belief in equal job opportunities for men and women as well as equal pay for equal work they also found that: (a) 59% of males and 42% of females believed that a child is likely to suffer if the mother works; (b) 28% of males and 16% of females believed that when the rate of unemployment is high, men should get jobs before women; and (c) 20% of males and 13% of females believed that a married women should not work if her husband is able to support her. Thus, it appears that many of Canada's youth do not fully understand the value of paid work for women nor the possible consequences of not being financially independent.

However, changes in family structure and dynamics continue to impact upon the lives of students. This is evidenced by the high number of single parent families, usually headed by women, and by the high number of dual-earner families which make traditional male and female roles impossible for a large number of people (Fredian, 1981; Tyler et al., 1985). Yet, many young Canadian females still expect marriage to include children and a husband who supports the family financially (Labour Canada, 1986; Tyler et al., 1985). The Committee on Young Women's Issues (1986) found that 95% of the young women surveyed in Newfoundland and Labrador expected to marry and have children, but that 30% of them did not expect to have to work after marriage.

At the opposite end of the continuum are those young females who expect to emulate the "superwoman" model of females who excel as spouses, mothers, homemakers, community members, and paid employees (MacLeod, 1988; Collinson, 1989; Friedan, 1981; Committee on young women's Issues, 1986). However, women who attempt this lifestyle often become exhausted and disillusioned; many take part-time jobs so as to be able to juggle paid employment and family responsibilities (MacLeod, 1988; Tyler et al., 1985). Part-time work results in lower pay, less or no coverage for pensions and unemployment insurance, and the loss of other benefits (Tyler et al., 1985). This situation has facilitated the idea that the world of work must be modified to become more sensitive to the needs of men and women who wish to simultaneously contribute to and to benefit from working and raising a family (Collinson, 1989; Friedan, 1981; MacLeod, 1988). Education can play an important role in meeting this goal both by teaching about equality and by applying it in the practices of its institutions; one way of doing this is by employing equal numbers of both genders at every level who also serve as occupational role models (Department of Education, 1983).

It is particularly important to further educate junior high school students about reality in the world of work and about the importance of course and career selection before choices limiting future options have been made. As Herr and Cramer (1992) pointed out timely, relevant, and accurate

information prior to career preparation is an important aspect
of effective career education programs. Furthermore, in
preparation for their adult lives students will need to
understand and overcome the negative effects of stereotyping on
both males and females and the benefits that greater role
flexibility could bring to their public and private lives. As
Dahl et al. (1981) pointed out "this is not only a women's or
feminist issue--it is a human issue" (p. 10).

Sexuality Education

One aspect of sexuality which negatively affects junior
high school students is teenage pregnancy, which King et al.
(1989) found students to be more concerned about than any other
potential outcome of sexual intercourse. The emotional,
social, educational, and economic consequences of pregnancy are
more likely to affect female students than male students
because mothers usually take primary responsibility for
children (Biehler & Hudson, 1986). Hays and Cryer (1987, cited
in Younghusband, 1990) profiled typical pregnant teenagers as
young people who, although biologically ready for pregnancy and
childbirth, had limited ability to use information and to
project events into the future. They were also characterized
by poor school performance, low educational aspirations, low
levels of self-esteem, and unstable family backgrounds.

A common consequence of teenage pregnancy is early school
leaving. As mentioned in chapter I, of the females interviewed

for "Leaving Early" (1984), 45% reported being pregnant at the time that they left school; and the Department of Education (1989) showed that the 11% of female early leavers from the 1986-87 school year who left because of pregnancy constituted 4% of the total number of early leavers for that year. Teenage pregnancy has also been identified as a major reason for early school leaving in the United States, with about one-third of all females who left early reporting doing so for personal reasons, particularly pregnancy and marriage (Rumberger, 1987). In addition, teenage parents who choose to remain in school do so under the extra financial pressure and responsibility of child care (Kenney, 1987). Furthermore, of the pregnant teenagers who marry many become single parents within 6 or 7 years because of the high divorce rate, estimated at 60 to 70%, among those who marry during their teen years (Burden & Klerman, 1984; Krishnamoni & Jain, 1983; "Youth in The 1980s," 1985).

Perhaps the most alarming consequence of teenage pregnancy is the number of young mothers and their children who experience poverty either because they live on welfare or on income from low-paying jobs (Burden & Klerman, 1984; Kenney, 1987). It is often difficult for teenage parents to escape poverty because low levels of education, due to early school leaving, have closed doors to higher paying and more prestigious occupations. In addition, the shortage of affordable child care services makes returning to school almost

impossible. Schlesinger (1982) claimed that "... in our industrial society, adolescent pregnancy breeds poverty" (p. 46). Furthermore, the financial consequences are felt collectively as well as individually because the financing of welfare payments and the increased number of social services that these families need must be provided by the rest of society (Kenney, 1987; McKilligin, 1978). Thus, the long-term effects of teenage pregnancy can be summarized as a loss of human potential, with those so affected generally living less productive and perhaps less satisfying lives (Jagdeo, 1985, cited in "Youth in The 1980s," 1985).

The importance of providing adolescents with accurate information in the area of sexuality has long been recognized and additional preventative approaches have been posited. Burden and Klerman (1984) contended that many teenage pregnancies can be prevented by encouraging young women to achieve a good education and to plan for a career. The National Research Council (1987, cited in Kenney, 1987) in the United States reported that teenagers, especially females, who are goal-oriented are less likely to become sexually active at an early age and are more likely to behave responsibly if and when they do. Burden and Klerman (1984) further proposed that the overall economic situation of women needs to be improved to provide attractive alternatives to early parenthood and the low-paying jobs that females have traditionally held. Kenney (1987) also pointed out the importance of establishing career

goals to teenage pregnancy prevention and suggested additional strategies; they included: (a) providing appropriate role models, (b) helping students understand how teenage pregnancy would affect their lives, (c) teaching the model for and helping students understand the importance of responsible decision making, and (d) providing assertiveness training.

Furthermore, many young Canadians do not receive formal education in the area of sexuality and do not have easy access to health services such as family planning clinics. Keck, Duphinais, and Lewko (1988) reported that comprehensive sexuality education programs are available to fewer than 1 in 10 Canadian high school students, and Gordon (1986) further suggested that information presented by schools in the area of sexuality is not effective because it is often not relevant to students' needs. Furthermore, research cited in "Youth in The 1980s" (1985) has shown that young people receive much of their information about fertility and contraception from friends and through the media, and that such information is often either incomplete or inaccurate. As Rousseve (1985) pointed out, ignorance in the area of sexuality does not promote abstinence and likely contributes to the problem of teenage pregnancy.

Countries with extensive sexuality education programs and easily available contraceptive services have the lowest teenage pregnancy rates (Kenney, 1987). Research cited in "Youth in The 1980s" (1985) has also shown that young people who have taken sexuality education courses are less likely to have

sexual intercourse early, and more likely to use contraception when they become sexually active. As well, approximately 80% of parents, particularly those less educated, have supported sexuality education courses ("Youth in The 1980s," 1985; Schlesinger, 1982).

The family remains an important source of information about sexuality, and open communication between family members appears to be associated with the postponement of sexual activity and responsible sexual behavior. Welches (1979, cited in Proctor, 1986) found that of the young females surveyed, only 6% of those who viewed their relationships with both parents as above average reported being sexually active, whereas 38% of those who viewed their relationships with parents as below average reported being sexually active. In addition, King et al. (1989) found that students who reported not having sexual intercourse were more likely to report good relationships with their parents. However, Gordon (1986) pointed out that approximately 85% of adolescents do not receive meaningful sexuality education from their parents. This is likely due primarily to parents' own limited understanding and vocabulary and to the discomfort that they feel in discussing sexuality. Furthermore, "without one's parents to draw upon as a model, the cycle of noncommunication is repeated from generation to generation" (Gordon, 1986, p. 24). Therefore, educational programs to help parents talk with

their children about sexuality would likely be beneficial ("Youth in The 1980s," 1985).

The need for increased sexuality education is apparent in Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition to having a high teenage pregnancy rate, Beasley (1989) showed that, when compared with other young Canadians, Newfoundland high school students tended to be more sexually active, less likely to receive information about sexuality from their families and their schools, and more likely to receive information from friends and television. As well, King et al. (1989) found that more males than females reported that they had engaged in sexual activity. Except for dropouts, for whom the percentage was the same, the study also found that more males than females felt pressure from friends to be sexually active. Even though the physical changes associated with sexual maturation occur later in males than in females, males almost everywhere are more likely to begin sexual activity, including intercourse, earlier than females ("Youth in The 1980s," 1985). In addition, King et al. (1989) found that students with higher educational aspirations were less likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse, and that both male and female early school leavers were more likely to report having sexual intercourse at least once than were either grade 11 students or college and university students.

Research presented above indicates that young people, who are maturing at an earlier age, have a need for sexuality

education based on their developmental needs, presented early enough to prevent problems associated with teenage sexual activity, particularly pregnancy, but also sexually transmitted diseases and sexual abuse. Preventative approaches to teenage pregnancy through accurate and timely education have been widely recommended (Gordon, 1986; S. Harris, 1986; Keck et al., 1988; Rousseve, 1985; Schlesinger, 1982). King et al. (1989) recommended that such information be presented to young people prior to and throughout adolescence--corresponding to the elementary, junior high, and senior high school years. Yet, in Newfoundland and Labrador a course in adolescent sexuality and relationships is offered at the grade 9 level, often with little sexuality related information provided to younger students. For example, some female students who begin the menstrual cycle early, (ages 9, 10, and 11), appear not adequately prepared (personal observation). Furthermore, school libraries generally contain few written resources on the topic which can be read and understood by young adolescents.

Research has further indicated that sexuality education for adolescents should be tied to early concrete developmental changes such as menarche because ignorance of the menstrual cycle and conception is the underlying cause of a large number of teenage pregnancies each year (Black & DeBlassie, 1985; Proctor, 1986). Smith, Weinman, and Mumford (1982) found that of 104 pregnant teenagers surveyed, 74% reported that they had not wanted to become pregnant, and that the majority of them

did not understand the menstrual cycle and its relationship to fertility. Marsiglio and Mott (1986, cited in Kenney, 1987) noted that some young people are sexually active before formal education on the topic begins, and as Furstenberg (1980, cited in Black & DeBlassie, 1985) pointed out the general approach to teenage sexuality, including pregnancy, has been reactive rather than proactive.

Furthermore, educators cannot assume that without formal sexuality education students have sufficient knowledge upon which to make important decisions. Consequently, sexuality should not continue to be treated as a taboo subject but as "... an integral part of each person's physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual self ... throughout the life cycle" (Keck et al., 1988, p. 12). As Davis and Harris (1982, cited in Black & DeBlassie, 1985) proposed, to be effective, sexuality education must be based on the needs of the students concerned. Planning should consist of finding out students' level of understanding, their current knowledge, what they need to know in the area of sexuality and reproduction, and be followed by relevant information.

Extracurricular Participation

Extracurricular activities provided to students serve a number of functions including the wise use of leisure time, opportunities to socialize, responsibility taking, self-discipline, organizational and time management skills, as well

as skill development specific to each activity (Holland & Andre, 1987). In addition, Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, and Smith (1979, cited in Anderson, 1982) indicated that participation in school activities was related to academic achievement, and that students who experienced success in extracurricular activities were more likely to accept school norms. Holland and Andre (1987) also cited research showing that participation in athletics and other extracurricular activities contributes to educational aspirations, and to educational and occupational attainment for both male and female students; the number of activities participated in also appears to be important. Holland and Andre noted the need to further explore gender differences as they relate to participation in extracurricular activities. As well, Ekstrom, et al. (1986) found that students who left school early were less likely to participate in extracurricular activities, especially athletics, than were students who stayed in school.

Spady (1970, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) found that students who did not participate in any extracurricular activities were less likely to achieve goals than were typical students. Burbach (1972, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) examined the relationship between the extent of student participation and feelings of powerlessness--of having little or no control over life events; the results showed that as the number of activities in which students were involved increased, both social and high school powerlessness decreased. Crain,

Mahard, and Narat (1982, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) reported that self-esteem is associated with extracurricular participation, and Grabe (1981, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) further found that participation contributed to self-esteem more in small schools than in large ones.

Extracurricular participation appears to be of concern in Newfoundland and Labrador schools. Cluett (1984), for example, found that of the extracurricular activities available to grade 7 students, 64% participated in sports, 53% in clubs and related activities, 22% in arts and music activities, and 21% did not participate in any. Cluett suggested that non-participation among students may be due to demands of the academic program and to reluctance to become involved because of difficulty coping with school transition. In addition, as previously mentioned, extracurricular activities especially athletic programs appear to be very important to students, particularly in smaller communities. Eitzen (1975, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) found that high school athletic teams were valued and supported more in small rural communities, and in communities with a lower percentage of professionals and a higher percentage of lower income families. Lindsay (1982, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) further found that extracurricular participation rates were higher in small schools in both urban and rural areas, and that participation rates for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds were much higher in small than in large schools. However, Grabe

(1981, cited in Holland & Andre, 1987) found that students who failed to experience success in activities felt alienated from school, particularly when the pressure to participate was high. Therefore, providing all students with extracurricular activities through which success can be experienced appears to be important.

In addition, not all students have been provided with equal opportunities to participate in the activities which have been available; for example, organized sports have traditionally been segregated on the basis of gender. As a result, females have been excluded from contact sports such as wrestling, football, and ice hockey; and most sports in which women have participated have had distinct men's and women's teams (Hall, 1981). This situation has changed little as schools generally continue to promote separate teams for male and female students. As Collinson (1989) and Kostash (1987) pointed out, more team sports would provide additional opportunities for people to connect and share with each other and to learn to work better within groups.

Hall (1981) reported that, on average, men have 52% muscle mass in relation to their body weight, and that women have 40% muscle mass in relation to their body weight, while Gold (1977, cited in De Muth Allensworth & Byrne, 1982) reported that size, strength, and reaction times are roughly the same for males and females during childhood. Furthermore, females have tended to be bigger and stronger than males during early adolescence

because they mature earlier, but during middle adolescence physical size diverges so that by adulthood males are 10% bigger than females, on average. In addition, more participation in sports and other physical activities, a cultural expectation, increases the tendency for males to have somewhat greater physical strength than females. Posterski and Bibby (1989) found evidence of this among adolescents; males were more likely to report enjoying sports than were females, and females were more likely to report enjoying reading than were males. But as Labour Canada (1986) pointed out "there is no reason to assume that these likes and dislikes are innate rather than learned" (p. 39). Kostash (1987) also noted that, in the area of leisure activities, adolescent females are much more inactive and passive than are adolescent males, and that this results from socialized mind sets; for example, most adolescent females learn that certain body positions, required for athletic participation, such as squatting to be ready to receive a tennis ball or a grounded baseball are considered inappropriate for females. Such socialization restricts their athletic skill development, physical strength, and confidence to participate in some sports and activities.

In addition, Sage and Loudermilk (1979, cited in Hall, 1981) pointed out that female athletes receive less recognition for their skills and accomplishments than do male athletes because little value is placed on female participation in sports. As Hall (1981) noted, in North American society female

athletes of similar talent to male athletes usually receive
fewer psychological and material rewards. Kostash (1987) cited
a Globe and Mail report showing that less money has been spent
on female sports than on male sports, and that female athletics
have not been promoted to the extent that male athletics have.
Kostash further noted that female sports teams have had far
fewer fans because females generally were not encouraged to
develop their skills. De Muth Allensworth and Byrne, (1982)
also noted that physical education programs within schools have
minimized the importance of physical development for females,
and reported that in the United States some school districts
spent as much as ten times more money on male athletic programs
than on female athletic programs.

As well, statistics reported by the Department of
Education (1991a) showed that in Newfoundland and Labrador a
higher percentage of male than female students were enroled in
senior high school physical education courses during the 1990-
91 school year (Appendix A). Thus, fewer female students have
reaped the physical and psychological benefits of physical
education programs. Those benefits as outlined by Snyder and
Spreitzer (1978, cited in Hall, 1981) are: (a) greater
physical endurance, (b) self-awareness, and (c) confidence in
one's motor and learning ability--qualities which also
contribute to better performance and higher achievement in
education and in the world of work. Students need to be
encouraged to participate in athletic activities because of the

resulting benefits to physical and emotional growth, body image, and self-concept (De Muth Allensworth & Byrne, 1982). Furthermore, the Department of Education (1986) recommended that physical activities provided in Newfoundland and Labrador junior high schools stress skill improvement rather than competition, and that healthy attitudes toward competition should be encouraged as students strive toward self-improvement. This philosophy allows for male and female participation on the same teams and for greater overall student involvement.

Decision Making

Junior high school students make important decisions in a number of areas including school participation, course selection, extracurricular activities, choice of friends, sexuality, and career planning. However, providing students with factual information does not guarantee that they will make wise decisions because of the gap between pertinent knowledge and behavioral change (Hamrick, Anspaugh, & Smith, 1980). This phenomenon can be observed among informed adults who smoke cigarettes, who use alcohol and other types of drugs, or who engage in other risky behaviors. It appears that applying knowledge to life situations to the extent that behavioral change results involves a consideration of emotions and personal values; that is, factual information must in some way take on personal meaning for the individual (Hamrick, et al.,

1980; Varenhorst & Gelatt, 1971). Thus, both factual information and the skills to use it are essential to sound decision making.

The optimum age for teaching decision-making skills is not well-established, but it appears that most children are ready to learn them by the end of the elementary school years (Duryea, 1983). Whereas younger children who think in concrete terms are likely to attempt to solve problems through trial and error without planning, early adolescents develop the ability to manipulate abstract ideas and to solve problems by thinking ahead, generating alternatives, and considering outcomes (Biehler & Hudson, 1986). They are "... increasingly able to think about what can be rather than what is" (C. A. Harris, 1986, p. 608), an ability which is prerequisite to sound decision making.

It has been suggested that decision-making skills be taught before the beginning of junior high school to prepare adolescents to deal with potentially problematic situations that they may face (Duryea, 1983; Russell & Roberts, 1979'. However, King et al. (1989) found that 34% of grade 7 students and 24% of grade 9 students reported difficulty making decisions. In Newfoundland and Labrador a decision-making model is usually not presented until grade 9, after many students have made important decisions.

Decision-making skills do not guarantee that the best choice will always be made or that each outcome will be

positive because many factors influence the outcome of decisions, but they do help students use information. Employing decision-making skills requires the active involvement of the individual, and provide a framework within which solutions to problem situations can be outlined and assessed when they are encountered (Duryea, 1983). Therefore, Russell and Roberts (1979) contended that decision-making skills enable young people to interact within the social environment in ways that empower them to better manage their own behavior and to act responsibly.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the sample surveyed
by this study, the instruments used, and the procedure. This
is followed by a discussion of the independent and dependent
variables. Preparation for analyses and statistical procedures
are described last.

The Sample

This study surveyed 676 students in grades 7 (34%), 8
(31%), and 9 (35%). Urban and rural areas of Newfoundland were
represented equally, and 45% were male and 55% female. They
represented 41 classes, 14 schools, and 9 school board
districts.

Due to practical considerations of time and finances a
convenient sample was selected with the location of schools
being an important factor; therefore, no students from Labrador
were surveyed. However, the sample was stratified to represent
the denominational composition of the Newfoundland and Labrador
school system as well as the population distribution in urban
and rural areas.

The Instruments

The instruments used in this study were a student form designed to be completed independently by each student, and a teacher form to be completed by the teacher most familiar with the academic performance and academic ability of the students in each class selected. The forms were devised by the researcher based on current literature and on experience teaching junior high school students. Both forms were reviewed by a university educator and by two teachers who have considerable experience teaching junior high school students, and minor changes were made. Part A of the student form was administered to a class of grade 6 students resulting in changes to the instructions for this part. The student form was then completed by two school students, one in grade 5 and one in grade 7, to ensure that the difficulty level and time required were satisfactory.

Student Form

The student form (Appendix B) was a survey questionnaire composed of four parts: (A) a three-column checklist activity; (B) a 57 item, 4-point, Likert-type checklist; (C) one open-ended question; and (D) a personal information section.

Parts A, B, and C of the questionnaire reflected the dependent variable under investigation--the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students. Part

D of the questionnaire reflected 7 of the 8 independent variables under investigation. Students were not asked whether they lived in urban or rural areas.

Part A, numbers I and II pertained to students' participation and interest in extracurricular activities, and their reasons for not participating more. Statements included in Part B pertained to the following categories: student participation, teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, achievement-related, school climate, home-related, and identification with school. Students responded by checking (A) always, (O) often, (S) sometimes, or (N) never. All statements were positively worded so that for all except eight statements (A)--always indicated a positive response, and (N)--never indicated a negative response. The statements in Part B were arranged so that those pertaining to the eight factors were dispersed throughout. Each of the eight factors was represented by a minimum of six statements and a maximum of nine (Appendix C). Part C elicited students' suggestions for school improvement. Information elicited in Part D pertained to personal and parental factors. These were: gender, age, grade level, average school grades, grade retention, specific grade(s) repeated, levels of parental education, and parental occupations. This form took approximately 40 minutes for administration and completion.

Teacher Form

The teacher form (Appendix D) was designed to provide an informed estimate of each student's level of academic performance and academic ability. It requested that teachers report the average mark in school subjects and an estimate of the overall academic ability level for each student who completed the student questionnaire. This form took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Procedure

To obtain permission to conduct the study a package was forwarded to the superintendent of each school district selected. It contained a letter to the superintendent and a school board consent form (Appendix E), a copy of the certificate of approval from the Ethics Review Committee of the Memorial University Faculty of Education, a copy of the student form, a copy of the teacher form, a brief description of methodology (Appendix F), a copy of the letters to school principles and teachers (Appendix G) and a copy of the letter to parents and the parental consent form (Appendix H).

After school board consent was received, a telephone call was made to the respective superintendents informing them of the schools to be surveyed, except in the cases of 2 of the 9 boards which selected schools to be surveyed. Subsequently, each school principal concerned was informed of the study in

writing. Each principal was initially sent a letter, a copy of the school board consent form, a copy of the letters to teachers and parents, and a copy of the parental consent form. A copy of the student questionnaire was not forwarded, but 2 of the 14 principals later requested it.

After a week, the written correspondence was followed by a telephone call to each principal to ensure their cooperation and to further inform them of the research procedures. Each principal was asked to select one class each of grades 7, 8, and 9 students representing a cross-section of academic ability. It was requested that the principals elicit the cooperation of a teacher with considerable involvement with each class to forward the letter and consent form to parents, to collect the parental consent forms, and to complete the teacher form. The maximum number of students participating was also ascertained and a tentative date for administration of the student questionnaire arranged. Subsequently, a package was sent to each principal containing the appropriate number of the letter to parents, the parental consent form, the letter to teachers, and the teacher form.

Just prior to each school visit, the respective principals were again contacted by telephone. During the school visit parental consent forms and teacher forms were collected in all except one school where a staff member was extremely concerned about confidentiality. In this case the researcher consulted with teachers and put the information from the form directly

onto the student questionnaires. In all except one school, the student questionnaires were administered by the researcher, who in most classes was accompanied by an assistant, also a certified teacher. In the school which the researcher did not visit the forms were administered by a certified teacher who did substitute work in the school.

Students in each class surveyed were provided with a brief explanation of the research project and its purpose, as well as the name and position of the researcher. They were also told that the researcher had a method of identifying the questionnaire of each student so that it could be linked up with other information. Students were encouraged to be frank, and the importance of confidentiality on the part of the researcher, a school guidance counsellor was stressed. They were also told that the results of the study would be reported anonymously in terms of groups of students rather than of individual students.

Specific instructions were given for Part A of the questionnaire and general instructions were given for Parts B, C, and D. Students were encouraged to ask for clarification if needed. Student cooperation and effort in completing the questionnaire were excellent.

The data for this study were collected during February, March, and April of 1991. Approximately 74% of students who could have participated in the study returned the necessary parental consent forms and did so. Almost all students in most

classes participated. However, participation in 6 of the 34 classes was unusually low. It appeared that school personnel involved had not encouraged those students to participate.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the research procedures were ethically sound, the researcher provided students, parents, and appropriate school and school board personnel with a clear explanation of the purpose of the study and of the procedures to be followed. In addition, because students were requested to report their personal experiences and because teachers were asked to provide an estimate of each student's performance in and ability to do academic work, confidentiality and anonymity were crucial.

The following steps were taken to ensure ethically sound research:

1. The researcher was identified by name and by title.

2. Letters were forwarded to parents, teachers, school principals, and school superintendents outlining the purpose of the study and procedures to be followed.

3. An estimate of the time required to complete both the student form and the teacher form was provided.

4. The signed consent of the school board superintendent was obtained for the schools surveyed.

5. A copy of the school board consent was forwarded to each principal and the principal's agreement was obtained.

6. Signed parental consent was obtained for each student who participated in the study. It granted permission for the student to complete the questionnaire and for a teacher to provide an estimate of the student's academic performance and academic ability.

7. Teachers were provided with an envelope in which to seal the teacher form, and the forms were collected from teachers by the researcher during the school visits.

8. The position of the researcher and the purpose of the study were explained to each class of students.

9. Students were told that the researcher had devised a method of linking their questionnaire with other information obtained, that all identifying information would be held in confidence by the researcher, and that all reporting would be anonymous.

10. The questionnaires were administered and collected by the researcher in all but one school. In that school each student was provided with an envelope in which to seal the questionnaire.

11. In order to protect student and school anonymity, all student forms were given a code number to correspond with a master list, available only to the researcher. After the questionnaires were matched with information on the teacher

forms, all data was handled using only the code numbers. This method is similar to the one used by Wiseman (1982).

12. Complete anonymity was ensured. Results reported reflected the dependent and independent variables; no identifying information is included.

<u>Analysis</u>

<u>Discussion of Independent Variables</u>

<u>Gender</u>: Male, Female.

<u>Age</u>: Present age of student based on student report.

<u>Academic Ability</u>: Student ability to achieve academically based on teachers' reported estimates using the following scale: (1) Above Average, (2) High Average, (3) Low Average, and (4) Below Average. High average and low average levels of ability were explained to teachers as higher and lower levels of ability within the average range; classifications did not correspond in meaning with those used in the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. Students with ability levels below the average range were classified as below average, and those with ability levels above the average range as above average.

<u>Grade Level</u>: Present grade placement of students based on student report.

<u>Grade Retention</u>: The practice of requiring students to repeat school grades. This study compared students who had

been retained in a grade, or grades, with those who had not been retained; retention was based on student report of whether a grade had been repeated, and students were asked the specific grade, or grades, in which this had occurred.

Parental Education: Highest level of education attained by students' parents based on student report of the levels of education attained by the person's mother and father.

Parental Occupation: Occupational areas of students' parents based on student report of the current occupational areas of the person's mother and father.

Area of Residence: Urban, Rural.

Urban: The Department of Education (1991a) used Statistics Canada information which classified urban areas as Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA), Census Agglomerations (CA), and other communities of 5,000 and over (Appendix I).

Rural: The Department of Education (1991a) used Statistics Canada information which classified rural areas as communities of less than 5,000 which were not census subdivisions of a CMA or a CA.

Discussion of Dependent Variable

Junior High School Students: Students registered in grades 7, 8, and 9.

Educational Experiences: Students' reported experiences in and perceptions of their educational environment. The factors investigated were: student participation, teacher-

related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, achievement-related, school climate, extracurricular participation, home-related, and identification with school. Students were also asked, via an open-ended question, to suggest ways in which schools could be changed to better meet their needs--students' suggestions for school improvement.

Preparation for Analysis

For the eight statements in Part B which indicated a negative response (numbers 37, 38, 39, 43, 44, 47, 48, and 49), the values were reversed before analysis so that they agreed in meaning with the other 49 statements.

Part C of the student form was an open-ended question requesting that students indicate how schools could be changed to better meet their needs. In order to analyze the 250 different responses, it was necessary for the researcher to identify themes and organize the responses into categories. This resulted in a list of 21 "school improvement categories" (Appendix J).

Part D of the student form requested that students' report the educational level of their parents. These levels were organized into nine categories (Appendix K), and the highest level achieved by parents was used in the analysis.

Part D of the student form also requested that students report their parents' occupations. The 212 different occupations identified were grouped under 12 headings (Appendix

L), and each occupation was placed into the appropriate category (Appendix M). The <u>Choices Guide</u> (1987) and the <u>Job Futures Handbook</u> (1988) were used in preparing this categorization.

Information on performance and ability was obtained from a teacher for each student surveyed. Therefore, it was necessary to match the teacher forms with the student forms. This was done by copying the information for each student from the teacher form, without the identifying information, onto the respective student questionnaires.

<u>Statistical Procedures</u>

The Statistical Social Science Computer Package Program, SPSSX, was used to analyze the data collected for this study. Part B of the student questionnaire which pertained to eight aspects of students' perceived educational experiences was analyzed to determine its internal consistency reliability. Part A of the questionnaire which pertained to student's extracurricular participation and interest, and part C which elicited students' suggestions for school improvement were not checked for reliability.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data in Part A, number I, and in Part B to answer research questions under investigation. When the independent variable was comprised of more than two groups, significant differences

identified by the ANOVA were analyzed using the Student Newman-Keuls post hoc multiple comparisons procedure.

Multivariate correlational techniques were used to analyze the data obtained by Part A, number I, and part B of the student questionnaire to obtain additional information to that provided by analysis of variance. Multiple regression analysis was done to determine the magnitude and significance of relationships between the independent variables and each category of the dependent variable under investigation. A correlation matrix was generated and correlations for all variables are presented in chapter IV. This information enabled the researcher to clarify relationships among variables and to predict at better than chance levels.

Stepwise multiple regression, step-up procedure, was used to regress the nine categories of the dependent variable--students' perceived educational experiences (student participation, teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related achievement-related, school climate, extracurricular involvement, home-related, and identification with school) upon the eight independent variables selected (gender, age, academic ability, grade level, grade retention, parental education, parental occupation, and area of residence). Information obtained enabled the researcher to examine the relative impact and significance of each independent variable upon the categories of the dependent variable. This enabled the

researcher to answer research questions with confidence that findings did not occur by chance.

The crosstabs descriptive statistics procedure was used to analyze the data in parts A, B, and C of the student questionnaire. This provided an overview and breakdown of student responses.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of all research
procedures used in the study. They were (a) reliability
analysis, (b) analysis of variance (ANOVA), (c) multiple
regression techniques, and (d) descriptive statistics. A
summary of research findings is also included.

Reliability analysis results are presented first, followed
by ANOVA results for the eight research questions posed
including results of the Student Newman-Keuls post hoc multiple
comparisons procedure when relevant. This is followed by a
discussion of correlation coefficient relationships, and a
discussion of stepwise multiple regression results for the
eight independent variables with the nine categories of the
dependent variable.

A synthesis of findings related to research questions is
then presented in view of relationships identified as
significant by both ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression
analysis. Results of the Student-Newman Keuls procedure are
included when relevant.

Results of descriptive statistics are presented in the
following order: (a) findings of specific questions on the
student form (b) findings related to teaching methods, (c)

findings related to extracurricular participation and interest, and (d) findings related to school improvement. This is followed by additional multiple regression findings of interest, although not the focus of the study.

A summary of all research findings are then presented as follows: (a) summary of research question results, (b) summary of descriptive statistics, and (c) summary of additional findings.

Reliability

Reliability analysis showed the internal consistency of Part B of the student questionnaire, a 57-item Likert-type scale, to be .92, indicating a high degree of reliability.

Analysis of Variance Results

It should be noted that this study involved a large sample, and that some of the variables may have been intercorrelated. Therefore, small mean differences were statistically significant, and some of the statistically significant differences may have occurred by chance.

Research Question 1: Are there significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by male and female junior high school students?

ANOVA results, presented in Table 1, indicate that there were significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by male and female junior high school students. The results indicate that male students perceived the following aspects of their educational experiences more negatively than female students did: (1) student participation, (2) instruction-related, (3) achievement-related, (4) school climate, (5) extracurricular participation, and (6) identification with school. There was no significant difference identified in the teacher-related, knowledge-related, and home-related categories. Table 1 also indicates that in no category were the educational experiences of female students more negative than those of male students. Therefore, this research indicated that at the junior high school level, female students perceived their educational experiences more positively than male students did.

Research Question 2: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students of different ages?

Information presented in Table 2 (ANOVA results) and Table 3 (related means) indicate that there were significant differences among the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students of different ages. The differences pertained to the following categories: (1) student participation; (2) teacher-related; (3) instruction-related;

Table 1

Students' Educational Experiences Related to Gender

Categories	Male		Female		ANOVA		
	n	M[a]	n	M[a]	F	df	p
Student participation	305	2.07	370	2.00	4.34	1,673	.0377*
Teacher-related	305	2.38	370	2.37	0.15	1,673	.6995
Instruction-related	305	2.36	370	2.31	4.33	1,673	.0377*
Knowledge-related	305	2.60	370	2.58	0.52	1,673	.4705
Achievement-related	305	2.03	370	1.88	14.49	1,673	.0001*
School climate	305	2.49	370	2.33	21.96	1,673	.0000*
Extracurricular	305	4.63	370	4.28	5.58	1,673	.0185*
Home-related	305	1.88	370	1.84	0.78	1,673	.3769
Identification with school	305	2.39	370	2.29	5.90	1,673	.0154*

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by p.

Table 2

Students' Educational Experience Related to Age

Categories	ANOVA		
	F	df	P
Student participation	4.57	5,668	.0004*
Teacher-related	3.51	5,668	.0038*
Instruction-related	4.20	5,668	.0009*
Knowledge-related	4.85	5,668	.0002*
Achievement-related	11.14	5,668	.0000*
School climate	2.53	5,668	.0279*
Extracurricular	1.45	5,668	.1808
Home-related	5.76	5,668	.0000*
Identification with school	4.00	5,668	.0014*

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

and students 14 years old were more negative than those 12 years old.

2. In the teacher-related category, students 16 years old were more negative than those 12, 13, and 14 years old, and students 15 years old were more negative than those 14 years old.

3. In the instruction-related category, students 15 years old were more negative than those 12, 13, and 14 years old.

4. In the knowledge-related category, students 12 and 13 years old were more negative than those 14 years old, with those 12 years old being the most negative.

5. In the achievement-related category, students 15, 16 and 17 years old were more negative than those 12, 13, and 14 years old, and students 17 years old were more negative than those 15 years old.

6. In the school climate category, students 15 years old were more negative than those 12, 13, and 14 years old.

7. In the home-related category, students 15 and 16 years old were more negative than those 12, 13, and 14 years old.

8. In the identification with school category, students 15 years old were more negative than those 12, 13, and 14 years old.

Therefore, this research indicated that the older students were at the junior high school level, the more negatively they perceived their educational experiences. With the exception of

the knowledge-related area, students 12, 13, and 14 years old perceived their educational experiences the most positively.

Research Question 3: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have different levels of academic ability?

Information presented in Table 4 (ANOVA results) and Table 5 (related means) indicate that there were significant differences among the educational experiences of junior high school students with difference levels of academic ability (1 = Above Average, 2 = Higher Average, 3 = Lower Average, and 4 = Below Average). The differences identified pertained to the following categories: (1) student participation, (2) teacher-related, (3) instruction-related, (4) achievement-related, (5) school climate, (6) home-related, (7) extracurricular participation, and (8) identification with school. There was no significant difference identified in the knowledge-related category.

Post hoc analysis using the Student Newman-Keuls procedure identified the following significant differences ($p < .05$) among groups:

1. In the student participation category, below average ability students were more negative than lower, higher, and above average ability students; lower average ability students

Table 4
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Academic Ability

	ANOVA		
Categories	F	df	P
Student participation	15.47	3,669	.0000[*]
Teacher-related	7.84	3,669	.0000[*]
Instruction-related	4.48	3,669	.0040[*]
Knowledge-related	2.14	3,669	.0945
Achievement-related	38.74	3,669	.0000[*]
School climate	7.05	3,669	.0001[*]
Extracurricular	10.41	3,669	.0377[*]
Home-related	10.83	3,669	.0000[*]
Identification with school	8.05	3,669	.0000[*]

[*] Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

Table 5
Means[a] for Academic Ability

	1 (n = 219)	2 (n = 241)	3 (n = 167)	4 (n = 46)
Categories	M[a]	M[a]	M[a]	M[a]
Student participation	1.92	2.01	2.13	2.30
Teacher-related	2.27	2.37	2.49	2.51
Instruction-related	2.28	2.33	2.39	2.40
Knowledge-related	2.57	2.60	2.63	2.44
Achievement-related	1.74	1.92	2.14	2.34
School climate	2.32	2.37	2.52	2.49
Extracurricular	4.04	4.20	4.54	4.68
Home-related	1.72	1.86	1.98	2.06
Identification with school	2.22	2.32	2.47	2.40

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

were more negative than higher and above average ability students; and higher average ability students were more negative than above average ability students. Thus, the lower the academic ability level of students, the more negative were their perceptions of their experiences in the student participation category; conversely, the higher the academic ability level of students the more positive were their perceptions of their experiences in the student participation category.

2. In the teacher-related category, below average, lower average, and higher average ability students were more negative than above average ability students, and lower average ability students were more negative than higher average ability students. Students with higher average and above average levels of academic ability perceived their experiences in the teacher-related category the most positively.

3. In the instruction-related category, lower average ability students were more negative than above average ability students.

4. In the achievement-related category, below average ability students were more negative than lower, higher, and above average ability students; lower average ability students were more negative than higher and above average ability students; and higher average ability students were more negative than above average ability students. Thus, the lower the academic ability level of students, the more negative were

their perceptions of their experiences in the achievement-related category; conversely, the higher the academic ability level of students, the more positive were their perceptions of their experiences in the achievement-related category.

5. In the school climate category, lower average ability students were more negative than higher average and above average ability students.

6. In the extracurricular participation category, lower average ability students participated in fewer extracurricular activities than above average ability students.

7. In the home-related category, below average and lower average ability students were more negative than higher average and above average ability students; and higher average ability students were more negative than above average ability students. Students with an above average level of academic ability perceived their experiences in the home-related category the most positively.

8. In the identification with school category, lower average ability students were more negative than higher average and above average ability students; and higher average ability students were more negative than above average ability students. Students with an above average level of academic ability perceived their experiences in the identification with school category the most positively.

Therefore, this research indicated that the higher the academic ability level of junior high school students, the more

positively they perceived their educational experiences. The research also indicated that students with an above average level of academic ability perceived their educational experiences the most positively.

Research Question 4: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9 school students?

Information presented in Table 6 (ANOVA results) and Table 7 (related means) indicate that there were significant differences among the educational experiences of grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9 school students. The differences identified pertained to the following categories: (1) student participation, (2) instruction-related, (3) knowledge-related, (4) achievement-related, (5) home-related, and (6) identification with school. There was no significant difference identified in the teacher-related, school climate, and extracurricular participation categories.

Post hoc analysis using the Student Newman-Keuls procedure identified the following significant differences ($p < .05$) among groups:

1. In the student participation category, students in grade 9 were more negative than students in grade 7.

2. In the instruction-related category, students in grade 9 were more negative than students in grades 7 and 8.

Table 6

Students' Educational Experiences Related to Grade Level

	ANOVA		
Categories	F	df	P
Student participation	4.81	2,672	.0084*
Teacher-related	0.62	2,672	.5377
Instruction-related	3.81	2,672	.0226*
Knowledge-related	9.45	2,672	.0001*
Achievement-related	6.03	2,672	.0025*
School climate	1.09	2,672	.3366
Extracurricular	1.67	2,672	.1711
Home-related	7.47	2,672	.0006*
Identification with school	5.09	2,672	.0064*

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

Table 7

Means* for Grade Level

	7 (n = 230)	8 (n = 214)	9 (n = 231)
Categories	M*	M*	M*
Student participation	1.97	2.02	2.09
Teacher-related	2.35	2.38	2.40
Instruction-related	2.32	2.30	2.38
Knowledge-related	2.68	2.59	2.49
Achievement-related	1.88	1.93	2.03
School climate	2.38	2.39	2.44
Extracurricular	4.58	4.26	4.59
Home-related	1.76	1.86	1.95
Identification with school	2.30	2.28	2.42

* The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

3. In the knowledge-related category, students in grade 7 were more negative than students in grades 8 and 9, and students in grade 8 were more negative than students in grade 9.

4. In the achievement-related category, students in grade 9 were more negative than students in grades 7 and 8.

5. In the home-related category, students in grades 8 and 9 were more negative than students in grade 7.

6. In the identification with school category, students in grade 9 were more negative than students in grades 7 and 8.

Therefore, this research indicated that students in grades 7 and 8 perceived their educational experiences more positively than did students in grade 9.

<u>Research Question 5</u>: Are educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have been retained in a grade, or grades, significantly different from those of students who have not been retained?

ANOVA results, presented in Table 8, indicate that there were significant differences between the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students who had been retained in a grade or grades, and those who had not been retained. The results indicate that students who had been retained in a grade or grades perceived the following aspects of their educational experiences more negatively than students

Table 8
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Grade Retention

	Yes		No		ANOVA		
Categories	n	M[a]	n	M[a]	F	df	p
Student participation	112	2.17	560	2.00	15.38	1,670	.0001*
Teacher-related	112	2.50	560	2.35	8.50	1,670	.0037*
Instruction-related	112	2.42	560	2.32	9.40	1,670	.0023*
Knowledge-related	112	2.56	560	2.59	0.37	1,670	.5412
Achievement-related	112	2.25	560	1.89	59.25	1,670	.0000*
School climate	112	2.50	560	2.39	5.42	1,670	.0202*
Extracurricular	112	4.52	560	4.19	2.69	1,670	.1017
Home-related	112	1.98	560	1.84	7.29	1,670	.0071*
Identification with school	112	2.47	560	2.31	10.14	1,670	.0015*

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by p.

who had not been retained: (1) student participation, (2) teacher-related, (3) instruction-related, (4) achievement related, (5) school climate, (6) home-related and (7) identification with school. There was no significant difference identified in the knowledge-related and extracurricular participation categories. Table 8 also indicates that in no category were the perceived educational experiences of students who had not been retained more negative than those of students who had been retained.

Notably, of the total sample, 112--(16.6%) of students reported that they had been retained, 32--(4.7%) reported that they had been retained more than once, and four of the 32-- .006% reported that they had been retained three times. ANOVA

results further indicated that the perceived educational experiences of students who had been retained in more than one grade were more negative, in the identification with school category, than those of students who had not been retained [F (1,110) = 6.58, p = .0017)]. Therefore, students who had been retained in a grade identified with school less than students who had not been retained, and students who had been retained in more than one grade identified with school even less than those who had been retained once. No other significant difference was identified between the perceived educational experiences of students who had been retained in one grade and those who had been retained in more than one grade.

Overall, this research indicated that at the junior high school level, students who had not been retained perceived their educational experiences much more positively than those who had been retained in a grade or grades.

Research Question 6: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different levels of parental education?

This question was answered by looking at (A) mothers' educational levels and (B) fathers' educational levels.

A. Information presented in Table 9 (ANOVA results) and Table 10 (related means) indicate that there were significant differences among the perceived educational experiences of

Table 9
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Level of
Mothers' Education

	ANOVA		
Categories	F	df	P
Student participation	1.28	7,642	.2592
Teacher-related	1.79	7,642	.0868
Instruction-related	2.16	7,642	.0363*
Knowledge-related	0.20	7,642	.4905
Achievement-related	5.28	7,642	.0000*
School climate	2.37	7,642	.0214
Extracurricular	2.71	7,642	.0089*
Home-related	4.53	7,642	.0001*
Identification with school	3.27	7,642	.0020*

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

Table 10
Means* for Mother's Education

	1 (n = 137)	2 (n = 235)	3 (n = 136)	4 (n = 58)	5 (n = 135)
Category	M*	M*	M*	M*	M*
Student participation	2.10	2.23	2.01	1.98	1.97
Teacher-related	2.44	2.41	2.36	2.26	2.32
Instruction-related	2.41	2.36	2.31	2.29	2.28
Knowledge-related	2.57	2.61	2.58	2.46	2.60
Achievement-related	2.15	1.94	1.93	1.85	1.82
School climate	2.49	2.44	2.36	2.29	2.38
Extracurricular	5.09	4.39	4.49	4.22	4.29
Home-related	2.00	1.90	1.83	1.78	1.73
Identification with school	2.47	2.37	2.28	2.17	2.23

* The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences
represented by the category.

junior high school students whose mothers had different levels of education (1 = junior high school, 2 = senior high school, 3 = trades school/community college, 4 = school of nursing, and 5 = university). Specific comparisons were made only for the five levels of education with numbers of 30 or more. Thus, there may have been more specific significant differences indicated had the numbers in other groups been larger.

The differences identified pertained to the following categories: (1) instruction-related, (2) achievement-related, (3) school climate, (4) extracurricular participation, (5) home-related, and (6) identification with school. There was no significant difference identified in the student participation, teacher-related, and knowledge-related categories.

Post hoc analysis using the Student Newman-Keuls procedure identified the following significance differences ($p < .05$) among groups:

1. In the instruction-related category, students whose mothers had junior high school education were more negative than students whose mothers had university education.

2. In the achievement-related category, students whose mothers had junior high school education were more negative than students whose mothers had senior high school, trades school/community college, school of nursing, and university education.

3. In the extracurricular participation category, students whose mothers had senior high school education

participated in fewer activities than students whose mothers had university education.

4. In the home-related category, students whose mothers had junior high school and senior high school education were more negative than students whose mothers had university education; and students whose mothers had junior high school education were more negative than students whose mothers had trades school/community college education.

5. In the identification with school category, students whose mothers had junior high school education were more negative than students whose mothers had trades school/ community college, school of nursing, and university education.

Therefore, this research suggested that students whose mothers had junior high school education perceived their educational experiences more negatively than students whose mothers had higher levels of education, and that students whose mothers had university education perceived their educational experiences more positively than other students.

B. Information presented in Table 11 (ANOVA results) and Table 12 (related means) indicates that there were significant differences among the educational experiences of junior high school students whose fathers had different levels of education (1 = elementary school, 2 = junior high school, 3 = senior high school, 4 = trades school/community college, and 5 = university). Specific comparisons were made only for the five

Table 11
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Level of Father's Education

	ANOVA		
Categories	F	df	P
Student participation	2.98	7,616	.0044[*]
Teacher-related	1.94	7,616	.0610
Instruction-related	2.24	7,616	.0298[*]
Knowledge-related	1.10	7,616	.3620
Achievement-related	7.70	7,616	.0000[*]
School climate	2.69	7,616	.0094[*]
Extracurricular	3.17	7,616	.0027[*]
Identification with school	2.30	7,616	.0019[*]
Home-related	2.80	7,616	.0072[*]

[*] Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

Table 12
Means[a] for Father's Education

	1 (n = 26) M[a]	2 (n = 97) M[a]	3 (n = 136) M[a]	4 (n = 156) M[a]	5 (n = 189) M[a]
Categories					
Student participation	2.27	7.05	2.07	1.99	1.94
Teacher-related	2.61	2.37	2.37	2.31	2.33
Instruction-related	2.54	2.36	2.34	2.32	2.29
Knowledge-related	2.74	2.54	2.53	2.52	2.61
Achievement-related	2.36	2.08	1.96	1.94	1.78
School climate	2.65	2.44	2.38	2.43	2.31
Extracurricular	4.65	4.58	4.83	4.11	3.96
Home-related	2.20	1.89	1.89	1.84	1.76
Identification with school	2.68	2.40	2.34	2.28	2.23

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

levels of education with numbers of 26 or more. Thus, there may have been more significant differences indicated had the numbers in other groups been larger.

The differences identified pertained to the following categories: (1) student participation, (2) instruction-related, (3) achievement-related, (4) school climate, (5) extracurricular participation, (6) home-related, and (7) identification with school. No significant difference was identified in the student participation and teacher-related categories.

Post hoc analysis using the Student Newman-Keuls procedure identified the following significant differences ($\underline{p} < .05$) among groups:

1. In the student participation category, students whose fathers had elementary and senior high school education were more negative than students whose fathers had university education; and students whose fathers had only elementary school education were more negative than students whose fathers had trades school/community college education.

2. In the instruction-related category, students whose fathers had only elementary school education were more negative than students whose fathers had senior high school, trades school/community college, and university education.

3. In the achievement-related category, students whose fathers had only elementary school education were more negative than students whose fathers had junior high school, senior high

school, trades school/community college, and university education; and students whose fathers had junior high school, senior high school, and trades school/community college education were more negative than students whose fathers had university education. Thus, students whose fathers had only elementary school education perceived their experiences in the achievement-related category the most negatively, and students whose fathers had university educa⸱ᵢon perceived their experiences in this category the most positively.

4. In the school climate category, students whose fathers had only elementary school education were more negative than students whose fathers had university education.

5. In the extracurricular participation category, students whose fathers had senior high school education participation in fewer activities than students whose fathers had trades school/community college, and university education.

6. In the home-related category, students whose fathers had only elementary school education were more negative than students whose fathers had junior high school, senior high school, trades school/community college, and university education.

7. In the identification with school category, students whose fathers had only elementary school education were more negative than students whose fathers had junior high school, senior high school, trades school/community college, and university education.

Therefore, this research indicated that students whose fathers had only elementary school education perceive their educational experiences more negatively than students whose fathers had higher levels of education.

Research Question 7: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different parental occupational areas?

This question was answered by looking at (A) mothers' occupational areas and (B) fathers' occupational areas.

A. Information presented in Table 13 (ANOVA results) and Table 14 (related means) indicates that there were significant differences among the educational experiences of junior high school students whose mothers worked in different occupational areas (1 = professional; 2 = business; 3 = clerical, sales, and service; (4) = primary industry; and 5 = homemaker. Specific comparisons were made only for the five occupational areas with numbers of 30 or more. Thus, there may have been more specific significant differences indicated had the numbers in other groups been larger.

The differences identified pertained to the following categories: (1) student participation, (2) achievement-related, (3) extracurricular participation, (4) home-related, and (5) identification with school. There was no significant

Table 13
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Mothers' Occupational Areas

	ANOVA		
Categories	F	df	P
Student participation	1.92	10,608	.0398*
Teacher-related	1.22	10,608	.2718
Instruction-related	0.86	10,608	.5711
Knowledge-related	0.83	10,608	.6013
Achievement-related	2.77	10,608	.0023*
School climate	1.70	10,608	.0768
Extracurricular	2.85	10,608	.0018*
Home-related	2.38	10,608	.0092*
Identification with school	1.94	10,608	.0371*

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

Table 14
Means[a] for Mothers' Occupational Areas

	1 (n = 112)	2 (n = 35)	3 (n = 182)	4 (n = 45)	5 (n = 174)
Categories	M[a]	M[a]	M[a]	M[a]	M[a]
Student participation	1.95	2.01	2.01	2.03	2.06
Teacher-related	2.31	2.38	2.35	2.35	2.43
Instruction-related	2.27	2.34	2.33	2.34	2.37
Knowledge-related	2.54	2.49	2.60	2.53	2.63
Achievement-related	1.79	1.90	1.96	1.99	1.99
School climate	2.32	2.33	2.42	2.39	2.43
Extracurricular	3.87	4.34	4.69	4.85	4.36
Home-related	1.77	1.82	1.89	1.95	1.90
Identification with school	2.19	2.26	2.33	2.39	2.40

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

difference identified in the teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, and school-related categories.

Post hoc analysis using the Student Newman-Keuls procedure identified the following significant differences ($p < .05$) among groups:

1. In the achievement-related category, students whose mothers were homemakers and students whose mothers were employed in clerical, sales, and service occupations were more negative than students whose mothers were employed in professional occupations.

2. In the extracurricular participation category, students whose mothers were employed in primary industries participated in fewer activities than students whose mothers were employed in professional occupations.

3. In the identification with school category, students whose mothers were homemakers were more negative than students whose mothers were employed in professional occupations.

B. Information presented in Table 15 (ANOVA results) and Table 16 (related means) indicates that there were significant differences among the educational experiences of junior high school students whose fathers worked in different occupational areas: (1) professional, (2) business, (3) skilled trades, (4) primary industries, and (5) unskilled labor. Specific comparisons were made only for the five occupational areas with numbers of 30 or more. Thus, there may have been more specific

Table 15
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Fathers' Occupational Areas

	ANOVA		
Categories	F	df	P
Student participation	1.92	11,587	.0342*
Teacher-related	0.83	11,587	.6143
Instruction-related	1.46	11,587	.1412
Knowledge-related	0.96	11,587	.4779
Achievement-related	3.60	11,587	.0001*
School climate	1.38	11,587	.1766
Extracurricular	2.18	11,587	.0144*
Home-related	1.65	11,587	.0814
Identification with school	1.75	11,587	.0603

* Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by P.

Table 16
Means[a] for Fathers' Occupational Areas

Categories	1 (n = 95) M[a]	2 (n = 100) M[a]	3 (n = 132) M[a]	4 (n = 70) M[a]	5 (n = 106) M[a]
Student participation	1.92	2.04	1.96	2.19	2.09
Teacher-related	2.31	2.37	2.31	2.40	2.42
Instruction-related	2.30	2.32	2.31	2.43	2.34
Knowledge-related	2.62	2.61	2.53	2.53	2.57
Achievement-related	1.77	1.90	1.90	2.12	2.00
School climate	2.31	2.38	2.38	2.51	2.39
Extracurricular	4.23	4.39	4.39	4.54	4.75
Home-related	1.74	1.87	1.85	1.96	1.84
Identification with school	2.19	2.33	2.28	2.43	2.38

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

significant differences indicated had the numbers in other groups been larger.

The differences identified pertained to the following categories: (1) student participation, (2) achievement-related, and (3) extracurricular participation. There was no significant difference identified in the teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, school climate, home-related, and identification with school categories.

Post hoc analysis using the Student Newman-Keuls procedure identified the following significant differences (p < .05) among groups:

1. In the achievement-related category, students whose fathers were employed in primary industries were more negative than students whose fathers were employed in professional, business, and skilled trades occupations; and students whose fathers were employed in unskilled labor occupations were more negative than students whose fathers were employed in professional occupations.

Therefore, this research indicated that students whose parents were employed in professional occupations perceived their achievement-related educational experiences more positively than students whose parents were employed in areas for which less formal education was required, i.e., mothers who were homemakers and mothers who were employed in clerical sales, and service occupations, and fathers who were employed in primary industries and in unskilled labor occupations.

Research Question 8: Are there significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who live in urban areas and those who live in rural areas?

ANOVA results, presented in Table 17, indicate that there were significant differences between the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students who lived in urban areas and those who lived in rural areas. The results indicate that students who lived in urban areas perceived the following aspects of their educational experiences more negatively than students who lived in rural areas: (1) instruction-related, (2) knowledge-related, (3) extracurricular participation, and (4) home-related. There were no significant differences identified in the student participation, teacher-related, achievement-related, school climate, and identification with school categories. Table 17 also indicates that in no category were the perceived educational experiences of students who lived in rural areas more negative than those of students who lived in urban areas. Therefore, this research indicated that, at the junior high school level, students who lived in rural areas perceived their educational experiences somewhat more positively than students who lived in urban areas.

Table 17
Students' Educational Experiences Related to Area of Residence

	Urban		Rural		ANOVA		
Categories	n	M[a]	n	M[a]	F	df	p
Student participation	336	2.06	340	2.00	2.69	1,674	.1015
Teacher-related	336	2.41	340	2.34	2.51	1,674	.1134
Instruction-related	336	2.36	340	2.31	4.09	1,674	.0435[*]
Knowledge-related	336	2.65	340	2.52	12.09	1,674	.0005[*]
Achievement-related	336	1.92	340	1.98	2.62	1,674	.1062
School climate	336	2.41	340	2.39	0.45	1,674	.5016
Extracurricular	336	4.64	340	4.30	5.23	1,674	.0224[*]
Home-related	336	1.91	340	1.80	7.58	1,674	.0061[*]
Identification with school	336	2.36	340	2.31	1.77	1,674	.1835

[a] The higher the mean score, the more negative were students' reports of their experiences represented by the category.

[*] Indicates significant difference at the level indicated by p.

Correlation Coefficients

A correlation matrix was generated using multiple regression techniques, and correlations for all variables are presented in Table 18. The relationships between the eight independent variables under investigation with the nine categories of the dependent variable are discussed below.

It should be noted that many of the correlations between the independent variables and categories of the dependent were low. Although statistically significant, these relationships accounted for only a small amount of variance.

Table 18

Correlation Matrix For All Variables

Variables	Resi-dence	Peduc	Pocoup	Gender	Age	Grade	Ability	Reten-tion	Part	Tchr	Home	In-struct	Know	Achieve	Cli-mate	Ident	Extcurr
Residence	1.000	.000	.000	.342	.010	.173	.000	.008	.051	.057	.003	.022	.000	.053	.751	.092	.011
Peduc	-.355	1.000	.000	.242	.000	.093	.000	.114	.000	.008	.000	.091	.367	.000	.091	.000	.000
Pocoup	.261	-.511	1.000	.058	.047	.075	.000	.064	.000	.077	.000	.012	.282	.000	.055	.000	.001
Gender	.016	-.027	-.061	1.000	.002	.197	.071	.179	.019	.150	.188	.019	.235	.000	.000	.008	.009
Age	.089	-.196	-.058	-.113	1.000	.000	.000	.021	.000	.016	.000	.091	.000	.000	.000	.000	.070
Grade	.036	-.106	.053	-.048	.699	1.000	.000	.009	-.064	-.254	.000	.046	.000	.001	.122	.007	.063
Ability	-.158	-.336	-.286	-.956	.323	-.150	1.000	.187	.000	.000	.000	.809	.405	.000	.000	.000	.032
Retention	.093	-.046	.059	-.043	-.078	-.091	.011	1.000	.049	.153	.221	.057	.165	.428	.048	.141	.335
Part	-.063	-.147	.118	-.080	-.183	-.102	.251	.019	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Tchr	-.105	-.093	.055	-.015	.082	.026	.180	.030	.389	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Home	-.079	-.175	.123	-.034	.121	.058	-.214	.061	.453	.475	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Instruct	-.078	-.122	.086	-.080	-.187	-.168	-.117	-.037	.104	.572	.411	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Know	-.133	-.013	-.022	-.029	-.128	-.009	-.009	.279	.163	.557	.580	.507	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Achieve	.062	-.243	.175	-.146	.252	-.117	-.283	.107	.585	.525	.580	.507	.315	1.000	.000	.000	.001
Climate	-.026	-.119	.062	-.178	.124	.045	.160	.412	.530	.697	.375	.450	.394	.193	1.000	.000	.011
Ident	-.051	-.174	-.143	-.093	.155	.094	.171	.064	.041	.000	.480	.693	.524	.613	.401	1.000	.000
Extcurr	.080	.143	.116	.091	-.057	-.059	-.109	-.016	-.192	-.169	-.133	-.168	-.168	-.125	-.088	-.088	1.000

Correlation coefficients below the diagonal; significance levels above the diagonal. p values $<$ .05 are statistically significant.

Discussion of Results

The relationships between the independent variable gender and students' perceived educational experiences were statistically significant at the .01 level or less in the following categories: achievement-related, school climate, identification with school, and extracurricular participation; the correlations were -.146, -.179, -.093, and .091 respectively. The relationships between gender and the student participation and instruction-related categories were statistically significant at the .02 level; the correlations for both were -.080. Therefore, a relationship between gender and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The relationships between the independent variable age and students' perceived educational experiences were statistically significant at the .01 level or less in the following categories: student participation, home-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, achievement-related, school climate, and identification with school; the correlations were .183, .187, .121, -.128, .252, .124, and .155 respectively. The relationship between age and the teacher-related category was statistically significant at the .02 level; the correlation was .082. Therefore, a relationship between age and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The relationships between the independent variable academic ability and students' perceived educational experiences were statistically significant at the .01 level or

less in the following categories: student participation, teacher-related, home-related, instruction-related, achievement-related, school climate, identification with school, and extracurricular participation. The correlations were .251, .180, .214, .137, .383, .160, .171, and -.109 respectively. Therefore, a relationship between academic ability and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The relationships between the independent variable grade level and students' perceived educational experiences were statistically significant at the .01 level or less in the following categories: student participation, home-related, knowledge-related, achievement related, and identification with school. The correlations were .102, .132, -.168, .117, and .094 respectively. Therefore, a relationship between grade level and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The relationships between the independent variable grade retention and students' perceived educational experiences were statistically significant at the .05 level in the student participation and school climate categories; the correlations for both were .064. Therefore, a relationship between grade retention and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The relationships between the independent variable parental education and students' perceived educational

experiences were statistically significant at the .01 level or less in the following categories: student participation, teacher-related,   home-related,   instruction-related, achievement-related,   school   climate,   identification   with school,   and   extracurricular   participation;   the   correlations were -.147, -.093, -.175, -.122, -.243, -.118, -.174, and .143 respectively.   Therefore,   a   relationship   between   parental education and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The   relationships   between   the   independent   variable parental   occupation   and   students'   perceived   educational experiences were statistically significant at the .01 level or less in the following categories: student participation, home-related,   instruction-related,   achievement-related, identification with school, and extracurricular participation; the correlations were .118, .123, .086, .175, .143 and -.116 respectively.   Therefore,   a   relationship   between   parental occupation and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

The relationships between the independent variable area of residence and students' perceived educational experiences were statistically   significant   at   the   .01   level   or   less   in   the following categories: home-related, knowledge-related, and extracurricular involvement; the correlations were -.105, -.133, and .088 respectively. The relationship between area of

residence and the instruction-related category was statistically significant at the .02 level; the correlation was -.078. The relationships between area of residence and the student participation and achievement-related categories were statistically significant at the .05 level; the correlations were -.063 and .062 respectively. Therefore, a relationship between area of residence and students' perceived educational experiences was postulated.

Multiple Regression Results

Student Participation

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the student participation category is summarized in Table 19. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables academic ability, area of residence, age, parental education, and students' perceived level of general participation were significant at the .01 level or less. The relationship between the independent variable grade retention and student participation was significant at the .03 level.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and student participation was .200 with a t-value of 4.936; lower levels of academic ability were associated with negative perceptions of student participation, and higher levels of academic ability

Table 19

Multiple Regression Data for the Student Participation Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Age	.045	.015	.117	3.001	.0028
Academic ability	.091	.018	.200	4.936	.0000
Retention	.033	.015	.080	2.156	.0314
Parental education	-.011	.004	-.106	-2.570	.0104
Area of residence	-.125	.033	-.150	-3.817	-.0001

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

were associated with positive perceptions of student participation. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and student participation was -.150 with a t-value of -3.817; urban area of residence was associated with negative perceptions of student participation, and rural area of residence was associated with positive perceptions of student participation.

The beta coefficient between age and student participation was .117 with a t-value of 3.001; older student age was associated with lower levels of student participation and younger student age was associated with higher levels of student participation. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between parental education and student participation was -.106 with a t-value of -2.570; lower levels of parental education were associated with negative

perceptions of student participation, and higher levels of parental education were associated with positive perceptions of student participation. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between grade retention and student participation was .080 with a t-value of 2.156; grade retention was associated with lower levels of student participation, and not being retained was associated with higher levels of student participation. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

Teacher-Related

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the teacher-related category is summarized in Table 20. It shows that the relationship between the independent variable academic ability and students' perceived teacher-related experiences was significant at the .01 level or less, and the relationship between the independent variable area of residence and teacher-related was significant at the .02 level.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and teacher-related was .194 with a t-value of 5.078; lower levels of student academic ability were associated with negative teacher-related perceptions, and higher levels of student academic ability were associated with positive teacher-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and teacher-related was -.092 with a t-value of -2.396; urban area

Table 20

Multiple Regression Data for the Teacher-Related Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Academic ability	.105	.021	.194	5.078	.0000
Area of residence	-.091	.038	-.092	-2.396	.0169

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized
partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

of residence was associated with negative teacher-related
perceptions, and rural area of residence was associated with
positive teacher-related perceptions.

Instruction-Related

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression
analysis related to the instruction-related category is
summarized in Table 21. It shows that the relationships
between the independent variables area of residence, parental
education, and academic ability and students' instruction-
related experiences were significant at the .01 level or less.
The relationship between the independent variable gender and
instruction-related was significant at the .05 level.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and
instruction-related was -.143 with a t-value of -3.545; urban
area of residence was associated with negative instruction-
related perceptions, and rural area of residence was associated

Table 21

Multiple Regression Data for the Instruction-Related Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Gender	-.049	.024	-.075	-1.995	0.464
Academic ability	.038	.014	.109	2.721	.0067
Parental education	-.011	.003	-.138	-3.272	.0011
Area of residence	-.092	.026	-.143	-3.545	.0004

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized
partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

with positive instruction-related perceptions. This was
consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between parental education and
instruction-related was -.138 with a t-value of -3.272; lower
levels of parental education were associated with negative
instruction-related perceptions, and higher levels of parental
education were associated with positive instruction-related
perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and
instruction-related was .109 with a t-value of 2.721; lower
levels of student academic ability were associated with
negative instruction-related perceptions, and higher levels of
student academic ability were associated with positive
instruction-related perceptions. This was consistent with
ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between gender and instruction-related is -.075 with a t-value of -1.995; male gender was associated with negative instruction-related perceptions, and female gender was associated with positive instruction-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

Knowledge-Related

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the knowledge-related category is summarized in Table 22. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables grade level and area of residence and students' knowledge-related educational experiences were significant at the .01 level or less. The relationship between the independent variable parental education and knowledge-related was significant at the .03 level.

The beta coefficient between grade level and knowledge-related was -.171 with a t-value of -4.536; lower grade placement was associated with negative knowledge-related perceptions, and higher grade placement was associated with positive knowledge-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and knowledge-related was -.157 with a t-value of -3.917; urban area of residence was associated with negative knowledge-related perceptions, and rural area of residence was associated

Table 22

Multiple Regression Data for the Knowledge-Related Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Grade Level	-.097	.021	-.171	-4.536	.0000
Parental education	-.011	.005	-.087	-2.156	.0314
Area of residence	-.153	.039	-.157	-3.917	.0001

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized
partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

with positive knowledge-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between parental education and knowledge-related was -.087 with a t-value of -2.156; lower levels of parental education were associated with negative knowledge-related perceptions, and higher levels of parental education were associated with positive knowledge-related perceptions.

Achievement-Related

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the achievement-related category is summarized in Table 23. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables academic ability, gender, parental education, and age and students' achievement-related educational experiences were significant at the .01 level or less.

Table 23

Multiple Regression Data for the Achievement-Related Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Gender	-.115	.034	-.119	-3.405	.0007
Age	.052	.016	.118	3.182	.0015
Academic ability	.155	.020	.296	7.712	.0000
Parental education	-.015	.004	-.124	-3.334	.0009

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and achievement-related was .296 with a t-value of 7.712; lower levels of student academic ability were associated with negative achievement-related perceptions, and higher levels of student academic ability were associated with positive achievement-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between gender and achievement-related was -.119 with a t-value of -3.405; male gender was associated with negative achievement-related perceptions, and female gender was associated with positive achievement-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between parental education and achievement-related was -.124 with a t-value of -3.334; lower levels of parental education were associated with negative achievement-related perceptions, and higher levels of parental

education were associated with positive achievement-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between age and achievement-related was .118 with a t-value of 3.182; older student age was associated with negative achievement-related perceptions, and younger student age was associated with positive achiev ent-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

School Climate

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the school climate category is summarized in Table 24. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables gender, academic ability, and grade retention and students' perceptions of their school climate experiences were significant at the .01 level or less. The relationship between the independent variable area of residence and school climate was significant at the .04 level.

The beta coefficient between gender and school climate was -.172 with a t-value of -4.605; male gender was associated with negative perceptions of school climate, and female gender was associated with positive perceptions of school climate. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and school climate was .126 with a t-value of 3.171; lower levels of student academic ability were associated with negative perceptions of school climate, and higher levels of student

Table 24

Multiple Regression Data for the School Climate Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Gender	-.159	.035	-.172	-4.605	.0000
Academic ability	.063	.020	.126	3.171	.0016
Parental education	-.013	.005	-.110	-2.616	.0091
Area of residence	-.075	.037	-.082	-2.054	.0404

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized
partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

academic ability were associated with positive perceptions of

school climate. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between parental education and school

climate was -.110 with a t-value of -2.616; lower levels of

parental education were associated with negative perceptions of

school climate, and higher levels of parental education were

associated with positive perceptions of school climate. This

was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and school

climate was -.082 with a t-value of -2.054; urban area of

residence was associated with negative perceptions of school

climate and rural area of residence was associated with

positive perceptions of school climate.

Extracurricular Participation

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the extracurricular participation category is summarized in Table 25. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables gender, parental education, and area of residence and students' perceived level of extracurricular participation at school were significant at the .01 level or less.

The beta coefficient between gender and extracurricular participation was .094 with a t-value of 5.310; male gender was associated with participation in fewer activities, and female gender was associated with participation in more activities. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between parental education and extracurricular participation at school was .201 with a t-value of 5.009; lower levels of parental education were associated with participation in fewer activities, and higher levels of parental education were associated with participation in more activities. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and extracurricular participation at school was .158 with a t-value of 3.928; urban area of residence was associated with participation in fewer activities, and rural area of residence was associated with participation in more activities. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

Table 25
Multiple Regression Data for the Extracurricular Participation
Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Gender	.362	.145	.094	5.310	.0000
Parental education	.098	.020	.201	5.009	.0000
Area of residence	.607	.155	.158	3.928	.0001

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

Home-Related

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the home-related category is summarized in Table 26. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables area of residence, parental education, academic ability, and age and students' perceived home-related educational experiences were significant at the .01 level or less.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and home-related was -.201 with a t-value of -5.145; urban area of residence was associated with negative home-related perceptions, and rural area of residence was associated with positive home-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

Table 26

Multiple Regression Data for the Home-Related Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Age	.060	.019	.124	3.199	.0014
Academic ability	.084	.023	.148	3.654	.0003
Parental education	-.023	.005	-.172	-4.189	.0000
Area of residence	-.209	.041	-.201	-5.145	.0000

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

The beta coefficient between parental education and home-related was -.172 with a t-value of -4.189; lower levels of parental education were associated with negative home-related perceptions, and higher levels of parental education were associated with positive home-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and home-related was .148 with a t-value of 3.654; lower levels of student academic ability were associated with negative home-related perceptions, and higher levels of student academic ability were associated with positive home-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between age and home-related was .124 with a t-value of 3.199; older student age was associated with negative home-related perceptions, and younger student age was

associated with positive home-related perceptions. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

Identification with School

Information generated by stepwise multiple regression analysis related to the identification with school category is summarized in Table 27. It shows that the relationships between the independent variables parental education and area of residence and students' perceived identification with school educational experiences were significant at the .01 level or less. The relationships between the independent variables academic ability and age and students' perceived identification with school were significant at the .02 level. The relationship between the independent variable gender and students' perceived identification with school was significant at the .03 level.

The beta coefficient between parental education and identification with school was -.172 with a t-value of -4.105; lower levels of parental education were associated with lower identification with school, and higher levels of parental education were associated with higher identification with school. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between area of residence and identification with school was -.135 with a t-value of -3.397;

Table 27

Multiple Regression Data for the Identification with School Category

Independent Variables	B	SE(B)	Beta	T	Sig T
Gender	-.082	.038	-.080	-2.126	.0339
Age	.043	.019	.092	2.320	.0206
Academic ability	.056	.023	.100	2.429	.0154
Parental education	-.022	.005	-.172	-4.105	.0000
Area of residence	-.138	.041	-.135	-3.397	.0007

B = regression coefficients; SE(B) = standard errors; Beta = standardized partial regression coefficients; T = t-values; Sig T = significance levels.

urban area of residence was associated with lower identification with school, and rural area of residence was associated with higher identification with school.

The beta coefficient between academic ability and identification with school was .100 with a t-value of 2.429; lower levels of academic ability were associated with lower identification with school, and higher levels of academic ability were associated with high identification with school. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between age and identification with school was .092 with a t-value of 2.320; older student age was associated with lower identification with school, and younger student age was associated with higher identification with school. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

The beta coefficient between gender and identification with school was -.080 with a t-value of -2.126; male gender was associated with lower identification with school, and female gender was associated with higher identification with school. This was consistent with ANOVA results.

Synthesis of Findings of Research Questions

The findings presented below are based on the results of both ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression analysis. It should again be noted that this study involved a large sample, and that some of the variables may have been intercorrelated. Therefore, in ANOVA results, small mean differences were statistically significant, and some of the statistically significant differences may have occurred by chance. In addition, many of the correlations between the independent variables and categories of the dependent variable were low. Although statistically significant, these relationships accounted for only a small amount of variance.

Research Question 1: Are there significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by male and female junior high school students?

This study identified significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by male and female junior high school students. Male students perceived the following

aspects of their educational experiences more negatively than did female students: (1) instruction-related, (2) achievement-related, (3) school climate, (4) extracurricular participation, and (5) identification with school. In addition, ANOVA results did not identify any aspect of the educational experiences of female students as more negative than those of male students. Therefore, this research indicated that at the junior high school level, male students' perceptions of their educational experiences were more negative than those of female students.

Research Question 2: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students of different ages?

This study identified significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students of different ages. Those differences related to students' perceptions of the following aspects of their educational experiences: (1) student participation, (2) knowledge-related, (3) achievement-related, (4) home-related, and (5) identification with school.

Results of the Student Newman-Keuls procedure showed that, except for the knowledge-related aspect, students 15, 16, and 17 years old perceived their experiences in the areas outlined above significantly more negatively than students 12, 13, and 14 years old. However, in the knowledge-related aspect students 12 years old were more negative than those 13 years

old, and students 13 years old were more negative than those 14 years old. Therefore, this research indicated that, except for the knowledge-related aspect, the older students were at the junior high school level, the more negatively they perceived their educational experiences.

Research Question 3: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have different levels of academic ability?

This study identified significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have different levels of academic ability. Those differences related to students' perceptions of the following aspects of their educational experiences: (1) student participation, (2) teacher-related, (3) instruction-related, (4) achievement-related, (5) school climate, (6) home-related, and (7) identification with school.

Results of the Student Newman-Keuls procedure showed that students with below average and lower average levels of academic ability perceived their experiences in the areas outlined above significantly more negatively than students with higher levels of academic ability. Students with above average levels of academic ability perceived their educational experiences the most positively. Therefore, this research indicated that the higher the academic ability level of junior

high school students, the more positively they perceived their educational experiences.

Research Question 4: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by grade 7, grade 8, and grade 9 school students?

This study identified significant difference among educational experiences as perceived by students in different grades only in the knowledge-related aspect. Results of the Student Newman-Keuls procedure showed that grade 7 students perceived their knowledge-related experiences more negatively than grade 8 students, and that grade 8 students perceived them more negatively than grade 9 students. Grade 9 students perceived their knowledge-related experiences the most positively. Therefore, this research indicated that, except for the knowledge-related aspect, there was little difference in the way that students in different junior high school grades perceived their educational experiences.

Research Question 5: Are educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students who have been retained in a grade, or grades, significantly different from those of students who have not been retained?

This study identified significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by students who had been retained and those who had not been retained only in the

student participation aspect. Students who had been retained perceived their level of participation more negatively than those who had not been retained. Therefore, this research indicated that, except for the student participation aspect, retention per se made little difference in the way that junior high school students perceived their educational experiences.

Research Question 6: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different levels of parental education?

This study identified significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different levels of parental education. Those differences related to students' perceptions of the following aspects of their educational experiences: (1) instruction-related, (2) achievement-related, (3) school climate, (4) extracurricular participation, (5) home-related, and (6) identification with school.

Results of the Student Newman-Keuls procedure showed that students whose mothers had only junior high school education perceived their educational experiences more negatively than students whose mothers had higher levels of education, and that students whose mothers had university education perceived their educational experiences somewhat more positively than other students. In addition, students whose fathers had only

elementary school education perceived their educational experiences more negatively than students whose fathers had higher levels of education, and students whose fathers had university education perceived their educational experiences more positively than other students. Therefore, this research indicated that junior high school students whose parents had not completed senior high school perceived their educational experiences more negatively than students whose parents had higher levels of education, and that students whose parents had university education perceived their educational experiences more positively than other students.

Research Question 7: Are there significant differences among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different parental occupational areas?

This study did not identify a significant difference among educational experiences as perceived by junior high school students from family backgrounds with different parental occupational areas. Therefore, this research indicated that family background of different parental occupational areas per se made little, if any, difference to the way that students perceived their educational experiences.

Research Question 8: Are there significant differences between educational experiences as perceived by junior high

school students who live in urban areas and those who live in
rural areas?

This study identified significant differences between
educational experiences as perceived by junior high school
students who lived in urban areas and those who lived in rural
areas. Students who lived in urban areas perceived the
following aspects of their educational experiences more
negatively than students who lived in rural areas: (1)
instruction-related, (2) knowledge-related, (3) extracurricular
participation, and (4) home-related. ANOVA results also showed
that in no category were the educational experiences of
students who lived in rural areas more negative than those of
students who lived in urban areas. Therefore, this research
indicated that junior high school students who lived in rural
areas perceived their educational experiences somewhat more
positively than those who lived in urban areas.

Descriptive Statistics' Results

Findings Related to Teaching Methods

Part B, questions 56 and 57, of the student questionnaire
provided students with an opportunity to report the types and
frequency of teaching methods used in their classes and those
that they themselves preferred.

The five methods reported most frequently by students as
often or always used in their classes were: (1) writing

answers using textbooks, noted by 80%; (2) teacher lecture, noted by 74%; (3) class discussion, noted by 72%; (4) writing own ideas, noted by 60%; and (5) doing experiments, noted by 57%.

The five methods reported most frequently by students as often or always preferred were: (1) field trips and outside visits, noted by 90%; (2) films and videos, noted by 84%; (3) class discussion, noted by 78%; (4) group work, noted by 76%; and (5) doing experiments, noted by 74%.

The five methods reported by students as sometimes or never preferred were: (1) teacher lecture, noted by 71%; (2) writing answers using textbooks, noted by 68%; (3) writing own ideas, noted by 52%; (4) choosing books and reading, noted by 48%; and (5) role play, noted by 46%.

The findings presented above show that the two teaching methods reported used most often in junior high school classes (teacher lecture and writing answers using textbooks) were the two reported least preferred by students. In addition, 3 of the 5 teaching methods reported most preferred by students (field trips and outside visits, films and videos, and group work) were not among the five reported used most frequently in classes. Students also indicated a preference for more involvement in experiments; while 57% noted that doing experiments was one of the five methods used most frequently in classes, 74% reported that they often or always preferred doing experiments. Notably, the amount of time reported spent on

class discussion was approximately the amount that students preferred. Seventy-two percent of students reported class discussion as 1 of the 5 teaching methods used most frequently, and class discussion was 1 of the 5 methods preferred by 78% of students.

Findings Related to Extracurricular Participation and Interest

When students were asked to check all of the activities in which they participated during their free time at school, the five checked most often were: (1) talking with friends--92%, (2) sports--73%, (3) reading--63%, (4) dances--52%, and (5) music--40%.

When students were asked to check the three activities on which they spent most of their free time at school, the five checked most often were: (1) talking with friends--79%, (2) sports--57%, (3) reading--34%, (4) dances--24%, and (5) music--20%.

When students were asked to check the three activities in which they were most interested, the five checked most often were: (1) sports--57%, (2) talking with friends--40%, (3) using computers--37%, (4) dances--28%, and (5) music--22%.

Notably, using computers, 1 of the 5 activities in which students reported most interest, was not among the five in which most students reported participating or on which they spent most of their free time at school. While 37% of students reported using computers as 1 of the 3 activities in which they

were most interested, only 23% reported using computers, and only 8% reported using computers as an activity on which they spent most of their free time at school.

In addition, there was a discrepancy between student interest and student participation in the areas of drama and school newspaper. While 18% of students reported drama as 1 of the 3 activities in which they were most interested, 9% reported participating in drama, and only 3% reported drama as one of the activities on which they spent most of their free time at school; and while 10% of students reported school newspaper as 1 of the 3 activities in which they were most interested, 3% reported participating, and only 0.6% reported newspaper participation as an activity on which they spent most of their free time at school.

Other notable findings related to talking with friends during free time at school were: (a) talking with friends as an activity on which students spent most of their free time decreased with age, from 84% at age 12 to 71% at age 15; (b) 61% of students of below average ability reported talking with friends as an activity on which they spent most of their free time, compared with 81% of students of above average ability; and (c) 11% more students from urban than rural areas reported talking with friends as an activity in which they were most interested.

Other notable findings related to participation in extracurricular sports at school were: (a) 12% more male than

female students participated; (b) 14% more male than female students reported sports as an activity on which they spent most of their free time; (c) participation decreased with age and grade, from 77% at age 12 to 65% at age 15; (d) participation and interest increased with ability; (e) 16% more students whose mothers were employed in professional occupations reported sports as an activity in which they were most interested than students whose mothers were homemakers; (f) students whose fathers were employed in professional occupations were more likely to participate in sports than students whose fathers were employed in unskilled labor occupations; (g) 17% more students from rural than urban areas participated; and (h) 12% more students from rural than urban areas reported sports as an activity on which they spent most of their free time at school.

Other notable findings related to participation in extracurricular reading at school were: (a) 22% more female than male students participated; (b) 14% more female than male students reported reading as an activity on which they spent most of their free time; (c) reading participation decreased with age and grade, almost 20% over three years, from 73% at age 12 to 54% at age 15; (d) reading participation increased with ability; (e) 12% fewer students who had been retained in a grade, or grades, participated than students who had not been retained; (f) 13% more students whose mothers had university education participated than students whose mothers had junior

high school education; and (g) students whose mothers were employed in business occupations were more likely to report interest in reading and to participate than students whose mothers were employed in clerical, sales, and service occupations and in primary industries.

Other notable findings related to participation in dances at school were: (a) 15% more female than male students participated; (b) dances as an activity in which students were most interested increased with ability, from 4% for students of below average ability to 23% for students of above average ability; and (c) 66% of students whose mothers had university education participated, compared with 48% of students whose mothers had senior high school education.

Other notable findings related to participation in extracurricular music at school were: (a) 15% more female than male students participated; (b) 11% more female than male students reported music as an activity in which they were most interested; (c) 19% more students whose mothers had university education participated than students whose mothers had senior high school education; (d) 21% more students whose fathers had university education participated than students whose fathers had senior high school education; (e) 30% of students whose mothers were employed in professional occupations participated, compared with 13% of students whose mothers were employed in primary industries; (f) 55% of students whose fathers were employed in professional occupations participated, compared

with 28% of students whose fathers were employed in unskilled labor occupations; and (g) 10% more students from urban than rural areas participated.

Other notable findings related to extracurricular computer use at school were: (a) 12% more male than female students participated; (b) 11% more male than female students reported using computers as an activity in which they were most interested; (c) students whose parents had not completed high school were more interested and participated more than students whose parents had post-secondary education; (d) 40% of students whose mothers were homemakers reported using computers as an activity in which they were most interested, compared with 20% of students whose mothers were employed in business occupations; (e) 49% of students whose fathers were employed in unskilled labor occupations reported using computers as an activity in which they were most interested, compared with 27% of students whose fathers were employed in professional occupations; and (f) 15% more rural than urban students reported using computers as an activity in which they were most interested.

Other notable findings related to extracurricular drama participation at school were: (a) 14% more female than male students reported drama as an activity in which they were most interested; (b) 13% fewer students who had been retained in a grade, or grades, reported drama as an activity in which they were most interested than students who had not been retained;

(c) 14% more students whose fathers had university education reported drama as an activity in which they were most interested than students whose fathers did not have post-secondary education; (d) 26% of students whose mothers were employed in professional occupations reported drama as an activity in which they were most interested, compared with 7% of students whose mothers were employed in primary industries; and (e) 32% of students whose fathers were employed in professional occupations reported drama as an activity in which they were most interested, compared with 10% of students whose fathers were employed in primary industries.

Findings Related to School Improvement

Part C of the questionnaire provided students with an opportunity to suggest ways in which schools could be changed to better meet their needs. The 250 different responses were categorized into 21 "school improvement categories" (Appendix J). The six areas most in need of change, as indicated by students surveyed, were: (1) extracurricular, noted by 159--25%; (2) teaching methods, noted by 122--19%; (3) time in school, noted by 101--16%; (4) evaluation and achievement, noted by 87--14%; (5) curriculum composition, noted by 69--11%; and (6) teacher concerns, noted by 65--10%. A summary of students' specific suggestions associated with each category is presented in Appendix N. Notably, 34--5% of students surveyed

expressed total satisfaction with school, while 3--.004% of them expressed total dissatisfaction.

Findings of Specific Questions on the Student Form

Questions included in Part B of the student questionnaire pertained to specific aspects of students' educational experiences. Notable findings in each category are outlined below.

A notable finding from the student participation category was that 29% of students reported that they sometimes or always stayed quiet in their classes when they wanted to speak out.

Notable findings from the teacher-related category were: (a) 80% of students reported paying attention to what teachers said in classes; (b) 91% reported that teachers expected them to do their best work; (c) 24% reported that teachers never praised them for their school work; (d) 20% reported that teachers never understood how they felt; and (e) 17% reported that teachers never encouraged them to express their ideas in classes.

Notable findings from the instruction-related category were: (a) 72% of students reported that the things they learned at school were useful; (b) 29% reported that they often did not understand things that their teachers talked about; (c) 46% reported that they often did not enjoy the kinds of teaching done in their classes; and (d) 41% reported that the amount of homework set was often unfair. Other notable

findings from this category are presented in the section "Findings Related to Teaching Methods."

Notable findings from the knowledge-related category were: (a) 44% of students reported that they never used computers at school; and (b) 26% reported that information given in their classes never answered the questions that they had about sex.

Notable findings from the achievement-related category were: (a) 89% of students reported that they always felt that it was important for them to finish high school; (b) 78% reported that they always studied and did homework; (c) 82% reported that they often felt that they would fail quizzes and assignments; (d) 17% reported that they were never interested in their classes; and (e) 62% reported that they often or always felt bored in their classes.

Notable findings from the school climate category were: (a) 81% of students reported having the right number of teachers; (b) 85% reported the right number of students in classes; (c) 65% reported that they did not help to make classroom rules; (d) 40% reported being treated unfairly if they broke classroom or school rules; (e) 22% reported that they were never encouraged to help classmates; (f) 26% reported being treated unfairly by classmates; and (g) 21% reported that their classrooms were never comfortable and pleasant.

Notable findings from the home-related category were: (a) 91% of students reported that their parents encouraged them to get good marks in school subjects; (b) 85% reported that things

happening at home did not prevent them from doing well at school, i.e., their homes were conducive to learning; (c) 27% reported that they never or often did not have a quiet place at home where they could read and study; and (d) 20% reported that their parents never attended parent-teacher meetings.

Notable findings related to the identification with school category were: (a) 74% of students reported that school was a good place to make friends and to spend time with them; (b) 43% reported that their teachers often did not know and understand them; (c) 50% reported that they often or always felt unimportant as a member of their classes; (d) 18% reported that they were never encouraged to play on sports' teams at school; (e) 35% reported that they often or always preferred to work at a job than attend school; and (f) 29% reported that they had thought about quitting school.

Additional Findings

Although not the focus of this study, multiple regression analysis identified significant relationships ($p < .001$) among categories of the dependent variable (Table 18). Those with correlation coefficients of .500 or higher are presented below:

1. Student participation was associated with teacher related (.501), achievement-related (.585), and identification with school (.530). Based on students' reports of their experiences, high levels of student participation were

associated with positive teacher-related, achievement-related, and identification with school factors; and low levels of student participation were associated with negative teacher-related, achievement-related, and identification with school factors.

    2.   Teacher-related was associated with student participation (.501), instruction-related (.572), knowledge-related (.557), achievement-related (.525), school climate (.540), and identification with school (.687). Based on students' reports of their experiences, positive teacher-related factors were associated with positive student participation, instruction-related, knowledge-related, achievement-related, school climate, and identification with school factors; and negative teacher-related factors were associated with negative student participation, instruction-related, knowledge-related, achievement-related, school climate, and identification with school factors.

    3.   Instruction-related was associated with teacher-related (.572), achievement-related (.507), and identification with school (.603). Based on students' reports of their experiences, positive instruction-related factors were associated with positive teacher-related, achievement-related, and identification with school factors; and negative instruction-related factors were associated with negative teacher-related, achievement-related, and identification with school factors.

4. Knowledge-related was associated with teacher-related (.557) and identification with school (.524). Based on students' reports of their experiences, positive knowledge-related factors were associated with positive teacher-related and identification with school factors; and negative knowledge-related factors were associated with negative teacher-related and identification with school factors.

5. Achievement-related was associated with student participation (.585), teacher-related (.525), home-related (.500), instruction-related (.507), school climate (.503), and identification with school (.613). Based on students' reports of their experiences, positive achievement-related factors were associated with positive student participation, teacher-related, home-related, instruction-related, school climate, and identification with school factors; and negative achievement-related factors were associated with negative student-participation, teacher-related, home-related, instruction-related, school climate, and identification with school factors.

6. School climate was associated with teacher-related (.540), achievement-related (.503), and identification with school (.601). Based on students' reports of their experiences, positive school climate factors were associated with positive teacher-related, achievement-related, and identification with school factors; and negative school climate

factors were associated with negative teacher-related, achievement-related, and identification with school factors.

7. Home-related was associated with achievement-related (.500). Based on students' reports of their experiences, positive home-related factors were associated with positive achievement-related factors; and negative home-related factors were associated with negative achievement-related factors.

8. Identification with school was associated with student participation (.530), teacher-related (.687), instruction-related (.603), knowledge-related (.524), achievement-related (.613), and school climate (.601). Based on students' reports of their experiences, identification with school was associated with positive student participation, teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, and school climate factors; and failure to identify with school was associated with negative student participation, teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, and school climate factors.

Neither category correlated with the extracurricular participation category at the .500 level or higher.

Summary of Findings

Summary of Research Questions' Findings

Considering the results of both ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression analysis, the factors influencing junior

high school students' perceived educational experiences as
identified by the research questions posed by this study were:
(1) academic ability--significantly influencing seven aspects
of experience, (2) parental education--significantly
influencing seven aspects of experience, (3) gender--
significantly influencing five aspects of experience, (4) age--
significantly influencing five aspects of experience, and (5)
area of residence--significantly influencing four aspects of
experience. The factors found to have little influence on
students' perceived educational experiences were: (1) grade
level--significantly influencing one aspect of experience, (2)
retention--significantly influencing one aspect of experience,
and (3) parental occupation--significantly influencing neither
aspect of experience.

Those aspects of students' perceived educational
experiences found to be significantly influenced by each
independent variable are presented in Table 28. It can be
noted that four factors--academic ability, parental education,
gender, and age all significantly influenced both the
achievement-related and identification with school aspects of
students' perceived educational experiences. However, due to
the limitations of this study and the statistical procedures
employed, it should also be noted that these findings are not
conclusive.

Table 28

Significant Relationships Between Independent Variables and
Categories of the Dependent Variable

• Academic Ability	• Parental Education
Student participation	Student participation
Teacher-related	Instruction-related
Instruction-related	Achievement-related
Achievement-related	School climate
School climate	Extracurricular participation
Home-related	Home-related
Identification with school	Identification with school
• Gender	**• Age**
Instruction-related	Student participation
Achievement-related	Achievement-related
School climate	Knowledge-related
Extracurricular participation	Home-related
Identification with school	Identification with school
• Area of Residence	**• Grade Level**
Instruction-related	Knowledge-related
Knowledge-related	
Extracurricular participation	
Home-related	
• Grade Retention	**• Parental Occupation**
Student participation	

• Categories of the dependent variable

Summary of Descriptive Statistics' Findings

   Teaching Methods.

   Findings related to teaching methods showed a discrepancy
between teaching methods reported used most often in junior
high school classes and those most preferred by students.

   Teacher lecture and writing answers using textbooks, the
two teaching methods reported used most often, were the two

reported least preferred by students. Field trips, videos, and group work, 3 of the 5 teaching methods reported preferred by students, were not among the five reported most frequently used in junior high school classes; students also indicated a preference for more involvement in experiments. Notably, the amount of time reported spent on class discussions was approximately the amount that students preferred.

Extracurricular Participation.

Findings related to extracurricular participation and interest identified activities in which most students were involved, those on which they spent most of their free time at school, and those in which they were most interested.

The five activities in which most students reported participating and on which they reported spending most of their free time at school were: (1) talking with friends, (2) sports, (3) reading, (4) dances, and (5) music, respectively. The five activities in which students reported being most interested were: (1) sports, (2) talking with friends, (3) using computers, (4) dances, and (5) music, respectively.

Notably, using computers, 1 of the 5 activities in which students reported most interest was not among the five in which most students reported participating during their free time at school. In addition, although interest in drama and school newspaper was not high overall, twice as many students were

interested in drama than participated, and over three times as
many were interested in school newspaper than participated.

School Improvement.

When asked how schools could be changed to better meet
their needs, students surveyed identified the following aspects
of schooling as most in need of improvement: (1)
extracurricular, (2) teaching methods, (3) time in school, (4)
evaluation and achievement, (5) curriculum composition, and (6)
teacher concerns, respectively. Notably, some students
surveyed were fully satisfied with school, while very few were
totally dissatisfied.

Specific Questions on the Student Form.

Notable findings were identified in each category
represented by questions on the student form. Information
obtained identified specific positive aspects of students'
educational experiences as well as specific areas of concern.

The following areas of concern were identified: (a) over
one-quarter of students surveyed reported staying quiet in
classes when they wanted to speak out; (b) almost half reported
often not enjoying the kinds of teaching done in classes; (c)
over one-quarter reported difficulty understanding things
talked about by teachers; (d) almost two-thirds reported
feeling bored in their classes; (e) almost one-quarter reported
that teachers never praised them for their school work; (f)

over three-quarters reported that they often felt that they
would fail quizzes and assignments; (g) half reported that the
amount of homework set was unfair; (h) over one-quarter
reported not having a quiet place at home where they could read
and study; (i) almost half reported that they never used
computers at school; (j) two-thirds reported that they never or
often did not have their questions in the area of sexuality
answered; (k) almost three-quarters reported that they never
helped to make classroom rules; (l) almost half reported being
treated unfairly if they broke rules; (m) over one-quarter
reported being treated unfairly by classmates; (n) half
reported feeling unimportant as a member of their classes; (o)
almost half reported that teachers did not know and understand
them; (p) over one-quarter reported that they preferred to work
at a job than attend school; and (q) over one-quarter reported
that they had thought about quitting school.

The following positive aspects were identified: (a) over
three-quarters of students surveyed reported paying attention
to what teachers said in their classes; (b) over three-quarters
reported that they always studied and did homework; (c) almost
all reported that it was important for them to finish high
school; (d) over 80% reported having the right number of
teachers, and the right number of students in classes; (e)
almost all reported that teachers expected them to do their
best work; (f) three-quarters reported that school was a good
place for students to socialize; (g) almost all reported that

their parents encouraged them to do well in school subjects and (h) 85% reported that things happening at home did not prevent them from doing well, i.e., their homes were conducive to learning.

Summary of Additional Findings

Multiple regression analysis identified a number of significant relationships ($\underline{p}$ < .001) with correlation coefficients of .500 or higher among categories of the dependent variable. Those with the strongest relationships were:

1. Teacher-related was associated with instruction-related (.572) and knowledge-related (.557).

2. Achievement-related was associated with student participation (.585).

3. Identification with school was associated with teacher-related (.687), instruction-related (.603), achievement-related (.613), and school climate (.601).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived educational experiences of junior high school students and to determine how gender, age, academic ability, grade level, grade retention, parental education, and area of residence related to those experiences. The statistical procedures employed were analysis of variance (ANOVA), stepwise multiple regression, and descriptive statistics.

This chapter presents a discussion of the conclusions and implications of the study. Results of research questions are discussed first, followed by discussion of descriptive statistics and additional findings. Recommendations are presented last.

Conclusions and Implications

Discussion of Research Questions' Findings

As outlined in chapter IV, the findings discussed below are based on a synthesis of relationships identified as significant by both ANOVA and stepwise multiple regression results. It should again be noted that this study involved a large sample, and that some of the variables may have been

intercorrelated. Therefore, in ANOVA results, small mean differences were statistically significant, and some of the statistically significant differences may have occurred by chance. In addition, many of the correlations between the independent variables and categories of the dependent variable were low. Although statistically significant, these relationships accounted for only a small amount of variance.

Research Question 1--Gender. Findings of research question 1 showed that gender significantly influenced students' perceived educational experiences. Male students perceived the instruction-related, achievement-related, school climate, extracurricular participation, and identification with school aspects more negatively than did female students.

These findings were not consistent with the Committee on Young Women's Issues (1987) which found that female students reported that teachers expected less from them and spent less time helping them than male students. However, the findings were consistent with those of Bulcock et al. (1991), Kedar-Voivodas (1983), O'Reilly (1988), and Remberger (1987). They were also consistent with Department of Education (1989, 1991a) reports of a higher proportion of male early school leavers; and if male students have perceived their educational experiences more negatively than female students, it is understandable that more of them have left school early. Consequently, it is important to consider in more detail

whether schooling experiences are perceived more negatively by male students than by female students, with a view to providing them with experiences that they will perceive more positively.

The reasons for the perceived differences between the perceived educational experiences of male and female school students have not been fully explained. This researcher sees merit in the explanations of Kedar-Voivodas (1983) and others, cited in Kedar-Voivodas, who viewed gender differences in students' perceived educational experiences, at least partially, as a result of socialization into traditional sex roles. Role conflict between socially accepted behavior and behavior expected at school appears to be more problematic for male students than for female students. Active and aggressive behavior by males has generally been accepted by society, but has often been curtailed at school. For example, male students have been given detention in, and suspension and expulsion from school more often than female students because of behavior considered unacceptable (Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988; Rumberger, 1987). This implies that schools and society generally need to have more consistent behavioral expectations for young males so as to reduce the conflict that they experience at school. Furthermore, traditional teaching methods have been predominantly teacher-dominated, often requiring students to be passive recipients of knowledge. This too is inconsistent with the traditional male sex role. In addition, substantially more

male than female students have been identified as having needs requiring special education intervention (Croll & Moses, 1985, cited in Croll, 1985; May et al., 1988, cited in Bulcock et al., 1991). If this in fact represents a higher proportion of learning difficulties among male students, they may also perceive their educational experiences more negatively than females because of difficulty experienced with academic programs.

This implies that a resource-based, participatory approach to teaching, as outlined by the Department of Education (1992a), which facilitates individualized learning, would likely foster more positive perceptions, particularly among male students. Participatory approaches to student learning may also result in female students becoming more active and assertive, characteristics which will be important when they are adults, both in the world of work and in their personal lives (Fredian, 1981; Sadker & Sadker, 1986).

Even though female students surveyed by this study, and others mentioned previously, did not perceive their educational experiences as negatively as male students did, there have been signals that some aspects of female students' educational experiences detract from their potential success. They are: (a) female students' lack of confidence to succeed in mathematics and science courses, irrespective of ability, and lower rates of participation in them (Department of Education, 1991a; Robertson, 1988); (b) lower female representation in

administrative positions and in many highly paid and prestigious occupational areas (Labour Canada, 1986; Robertson, 1988; Tyler et al., 1985); and (c) lower average incomes for paid female workers (Statistics Canada, 1990).

Yu (1976) suggested that one reason for this may be that although females achieve as well as males in the school system, adult females have not been expected to use what they have learned. In addition, Allen-Meares (1982) and LaFrance (1985) suggested that aspects of schooling such as teacher expectations, student-teacher interaction, and sex-biased language used in classrooms may discriminate against female students. Sadker and Sadker (1986) also contended that female students are often ignored by teachers, and therefore, do not benefit from criticism, remediation, and praise to the extent that male students do. Their research, based on classroom observation, is ongoing with similar patterns still being noted. This suggests that, because of the way that they have been socialized, female students may not perceive negatively experiences that some educators and researchers view as impacting negatively upon the extent to which they reach their potential. This implies that research using the observation method may yield useful information about gender differences in students' educational experiences that the questionnaire method did not obtain.

Research Question 2--Age. Findings of research question 2 showed that age significantly influenced students' perceived educational experiences. Students 15 and 16 years old perceived the student participation, achievement-related, home-related, and identification with school aspects more negatively than did students 12, 13, and 14 years old. However, in the knowledge-related aspect students 12 years old were more negative than those 13 years old, and students 13 years old were more negative than those 14 years old.

One observation that can be made regarding this finding is that students 15 and 16 years old in this sample were at least one year behind their age peers for grade. This suggests that placing students behind their age peers may cause them to perceive their educational experiences negatively and to identify with school less. A possible explanation is that they may be treated as being less mature when they are grouped with younger students, at a time when they are striving for activities and privileges that usually accompany being older. This finding supports keeping students with their age peers, even if they cannot handle all of the academic demands of the regular program; and the Department of Education (1990a) has recommended that, in Newfoundland and Labrador, students progress to the next grade if they can be satisfactorily accommodated there.

This finding that older students' perceptions of their educational experiences were more negative than those of

younger students was consistent with the finding of Keeping (1988) and "Leaving Early" (1984) that approximately 70% of early leavers had repeated at least one grade; thus, early school leaving and negative perceptions of educational experiences appear to be closely related. Therefore, it may be possible to identify many potential early leavers by examining how they perceive their educational experiences.

The finding that younger students were more negative in the knowledge-related aspect indicated that they felt that not enough information was being provided to them to meet their needs. This related to such areas as computer use, careers, sexuality, and decision making. This finding is consistent with the observations of many educators and researchers, including Duryea (1983); Gordon (1986); Herr and Cramer (1992); Keck, Duphinais, and Lewko (1988); and Russell and Roberts (1979), who have emphasized that students have not traditionally been provided with all of the information that they needed when they were younger, and who have recommended that students be provided with this knowledge when they need it. This finding should also alert educators to gaps in students' knowledge and to ask why needed information is not provided.

Research Question 3--Academic Ability. Findings of research question 3 showed that academic ability significantly influenced students' perceived educational experiences.

Students with below average and lower average levels of academic ability perceived the student participation, teacher-related, instruction-related, achievement-related, school climate, home-related, and identification with school aspects more negatively than students with higher levels of ability. Educational experiences were perceived the most positively by students with above average levels of academic ability.

These findings suggested that schools were doing a relatively good job of meeting the needs of higher ability students, but were doing less well in meeting the needs of students with lower levels of academic ability. This is consistent with the conclusions of Stipek and Mac Iver (1989) that as students progress through the grades student-teacher interaction becomes more impersonal and more emphasis is placed on performance, making it increasingly difficult for lower ability students to maintain higher levels of self-confidence. It is also consistent with the conclusion of Kedar-Voivodas (1983) that teachers were more attached to students who were high achievers and more likely to be indifferent toward lower ability and lower achieving students.

It is understandable that students with lower levels of ability perceived their experiences more negatively than higher ability students because school seems to be more of a struggle and less rewarding for them than for higher ability students. Therefore, providing lower ability students with activities through which success can be experienced appears to be one way

of making their experiences more positive. Cooperative
learning techniques in which students contribute according to
their ability and benefit from the knowledge and skills of all
group members would likely make academic tasks more rewarding
for lower ability students (Johnson et al., 1988). Keeping
them with their age peers also seems to be important.

Research Question 4--Grade Level. Findings of research
question 4 showed that grade level made little difference to
the way that students perceived their educational experiences.
Grade level significantly influenced the knowledge-related
aspect only.

Students in grade 7 were more negative than students in
grade 8, and students in grade 8 were more negative than
students in grade 9. Because age and grade are correlated,
this finding is related to research question 2, which found
that younger students perceived the knowledge-related aspect
more negatively than older students. The finding suggested
that students in grade 9 were provided with more of the
information that they needed than were students in grade 8, and
students in grade 8 were provided with more than students in
grade 7.

This finding was not surprising because more information
is provided as students progress through the grades. However,
it indicated that students in grades 7 and 8 needed more
information than they were being provided with; this was

especially true for students who had been retained and who were, therefore, older for grade than their classmates. There appears to be a need to survey students in grades 7 and 8 to further determine the areas and the specific kinds of information needed. Subsequently, this information should be provided.

   Research Question 5--Grade Retention. Findings of research question 5 showed that grade retention per se made little difference to the way that students surveyed perceived their educational experiences. Retention significantly influenced the student participation aspect only. This showed that students who had been retained participated less; for example, they were less likely to pay attention in classes, to ask questions, and to complete assigned work than were students who had not been retained. This indicated that these students had already begun to remove themselves psychologically, a pattern noted by the Department of Education (1989).

   On the surface it appeared that the relatively small impact of grade retention identified by this study was not consistent with many others including the Department of Education (1989, 1990b, 1991a); Frey and Ruble (1987); and Holmes and Matthews (1984). However, findings of this study indicated that other factors related to grade retention impacted upon students' perceived educational experiences more than retention per se. The study found that older student age,

lower levels of student academic ability, and male gender
negatively influenced students' perceived educated experiences;
and all of those have been associated with grade retention.
Therefore, it appears that repeating in and of itself may not
have contributed substantially to negative perceptions of
educational experiences by students who had not mastered
curriculum content and skills, but that it caused them to be
placed behind their age peers and to be grouped with younger
students, a factor which appeared to strongly contribute to
negative perceptions of educational experiences. Part of the
problem may have been the way that students were organized for
instruction; and part of the solution may lie in restructuring
along a non-grading, con.inuous progress model. This could
allow students to review content and practice skills without
being "put back." Keeping students who experience difficulty
in the regular program with their age peers using an
individualized program plan also appears beneficial. However,
many students so placed have been acutely aware that they have
not performed as well as their peers.

    Furthermore, students have continued to repeat grades.
For example, of the students surveyed for this study: (a) one
hundred and twelve--16.6% had been retained, (b) thirty-two--
4.7% reported that they had been retained more than once, and
(c) four of the 32--.006% reported that they had been retained
three times. In addition, if all students in classes had
completed the questionnaire the numbers of students retained

may have been higher; teachers in some classrooms indicated that those not completing the questionnaire were usually lower performing students. This indicated that many students were still being required to repeat grades. The Department of Education (1990a) recommended against retaining students, and there appears to be a need for the Department of Education and for school districts to closely monitor grade retention in the schools. These findings also indicated the importance of continuing to research and put in place ways of helping students who experience difficulty with academic programs.

Research Question 6--Parental Education. Findings of research question 6 showed that level of parental education significantly influenced students' perceived educational experiences. Students whose parents had not completed the senior high school program perceived the instruction-related, academic achievement. school climate, extracurricular participation, home-related, and identification with school aspects more negatively than students whose parents had higher levels of education. Students whose parents had university education perceived those aspects of their educational experiences somewhat more positively than other students.

These findings are consistent with those of other researchers. Ekst om et al. (1986) noted that early school leavers tended to have family backgrounds with weak educational support systems; Holland and Andre (1987) reported that

extracurricular activities were particularly important for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds; and Kurdek and Sinclair (1988) found that students' school grades were positively related to family backgrounds in which intellectual activities and achievement were valued. Crocker (1989) also reported that being able to receive help at home was associated with higher levels of academic achievement; and it is the more highly educated parents who are most capable of providing this help.

In addition, it is likely that education is more highly valued by parents who have higher levels of education, and that parents who have university and other post-secondary education give more educational support to their children than parents who have not completed senior high school; and this research found this to be reflected in students' perceived educational experiences. The research also suggested that students whose parents had lower levels of education needed extra support at school. The Department of Education (1990b) emphasized the importance of ensuring that students from lower socio-economic home backgrounds receive the maximum benefit from schooling. One way of doing this is to provide students whose parents are not well-educated with regular study and tutorial sessions at school, an idea supported by the Department of Education (1992b). Peer tutoring could be provided to meet some of this need.

It is likely that there were fewer educational materials in homes where parents had not completed senior high school and that parents' ability to assist with homework was limited; there may also have been less parental contact with and involvement in schools. Brophy and Evertson (1976, cited in Department of Education, 1990b) found that it was particularly important that teachers ensure that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds complete assigned work. Increased teacher contact with the home and encouragement of parents to become more involved would be of value. The Department of Education (1992b) pointed out that "the home environment is critical to successful learning, and parents ... involvement in school can influence their child's learning" (p. 4).

Research Question 7--Parental Occupation. Findings of research question 7 showed that parental occupation per se made little, if any, difference to the way that students perceived their educational experiences. This study found that parental occupation did not significantly influence any aspect of students' perceived experiences.

It is generally accepted that socio-economic status impacts upon the extent to which students reach their educational potential (Department of Education, 1990b; Ekstrom et al., 1986; Keeping, 1988; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986); and students' socio-economic status is determined primarily by parental education, parental occupation, and family income.

The findings of this study indicated that level of parental education, already discussed under "Research Question 6," is the most important of these to impact upon students' educational experiences for the reasons discussed in that section. It further appeared that parental occupation impacted upon students' perceptions of their experiences only as mediated by parental education. Education partially determines participation in different occupational areas, particularly participation in different levels of occupation as measured by income and prestige. Therefore, it often appears that having parents in the more highly paid and prestigious occupations helps children do better at school, but this research indicated that it was the education which enabled parents to hold these positions that made the difference to how well their children did. This research also suggested that it may not matter which areas educated parents are employed in, or perhaps even if they work or not, but that being educated and instilling a positive attitude toward education and its value is perhaps the most important thing that parents can do to positively impact upon the way that children perceive their educational experiences. This is consistent with the findings of Kurdek and Sinclair (1988).

<u>Research Question 8--Area of Residence</u>. Findings of research question 8 showed that area of residence significantly influenced students' perceived educational experiences.

Students who lived in urban areas perceived the instruction-related, knowledge-related, extracurricular participation, and home-related aspects more negatively than did students who lived in rural areas. No aspect was perceived more negatively by students who lived in rural areas.

These findings were not consistent with those of other research. "Leaving Early" (1984) found that students in rural areas were more likely to leave school early than students in urban areas. Canadian Tests of Basic Skills' results have shown that students in larger schools have outperformed students in smaller schools, at all grade levels (Department of Education 1991b); and Riggs (1987) found that students in smaller communities were more negative toward schooling and more likely to plan to leave early. This study indicated that these findings were due as much or more to factors such as parental education than to being educated in a rural community per se. Young people who have completed their high school education have often left smaller communities and moved to larger centres to obtain employment or post-secondary education. Those less educated have tended to stay in their communities, and it is largely their children who have been educated in small rural schools. Crocker (1989) noted that more students from larger communities had home backgrounds in which parents were more highly educated. Furthermore, in smaller schools in rural areas there have been fewer course offerings and fewer

educational specialists to help students who have experienced difficulty.

There are, however, positive aspects of attending school in rural areas. This may help to explain why students in urban areas perceived the four aspects of their educational experiences mentioned above more negatively than those in rural areas. The researcher has noted that: (a) students in rural areas were more likely to have a parent who did not work outside of the home; (b) students in rural areas were more likely to have both natural parents living with them; (c) a larger percentage of students in smaller schools were able to participate in extracurricular activities because there were fewer students in the schools; (d) most students, not just those with the best skills, were able to make the sports' teams; (e) many teachers in rural areas may have provided students with more of the information that they needed in addition to the prescribed program because they likely realized that there were few other sources of information that students could access; (f) teaching methods may have been more current because of the turnover of teachers in rural areas, and teachers hired were more likely to have recently completed their teacher training; and (g) schools in rural areas were smaller, making more personal contact between students and teachers possible.

Students in urban areas, on the other hand, lived in a much different environment. They: (a) were more likely to

live in single-parent families; (b) were more likely to have both parents working outside of the home full-time; (c) may have had less opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities because there were more students to compete for positions; (d) may not have independently accessed information that they needed from sources and agencies outside of the school; (e) may have been more exposed to traditional teaching methods; (f) attended larger schools in which opportunities for personal contact between students and teachers were more limited; and (g) attended schools that were sometimes composed only of junior high school students so they did not have older students to draw upon as models or younger students to set an example for. All of these factors may have impacted upon student behavior and school climate, and influenced the way that students perceived their experiences.

Therefore, from the student perspective educational experiences were somewhat more positive in rural junior high schools than in urban ones. On the other hand though, students in rural areas may have been disadvantaged in ways that they did not perceive negatively such as through fewer course offerings, less specialist help, and exposure to a narrower range of experiences generally.

Discussion of Summary of Research Questions' Findings

Analyses of data related to research questions enabled the researcher to identify factors which most strongly influenced

students' perceived educational experiences. They were: (a) academic ability, (b) parental education, (c) gender, (d) age, and (e) area of residence. This was as expected. However, the researcher had expected grade retention to be more significant than the study found. In addition, the researcher had expected female students to perceive some aspects of their educational experiences more negatively than male students did, and students in rural areas to perceive some aspects of their educational experiences more negatively than students in urban areas did.

The study found that academic ability, parental education, gender, and age all significantly influenced the achievement-related and identification with school aspects of students' perceived educational experiences. This provided a profile of students who were most negative in the achievement-related and identification with school aspects of their perceived educational experiences. These students had lower levels of academic ability, family backgrounds with parents who had lower levels of education, male gender, and were older. Students with this profile were more likely than other students to be not interested in school and not happy with the achievement-related aspects of their educational experiences, and they identified with school less than other students. Therefore, they may have been the most disadvantaged among junior high school students, and likely most in need of attention and

assistance. In addition, students in urban areas appeared to be somewhat more disadvantaged than those in rural areas.

However, given the limitations of this study and the statistical procedures employed, many of the conclusions are tentative. Therefore, additional research to further clarify factors which influence students' perceived educational experiences is warranted.

Discussion of Descriptive Statistics' Findings

Findings Related to Teaching Methods.

Findings related to teaching methods showed that teacher lecture and writing answers using textbooks, the two teaching methods reported by students surveyed as used most often in their classes, were the two least preferred by students. In addition, over one-quarter of students surveyed reported difficulty understanding things talked about by teachers. Field trips and outside visits, films and videos, and group work, 3 of the 5 teaching methods most preferred by students were not among the five reported used most frequently in classes. Students also indicated that they preferred to spend a little more time on experiments. The amount of time spent on class discussion was approximately the amount that students reported that they preferred. However, responses to question 47 on the student form showed that over one-quarter of students surveyed stayed quiet in their classes when they wanted to

speak out. Those findings indicated a need for less teacher lecture, teacher presentation at a level understandable to students, and less writing answers using textbooks. They also indicate a need for more field trips, more educational films and videos, for more group work, and involvement of all students in discussion.

These findings supported the Department of Education's (1992a) focus on resource-based learning. Notably, Gadwa and Griggs (1985) found that students who left school early often had learning style preferences involving variety and active participation so providing students with different ways to learn may help some of them stay in school longer. Time and financial resources may limit the number of field trips that can be provided, especially in rural areas where longer distances are usually involved. However, many educational films and videos are available from the Department of Education's Audio-Visual Library and from the National Film Board of Canada, and it is likely that greater use could be made of them. Group work can be provided to junior high school students using cooperative educational approaches as outlined by Johnson et al. (1988).

Findings Related to Extracurricular Participation and Interest.

When students were asked to check the activities that they were interested in, and those that they spent most of their

free time at school on, 2 of the 5 checked most often were talking with friends and dances. This finding was consistent with Cluett's (1984) finding that the socialization aspects of schooling are very important to junior high school students.

This study found sports to be the extracurricular activity in which students were most interested; 73% of students participated and 57% spent most of their free time at school on sports. This finding was also consistent with Cluett's (1984) conclusion that participation in sports was an important source of enjoyment for students. The study also found that more male than female students participated in and spent more of their free time at school on extracurricular sports at school. This was consistent with the participation rates of male and female students in physical education courses at the senior high school level, and indicates a need to encourage more female students to participate in sports.

Using computers, an activity in which 37% of students reported being most interested, was not among the five in which most students reported participating. In addition, 44% of students reported that they never used computers at school, not in their courses or as an extracurricular activity. This indicated a need for greater availability of and student participation in computer use.

Although not identified as a need to the extent that computer use was, the study also identified a need for drama

and school newspaper participation to be more available as extracurricular options for students.

This study also found three notable results related to extracurricular reading participation. Reading was not 1 of the 5 activities in which students were most interested, but more female than male students participated in reading, and more female than male students spent most of their free time at school reading. This was consistent with Posterski and Bibby (1989) and indicated a need to encourage male students to read more. The study also found that reading participation decreased with age and grade by almost 20% over three years. This finding indicated a need to instill the value of reading among junior high school students and to help them select reading materials of interest to increase their motivation to continue to read.

Suggestions for School Improvement.

Students surveyed were asked how school could be changed to better meet their needs. The six aspects of schooling identified as being most in need of improvement were: (a) extracurricular activities, (b) teaching methods, (c) time in school, (d) evaluation and achievement, (e) curriculum composition, and (f) teacher concerns, respectively. A summary of students' suggestions for change is presented in Appendix N.

One-quarter of students surveyed indicated a need for more extracurricular activities, particularly socialization

activities and sports. This is consistent with Cluett's (1984) findings regarding the importance of socialization activities and participation in sports to junior high school students. These findings indicated that schools should offer a greater variety of extracurricular activities particularly those discussed in the section "Findings Related to Extracurricular Participation and Interest." There also seemed to be a need to provide more students with opportunities to participate. On the matter of choosing teams, for example, students commented:

> School could be changed to better meet my needs by letting everyone who wants to be on school teams be on them, instead of just picking some and making others feel bad.

> I would like it better if the school concentrated more on making students who aren't so good better, instead of having teams for the people who already know how.

This supports a participatory approach to school sports rather than a competitive one, an approach which has already been recommended by the Department of Education (1986).

A need for changes in teaching methods was noted by 19% of students surveyed. This was consistent with students' responses to questions 47, 56, and 57 of the student questionnaire that were discussed in the section "Findings Related to Teaching Methods." It also supports the need for the changes suggested in that section. Students' specific suggestions generally indicated a need for a more student-

oriented participatory approach to learning. Their comments on this matter included:

It would be better if there was [*sic*] more time to learn for ourselves. Most of the time we are given information and we must memorize it. I feel that if we found things out for ourselves we may learn better.

I think that the teachers could make school classes a lot more interesting and have more things that students enjoy doing. Even kids my age (grade 7) are dropping out of school and falling asleep in class!

Make learning more fun and interesting because we're only teenagers, not adults.

Issues related to time in school were noted by 16% of students surveyed, and all except one of those students indicated a desire to spend less time in school. Students' suggestions included shorter school days, longer breaks within the school day, longer week-ends, and more holidays. One student commented: "School can be changed to better meet my needs by having a class free every day, having half an hour for recess, an hour for dinner, and get out of school every Friday at two o'clock." Therefore, a longer school year, a possibility outlined by the Department of Education (1992b), would likely be perceived negatively by junior high school students. This indicates that using the instructional time

already available more efficiently and effectively may benefit junior high school students more than lengthening the school year. More breaks within the school day may also be beneficial.

A need for changes related to evaluation and achievement was noted by 14% of the students surveyed. Many of their suggestions related to the difficulty level of academic work and to evaluation methods, particularly quizzes and exams, with some students being concerned about failure. In addition, findings of questions 8 and 19 on the student form showed that one-half of students surveyed indicated that the amount of homework set was unfair, and that over one-quarter indicated that they did not have a quiet place at home where they could read and study, making homework completion difficult. One student commented, "I would like for school to be more challenging. Often things are taught that I already know," while another wrote, "I need work which is easier to understand." This indicated a need to further individualize programs for students, particularly for those with above and below average levels of academic ability. A student with evaluation concerns commented, "things would be better for me if there were no mid-term and final exams." This comment and others related to it indicated a need for a variety of evaluation methods, for less emphasis on quizzes and exams, and for closer monitoring of the amount of work expected to be done

at home. This was supported by recommendations of the Department of Education (1990a).

A need for changes in curriculum composition was noted by 11% of students. Their comments indicated a need to focus on interesting and practical content. In addition, question 54 of the student form showed that over one-quarter of students surveyed reported that information provided in their classes never answered the questions that they had about sex. This was consistent with the findings of Beasley (1989), discussed in chapter II, that Newfoundland high school students tended to be more sexually active than other young Canadians, and less likely to receive information from their families and from their schools. In addition, findings of research question 39 on the student form showed that over half of the students surveyed often or always felt bored in their classes. There were also indications that students were not aware of the importance of the subjects that they were doing. Students' comments on this matter included:

> I think that we should talk about careers and get us ready
> for the real world.

> Have sex education as a course, we need to know these
> things!

I think that there should not be so many subjects. Most of our subjects are not going to do us any good so why should we do it?

These findings were similar to those of Martin (1985a). They indicated that some changes to the curriculum were needed to make it more interesting and practical for students, and that the purpose and importance of subjects taught needed to be discussed more with students.

Teacher concerns were noted by 10% of students surveyed. Many expressed a need for some teachers to show more understanding of, and respect and concern for students. This finding is consistent with that of Martin (1985b). In addition, on question 12 of the student form, almost half of the students surveyed reported that teachers did not know and understand them, and on question 6 almost one-quarter reported that they were never praised by teachers for their school work. Students' comments on this matter included:

Members of the school board and teachers could listen and understand their students needs physical, mental and social more. This way there would be less teacher-student conflict.

Teachers spend too much time criticizing you. They want you to respect them, but they don't respect us and that sometimes interferes with my school work.

These findings indicated that teachers need to be more cognisant of the nature of their interactions with students and of the impact that those interactions have on the way that students perceive teachers.

Findings of Specific Questions on the Student Form.

Many of the significant findings obtained by specific questions on the student form have already been discussed in this chapter. However, some questions provided further insight into students' educational experiences.

Findings of questions 11 and 46, related to school climate, showed that almost three-quarters of the students surveyed did not help to make classroom rules, and that almost half felt unfairly treated if they broke rules. This is consistent with the findings of Martin (1985b) and Wehlage and Rutter (1986). These findings indicated a need to give students more autonomy in the school setting including involvement in developing rules and outlining disciplinary procedures as suggested by Blumenfeld and Meece (1985) and The Department of Education (1986).

Findings of questions 9, 33, and 34, also related to school climate, provided insight into how many students felt at school. As outlined in chapter IV, findings showed that of all the students surveyed: (a) one-third reported being often treated unfairly by classmates, (b) one-half reported often feeling unimportant as members of their classes and (c) almost

two-thirds reported that their classrooms often were not comfortable and pleasant. This was demonstrated by the following comments:

> I think there should be a rule about insulting classmates, I have that done to me just about all the time.

> School would be better for me if there weren't bullies around that pick on you just because they think it's cool.

> I could change schools and have a better life, rather than be a loser all of the time.

> I would like for people who act up in class to be sent to the office or be made to go outside of the door.

Between one-third and two-thirds of students surveyed often perceived themselves as unimportant or unfairly treated by peers and uncomfortable at school for those or other reasons. Martin (1985b) noted that "being left out" was also a common experience of Newfoundland and Labrador high school students. If these findings can be generalized to the population of Newfoundland and Labrador school students, there is little wonder that many have left school early.

These findings indicate a need to foster positive interaction and relationships among students, to use self-esteem and self-concept building activities, and to provide comfortable and pleasant classroom climates. They also

indicate a need for further research to identify specific causes of students' perceptions of unfair treatment by other students, of feeling unimportant as classroom members, and of discomfort; the aim is to provide educational environments for junior high school students which are more positive and comfortable, and therefore, more conducive to learning and to staying in school.

Findings of questions 23 and 49, related to identification with school, showed that many students reported that they preferred to work at a job than to attend school, and that over one-quarter had thought about quitting school. This is consistent with the finding of Martin (1985a) that some students planned to quit school, and with the conclusion of the Department of Education (1989) that students "drop out" psychologically long before they remove themselves physically, and that the final break occurs as a result of a cumulation of many factors over an extended period. Therefore, it is important for teachers of junior high school students to realize that this process is likely occurring in the minds and lives of some students in their classes. Addressing this issue and providing students with the most positive experiences possible would likely reduce the numbers of students leaving school early.

Positive educational experiences were also identified by students surveyed. These pertained primarily to student effort, classroom composition, socialization, and home factors.

Findings of questions 1 and 29, related to student effort, showed that over three-quarters of the students surveyed reported that they paid attention to what teachers said in their classes, and that they always studied and did homework. In addition, question 22 found that almost all students felt that it was important for them to finish high school. This indicated that large numbers of students were cognisant of the importance of their education, and that they put considerable effort into their work.

Findings of questions 14, 43, and 44, related to teachers and classroom composition, showed that over 80% of students surveyed reported that teachers expected them to do their best work, and that they had a satisfactory number of teachers and students in their classes. This implied that the student-teacher ratio was about right for most students, and that teachers conveyed to their students expectations for high quality work. In addition, responses to question 53, indicated that three-quarters of students surveyed felt that school was a good place for students to socialize, even though many indicated extracurricular socialization activities as an area of need. This further points to the importance of such activities to junior high school students.

The above findings indicate that many students were satisfied with some aspects of their school-related educational experiences. In fact, as noted in the section "Findings Related to School Improvement," 5% of students surveyed

expressed total satisfaction with school. Students' comments included:

> I think that our school and class are pretty good now. We take part in a lot of activities and we have dances and trips. We have a good homeroom teacher who is nice and has a good sense of humour.

> School is fine the way it is, nothing needs to be changed.

Findings of questions 7 and 37, related to home, indicated that the home situations of approximately 85% of students surveyed were conducive to learning, in that their parents encouraged them to do well in their school subjects, and that nothing was happening at home to prevent them from doing well. This suggested that the majority of parents of students surveyed were concerned about their children's education, and that the lack of support of some parents may have been due to lack of knowledge because of their own limited education. This was suggested by the findings of research question 6 which indicated that students whose parents had not completed senior high school perceived six aspects of their educational experiences, including home-related, more negatively than students whose parents had higher levels of education. Problematic family circumstances may have been a factor in some homes, but this was indicated by only 6% of students surveyed.

Discussion of Additional Findings

     As outlined in chapter IV, a number of significant
relationships ($\underline{p}$ < .001) with correlation coefficients of .500
or higher among categories of the dependent variable were
identified using multiple regression analysis. Those with the
strongest relationships were in the teacher-related,
achievement-related, and identification with school areas. The
weakest relationships were between extracurricular
participation and the other variables.

     Teacher-related was most strongly associated with
instruction-related and knowledge-related. Students perceived
positively teachers who used instructional methods that they
enjoyed and who provided them with knowledge that students felt
they needed.

     Achievement-related was most strongly associated with
student participation. Students who reported participating
most in their classes perceived their achievement most
positively.

     Identification with school was most strongly associated
with teacher-related, instruction-related, achievement-related,
and school climate. Students who identified with school most
had positive perceptions of their teachers, enjoyed the
instructional methods used, achieved well, and had positive
perceptions of school and classroom climates.

     The low correlations between extracurricular participation
and the other variables investigated by this study were

surprising, considering the numbers of students who participated in them and that extracurricular activities were noted as a concern by 25% of students surveyed. Research questions posed by the study further found that: (a) male students participated in fewer activities than females, (b) students whose parents had lower levels of education participated in fewer than students whose parents had higher levels of education, and (c) students from urban areas participated in fewer activities than those from rural areas. The lack of a significant relationship with other variables was not consistent with research discussed in chapter II which found extracurricular activities to be related to academic aspirations, academic achievement, acceptance of school norms, and student self-esteem. Further research into how extracurricular participation is related to students' perceptions of other aspects of schooling and to their level of attachment to school may be beneficial.

The above findings indicated that factors within school environments are just as important, or more important, than independent factors such as those investigated by this study in influencing students' perceptions of their educational experiences and, therefore, their level of attachment to school and their school-related educational decisions. Consequently, there appeared to be a need to reexamine factors within school environments with a view to providing junior high school

students with experiences that would be perceived more positively by them.

Summary of Discussion

The findings of this study showed that there were a number of aspects of schooling in which changes could be made to better meet the needs of junior high school students. It was noteworthy that many of the suggestions for change arising from this study had already been recommended by the Department of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador and had been outlined in published documents (see References). This indicated that there was a need for the department to become more involved in the school system to ensure that existing policies and recommendations were in place at the school and classroom levels. It also pointed to a need for more inservice of school personnel to keep them informed of current policy, rationale, and recommendations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arising from this study are respectfully forwarded:

Recommendations for Practice in Junior High Schools

1. Identify students whose parents have lower levels of education, and provide those parents with encouragement and

strategies to help them become more involved in their children's education

2. Provide lower ability students with more academic and social activities through which success can be experienced.

3. Group all students with their age peers whenever possible, and seldom require students to repeat a grade.

4. Use a variety of teaching methods, particularly field trips, educational films and videos, group work, computer use, and experiments. Students indicated that the current level of classroom discussion was sufficient; however, less teacher lecture and writing answers using textbooks was suggested.

5. Provide a resource-based, participatory approach to learning, as outlined by the Department of Education (1992a).

6. Provide male students with experiences that will be perceived more positively by them.

7. Provide students with needed information in such areas as career and sexuality education early enough to be of benefit in making decisions.

8. Provide students with self-esteem and self-concept building activities.

9. Provide activities to foster positive interaction and relationships among students.

10. Foster comfortable and pleasant classroom climates.

11. Increase student involvement in rule-making and in planning disciplinary procedures.

12.   Continue to offer a variety of extracurricular activities, particularly sports, socialization activities, computer use, music, drama, and school newspaper, respectively; and provide as many students as possible with opportunities to participate.

13.   Provide students who need them, particularly those whose parents have lower levels of education, with study and tutorial sessions at school, and include peer tutoring as part of this.

14.   Ensure that the amount of work expected to be completed at home is reasonable.

15.   Provide curriculum content which is interesting and practical, and explain the purpose and importance of subjects taught.

16.   Motivate students, particularly males and those who are older, to read more.

17.   Encourage all students to participate when discussing answers, ideas, and opinions orally.

18.   Use instructional time available more effectively to ensure that students receive the maximum benefit from schooling--many students felt that they spent too much time in classes.

19.   Use a variety of evaluation methods.

20.   Maintain respect and understanding in student-teacher interaction.

Recommendations for Policy

1. Increase inservice of junior high school personnel to keep them informed of current policy, rationale, and recommendations.

2. Increase involvement of Department of Education and school board office personnel to ensure that existing policies and recommendations for junior high schools are in place at the school and classroom levels.

3. Encourage each junior high school to conduct an effectiveness assessment, with the assistance of a skilled facilitator.

Recommendations for Research

1. Conduct research to further examine and clarify factors influencing junior high school students' perceptions of their educational experiences.

2. Conduct research to determine the extent to which male junior high school students perceive their educational experiences more negatively than do female students, specific aspects of schooling in which this occurs, and why. Further insight may be gained by using the observation method to identify differences between the educational experiences of male and female students.

3. Conduct research to examine why many students feel unimportant, unfairly treated by peers, and uncomfortable at school.

4. Survey students in grades 7 and 8 to further determine specific practical information needed by them, for example, in the areas of career and sexuality education.

5. Conduct research to determine whether junior high school students in urban areas perceive their educational experiences more negatively than those in rural areas, and the specific aspects of schooling in which this occurs.

6. Conduct research to examine why reading participation decreases during the junior high school years.

7. Conduct further research to determine how extra-curricular participation is related to students' perceptions of other aspects of schooling and to their level of attachment to school.

8. Conduct research to assess the benefits and feasibility of restructuring junior high school programs along a non-grading, continuous progress model.

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APPENDIX A

Enrolment by Course by Sex

Course	Enrolment		
	1990-91		
	Male	Female	Total
Business Education			
General Business 1101	438	599	1,037
General Business 2101	282	350	632
Typing 1102	1,380	2,433	3,813
Typing 2102	446	849	1,295
Word Processing 2123	1	46	47
Entrepreneurship 2124	22	29	51
Family Studies			
Foods 1100	641	1,268	1,909
Clothing 1101	149	671	820
Family Living 2200	2,079	2,399	4,478
Nutrition 3100	353	698	1,051
Textiles 3101	44	276	320
Industrial Education			
Design Technology 1101	927	387	1,314
Drawing and Planning 2101	361	117	478
Metalworking 1102	282	27	310
Metalworking 2102	161	26	187
Electricity 1103	690	149	839
Electronics 3104	202	29	231
Woodworking 1107	1,439	363	1,802
Woodworking 2107	733	222	955
Food Service 2105	139	264	403
Power Mechanics 2107	831	82	913
Textile Crafts 2106	34	247	261
Marine Industries 2108	284	139	423
Home Maintenance 3108	943	372	1,315
Physical Education			
Physical Education 1100	3,285	1,978	5,263
Physical Education 2100	2,533	1,193	3,726
Physical Education 3100	2,463	1,396	3,859

APPENDIX B

HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL IS IMPORTANT TO US
SO WE WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO
GIVE US YOUR IDEAS BY ANSWERING
THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

<u>INSTRUCTIONS</u>

READ EACH QUESTION

ANSWER EACH ONE

THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWER

CHOOSE THE ANSWER THAT IS MOST RIGHT FOR YOU

<u>IF YOU NEED HELP</u>

RAISE YOUR HAND AND
YOUR QUESTION WILL BE ANSWERED AT YOUR SEAT

YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED!

PART A

I.   Read the list of school activities below which many students take
part in.

    A.   In column A check ( ) <u>all</u> of those that you take part in
during your free time at school.

    B.   In column B check ( ) the <u>three</u> activities that you <u>spend
the most time on</u> during your free time at school.

    C.   In column C check ( ) the <u>three</u> that you are <u>most interested
in</u>. They may or may not be ones that you already take part
in.

At School:	A	B	C
1. Sports			
2. Using computers			
3. Student council			
4. Drama			
5. School newspaper			
6. Playing games (chess, monopoly, scrabble, etc.)			
7. Reading			
8. Music			
9. Talking with friends			
10. Bus monitor (helper)			
11. Class prefect (helper)			
12. Library prefect (helper)			
13. Dances			
14. Clubs (Allied Youth, Junior Red Cross, etc.)			
15. Other(s) _____			

II. Check ( ) the most important reason that prevents (keeps) you
     from taking part in more school activities.

_____ a. I don't have time
_____ b. I don't have enough money
_____ c. My parent's aren't agreeable
_____ d. I'm afraid to try
_____ e. I don't want to
_____ f. There isn't anything else that I'm interested in
_____ g. I have to catch a bus right after school
_____ h. I take part in activities outside of school
_____ i. Other reason(s): _____

_____ __ __

PART B

For each statement in this part put a Check ( ) under the letter of
the answer that is most right for you:

> A - Always
> O - Often
> S - Sometimes
> N - Never

		A	O	S	N
1.	I pay attention to what my teachers say in my classes.				
2.	I understand the things that my teachers talk about in my classes.				
3.	My teachers ask me to answer questions out loud in class.				
4.	I find my textbooks easy to understand.				
5.	In my classes I learn ways to study that may help me get higher marks on quizzes and assignments.				
6.	My teachers praise me for my school work.				
7.	My parents encourage me to get good marks in my school subjects.				
8.	I have a quiet, comfortable place at home to read and to study.				
9.	My classrooms are comfortable and pleasant.				

A   O   S   N

10. I find classroom and school rules easy to follow. _____

11. I feel fairly treated if I break classroom or school rules. _____

12. I feel that my teachers know and understand me. _____

13. My parents attend the parent - teacher meetings that are held. _____

14. My teachers expect me to do my best work in my school subjects. _____

15. I am interested in the information that is taught in my classes. _____

16. I take part in classroom discussions. _____

17. I do the in-class seat work that teachers ask me to do. _____

18. My teachers help me with my school work. _____

19. I feel that the amount of homework that is set for me is fair. _____

20. I have someone to help me with my homework if needed. _____

21. My parents praise me for my school work. _____

22. I feel that it is important for me to finish high school. _____

23. I feel that I would rather attend (come to) school than work at a job. _____

24. I use computers in my school. _____

25. In my classes I learn about different careers and jobs. _____

26. In my classes I learn about the changing roles (place) of men and women in society. _____

27. I feel that the things that I learn at school are useful. _____

				A	O	S	N

28. My parents talk with me about the importance of finishing high school. _____

29. I study and do homework. _____

30. I am happy with my marks on quizzes and assignments. _____

31. My teachers help me to understand the importance of the subjects that I do in school. _____

32. The work that I do is displayed (put up) in my classrooms. _____

33. I feel important as a member of my class. _____

34. I feel fairly treated by my classmates. _____

35. I get a chance to help out in my classrooms and around the school. _____

36. I enjoy the kinds of teaching that take place in my classes. _____

37. I feel that things that happen at home keep me from doing well at school. _____

38. I feel that I am likely to fail quizzes and assignments. _____

39. I feel bored in my classes. _____

40. My teachers show that they understand how I feel. _____

41. My teachers encourage me to talk about my own ideas in classes. _____

42. I ask my teachers for help with my school work. _____

43. I feel that I have too many teachers. _____

44. I feel that there are too many students in my classes. _____

45. I am encouraged to help other students in my classes. _____

46. I help to make the rules in my classrooms. _____

	A	O	S	N

47. I stay quiet in my classes when I would like to speak out. _____

48. I stay out of school when I don't really need to be. _____

49. I have thought about quitting school. _____

50. My teachers help me to understand the importance of finishing high school. _____

51. I feel that I get along well with my teachers. _____

52. I am encouraged to play on sports teams in my school. _____

53. For me school is a good place to make and meet with friends. _____

54. Information that is given in my classes answers the questions that I have about sex. _____

55. In my classes I learn skills (ways) to help me make important decisions. _____

56. Here are some ways of teaching that are used with students. How often is each of the following used with your classes?

	A	O	S	N

    a. Class discussions (talking) _____

    b. Group work _____

    c. Lecture (teacher talking) _____

    d. Films and videos _____

    e. Role play (acting things out) _____

    f. Doing experiments (discovering) _____

    g. Choosing books and reading _____

    h. Writing own ideas _____

    i. Reading textbooks and writing answers _____

    j. Field trips and outside visits _____

57. How often would you like to see each of
    the following ways of teaching used with
    your classes?   **A   O   S   N**

    a. Class discussion (talking)   _____

    b. Group work   _____

    c. Lecture (teacher talking)   _____

    d. Films and videos   _____

    e. Role play (acting things out)   _____

    f. Doing experiments (discovering)   _____

    g. Choosing books and reading   _____

    h. Writing own ideas   _____

    i. Reading textbooks and writing answers _____

    j. Field trips and outside visits   _____

PART C

58. How could school be changed to better meet your needs?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

PART D

Information About You

You <u>should not</u> put your name on this questionnaire. However, it is important for us to know some things about you and your parents.

Please answer the following questions:

1. Circle whether you are a boy (M) or girl (F):   M   F

2. Circle your age: 11   12   13   14   15   16   17   18

3. Circle your grade level: 7   8   9

4. Which of the sets of marks below are closest to your <u>average</u> in your school subjects <u>last year</u>?

    i.   80 or above
   ii.   65-79
  iii.   50-64
   iv.   49 or below

5. Which of the sets of marks below are closest to your <u>average</u> in your school subjects <u>this year</u>?

    i.   80 or above
   ii.   65-79
  iii.   50-64
   iv.   49 or below

6. Have you repeated a school grade? _____

7. If yes, which grade(s) did you repeat?

    a. kindergarten   f. five
    b. one   g. six
    c. two   h. seven
    d. three   i. eight
    e. four   j. nine

8. Circle the highest grade level that your <u>mother</u> finished:

        a. 1-6   b. 7-9   c. 10-12

9. Circle the highest grade level that your <u>father</u> finished:

        a. 1-6   b. 7-9   c. 10-12

10. If your mother or your father attended either of the following please <u>underline</u>:

Mother	Father
Trades School/community college	Trades School/community college
Fisheries College/Marine Institute	Fisheries College/Marine Institute
Nursing School	Nursing School
College of Trades and Technology/Cabot Institute	College of Trades and Technology/Cabot Institute
University	University
Other: _____	Other: _____
Don't know	Don't know

11. What is your <u>mother's</u> job or what kind of work does she do?

_____

12. What is your <u>father's</u> job or what kind of work does he do?

_____

NOTE: **PLEASE CHECK TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL QUESTIONS.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR IDEAS AND HELP

HAVE A NICE DAY!

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Composition

| Part A | Distribution of Items |

Extracurricular participation: I, II

Part B

Student participation: 1, 16, 17, 42, 47, 48

Teacher-related: 3, 6, 14, 18, 31, 40, 41, 50, 51

Instruction-related: 2, 5, 19, 36, 56, 57

Knowledge-related: 24, 25, 26, 27, 54, 55,

Achievement-related: 4, 15, 22, 29, 30, 38, 39,

School climate: 9, 11, 34, 43, 44, 45, 46

Home-related: 7, 8, 13, 20, 21, 28, 37

Identification with school: 10, 12, 23, 32, 33, 35, 49, 52, 53

Part C

Suggestions for school improvement: 58

Part D

Student information: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Family background: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

.

APPENDIX D

<u>Teacher Form</u>

The following information is very important to the analysis of the data collected by the study of the educational experiences of junior high school students.

Please take a few minutes from your busy schedule and to the best of your knowledge estimate the <u>average mark</u> in school subjects and the <u>overall academic ability</u> of each student in your class.

Use the codes provided and write the numbers of your responses in the spaces across from each student's name.

All information is confidential.

YOUR HELP IS APPRECIATED

<u>Codes:</u>

Average Mark	Academic Ability
1. 80 or above	1. Above Average
2. 65 - 79	2. High Average
3. 50 - 64	3. Low Average
4. 49 or below	4. Below Average

Grade _____

NO	STUDENT'S NAME	AVERAGE MARK	ACADEMIC ABILITY
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
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___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____
___	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX E

Letter to Superintendents

Dear

  As a graduate student in educational psychology at Memorial University and a school guidance counselor, I hereby request permission to administer questionnaires to grades seven, eight, and nine students in schools under your jurisdiction which may be selected for this study.

  The study addresses the educational experiences of junior high school students from their perspective; thus, it is necessary to elicit information from them. As well, because ability to perform academic work appears to influence students' experiences, it is important to the analysis of data collected for a teacher who works with the students to provide an estimate of each student's academic performance and overall academic ability.

  All information provided by teachers and students is confidential.

  For further explanation of the study and the intended procedure please refer to the methodology section enclosed. Also find enclosed a copy of: the certificate of approval from the Ethics Review Committee at MUN, the student questionnaire, the teacher form, a letter to school principals, a letter to parents, and the parental consent form. If additional information is needed I can be contacted collect on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 739-6885.

  Your consideration and approval of this request would be appreciated.

  Please reply at your earliest convenience using the consent form and envelope provided.

Sincerely yours,

_____   _____

Ruby Paddock Colbourne   Mildred Cahill
Graduate Student   Assistant Professor

Department of Educational Psychology, Memorial University

School Board Consent Form

Attention Ruby Paddock Colbourne:

Yes, Your proposed research procedures have been approved and you have consent to administer the necessary student questionnaires and teacher forms upon consultation with school principals and with authorized parental consent.

I understand that I will be notified as soon as the selection of schools to be surveyed is made. Subsequent to this the school principals and parents concerned will be contacted.

A copy of this consent form will accompany the letter to school principals to inform them that permission to survey in their schools has been granted.

_____   _____

Superintendent   Date

_____

School Board

Attention Ruby Paddock Colbourne:

Your request to conduct research in my school board district has not been approved.

_____   _____

Superintendent   Date

_____

School Board

APPENDIX F

Methodology Forwarded

The Sample

This study intends to survey approximately 500 male and female grade 7, 8, and 9 school students in rural and urban areas of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Instruments

The student form is a survey type questionnaire to be completed independently by each student. It is composed of four parts: (A) a three column check-list activity, (B) a fifty-six question 4-point Likert type check-list, (C) one open-ended question, and (D) a personal information section.

The questionnaire content reflects the dependent variable being investigated--the educational experiences of junior high school students. Questions included pertain to the following categories: student participation, teacher-related, instruction-related, knowledge-related, achievement-related, school climate, extracurricular school activities, home-related, and identification with school.

The teacher form should be completed by the classroom teacher who spends the most time teaching each class selected. It requests that the teacher report the average mark in school subjects and an estimate of the overall academic ability level of each student.

Time Required

Based upon a previous administration of the questionnaire to two students, one in grade 5 who completed it in 25 minutes and one in grade 7 who completed it in 18 minutes, it is expected that all students will complete the questionnaire within 30 minutes. Both students who completed the questionnaire reported that they found it interesting.

It is expected that the teacher form will be completed in approximately 15 minutes.

Method of Data Collection

It is expected that the questionnaires will be administered by the thesis writer and by a research assistant who is a certified teacher.

Confidentiality

In order to protect student anonymity, all student forms will be given a number code to correspond to their name and school with the master list available only to the thesis writer, a practising school guidance counselor. As soon as questionnaires are matched with information on the teacher forms all identifying information will be destroyed, and the data will subsequently be handled using only the code numbers. This method is similar to the one used by Wiseman (1982).

In order to further protect student anonymity, in schools where the questionnaires are not administered by the thesis

writer each student will be provided with an envelope in which
to seal the questionnaire. In all schools each teacher will be
provided with an envelope in which to seal the form.

Analysis

An analysis of data collected on students' educational
experiences will be done for gender, age, ability, grade level,
grade retention, parental education, parental occupation, and
area of residence.

Reporting

Results reported will reflect the dependent and independent
variables only; no identifying information will be included.

APPENDIX G

Letter to Principals

Dear

I am a graduate student in Educational Psychology at Memorial University and a school guidance counselor. I am involved in a study that addresses the educational experiences of junior high school students from their perspective.

Your superintendent has granted permission (see enclosed copy of signed permission form) for the administration of a questionnaire to grades seven, eight, and nine students. There is also an accompanying teacher form to be completed by the teacher who is most involved with each class. It is expected that all students will complete the questionnaire within 30 minutes, and that teachers will complete the form within 15 minutes.

Parental consent will be obtained for each student participating and for information requested of teachers. Enclosed you will find a copy of the letter to parents, the parental consent form, and the letter which will be forwarded to teachers involved.

The questionnaires will be administered by me or by a research assistant. All information obtained is confidential, and students will be asked not to put their names on the questionnaires. In no case will a child's name or the name of a school be reported.

You will be contacted in the near future so that a specific plan can be put in place. If further information is needed I can be contacted collect on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 739-6885.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Ruby Paddock Colbourne

Letter to Teachers

Dear Teacher:

I am a graduate student in Educational Psychology at Memorial University and a school guidance counselor. My research study addresses the educational experiences of junior high school students.

Your superintendent and principal have given their permission for the administration of a questionnaire to classes of grade seven, eight, and nine students in your school, and for the completion of an accompanying teacher form. Ideally the teacher form would be completed by the teacher who is most involved with each class. In addition, parental consent is necessary.

Thus, I need the assistance of my colleagues to help put the foundation of the study in place. This being the case, I ask you to distribute to the students in your class the enclosed letter to parents with the attached consent form. Please encourage the students to have the forms signed by their parents and returned to you as soon as possible. Enclosed you will find an envelope to place the returned forms in.

Upon the receipt of the consent forms I would appreciate it if you would complete the enclosed teacher form as it is an essential part of the study. Please place it in the envelope provided and seal it.

When I visit your school for questionnaire administration I will collect the above requested information from you. You will be further informed of the date and time through your principal.

Your help is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely yours,

Ruby Paddock Colbourne

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APPENDIX H

Letter to Parents

Dear Parent:

It appears that the educational experiences provided to students make a difference to how they feel about school and perhaps to how well they do.

I am a school guidance counselor and a graduate student at Memorial University. In my work I hope to study the educational experiences of students in grades seven, eight, and nine in different parts of the province. In order to do this it is important to find out more about their experiences, and I hope to do this by asking them to complete a questionnaire that will take about 30 minutes of their time. Students who have already done the questionnaire have found it interesting.

The questionnaire will be given by me or by a research assistant. All information is confidential, and students will be asked not to put their names on the questionnaires.

Also, because ability to do academic work appears to make a difference to students' educational experiences, one of the students' teachers will be asked to give an estimate of each students' performance in and ability to do academic work. The teacher will be given an envelope in which to seal the information, it will be available only to me, and will be kept strictly confidential. In no case will a child's name or the name of a school be reported.

I trust that you will give your permission for your child to take part in this worthwhile study. It would be appreciated if you would complete the enclosed form and have your child return it to his or her teacher as soon as possible.

Thank you for cooperation.

Sincerely Yours,

Ruby Paddock Colbourne

<u>Parental Consent Form</u>

I hereby grant permission for my child _____ to complete a questionnaire on the educational experiences of junior high school students.

I also grant permission for a teacher to provide an estimate of my child's academic performance and ability to do academic work.

I understand that all information is confidential.

_____   _____
Parent or Guardian   Date

APPENDIX I

Urban Areas

Area	Community	Population
St. John's (CMA)		**161,901**
	St. John's	96,216
	Mount Pearl	20,293
	Conception Bay South	15,531
	Metropolitan Area	6,254
	Goulds	4,688
	Torbay	3,730
	Paradise	3,364
	Portugal Cove	2,497
	Pouch Cove	1,576
	St. Phillips	1,604
	Wedgewood Park	1,385
	Bay Bulls	1,114
	Witless Bay	1,022
	Petty Hr./Maddox Cove	974
	Flatrock	884
	St. Thomas	648
	Hogan's Pond	139
Carbonear (CA)		**13,082**
	Carbonear	5,337
	Harbour Grace	3,053
	Victoria	1,895
	Salmon Cove	778
	Bryant's Cove	421
	Harbour Grace South	367
	Other Urban	1,231
Corner Brook (CA)		**33,730**
	Corner Brook	22,719
	Pasadena	3,268
	Halfway Point & others	2,182
	Summerside	798
	Irishtown	798
	McIver's	738
	Mount Moriah	692
	Meadows	671
	Gillams	512
	Massey Drive	415
	Steady Brook	386
	Hughes Brook	141
	Other Urban	410

Area	Community	Population
Gander (CA)		**10,899**
	Gander	10,207
	Appleton	502
	Other Urban	190
Grand Falls (CA)		**25,612**
	Grand Falls	9,121
	Windsor	5,545
	Bishop's Falls	4,213
	Botwood	3,916
	Badger	1,151
	Peterview	1,130
	Northern Arm	342
	Other Urban	194
Labrador City (CA)		**11,301**
	Labrador City	8,664
	Wabush	2,637
Stephenville		**7,994**
Happy Valley-Goose Bay		**7,248**
Marystown		**6,660**
Channel-Port aux Basques		**5,901**
TOTAL URBAN		**284,328**

APPENDIX J

<u>School Improvement Categories</u>

1. Satisfaction
2. Curriculum Composition
3. Teaching methods
4. Interest
5. Student participation
6. Evaluation and achievement
7. Teacher concerns
8. Discipline
9. Student relationships
10. Rules and decision making
11. Special needs
12. Career oriented
13. Extracurricular
14. Autonomy and freedom
15. School and classroom composition
16. Time in school
17. Resources
18. Facilities
19. Nutrition and food services
20. Transportation
21. Dissatisfaction

~

APPENDIX K

Parental Education Categories

1. Elementary school (grades 1-6)

2. Junior high school (grades 7-9)

3. Senior high school (grades 10-12)

4. Trades school\community college

5. College of trades and technology\Cabot Institute

6. School of Nursing

7. Fisheries College\Marine Institute

8. University

9. Other post-secondary:

    Police training school

    Armed Forces training

    Newfoundland Militia training

    Training college for clergy

APPENDIX L

Parental Occupation Categories

1. Protective service

2. Administrative and supervisory

3. Professional

4. Business

5. Skilled trade

6. Clerical, sales, and service

7. Primary industry

8. Unskilled labor

9. Homemaker

10. Unemployed

11. Retired

12. Student

APPENDIX M

Specific Parental Occupations

1. Protective services

(Salaried)

Armed forces	Customs officer
Police officer	Security guard
Prison guard	Safety supervisor
Child detention centre guard	Fire fighter
Child protection officer	Ambulance driver
Wildlife officer	

2. Administrative and Supervisory

(Salaried)

President of educational institution	Pay roll auditor
Head of university department	Government records manager
School board superintendent	Administrator of hospital and nursing association
School board coordinator	Administrator of senior citizens' cottages
School principal	Hospital supervisor
Supervisor of federal government department	Manager of hospital radiology department
Management position with provincial association	Dockyard supervisor
Director of provincial government department	Hydro company supervisor
Coordinator of provincial government department	Oil storage terminal manager
Director of cultural centres	Building inspector
Federal government auditor	Research firm supervisor

3. <u>Professional</u>

   (Salaried)

Professor	Transition house counselor
Teacher	Social worker
Fisheries institute instructor	Clergy
Community college instructor	Librarian
Lawyer	Journalist
Doctor	Editor
Dentist	Television reporter
Pharmacist	Television producer
Nurse	Translator
Public Health Nurse	Communications specialist
Nursing assistant	Computer programmer
Dietician	Chartered accountant
Physiotherapist	Engineer
Psychologist	Geologist
Employment counselor	Landscape architect
School guidance counselor	Ship's captain
Educational Therapist	

4. <u>Business</u>

   (Salaried or self-employed)

Operator of day care service	Real estate company manager
Heavy equipment company owner	Real estate sales person
Gas bar manager	Property rentals business
Garage manager	Operator of tourist cabins
Contractor	Boat charters business
Architectural contractor	Club owner
Electrical contractor	Games arcade owner
Woods' contractor	Fast food outlet owner

Land surveying business	Moving company manager
Sawmill owner	Transit company manager
Fish company owner	Nursing home owner
Fish plant manager	Telephone service manager
Fish plant foreman	Mine manager
Restaurant owner	Construction company owner
Cleaning business owner	Construction foreman
Florist business owner	Trucking company owner
Bank manager	Iron working company manager
Credit manager	Clothing store manager
Bank loans' officer	Jewelry store manager
Financial investor	Department store manager
Mortgage administrator	Craft fabric store owner
Pay roll officer	Shoe store manager
Sales manager	Convenience store manager
Government purchasing officer	Bakery manager
Investigation and security business	Dairy products company manager
Insurance underwriter	Supermarket manager
Life insurance agent	Sales and retail company manager
Automotive sales manager	Liquor corporation manager
Automotive sales person	

5. Skilled Trades

   (Hourly)

Heavy equipment operator	Electrician
Automotive appraiser	Welder
Insurance appraiser	Audiotechnician
Housing appraiser	Electrical power line worker
Building inspector	Telephone lines worker

Land surveyor

Interior decorator

Fashion designer

Florist

Television camera operator

Disc jockey

Photographer

Printer

Crafts' maker

Laboratory technician

Computer clerk

Meter technician

Mechanic

Carpenter

Mining company millwright

Millwright plant mechanic

Fish plant mechanic

Iron worker

Drafting technologist

Burner Mechanic

Mate on tug boat

Printer

Plumber

Sheet metal worker

Pipe fitter

Shipwright

Brick layer

Paper maker

Diamond driller

Traffic technician

Chef

Dental assistant

Dental hygienist

Legal secretary

6. **Clerical, Sales and Service**

(Hourly)

Student assistant

Child care worker

Baby-sitter

Foster parent

Seamstress

Home health aide

Bank teller

Census taker

Salesperson

Cashier

Store clerk

Service representative

Shipping department worker

Gas station attendant

Hairdresser

Manicurist

Part-time library worker

Bookkeeper

Secretary

Receptionist

Switch board operator

Typist

Bakery worker   Laundrymat worker
Waitress/waiter   Postal worker
Bartender

7. <u>Primary Industries</u>

   (Seasonal or hourly)

Farmer   Logger
Fisher person   Miner
Fish plant worker

8. <u>Unskilled Labor</u>

   (Hourly or self-employed)

Tractor-trailer driver   Roof finisher
Bus driver   House painter
Taxi driver   Carpet layer
Truck driver   Butcher
Construction worker   Sawmill worker
Roads construction worker   Ferry deckhand
Janitor   Railway worker
Building maintenance worker   Vehicle painter
Floor finisher   Factory worker

9. <u>Homemaker</u>

   (Unpaid)

Childcare

Domestic tasks

10. <u>Unemployed</u>

11. <u>Retired</u>

12. <u>Student</u>

APPENDIX N

School Improvement Suggestions

Satisfaction

School is fine the way it is

Nothing needs to be changed

School is meeting my needs

Extracurricular

More extra-curricular activities

More social clubs, e.g. Junior Red Cross

Activities which are fun, e.g. dances, skiing

More outside visits

More class trips

More free time for activities

More time to spend with friends

More school dances

Parties on special occasions

Public speaking

A school newspaper

A peer tutoring program

More sports' activities

To be permitted to use the gym on week-ends

Teaching Methods

More opportunities to write own ideas

More opportunities to read books of choice

More group projects

More group work

More debates

More role play

More guest speakers

More outdoors activities

More field trips

More drama presentations

Less time spent on teacher lectures

More films or videos

More use of computers

More experiments

More hands-on activities

Study sessions in the library

Less seat work

Less to write in one period

Not as many notes on the chalk board

Less reading of texts and answering questions

Less use of textbooks

More discussion of subjects

More group discussion

Not being singled out so often to answer questions

More time for students to ask questions

More opportunities to learn through experience

Time in School

Not having to come to school so early in the mornings

Start classes later in the day

More free periods

Some study periods

Shorter class periods

Fewer class periods

Shorter school day

A longer recess break

A longer lunch break

An afternoon recess break

A shorter school year

More holidays

Longer week-ends

Winter holidays instead of summer holidays

Longer school days (noted by one student)

Evaluation and Achievement

Work that is more challenging

To receive more help with academic work

More individual help

To have academic work explained more fully and clearly

Work which is easier to understand

Textbooks which are easier to understand

A lot less work

Less homework

More review before tests

More time to work on projects

More attention paid to academic achievement

Lower expectations for academic work

Teachers who realize when students are doing their best

More encouragement from teachers

To get better grades

To not fail quizzes

More assignments

Fewer assignments

Easier tests and quizzes

Not as many tests

No mid-term and final exams

Not to have to memorize information

Curriculum Composition

Take away subjects that people don't usually need in life

Fewer subjects to do

Less of specific subject areas: religion, French, math, art, and science

Offer more subjects

Choice between subjects

More of specific subject areas: science, math, music, and art

A computer course

A cooking course

Foreign language classes

A better French program

French immersion

Music classes

Acting classes

Some law classes

Industrial Arts

A typing course

Sexuality courses

Study about unusual things such as UFO's

Time to study a particular area of interest

More time to spend doing things of interest

Less emphasis on the practice of religion

Subjects that involve building or making things

Work of a more practical nature: clean up a polluted area or help out at a senior citizen's home

Better awareness of the world and of how to take care of it

More concern about the living conditions and health of needy people everywhere

To spend less time on things already understood

More discussion about the outside world

More discussion about how to get ahead in life

Explanation of how what is taught will be of benefit in the future

Swimming and skating programs

Longer physical education classes

More physical education classes

Teacher Concerns

Teachers who understand their work better

Teachers who are more active

Teachers who are more patient

A guidance counselor who is more caring

Teachers who are more caring

Teachers who are more concerned about students

Teachers who are able to control themselves better

Teachers who are more open minded

Teachers who treat every student as being equal

Teachers who are easier to get along with

Teachers who don't "nag at" students too much

Teachers who help students more

Teachers who are more strict

Teachers who are not as strict

To be criticized less by teachers

Not to be picked on by teachers

Teachers who tell us what they talk about in the staff room

Remove--"get rid of" a particular teacher

Get some different teachers

Get good teachers

Good substitute teachers

Dissatisfaction

To be able to attend a different school

Shut down the school

Have no school