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STUDENT ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION
AND
PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CLIMATE

by

John David Stuart Pope

B. A. (Commerce), Simon Fraser University, 1969

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the
Faculty of Education

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

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Student Activity Participation and Perceptions of Secondary

School Climate

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis was to determine whether participation in extracurricular student activities was correlated with perceptions of overall school quality and/or factors of school climate. Mandated reductions in education spending had brought about a critical examination of all school programs, and student activities appeared to have become a political pawn in this process; this study served as a means to appraise the value of such activities. Using climate as a variable provided a secondary purpose for the study: to replicate the use of the "Secondary School Student Climate Survey" used in two earlier studies.

The literature revealed positive correlations between participation and student achievement, future educational goals, and goal attainment, as well as school satisfaction and compliance; and negative correlations with deviation, alienation, and intra-group conflict. Theoretically then, it appeared likely that participation in student activities would positively correlate with perception of school climate.

The data for the study came from a stratified sample of five schools including both large and small, rural and urban schools. Student perceptions of school quality provided

measures of overall school rating and four climate factors: confidence in school, positive orientation, caring and understanding teachers, and academic press.

A Pearson correlational analysis failed to find significant relationships between level of student activity participation and any of the school quality variables. This finding is at variance with what the literature suggested; the literature is, however, based on studies conducted almost entirely in American schools. One explanation may be that student activities are less central in Canadian schools, which have a more academic focus, and that the finding of this study is likely an indication of those cultural differences.

An analysis of the data provided by the use of the climate instrument has provided a tentative suggestion that location characteristics may have some impact upon the measurement of school climate factors.

This study documents the need for further research in the area of student activity appraisal through the examination of other social-psychological variables, for example alienation or school satisfaction. Additionally, the measurement of climate should also undergo further study, in this case to determine the relevance of location variables.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

Highly contradictory data emerge in attempting to gauge the importance of student extracurricular activities within this province. A survey, conducted during the spring of 1986 by the Ministry of Education, asked all grade 10 students throughout the province about their participation in student activities. Sixty-eight percent of the sample reported that they had participated in some activity during the previous day (Koslow, 1986). During the same period; however, teachers in 15 school districts had collectively withdrawn these activities, and in another 21 districts were contemplating similar action for the fall ("We're Still Losing Ground, Teachers Say of Pay Raises," Vancouver Sun). Given the level of student participation, it appeared that teachers in one-half of the province's school districts were in direct conflict with over two-thirds of the province's students.

This conflict was, however, over economic issues and arose as a bargaining tactic at a time when the entire educational program and its fiscal support came under severe scrutiny. It may also have reflected the lack of Canadian research in this area; a situation which left the student activities program in British Columbia particularly vulnerable to manipulation by special interest groups from both inside and outside schools.

The presence of student activities in North American schools is a twentieth century phenomenon. They have gradually earned a permanent position in these schools, and empirical research (almost wholly American) has reduced criticism pertaining to their value. While they are strongly supported by students, parents and many teachers, this support is somewhat soft and subject to the perceived demands of other educational priorities. This is a contradiction, in terms of the literature reviewed, which was found to be most consistent with respect to cognitive domain and least consistent in the psycho-sociological area. It is precisely this contradiction between public perception and empirical reality which is responsible for the present crisis in this province.

A PROBLEM OF PERCEPTION

To those directly involved as consumers in American schools, the student activities program is a highly valued component of the total educational program. Evidence of this was provided in a survey of adults who rated extracurricular activities as the fourth most useful high school subject or experience for later life (Gallup, 1978). Another poll revealed 80 % of adults, with children in schools, rating extracurricular activities as important (Gallup, 1985). Similar studies, corresponding with the findings of the 1986 B.C. study, indicate high levels of student participation in these activities, and reveal their importance in the eyes of

students (Barker & Gump, 1964; Buser et al. 1975; Gholaon, 1985).

Unfortunately evidence of the perspective of those who work in the schools is not quite as clear. In this province the Ministry of Education's Administrative Handbook for Elementary and Secondary Schools provides guidance for those with the responsibility of managing the multi-faceted components of today's schools. Chapter 4, which deals with curriculum, states that student activities "...should be an integral part of the school program" (Province of British-Columbia, 1983:420). Additionally, the student activities program is considered sufficiently important to warrant special attention during the Ministry evaluation of schools undergoing accreditation reviews. In the same handbook, however, schools are subsequently cautioned to place the educational value of such activities in perspective with their cost effectiveness in terms of pupil lost time, as well as staff and resource expenditures. This statement presumes that the educational value of student activities can be quantitatively compared against those inputs, and therein lies the problem.

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

Presumably the mere existence of the student activity program would be evidence that these activities were perceived to be valuable by school authorities responsible

for those pupil, staff and resource allocations. But immediately two questions must be raised: why are these activities valued; and what is the basis upon which the allocation decision was made? There is a significant lack of recent Canadian empirical research to give answers to these two very important questions. Instead it appears that schools in this province, as well as the rest of this country, have provided student activities largely upon the basis of the experiential knowledge of their advocates. This has left the student activities program particularly vulnerable to the current assaults.

There is substantial experiential knowledge of the potential benefits of student activities. They both supplement and complement the formal curricular activities of the school. It is accepted, as well, that students should be provided with opportunities for recreation and leisure. The student activities program is fun and can provide a healthy outlet for adolescent energy. Focussing the expenditure of this energy on a school-wide level builds school spirit, and can potentially stimulate students toward the belief that school is an enjoyable place. However, with education costs rising so rapidly, these traditionally held values, together with those involving many other phases of the school program, have come under question in attempts to examine their validity.

This is not the first time that the educational value of the student activities program has come under question. Such activities have gradually evolved from a position of rejection to passive acceptance and eventually active encouragement. This evolution is reflected in the labels given these activities: "extracurricular" which connoted being separate or apart from the regular curriculum, and "cocurricular" which indicated their acceptance as a part of that curriculum. "Student activities" is a less value laden label and seems more appropriate for a study such as this.

During the course of this evolution the student activities program had many obstacles to overcome, including a major study by James Coleman (The Adolescent Society, 1961), in which it was suggested that participation in these activities was not conducive to positive academic orientation. Coleman's study spawned a number of other studies in the student activities area; each of which attempted to investigate whether his conclusions were accurate or not. Their findings contradicted his by demonstrating positive relationships between participation in student activities and subsequent success in academic pursuits (e.g. Rehberg & Schafer, 1968; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1977; Spady, 1970).

THE CURRENT CRISIS

During the past half-decade the student activities program has undergone another round of criticism. Most parents, having based their perspective largely upon their own experiences as high school students, continued to view such activities as cocurricular and inseparable from the total school experience (Gallup, 1978; 1985). Non-parents, on the other hand, have tended often to see only a burgeoning education budget out of control, and have been critical of what they perceive to be the frills in our school system. To many non-parents, the student activities program was an extra activity in the curriculum which needed to be closely examined in any attempt to reduce unnecessary (i.e. extra) education spending.

Between these two positions were those who worked within schools, and for some within this third group, the student activities program took on a third meaning. Many educators attempted to balance the demands of the parent and non-parent through careful allocation of resources, while maintaining traditional school programs. However, schools also took on additional roles during the past few decades, which caused the traditional responsibilities to be re-examined. Additionally, teachers became more assertive about their role descriptions, and what they considered to be their teaching responsibilities.

In British Columbia and other jurisdictions throughout North America student activities became topics in economic and political debates (Dannehl & Razor, 1971; Mitchell et al., 1981; Sandfort, 1985). The student activities program has been used as a political lever to elicit support from a sometimes apathetic public. Knowing the degree of support for the student activities program, the threatened withdrawal of such programs was used as a bargaining position to be traded off in return for support in another area. The bargainers also used the label "extra", however in this case "extra" referred to the concept that such activities were an additional unpaid service provided by teachers, which could be provided or withdrawn at their discretion.

TOWARD A SOLUTION

What is needed to help resolve the varied and often contradicting interpretations attached to the student activities program is an accurate measure of its value or effectiveness. School effectiveness is an area of educational research which has received considerable attention during the past two decades. This research has moved beyond earlier, simplified studies which looked upon the school as a model whose achievement outputs were dependent upon measurable inputs. Research has now demonstrated that it is the school processes which determine school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1981; Vancouver School Board,

1985). Researchers have attempted, with success, to identify common characteristics of processes in schools identified as being instructionally proficient. An analysis of these characteristics may enable us to better understand the role of the student activities program as it relates to the instructional effectiveness of the school.

Unfortunately the bulk of the effective schools research has focussed on (urban) elementary schools, while the student activities program has its emphasis at the secondary level. Secondary schools, by virtue of their organizational structure and the students they serve, have distinct differences which prevent the transfer of school effectiveness generalizations from one level to the other (Firestone & Herriott, 1982). Hallinger and Murphy (1986) have also cautioned against this practice in their recent study. Consequently, until a sufficient body of research begins to converge around mutually reinforcing findings, secondary school effectiveness remains at the pioneering stage.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

One of the characteristics consistently identified in instructionally effective schools, at both the elementary and secondary levels, is the presence of positive school climate (Edmonds, 1981; Rutter et al., 1979; Vancouver School Board, 1985). In fact, it has been argued that

measures of climate are a more reliable basis for appraising school effectiveness than the traditional narrow focus of standardized tests of achievement in reading and mathematics (Coleman, 1983). The climate characteristic has undergone examination in two large, urban secondary schools in the province (LaRoche, in progress; Wright, 1985), with the resulting development of an instrument designed to measure students' perception of school climate.

One of the first goals of this study is to replicate the findings of these two studies through a considerable expansion of the sample size. Wright's study achieved two of its purposes: that it is possible to describe the climate of senior secondary schools, and that individual factors of the secondary school climate will be discernible from responses to a student questionnaire. LaRoche's study used a refined version of Wright's questionnaire and identified, through factor analysis, four factors of school climate.

The refinement of Wright's climate questionnaire, together with an expansion of the sample size should add to a better understanding of secondary school climate as a characteristic of effective schools. Wright concluded his study questioning whether climate variables were place specific or generic to all secondary schools (1985:69). The expansion of the sample size to include an urban/rural mixture of five multi-sized schools will permit us to begin

to address this question, as well as attempting to replicate the earlier findings.

Given that it is possible to discern student's perception of school climate factors, the major goal of the study is to investigate dimensions of the value of the student activities program. This will be done through an extensive analysis of research on student activities, as well as an examination of the relationships between activity participation and climate factors.

The operational hypothesis is stated as follows:

Students who participate more actively in student activities will have a more favourable perception of school climate factors than students who participate less actively or not at all.

One of the characteristics of secondary schools which make them distinct from elementary are the students they serve. These students, through their own experiences, have become more aware of themselves and their educational needs, which has resulted in a more discriminating relationship with their schools (Wright, 1985): They are consumers of education, whose achievement can potentially be influenced by the type of relationships which they have with the school. Their perception of school climate should not be overlooked when attempting to determine secondary school effectiveness characteristics.

It is hypothesized in this study that a student's level of participation in the school's student activities program will correlate with a more favourable perception of school climate factors by that student. Numerous studies have shown correlations between participation in student activities and effective qualities associated with secondary school climate factors. These qualities include greater academic achievement orientation (Cooper, 1969; Otto, 1976; Rahberg, 1969; Schafer & Armer, 1968; Spreitzer & Pugh, 1973; Stevenson, 1975); more positive attitudes toward school personnel through shared activities (Coleman, 1965; Gorton, 1976; Rutter et al., 1979); greater compliance with the school's normative structure (Burnett, 1981; Hanks & Eckland, 1976); and general satisfaction with the school (Grabe, 1981; Lindsay, 1982).

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

This study should provide recent and Canadian data useful to school and district-level decision makers when allocating educational resources toward these and other components of the total educational program. The allocation of these resources toward programs without established merit, at a time when total educational resources have been critically restrained, is a source of conflict which continues to fuel the tension over education issues in this province. Some schools have complied with intense pressure to continue offering the traditional student activities, while others

have weathered parent and student opposition in their attempts to re-direct resources toward what they believe to be programs of greater merit. Non-parents, far removed from the realities of school, share an attitude with some who are directly involved as educators: an attitude that such activities are extra and should or could be removed. Only their reasons for removal differ. Educational research, such as this study, is one means of opposing the manipulation of the student activities program by special interest groups.

A positive correlation between participation in student activities and perception of school climate factors would add another dimension to a rather extensive body of research which has found consistent links between student activity participation and success in school (these studies are reviewed in Chapter 2). The key finding which has been absent in all the research is that which establishes participation as a cause of this success.

Such a finding is beyond the design of this study, but the path toward that key finding could be through an examination of school effectiveness characteristics. Research has consistently identified the presence of positive school climate as a characteristic of an effective school. A positive correlation between participation and any of the climate factors would lead us toward a better understanding of the manner in which student success is influenced,

potentially leading toward the design of studies which could investigate a causal relationship.

Before this path is embarked upon, however, additional research must be conducted upon school climate itself, particularly at the secondary level. This study examines school climate at a multi-school level, to address questions raised in previous research, and will hopefully lead to a more thorough understanding of this particular characteristic of an effective school.

The use of student activities as a bargaining tool is, I believe, a deplorable form of political hostage taking which has been achieved through lack of knowledge. This politically motivated action has not only divided teachers, but more perilously, has created rifts between teachers and students. The analysis and interpretation of existing empirical research on student activities is in itself a valuable exercise. Fresh research necessarily raises the profile of previous research, creating an increased awareness of earlier findings. The political events in British Columbia during the current year add urgency to the need to undertake this study.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

1. Although an attempt was made to search beyond traditional research avenues (see "The Search", Chapter 2) only three Canadian studies could be found which relate to the current study. The lack of Canadian research on this topic has caused this study to rely almost completely on research conducted in American schools. Given the cultural differences that exist between the two countries, there is the potential for cultural variations in the findings of this study.

2. The original design of the study called for a larger sample size to provide a matrix of socio-economic, school size, and location characteristics which would enable place-specific comparisons to be made. Emergent political events and timing prevented this from happening and the sample was reduced to five schools. Any conclusions concerning these comparisons can therefore be only tentatively put forward.

ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

Chapter One describes the background to the thesis and describes the problem which currently faces the student activity program. It provides a rationale for the use of the climate instrument as a means of providing an appraisal of the student activities program. The expectations of the

study are described and the implications of those expectations are discussed.

Chapter Two provides an evolutionary examination of the literature. It focusses on the studies which have taken place, initially in response to James Coleman's charge that student activities diverted student energies away from the classroom. These studies include measures of cognitive achievement as well as others dealing with social-psychological growth. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology, describing both the sample and the instruments used. The procedure for administering the questionnaire is described, as well as the extra measures taken to deal with a critical incident.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the problem. The instruments used in the study generated a large amount of data and the findings are presented and analyzed in three sections: those pertinent to the hypothesis, those pertinent to student activities in general, and those pertinent to school climate.

Finally, Chapter Five presents a brief summary of the previous four chapters and then presents conclusions related to the three sections of the study. The chapter concludes with some directions for future research.

DEFINITIONS

CLIMATE: One of the most frequently cited weaknesses of the effective schools literature is the imprecision of the language used and this has included the term "climate", which connotes a variety of meanings. A useful working definition, as it applies to secondary schools, is "the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions about the characteristics of an organization and its members" (Keefe, et al. 1985:74).

Thus the concept of climate is one of continuance and is shaped by the perceptions of its members, most notably the students in secondary schools. It includes their perceptions of the goals, expectations and practices of the school and its various constituencies, shaped by a set of values and attitudes characteristic of the school as a whole (Rutter et al., 1979).

Perceptions of school climate by secondary students are more meaningful than staff perceptions (which potentially tend to correspond to job satisfaction), and are a more accurate measure of school climate than parent perceptions (which are formed largely through filtered, indirect information).

In this study the variable climate was measured by the "Secondary School Student Climate Survey" (LaRochelle, 1986).

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL: Most of the initial research on school effectiveness used standardized achievement scores in reading and mathematics as measures of effectiveness.

Edmonds (1981) defined an effective school as one whose grade equivalent scores on those tests were above the city average. Statistical analysis of these schools required the elimination of family background variables on student performance to isolate school effects on performance.

While it is acknowledged that this is a somewhat narrow definition of school outputs, it has nevertheless served to provide a means of identifying and comparing instructionally effective elementary schools for purposes of identifying their common characteristics.

PARTICIPATE: Student activity participation was measured by presenting a list of different student activity categories and asking the respondents to indicate how many different activities they had been involved in for each category.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES: At one time these activities were labelled extracurricular as they took place outside of regular instructional hours for recreational purposes, and participation by students was by choice. They were seen to generally support or extend the regular curriculum and this led to the more recent label "cocurricular activities". These activities are usually categorized as follows:

1. academic activities which relate directly to classroom instruction. (examples: science club, spanish club, computer club, debating team);

2. athletic activities which relate to school sports. (examples: noonhour intramurals, floor hockey, school basketball team, gymnastics club.);

3. performance activities including music and drama. (examples: band, choir, drama productions);

4. activities which provide volunteer service to the school or community. (examples: decorating club, scorers for sports event, community volunteer);

5. activities involved in the publication of student materials. (examples: yearbook, newspaper);

6. activities related to student government. (examples: student council, class representatives, sports council); and

7. activities related to non-physical recreation or leisure. (examples: photography, model construction).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Student activities are essentially a twentieth century phenomenon in the North American continent, gaining passive acceptance in the educational community around the second decade (Gholson, 1985). Their position in secondary schools steadily improved throughout the next fifty years; however, when public confidence in schools declined markedly, the perceived importance of non-school activities suffered a similar descent (Gallup, 1974; 1978; 1983).

It is interesting to further examine this apparent relationship between public confidence in schools and the public's perception of the importance of student activities. The most recent Gallup Polls (1984; 1985) have reported a progressively higher public confidence in schools, continuing a trend in evidence from the low confidence ratings of the Seventies. In 1977, 60 % of parents with children in public schools had not "heard or read about the back to basics movement", and rated student activities as the third "best thing about their local schools" (Gallup, 1977). During the low ebb of public confidence, however, questions concerning student activities disappeared from the poll (or at least from the reported results of those polls.)

Interestingly, during a period coinciding with higher confidence ratings, they have now returned to the poll.

A number of implications could be derived from this apparent relationship. It appears that while the public values very highly student activities (80 % rated them important in the 1985 poll), they believe that the needs of the regular curriculum must first be met (in this case "extracurricular" would be an appropriate label for these activities). What remains to be answered however is why such activities are valued, and a further implication of the Gallup data would be that the reasons have little to do with the academic goals of the curriculum. Quite likely the public values these activities for perceived psychological or social-psychological benefits (e.g. character formation, motivation, sportsmanship).

THE SEARCH

It is, however, the relationship between cognitive development and student activities where the literature is strongest and most consistent. A search of the literature was conducted to determine what effects involvement in student activities had on students. The literature search commenced with the Current Index to Journals in Education to identify research on this topic. Having once identified key research articles it was a simple matter to follow the evolutionary path of research through the respective

references of each study. The literature search concluded with a computerized ERIC search on the topic delimited by the year when the previously gathered research had fallen off. Finally, an attempt was made to confine the literature review to actual studies or significant summaries of studies.

This procedure has ensured that this literature review is complete and based on a direct, unfiltered examination of actual studies. One limitation of the review which may have a potential bearing on the results is the limited number of studies using Canadian students as their sample. In addition to the aforementioned search, further attempts were made to identify Canadian research through examination of the Canadian Theses Index, as well as through telephone contact with educators at the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta. While the limited body of Canadian research on this topic makes this study particularly relevant to Canadian educators, there is a concern that potential differences between Canadian and American schools may result in cross-cultural variations in findings between this study and the literature (Downey, 1960; Zentner & Parr, 1968).

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF BENEFITS

Returning then to the perceived benefits of student activities, a historical analysis is appropriate to

establish their position in schools today. During the period 1870 - 1900 such activities were labelled "extracurricular", because few educational leaders or researchers saw any benefit from expanding resources in that component of the educational program. It was not until the period 1900 - 1920 that such activities came to be passively accepted, when educators acknowledged that they served some purpose, and were capable of providing learning experiences for young people (Gholson, 1985). This new development was largely a result of the work of the American based Commission to Study the Reorganization of Secondary Schools which stated as one of its Seven Cardinal Principles that schools should prepare students for wise use of leisure time.

The academic argument began to tilt more favourably toward the student activities program in 1918 when the first college level course on student activities, taught by Elbert Fretwell, was offered at Columbia University. Fretwell, hailed in the United States as the "Father of Student Activities", wrote numerous publications in this area and the student activities program became more actively encouraged. No longer viewed as "extra" this component of the school program came to be labelled as "cocurricular" or simply as student activities.

This attitude prevailed up to the 1960's until Coleman, in The Adolescent Society (1961), a highly respected study on

adolescent sub-culture and its impact on education, suggested that participation in student activities was detrimental to positive academic orientation. Coleman's conclusions appear to have prompted the design of a number of studies which investigated whether this was accurate.

Several contradicted Coleman by establishing positive relationships between participation in pupil activities and subsequent success in academic pursuits (e.g. Rehberg & Schafer, 1968; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1977; Spady, 1970)

Bolstered by this renewed support, the student activities program continued to become more firmly entrenched in North American schools until, as previously mentioned, the current crisis. The Gallup data, however, seems to indicate that student activities will emerge from this set-back as well.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Coleman provides a starting point for the review of the research dealing with one of the correlates of participation in student activities, academic achievement. Coleman advocated a "spend and drain" theory toward adolescent participation in student activities. His thesis was that interscholastic athletic competition, which directed so much energy toward athletics, was energy diverted away from educational pursuits (Coleman, 1961).

Coleman's thesis suggests the hypothesis that the academic achievement of athletes would be consistently lower than the achievement of the rest of the student population. Although this hypothesis has been disproven by many others, an examination of Coleman's own data reveals its inaccuracy. Student grade-point averages are an accepted method of comparing student achievement and Coleman provides mean grade-points for both the male student body and top athletes (in separate sections of his text: p. 252 and p. 274). While it is recognized that top athletes are dissimilar to all athletes, Coleman's "spend and drain" thesis would suggest the grade-point means of top athletes to be even lower than all athletes. Coleman's data rejects the hypothesis in seven of the ten schools for which data are provided. The weighted mean grade-points for all ten schools provides a mean grade-point average of 4.3 (A=8, B=6, C=4, D=2, F=0) for top athletes, and 3.8 for the entire male student body (Rehberg, 1969).

In a parallel study Eidsmoe (1964) examined grade-point averages of 592 football players from the top 30 high school varsity teams in Iowa. The mean grade-point average of the football players was 2.52, while the non-participating student average was only 2.09 (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0). In another study Laughlin (1978) examined grade-point averages of 243 high school athletes and found they were higher in-season than out-of-season.

While these studies began to suggest a relationship between participation in student activities (at least athletic activities) and academic achievement, it may have been that the presence of antecedent variables was responsible for higher student achievement. Subsequent studies accounted for these antecedent variables (intelligence, family socio-economic status, previous marks, curriculum track, year in school) through statistical analysis and research design.

Edwards (1967) matched 50 athletes with 50 non-athletes on the basis of verbal and numerical differential aptitude test scores, as well as social and economic background.

Grade-point mean average of athletes (2.35) was significantly higher than that of the non-athletic group (2.21), although the difference was smaller than in previous studies. Schafer & Armer (1968) established more accurate controlling measures, using intelligence quotients, father's occupation, previous grade-point average, year in school and curriculum track, and found a similar spread in grade-point averages in their study of 585 males. Additionally they found the largest grade-point spread controlling for students with lower scores in intelligence and social status, raising the implication that "the boys who would usually have the most trouble in school are precisely the ones who seemed to benefit most from taking part in sports" (Schafer & Armer, 1968:25). Schafer and Armer further

discovered that athletes were more likely to expect to complete at least two years of college than non-athletes.

At this point in the review the majority of studies investigating the relationship between student activity participation and curricular achievement have included males or predominantly males due, largely, to the limited number of athletic opportunities available for females at the time. Legislation changed this and Feltz & Weiss (1984), among others, were concerned that the move into "big time" athletics might have a detrimental effect upon the educational process of female athletes. Using a sample of 950 from four schools, senior females were categorized as athlete-only, service-only, athlete-service, or neither based upon listing of student activities from their high school yearbooks. Groups were compared on composite American College Test (ACT) scores with type and extent of participation in the student activities program. A composite index of SES was used as the controlled antecedent variable. Initial comparison of mean ACT scores with activity groups revealed the athlete-only group with the lowest; however, when SES was controlled the variance between participation categories disappeared. The authors concluded that "SES and extent of (student activity) involvement were variables that had more influence on ACT scores than the participation category to which the students belonged" (Feltz & Weiss, 1984:336).

Summarizing then, the findings of these studies, as well as a critical review of the literature by others (Cooper, 1969; Stevenson, 1975) refute Coleman's initial concern over the possible deleterious aspect of participation in student activities. Based on these studies, which utilized both male and female samples from a cross section of high schools, and which controlled for antecedent variables such as social status, intelligence, curriculum track and previous marks, one can conclude that academic achievement is not adversely affected by participation in student activities. In fact there appears to be a well validated positive correlation between such participation and academic success. Contrary to the "spend and drain" theory, those who are most involved in student activities are either better able to manage their time or able to perform several roles simultaneously, suggesting that it is possible that involvement in one area enhances involvement in the other (Feltz & Weiss, 1984).

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:

EXPECTATION AND ATTAINMENT

At the beginning of this century, secondary schools in North America were viewed to be institutions whose mandate was largely restricted to the preparation of elite youth for college level instruction. During subsequent decades this mandate became much broader and more egalitarian to include

a greater cross-section of youth and the focus of the curriculum correspondingly changed as well. Goodlad's (1984) analysis of documents defined the goals of education and schooling to include academic, vocational, social and personal development, with each viewed as important by those directly involved. While preparation for college has remained relatively important throughout this period of evolution, the past ten years have witnessed a dramatic increase in its importance. The most recent Gallup survey (1985) recorded 91% of parents rating a college education as important (up from 82 % in the 1978 survey). Given this perception rating, studies correlating student activity participation with educational expectations become another significant area of the literature review.

The studies which investigated this relationship parallel somewhat the grade-point studies, each beginning with further analysis of Coleman's (1961) findings on adolescent subculture. However, several went beyond simple correlational investigation and attempted to determine the causes of the participation:achievement correlation.

Rehberg joined with Schafer (1968) to investigate whether or not adolescent preoccupation with athletics had a detrimental effect on educational expectations. Using a sample of 785 males from six schools they requested information on student activity participation, and educational expectations measured with a fixed-response item

which indicated how far the respondent expected to continue with post-secondary schooling. A comparison of means indicated that 62 % of the athletes expected to enrol in a four-year college compared with 45 % of the non-athletes. Further statistical analysis, as in the other studies, controlled for social status and academic performance, and included as well a measure of parental educational encouragement. The strength of the relationship was only slightly reduced in a third-order partial analysis, confirming the presence of the relationship. A similar study by Snyder & Spreitzer (1977) used female athletes instead, but confirmed this positive relationship between athletics and educational expectations.

In their conclusions, Rehber & Schafer pushed forward the frontiers of this research by suggesting two theories for this correlation. Firstly, psychological theory suggests that level of aspiration is determined by self-esteem. Following this line of reasoning, self-esteem is enhanced through the prestige and recognition achieved on the playing field, which in turn results in higher goals, including educational ones. Alternatively, it could be reasoned that in sports the emphasis on hard work, achievement, self-improvement, persistence and competition carries over from the playing-field, resulting in increased motivation and aspirations in other areas, including post-secondary options.

Spreitzer & Pugh (1973) replicated Rehber & Schafer's study to focus on perceived peer status or self esteem as a mediating variable. They utilized a much larger sample (N=1780; thirteen schools) and also included both male and female students. Controlling for antecedent variables, they reported almost identical results in the association between participation and educational expectations. Using a fixed four item response to measure perceived peer status they found 34 % of the athletes defined themselves as "one of the most popular" or as "very popular" compared with 14 % of non-athletes. Subsequent analysis of the participation:expectations relationship, when controlling for self-evaluated popularity, demonstrated the relationship to be strongest among students reporting themselves as very popular and declining among students viewing themselves as moderately popular. This seemed to indicate support for the peer status theory.

Spreitzer & Pugh next differentiated among the thirteen schools according to school value climate to determine whether this might affect the influence of participation on perceived peer status and educational expectations. Using an item initially developed by Coleman (1965:41), school value climates were differentiated in terms of the relative proportion of students in the schools who checked "high grades, honor roll" or "being an athletic star" from among four other items on a questionnaire which asked "what does it take to be important and be looked up to by the other

students here at school?" (1973:178). Analysis of this information revealed that school value climate mediated the influence of perceived peer status on educational expectations. In schools where the athlete was valued, the relationship between participation was quite strong; however, in schools where the scholar was valued, the relationship was virtually non-existent. Thus the peer status theory was questionable at best.

Spady (1970) examined the peer status theory in a longitudinal study of 300 males enrolled in two schools. Data were initially gathered in 1963 and four years later in 1967, with a response rate of 85 %. During their senior year of high school 74 % of respondents had hoped to go on to college, yet by 1967 only 61 % had entered college, and only 48 % had completed more than one year. Spady's study was concerned with two issues: (1) the influence of peer-group factors on student aspirations; and (2) the influence of these factors on goal fulfillment. Spady, unlike previous researchers, correctly viewed educational expectations and attainment as distinctly different, and hypothesized that inflated perception of peer status might be responsible for this difference.

On the first issue Spady found that the student's role in his peer group was "a definite source of his success goals" (1970:699), and that participation in student activities was associated with having high status perceptions. Not

surprisingly then, there was a relationship between participation and educational expectation. However, the relationship with educational attainment did not hold with all types of participation. On this issue Spady reasoned that high or inflated status perceptions alone were insufficient for goal attainment. While participation in student activities offered opportunities for success outside the regular curriculum - opportunities that enhanced perception of status - this had to be coupled with the development of other skills and abilities in order to provide solid grounds for goal attainment. Athletic participation alone, while providing opportunities for enhancement of peer status, did not necessarily provide for the development of those other skills and abilities. Spady's findings suggest that development of these skills was more likely to come from participation in both athletic and service or leadership activities, and, like Spreitzer and Pugh, left the validity of the peer status theory unproven.

Otto conducted extensive analysis to test both the peer status theory, as well as the aspirations theory. Otto's data was taken from a longitudinal study of 340 males in their senior year of school and fifteen years later. The initial focus (Otto, 1975) was to replicate Spady's study, but over a longer period of time, using multiple regression analysis to examine the role of participation in student activities as a mediating variable between family social

status, academic ability and performance, and educational attainment. In his initial examination Otto replicated Spady's general finding that participation played an important role in educational attainment.

Otto's next task was to test the achievement aspirations theory and he further extended his analysis to include attainment of occupation and income (Otto, 1976). Otto viewed the school as embodying both the formal status system, where academic achievement conferred formal status, and the informal status system, where participation in the student activities program conferred informal status.

Students with aspiration orientations would seek success in either status system, as well as beyond their formal schooling. If aspirations were a cause of the participation:attainment correlation, Otto hypothesized that multiple regression analysis, which controlled for the independent effects of aspirations, should remove the effects of participation on the attainment process. To control for the effects of aspiration he used two measures: educational aspiration coded for number of years beyond the senior year, and occupational aspiration measured by the Occupational Aspiration Scale.

Otto's extended analysis found that level of participation had a significant total effect on occupation and income attainment as well as education. With respect to the aspirations theory, he found that participation continued to

correlate with attainment independent of the aspirations measures and the theory was rejected.

Otto next joined with Alwin (1977) to re-examine the peer status theory previously examined by Spady (1970). They were concerned with the inconsistencies in the empirical literature. Like Coleman (1961), Otto and Alwin reasoned that student activity participation and academic performance were alternate routes to membership in the leading crowd; however, they rejected his finite, zero-sum argument that participation in one was at the expense of the other. Also rejected was Rehberg and Schafer's (1968) causally linked thesis that success in the informal status system directly enhanced the formal status system. Their research continued to view the social status system of the school as bi-dimensional, but modestly correlated.

The analysis hypothesized that perceived peer status would mediate the effects of athletic participation on educational and occupational expectations and attainment. The California Test of Personality was used to measure peer status. They (Otto and Alwin) found however that perceived peer status did not mediate any of the dependent variables. In comparison, however, "significant others influence consistently reveals a strong effect on aspirations and attainments as both a set of intervening and predictor variables" (1977:112). However, other research has noted that perceived peer status is primarily dependent upon the

individual's ability to live up to the standards of significant others (Grabe, 1981), and therefore the finding is not surprising.

Summarizing, each of the studies established significant correlations between participation in the student activities program and educational expectations, as well as attainments. Correlations with occupational attainment and income have been established as well.

The value of Otto, and Otto and Alwin's research is to bring us closer to an empirical understanding of the effects of participation in student activities on educational expectations and attainment. Two theories for these effects were rejected: the aspirations theory which suggested that participation merely served as a proxy for educational aspirations and that high achievers were attracted to the potential success opportunities in this area and did correspondingly well in the academic system; and the perceived peer status theory which suggested that participants propped-up by the visibility and prestige gained through participation in student activities would seek post-secondary opportunities to seek out further peer status enhancement.

Instead, Otto and Alwin empirically established that the effect of student activity participation is largely mediated by social psychological processes, rather than psychological; that significant others influence has a

mediating effect on expectations and attainment. The significant others measure included parental educational encouragement, best friends' educational plans (an average of best friends aspiration scores), and girl friend's educational encouragement (which the authors acknowledged to be rather subjective). Otto and Haller (1979) pursued the social psychological explanation of educational attainment through a conceptual cross-validation using three other data sets. This analysis provided strong support for the social psychological theory of status attainment.

The significant others theory holds that aspirations are responsible for status (occupational and educational) expectations and attainment and that they are formed in social interaction. The individual already has a perception of his status potentials, which have been formed through previous experiences in the academic, social and athletic areas. "His self reflection is complemented by the reflexive activity of his significant others, who also assess his attributes and performances in communicating the expectations they hold for him" (Otto & Haller, 1979:889).

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS

While research on the cognitive correlations of participation were found to be consistent and established, studies correlating benefits in the affective domain were less so (Stevenson, 1979). This is not surprising as

studies of cognitive change can be more objectively measured and replicated than can studies of affective change. This is however the area of research on student participation which offers the greatest potential for discovery and only continued research will bring us closer to overcoming these problems.

The literature review has demonstrated a correlation between participation in the student activities program and student achievement, as well as educational expectation and attainment. Participation in student activities brings a student together with other achievement oriented participants who experience similar academic growth. Additionally, participation enhances a student's popularity and visibility and leads to membership in the leading crowd, which was found by Coleman (1961) to contain an over-representation of college oriented peers. These associations form a network of peers who value the educational goals of the school which reinforce the value of school to the participant. Rehberg suggests that visibility from participation also brings a student into contact with school personnel who encourage the student to continue on to college (1969). Collectively exposing the student to a social network of teachers and achievement oriented peers will have the immediate effect of binding the student activity participant to the school and its normative structure (Hanka and Eckland, 1976).

It is through the voluntary nature of their participation in the Pupil Activities Program, particularly in the secondary setting, that students and staff pursue common goals, and through this relationship come closer in their alignment of "norms, expectations and beliefs" (Brookover, 1979:19).

Rutter et al. (1979) commented on the value of shared activities toward a common goal as a means of reducing inter-group conflict, of developing a greater appreciation for the other, and leading to a sharing of additional goals. An examination of numerous statements of student activity objectives yields as the most important the development of a more positive attitude on the part of the student toward himself and toward school in general (Gorton, 1976).

Student activities were recognized as early as 1932 by Waller as a relatively successful device for the cooptation of the adolescent social structure and its leaders. Coleman (1965) recognized these activities as a solution to the particular difficulty of motivating adolescents to identify with, and direct their energy into their school. The difficulty was created by the fact that while adolescents were compelled to physically attend school, high academic achievement was not only unattainable to all, it was a poor overall motivator. Coleman reasoned that competition for high marks set students against each other much as piece work pay systems in factories often caused employee division. Athletic contests provided collective goals for the entire student body and tended to center the adolescent

social system at the school. "Teenagers think of the school, the team, and the student body as one and use the pronoun "we" in referring to this entity (We're playing Parkville Friday)" (Coleman, 1965:48).

The value of student activities as a mechanism which works toward preventing students from dropping out is well documented (Coleman, 1965; Graham, 1964; Vaughan, 1968; Warner, 1979). Burnett (1981) investigated the correlation between student participation and student deviance in a sample of 1500 (largely junior secondary students) from five schools in British Columbia and found an inverse relationship. High deviance students were rarely involved in student activities, while high participants were rarely highly deviant. Non-participants were not only deviant more often than participants, they were involved in more serious deviant behaviors.

One could expect a highly active student to have a low degree of alienation, and a highly alienated student not likely to be very active. While it has been established that unsuccessful participation is correlated with negative self regard and lower satisfaction with the total school experience (Grabe, 1981; Huling, 1980), there has been no research directly linking participation with satisfaction. Instead the path of research leads toward investigations of satisfaction in big schools versus small.

Barker and Gump (1964), as well as others (Baird, 1969; Grabe, 1981; Huling, 1980; Kleinert, 1969; Lindsay, 1982; 1984; Morgan & Alwin, 1980; Wicker, 1969; Willems, 1967) found participation in student activity to be inversely related with school size. Gump and Friesen (1964) compared students from a small school with a similar number, matched in sex, intelligence, and race, from a very large school. Analysis of responses to why activities were satisfying revealed contrasts between the two groups, related to centrality of position held by the student in the activity. Lindsay (1982), in an ambitious study involving 15,000 students, compared students in small, medium and large schools. Information was obtained on participation in four different activity categories, school attendance mean, and satisfaction with school. Satisfaction was determined through a fixed-response item which measured alienation, and a Likert scaled item which measured perception of the value of school courses. School size was found to be inversely correlated with high participation rates, attendance and student satisfaction with school. Lindsay concluded that in smaller schools there was more obligation for each person to participate actively, which led to higher rates of participation, which in turn led to greater satisfaction. Lindsay's study compared student participation and satisfaction between schools, with school size as the independent variable. While no studies have examined the

student satisfaction variable within schools, there is sufficient research to suggest that students who do participate will likely have a more favourable perception of satisfaction with their school.

Summarizing, this section of the literature review has indicated that students who participate not only have higher cognitive achievement indicators, they become involved in a social network of similar achievement oriented peers and school personnel, which has the effect of reinforcing the value of school to the participant. Shared activities develop positive attitudes on an individual basis toward school goals, and on a school-wide basis toward collective goals for the entire student body. Students who participate are less deviant, less alienated and more compliant with the normative structure of the school. Research indicates that small school students participate more than their large school counterparts, and are more satisfied with their school in general. Additionally, there is reason to believe that within school comparisons would indicate participants to be more satisfied with their school than non-participants.

SUMMARY

Contrary to the results of earlier research, participation in student activities has been found more recently to correlate positively with student achievement. Numerous

studies, of significant sample size, controlling for antecedent variables, have confirmed a relationship between participation and student grade-point means.

There is also evidence of a correlation between participation and the expectation to continue with education at the university or college level, suggesting that not only do participants perform better academically, they have a greater academic orientation. Longitudinal studies have found this correlation with educational attainment, as well.

While the correlations between student activity participation and academic orientation are significant and have been replicated many times, they remain at best correlations. Attempts to determine the cause of these correlations are largely at the pioneering stage. One study has rejected both an aspirations theory, which suggested that high achievers were attracted to these activities and did correspondingly well in the classroom; and a peer status theory which suggested that the prestige gained through activity participation continued to be sought after by means of post secondary education.

The research is very much at a pioneering stage in the affective area, and the results are relatively inconsistent. Relating back to the achievement variable, it is known that participants come into contact with a social network of other achievement oriented peers, many of whom are participants like themselves. This network embodies a

perception of the value of school which further reinforces the achievement orientation. The sharing of activities with school personnel breaks down inter-group conflict and leads potentially to a mutual understanding and alignment of goals. Research has indicated that participants are less likely to be alienated or to express deviant behavior, and more likely to be satisfied with the school in general.

It is on this last point that this study will focus. Within-school comparisons of participants and non-participants should indicate that participants have a higher perception of satisfaction with the school as well as a more favorable perception of school climate. This is a particularly important correlation at the secondary level of schooling where students have a more discriminating relationship with their school, and where student achievement will potentially be influenced by that relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

THE SAMPLE

The study uses data from schools in the province of British Columbia, collected in May 1986. It is well established that school size is inversely related to involvement in the student activities program (e.g. Barker & Guap, 1964; Huling, 1980; Lindsay, 1982; 1984; Morgan & Alwin, 1980). Kleinert (1969) found the relationship between participation and school size to be high and inverse for schools with enrollments of more than 600 students. Therefore, it was initially decided to include in the sample students from both large and small secondary schools. It also seemed logical to examine the urban/rural relationships as another dimension of the study. Rural schools were defined as those located in a town of less than 10,000 population outside the organized areas of cities larger than 10,000 (Morgan & Alwin, 1980).

Large school and small school, urban and rural, provided a matrix from which to select schools for the study. Unfortunately, using Kleinert's definition, it was quickly discovered that there were no large, urban schools accessible for purposes of this study. Permission was requested from four school districts for eleven schools to participate in the study.

Emergent political events involving the issue of student activities (referred to in Chapter 1), as well as general sensitivity toward the measurement of school climate reduced the school sample size by five, while a limited response rate caused the statistical rejection of data from one other. Data from five schools, representing three districts (located in the south-west corner of the province) provided a stratified sample of one large (N= 1760) and one medium sized (N = 800) school, both located in a large urban center, and three smaller schools (N = 600; 540; 400) located in three rural communities.

Two of the rural schools were located in the same district. School # 1 enrolls 540 students in grades 8 - 12. The school is located in the southernmost community of this geographically elongated district, and for many years was the major secondary school for 85 % of the district's secondary students, and until 1982 the major full secondary school. Coinciding with the loss of this special position, other factors led to a gradual erosion of student activity offerings.

School # 2, the second school from this district, enrolls 400 students in grades 8 - 12. Native students, from a very progressive Indian band, make up approximately 10 - 15% of this enrollment. The school was established in 1976 as a junior secondary, enrolling students in grades 8 - 10 who had previously attended School # 1 (20 km. to the south).

After successful community lobbying, the curriculum was incrementally expanded to provide instruction to grades 11 and 12 in 1981 and 1982. This school, as a result of its creation and growth, is very much in a developmental stage, imbued with a measure of fresh enthusiasm, yet lacking in a sense of tradition.

School # 3 is one of three secondary schools located in a neighbouring rural district. This district shares many similarities to the previously described district, including one small, relatively isolated school, and one new junior secondary school. In many ways School # 3 is similar to School # 1, pre-1976. Its slightly larger enrollment of 600 students includes all of the grade 11 and 12 students from most of the district, as well as grades 8 - 10 from its own enrollment area. Although the district has chosen not to expand the junior secondary school, community pressures could change this.

School # 4 is located in the province's largest urban center, and enrolls 800 students in grades 8 - 12. Over three-quarters of their parents were reported on the survey as having a university degree or higher, many of whom were students in the school where their children now attend. While the school obviously enjoys strong parental support, it is by no means the sole focus of the lifestyle of its affluent students. School offers but one of many social experiences from which these students may choose.

School # 5 is also located in the same urban district and is the largest in the study, enrolling 1760 students in grades 8 - 12. The student population has an extensive ethnic composition, predominantly Jewish and Chinese students.

Three-quarters of the students from School # 5 have traditionally gone on to post-secondary educational programs; consequently success in secondary school is important and there is keen competition to do well in classes. Like the students from School # 4, however, these students may choose from a wide range of social experiences beyond that which the school can offer.

All grade 11 students in the five schools were invited to participate in the study by way of a letter which contained a brief statement about the research project and a request for their consent to be a subject (see Appendix A).

Initially this consent procedure did cause the sponsoring university's Ethics Review Committee some concern; however, they subsequently became convinced that students of this age were able to give informed consent to participate in a non-threatening questionnaire of this nature (this was a very practical reason for confining the study to the grade 11 sample).

Grade 11 students were selected for a number of important reasons associated with the school climate variable. These students have had a much longer period of time in schools during which they have been able to observe school climate

factors. Additionally, they have better developed perception skills which enable them to give more accurate responses to the questionnaire.

The potential disadvantage of confining the sample to this grade was that the sample would not include students who had previously dropped-out of school. However, it may not be completely reasonable to expect a young, potential drop-out to give completely objective judgements to all of the items in the questionnaire (Mitchell, 1967). Given that a sample of grade 11 students would include older potential drop-outs, and that the reasons for dropping-out at an older age would more likely be related to school effects than non-school effects, it was decided to confine the sample to that grade.

Questionnaires administered to Grade 11 students in attendance at these schools in May, 1986 were completed by 592 students. Attempts were made to access students through timetabled grade 11 classes in order to expedite instructions and assistance. This did result in the omission of a small number of students who were not scheduled in a grade 11 class at the time of administration; however, this should not in any way bias the data.

The administration and consent procedures resulted in a very high response rate. Consequently, bias due to non-response cannot have any appreciable effect on the validity of the findings.

PROCEDURES

Data was gathered from the sample near the end of the school year. This was done for two reasons. Perception of school climate is largely a result of the student's experiences throughout the year, and is therefore most accurately measured at a point in time when those experiences have had the longest effect. The other variable, participation in student activities, is most accurately measured after or during actual participation rather than before, as initial commitment will sometimes dissipate (resulting in non-participation). Many student activities occur during a specific period (season) during the year, with some not taking place until the late spring, therefore this measure is also best taken near the end of the year. The attempt to conduct the research at the optimum moment was theoretically desirable but created a problem due to the numerous other year-end school activities. The decision of some schools not to participate was likely due to this timing problem.

The questionnaire was largely self-explanatory; to ensure standardization of testing situation, however, the following procedure was followed: the questionnaire was initially administered in two classrooms by the author, using a prepared list of instructions. These instructions were subsequently modified to improve upon minor areas of imprecision revealed in the initial piloting. The new set of instructions was then given to four teachers who piloted

its use; however, each testing situation was observed by the author, and clarification was provided as required. Areas of imprecision in the instructions were at this stage very minor and resolved in a third set of instructions. This set of instructions (see Appendix B) became the "Teachers Instructions" and was used in the remaining four schools. It is not felt that this piloting procedure has in any way biased the data of the pilot school, and did not likely have any appreciable effect on the findings.

In mid-April, however, just weeks before the study was scheduled to begin, teachers in one of the districts in the sample announced their intention to engage in a bargaining job action which would involve their withdrawal of student activities. This action naturally caused the author a great deal of anxiety due to the timing requirements of the study, and the potential contamination of the data.

A close observation of the event and its impact upon the students in the district was undertaken through direct personal observation and communication with other teachers in the district. All students were initially very concerned over this "loss". While some were critical of the teachers, most others appeared to support their goal and empathized with their decision to take this avenue of job action. The most active concern was restricted largely to junior students (i.e., grades 9 and 10). Fortunately, the withdrawal occurred at a time of limited student activity

offerings, and those underway were given time to wind-down. Thus the job action was largely symbolic, directed toward the local school trustees, through the public, rather than at the students.

By the end of the third week, students had largely forgotten about the issue or mistakenly assumed that the issue had been settled. It appeared that the effects of this event were largely dissipated at this point in time, and the study could now proceed. Students in this district were given the extra attention of additional instructions to respond to the questionnaire as they perceived their school prior to the withdrawal of student activities.

This unforeseen event may have had some effect on the data from this district. It should be noted, however, that the event was largely symbolic and did not directly affect the students; that what effects occurred were only observed outside of the experimentally accessible population; and that the impact of the event had largely dissipated at the time of the study.

MEASURES USED

Measures of Participation in Student Activities

Student participation in the student activities program was measured by presenting the student with a list of eight different activity categories (classroom related, athletic, music and drama, service, publication, governing, hobby/leisure, and other) and requesting information on the number of different activities in which the student had participated within each category (see Appendix C). This format replicates the procedures for measurement of participation in Barker & Gump, 1964; Gholson & Buser, 1981; Grabe, 1981; Kleinert, 1969; Morgan & Alwin, 1980; O'Reilly & Jarrett, 1980; Otto, 1975; and Serow, 1979. The various categories used in these studies, in some cases, were adapted to reflect the local situation. Students were provided with examples for each category, as well as a catch-all "other" category for those activities which didn't seem to fit the given categories. A limited number of responses to this category would indicate the adequacy of the other seven categories. This was found to be the case.

Measures of Student's Perception of School Climate

The school climate variable was measured using the "Secondary School Student Climate Survey" initially developed by Wright (1985) and subsequently refined by

LaRochelle (in progress). The survey presents students with 35 statements related to school quality, and requests the respondent to react to each by way of a fixed four-item response (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). A subsequent question requests the respondent to give an overall rating of their school by way of a fixed five-item response (A, B, C, D, F). The 35 statements have been shown, by factor analysis in previous research, to cluster with the overall rating and thus represent four climate factors (LaRochelle, in progress).

Measures of Other Variables

As previously stated, school size is inversely related to involvement in student activities and therefore all questionnaires were precoded to register total school enrollment. Additionally, respondents were requested to indicate their gender, and the highest formal education level attained by either of their parents. The latter was indicated through a seven point category score (see Appendix C.), for the purpose of providing a measure of social class. While it is readily acknowledged that this is a crude measure for social class, it was felt that its inclusion in this simple form might provide further useful data.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to test the main hypothesis a correlational analysis, using a one-tailed test of significance, was undertaken to determine the correlation between the participation variable and perception of the overall rating of the school, as well as each of the four school climate factors. Additionally, a multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictability of participation, and each of the four climate factors on the overall rating given to the school.

In addition to comparing the data between the two questionnaires, data within each were also analyzed. In order to replicate studies which had used the climate instrument, Cronbach alpha scores were computed for each of the four climate factors. Scores indicating the extent of participation were computed by activity category, as well as for each respondent.

Further explanation of the analysis and the interpretation of the data follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This thesis used data from two surveys, one measuring participation in the student activities program and the other measuring senior students' perceptions of school climate factors. Both areas of study are somewhat unusual - there is a paucity of Canadian research on student activities, and effective schools research has largely been confined to the study of urban, elementary schools. While the main goal of the thesis was to see if a relationship existed between the two areas of study, a large amount of data revealed findings other than those directly related to the hypothesis. The findings will be discussed in three sections.

FINDINGS PERTINENT TO THE HYPOTHESIS

A statistical analysis was carried out on the raw scores to test the operational hypothesis, as described in Chapter 1, which read as follows:

Students who participate more actively in student activities will have a more favourable perception of school climate factors than students who participate less actively or not at all.

The main purpose of this study was to determine if there was a significant relationship between participation and favourable perception of school climate. An extensive analysis of previous research on participation in student activities found consistently significant correlations between participation and academic achievement, as well as less consistent correlations with participant's attitudes toward school quality, and suggested that the hypothesis would be confirmed.

Table 1 provides a general correlation matrix between overall rating of the school, the four climate factors, total overall participation, and parent's education. This analysis does not reveal any significant correlations between the key variables under study, that is, participation and climate.

Table 2 examines the correlations between each of the variables. However, data has been separated into two categories. This has been done for two reasons. Firstly, previous research (Barker and Gump, 1964; Kleinert, 1969, Lindsay, 1982; Willems, 1967) found participation in student activities to be inversely related to school size, and Gump and Friesen (1964) found that smaller schools provided greater opportunities for positions of centrality which led to more satisfying experiences. Secondly, it appeared

TABLE 1

STUDENT PARTICIPATION & CLIMATE VARIABLES
 PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX

	Q 47	ASCORE	PEDUC	FACT1	FACT2	FACT3	FACT4
Q 47		.053	.110	.412	.300	.363	.199
ASCORE	.053		.094	.034	.070	.007	.048
PEDUC	.110	.094		.002	.125	.064	.071
FACTOR 1	.412	.034	.002		.492	.594	.351
FACTOR 2	.300	.070	.125	.492		.261	.176
FACTOR 3	.363	.007	.064	.594	.261		.370
FACTOR 4	.199	.048	.071	.351	.176	.370	

Note: * is $p \leq .001$
 ** is $p \leq .01$

N = 574

Pearson correlation, 1-tailed test of significance

- VARIABLES:
- Q 47 - the overall rating given to the school
 - ASCORE - level of participation
 - PEDUC - parent's education
 - FACTOR 1 - confidence in the school
 - FACTOR 2 - positive orientation toward school (peers/self)
 - FACTOR 3 - teachers caring and understanding
 - FACTOR 4 - academic press

from the analysis that some of the actual needs of the students in the three rural schools differed from their urban counterparts. These considerations suggested the possibility that the participation variable might correlate differently with the other variables dependent upon location. The separation of data dichotomizes the sample into 3 smaller rural schools (N= 400; 540; 600) and 2 larger urban schools (N= 800; 1760).

Table 2 does indicate some minor correlation differences when the sample is dichotomized. The correlation between participation (ASCORE) and Factor 2 is relatively stronger in the rural setting ($r = .137$; $r = .019$) and approaches significance. There is evidence of additional differences in each of the other variables when the dichotomized sample is compared, although statistically there are still no significant correlations. This finding suggests that school location is a variable which needs to be considered in the interpretation of the data. The importance of the school location variable will be reinforced in the subsequent analysis.

TABLE 2.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION & CLIMATE VARIABLES

PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX

(URBAN v/s RURAL SCHOOLS)

URBAN SCHOOLS

	Q 47	PEDUC	FACT1	FACT2	FACT3	FACT4
AScore	.064	.106	-.006	.019	.039	.065

N= 324; all non-significant
 Pearson Correlation, 1-tailed test of significance

RURAL SCHOOLS

	Q 47	PEDUC	FACT1	FACT2	FACT3	FACT4
AScore	.058	.144	.080	.137	-.052	.014

N= 250; all non-significant
 Pearson Correlation, 1-tailed test of significance

FINDINGS PERTINENT TO PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES

During the course of the literature review it became evident that very little Canadian research existed on the topic of participation in student activities (see "The Search", Chapter 2). There was a concern at the outset that a dependence on non-Canadian research for the Literature Review might lead to cross-cultural variations in the findings of this study. Most of the literature reviewed dealt with American schools, where student activities attracted large numbers of students and appeared to have a significant impact upon their schooling.

Table 3 provides a comparison of student participation in this study with a rather large American study conducted by Gholson and Buser (1981). The data has been sorted according to the school size categories used in the American study.

Students in the Canadian study participated less in classroom related activities, but were more active in hobby/leisure activities. Combining the two activities reveals generally higher rates of participation by the Canadian students in these club-type activities. Buser (1971) earlier had reported a trend which saw a decline in the provision of classroom activities and an increase in the formation of hobby/leisure activities. The Canadian data,

TABLE 3
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS REPORTING
PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES
by SCHOOL SIZE

<u>Activity Type:</u>	<u>School Size:</u>		
	200-499	500-999	1700-2599
	x (x)	x (x)	x (x)
CLASSROOM	15.0 (37)	23.8 (29)	14.6 (12)
ATHLETICS	55.0 (76)	57.5 (55)	51.7 (43)
MUSIC & DRAMA	13.3 (43)	31.8 (32)	15.2 (20)
SERVICE	48.3 (4)	43.2 (4)	39.3 (5)
PUBLICATIONS	15.0 (4)	17.9 (4)	23.1 (2)
GOVERNING	13.3 (7)	10.6 (5)	3.9 (3)
HOBBY	16.7 (1)	19.6 (1)	16.4 (1)
TOTAL PARTICIPATING	80.0 (83)	86.3 (75)	81.5 (67)

N = 574; (N = 600,000)

note: Figures in brackets are from a study by Gholson and Buser (1981), using data from the "Illinois Census of ... Cocurricular Activities (1976-77)". Multiple activity participation by some students results in the columns totalling greater than 100%.

which was collected in 1986, suggests a continuation of this trend.

Participation in service, governance and publications activities was found to be much higher in the Canadian study. Music and drama activities, however, attracted less participation. While the latter comparison may represent a cultural variation, it could also be a result of fewer opportunities to participate due to the recent increase in the number of mandatory courses required for graduation in British Columbia. It is known, from direct experience, that this has resulted in smaller enrollments in both music and drama elective courses which appears to have had some impact on their related student activities.

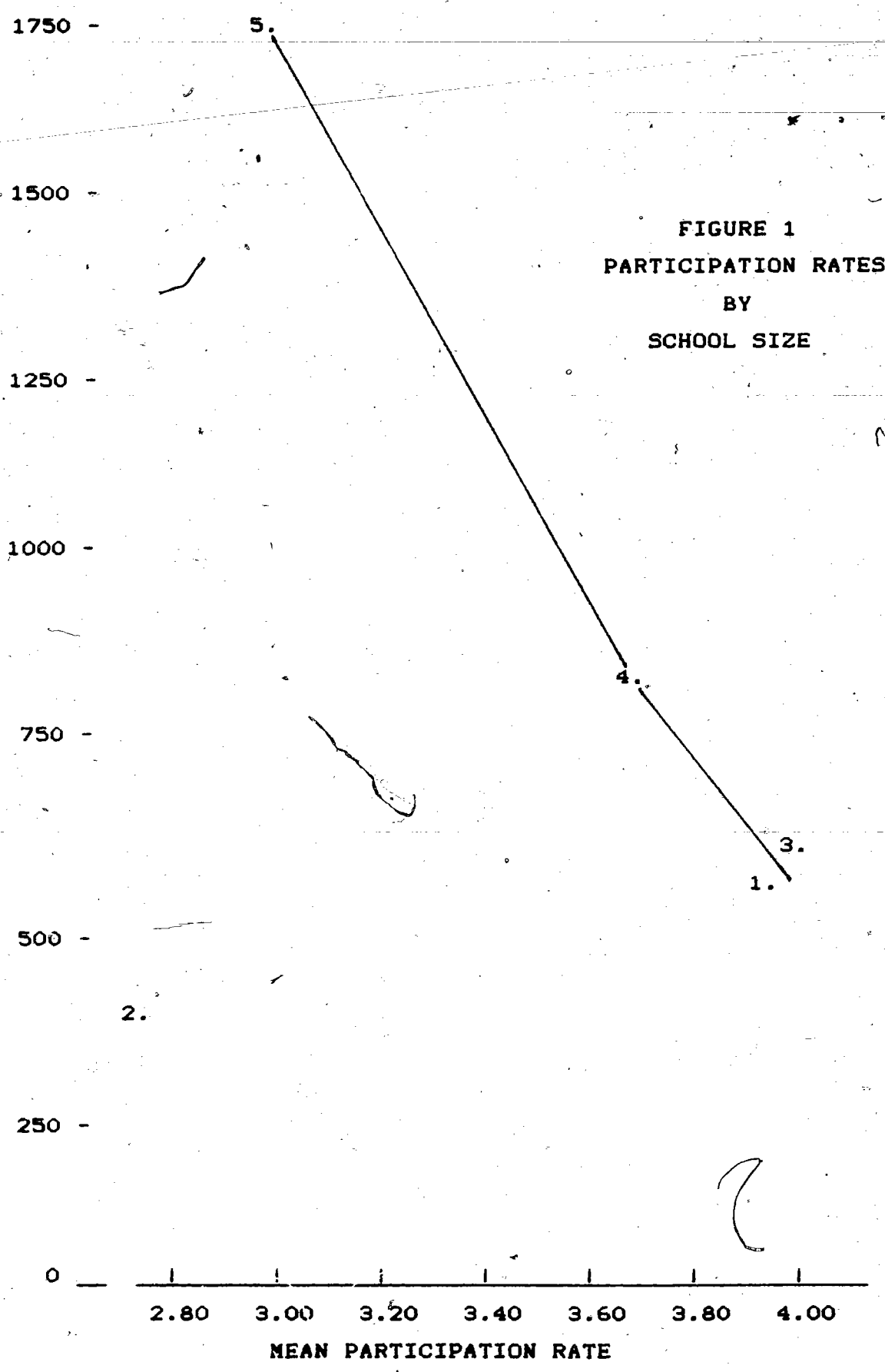
The findings from this sample are mixed when compared to participation in athletics, a category which attracted the largest numbers of students and which could be seen as the central student activity. While students in the smaller school category participated much less in the Canadian sample, participation was higher in the larger category and about the same in the mid-size category.

The American data reveals an inverse relationship between participation in student activities and school size. That relationship is not initially evident in the Canadian sample, due to the uncharacteristically low participation rates for School 2, the smallest in the sample. It had the

lowest total participation rate of the entire sample.

Figure 1 compares rates of total participation with enrollment for each of the schools in the sample. When the data for School 2 is excluded an inverse relationship is noted.

Examining the total percentage of students who participated in at least one activity, a greater percentage of Canadian students were participants when compared to the American study. While these activities attracted similar, if not greater numbers of students when compared with the American research, the participation rates alone do not measure the importance of student activities relative to the academic activities of the schools in the Canadian context. Instead, it is the failure to find significant correlations between that participation and either the overall rating of the school or any of the four climate factors which seems to be at variance with what the American research would suggest. Hence, there is the potential that cultural differences between American and Canadian schools in the overall importance of student activities may have had some impact upon the findings of this study.



FINDINGS PERTINENT TO SCHOOL CLIMATE

A secondary purpose of this study was to replicate previous research (Wright, 1985; LaRoche, in progress) on the measurement of student perceptions of secondary school climate. This research had attempted to identify both the presence of climate, as well as four factors which were parts of that climate. The research had been conducted in two large urban schools within the province. As discussed earlier, the major studies of effective schools have tended to focus upon urban, (and elementary) schools serving students from lower socio-economic groups. Consequently, "the generalizability of the findings to secondary schools, suburban and rural schools, and schools that serve middle- and upper-middle- class students is still unsubstantiated" (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986:329).

The present study extended that research through a comparative study of climate perception in five schools, including three smaller rural schools, a mid-sized urban school, and a large urban school. Additionally, there was a substantial difference in students' socio-economic status (as measured by parents' level of education) between the urban and rural schools.

These findings then step beyond previous research through data samples which include secondary schools, located in both urban and rural settings, and which serve a range of

low-middle to upper-middle-class students. The data from the climate instrument have provided a number of speculative conclusions which seem appropriate for further discussion.

Items from the survey were clustered into four Factor groupings according to LaRoche's (in progress) previous factor analysis, and a reliability analysis was computed to determine the consistency of factor items. Table 4 compares reliability coefficients for each of the four factors with the findings from the previous study. As can be seen, there is a very close similarity in Cronbach alpha scores between this study and earlier research. This suggests that the instrument, in this multi-school context, not only identified the presence of a school climate, but additionally provided a reliable measure of school climate factors.

Significant correlations were found between each of the four climate factors and student's overall rating of the school (Table 1: $r = .412; .300; .363; .199; p \leq .001$). However, multiple regression analysis, using the four factors, predicted only 20.5 % of the variance of the dependent variable, overall rating of the school. Thus there is considerable variance in the respondent's overall rating of the school which is unaccounted for by climate factors. It appears then, that there is more to the overall climate variable than the four factors which have been identified in this and previous research.

TABLE 4

CLIMATE FACTORS

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

(Cronbach's α)

		5 schools	LaRochelle
		Data	Data
Factor 1	(11 items)	.7293	(.6518)
Factor 2	(7 items)	.5679	(.6041)
Factor 3	(4 items)	.7073	(.6757)
Factor 4	(3 items)	.4487	(.4834)

Table 5 compares the item mean score for overall rating of school (Q47), as well as the aggregated item mean scores for each of the climate factors, on a school-by-school basis. The five schools have been rank ordered according to mean score for the overall rating of school. This rank ordering places the two urban schools (#'s 4 & 5) ahead of the three rural schools (#'s 1, 2 & 3) on this particular variable.

While it is evident that the urban students have given a higher overall rating to their schools (Q 47) than their rural counterparts, this is not the case when aggregated item mean scores for each of the factors are compared. There are only two cells (SCHOOL #1/FACTOR 2; SCHOOL #3/FACTOR 4) where any of the three rural factor data means are less than either of the two urban factor means. When similar data means are compared on an urban/rural aggregate basis, factor data means for rural schools are consistently higher, yet overall rating of school remains lower. While the information presented in Table 5 appears to be an inconsistency, it must be remembered that there was considerable variance in the overall rating which is unaccounted for in the multiple regression analysis.

One explanation has to do with the relatively isolated location of the rural schools vis a vis the urban schools. Students in urban centers have the benefit of being able to assess more objectively their schools through comparisons

TABLE 5

FACTOR COMPARISONS BY SCHOOL

and

RURAL v/s URBAN

school	4	5	3	2	1	AGGREGATE	
						URBAN	RURAL
Q 47	2.68	2.51	2.47	2.36	2.18	2.60	2.37
FACTOR 1	28.70	27.57	29.41	29.70	29.38	27.74	29.01
FACTOR 2	21.18	20.85	21.51	21.40	20.96	20.79	21.13
FACTOR 3	10.91	10.64	11.03	11.43	10.90	10.59	10.91
FACTOR 4	8.51	8.65	8.55	8.79	8.98	8.48	8.65
PEDUC	4.11	4.85	3.73	3.66	3.53	4.45	3.65

N = 574

Data reported are item means; high is positive in all cases.

FACTOR 1 - 11 items

FACTOR 2 - 7 items

FACTOR 3 - 4 items

FACTOR 4 - 3 items

with other schools. They have a personal knowledge base through direct experience, information from others with direct experience in different schools, as well as information from the media. Both of the two urban schools in this study have well established reputations, possibly contributing to the respondent's favourable overall rating.

On the other hand, rural students lack a knowledge base upon which to make comparisons. Most have attended only the one secondary school, and their social network of peers tends to revolve around that school, which further narrows their perspective. There is a mythology in small rural centers, particularly among adolescents, that country life is somewhat lacking in what it has to offer. This sentiment is often voiced when adolescents discuss their schools and could have affected these rural students' overall rating of their schools.

There are, in addition, explanations for some of the differences in the aggregate mean scores of the four factors. Hallinger and Murphy (1986) noted that the social class of students served by effective schools appeared to influence school effectiveness factors. Their study examined effectiveness factors in eight California elementary schools which had, for three consecutive years on the California Assessment Program, scored above other schools composed of students from similar social backgrounds (only 16 of over 3100 schools met this initial criteria).

Of the eight effective schools selected for the study, two served low-SES communities, two, lower-middle SES communities, two, middle communities, and two, upper-middle-SES communities.

The five schools from the current study, in addition to location and size, were also found to differ in the social class of the students which they serve. The three rural schools are smaller and serve students from lower social class communities than the two urban schools. Table 6 provides information on school enrolment and parents' level of education. The latter furnishes a useful measure of social class for the communities served by each school. While it is readily acknowledged that parents' education is by itself a somewhat limited measure of social class, the variable does, nevertheless, serve to highlight the large differences in social class between the urban and rural communities in this particular sample. The measure of parents' education was significantly associated with Q 47, overall rating of the school (Table 1: $r = .110$; $p \leq .01$). Higher ratings were given by higher SES students.

These social context differences can be further examined through responses to individual items from the survey. Table 7 lists item mean scores aggregated for the two larger, urban schools (upper-middle-SES) and the three

TABLE 6

PARENTS' EDUCATION

(% reporting some post-secondary education)

by

SCHOOL, URBAN/RURAL LOCATION, and ENROLMENT

"What is the highest formal education level attained by either of your parents?"

	<--- RURAL --->			<URBAN>	
school:	1	2	3	4	5
enrolment:	540	400	600	800	1760
1. Elementary	3%	0%	2%	0%	4%
2. Some secondary	20	18	17	5	8
3. Completed secondary	25	23	27	6	19
4. Some post-secondary	25	31	22	7	11
5. Completed university degree	13	21	21	56	43
6. Some graduate study	8	3	9	20	8
7. Other	6	4	2	6	7
MEAN	3.53	3.66	3.73	4.85	4.11
AGGREGATED MEAN POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION	<----- 3.65 ----->			<- 4.45 ->	
AGGREGATED MEAN ENROLMENT:	513 students			1280 students	

smaller, rural schools (lower SES). The urban and rural schools differed by 9 % in the overall school rating given by their students. Individual school quality items which differed by this amount* are listed in Table 7 for further examination. Of the 35 school quality items in the climate survey, 12 met this criteria.

Four of the effectiveness factors found to differ according to social context in the Hallinger and Murphy (1986) study appear to have relevance to at least half of the items listed in Table 7: home/school cooperation and support; widespread rewards and recognition; high expectations; and opportunity to learn.

Hallinger and Murphy found a distinctly different pattern of parental involvement in the school program between high- and low-SES schools. In the high-SES communities the school was a highly prized and a central component of community life, while parents in low-SES communities offered minimal substantive support. These values are likely transferred between generations and appear to be self sustaining. It would be expected that children in high- and low-SES communities would continue to hold such divergent values.

Examination of the data in Table 7 reveals this to be the case in the present study. Items 17 and 18 reflect a value orientation toward school; students from the upper-middle-SES communities agree more strongly with these two statements than do students from the lower SES

TABLE 7

DIFFERENT ITEM MEAN SCORES

	SOCIAL CONTEXT OF COMMUNITIES:		Per Cent Difference
	HIGHER SES	LOWER SES	
	SCHOOL SIZE : LARGER SMALLER		
17. Students in this school believe it is important to do well in their schoolwork.	2.79	2.56	+9%
18. This school offers the necessary courses to prepare me for the future.	2.84	2.58	+14%
22. My success in later life does not depend on how well I do in school.	2.86	3.20	-12%
23. In this school, most students do homework every night.	2.36	2.02	+17%
39. My teachers regularly let me know how I am doing.	2.06	2.53	-23%
44. My teachers almost never check to ensure the homework they assign is done.	2.34	2.58	-10%
25. In my classes, good effort results in good marks.	2.93	3.19	-9%
43. Marks are given in a fair manner in this school.	2.59	2.82	-9%
46. Discipline in this school is handled in a fair manner.	2.56	2.84	-11%
19. Staff in this school try to resolve student concerns.	2.91	2.60	+13%
26. Students generally respect one another in this school.	2.32	2.60	-12%
36. There is no shortage of reference materials or facilities for my schoolwork.	2.39	2.13	+12%

• - Negative item scores have been reversed.

communities. While the responses to item 22 appear to contradict this interpretation, it might also be that the broader experiences of upper-middle-SES students may cause them to view other variables as more important to success in later life, than simply successful schooling (perhaps post-secondary education, social contacts, family assets, and so on).

While the Murphy and Hallinger study found that all eight of the effective schools maintained high expectations for their students, there were substantial differences among the schools in the source and nature of these expectations. The high-SES communities, themselves, seemed to provide high levels of expectation, while the burden of providing these expectations shifted to the schools in low-SES communities. A similar finding resulted when examining the student rewards factor, where teachers in low-SES schools saw the need to provide constant, visible school rewards in order "to influence student norms and create a higher regard for the tasks of schooling" (1986:346). Teachers in high-SES schools perceived their students to have a more positive academic orientation and that learning would be less dependent upon extrinsic rewards.

The most striking difference between the two social groups is item 39, "my teachers regularly let me know how I am doing." It appears that in each of the three lower SES schools teachers recognized the need to monitor performance

and provide feedback to students. This continuous reinforcement and encouragement (particularly with the more mature grade 11 students in the study) is an example of how lower SES schools can assume those responsibilities of setting (and monitoring) high expectations and of providing continuous feedback and encouragement. Additionally, although homework was done by fewer students in lower SES communities (item # 23), their teachers were more diligent in assuming the responsibility to ensure that assigned homework was done (item # 44) whereas, it could be assumed from the data, that the parents in the upper-middle-SES communities took on this responsibility themselves.

The assignment of homework on a regular basis was another variable examined in the California study, in the context of the "opportunities for learning factor". While homework was a symbolic means of reinforcing high parental expectations, it was also a very efficient means of extending relevant learning time. Student completion of homework, however, is dependent upon parental involvement and cooperation. In low-SES schools where this was lacking, teachers were less likely systematically to assign homework, tending instead to direct their energies to within-school variables. This finding appears to be borne out in the responses to item #17, which had the second greatest difference in mean scores between SES groupings.

While item # 36 (provision of reference materials and facilities) reflects another rather obvious example of social context differences, it appears that the differences in the remaining items are more a result of school size (see Table 6 for school enrolment figures) and/or urban/rural location. Rural students are dispersed throughout their communities, with large percentages of them bussed to school each day. For these students, school is much more than a place of learning, it is also their limited opportunity (for six hours a day, five days of the week) to socialize with other adolescents of their age-group. The school community is the focal point of their lives. Urban students, however, live in higher-density settings, with efficient public transportation networks and a wider range of entertainment opportunities. Their schools are larger, less personal, and quite likely less important beyond the initial focus of educational attainment. This is exemplified by the differences in response to item 26. The social need of adolescents appears to be more intense but better served in the rural schools where there are more opportunities to make friends and less inter-group conflict.

Similarly items 19, 25, 43 and 46 refer to student-staff relationships which also appear to be influenced by school size. Smaller schools provide more opportunities for student-teacher contacts both outside and within the classroom. Teachers in smaller schools quite often will have taught more than one course during the year to a cohort

of students, and, as a rule, have often taught those students during subsequent grades. Each course-contact provides an additional 100 hours of student-teacher contact to reinforce their relationships.

Additionally, the smaller size of the schools and their communities provide other informal contact opportunities (noon-hour supervision, simply passing through the hallways, shared community events, meeting at the shopping center) which generally work toward reducing intra-group conflict, and potentially lead to an improvement in student-staff relationships, a mutual understanding, and closer goal alignment. This interpretation suggests an explanation for the differences between responses to items 19, 25, 43 and 46.

The use of the climate instrument in this study has provided a useful set of data for between school comparisons, and from which some tentative conclusions may be made. This study has replicated the findings of previous research using the "Secondary School Student Climate Survey". It has been confirmed that it is possible to differentiate a school climate for each school through measures of four factors: confidence in school, positive orientation, caring and understanding teachers, and academic press. Additionally, both student perceptions about the school, as well as the school's perceptions of the needs of its students appear, to

be influenced by variables specific to location. This is explored further in the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

SUMMARY

As outlined in Chapter One, there were two purposes to this thesis. The primary purpose of the study was to appraise the value of student activities through an examination of previous research and through an analysis of the relationship (or lack of it) between students' perception of school climate factors and their participation in the student activities program.

The use of climate as a variable provided a secondary purpose of the thesis. This study was intended to replicate two earlier studies, which had dealt with the identification and measurement of secondary school climate using the "Secondary School Student Climate Survey", in an expanded, multi-school sample. This would enable comparative findings to be analyzed on the basis of school size, urban/rural location, and social context of the school's community.

The data for the study was taken from a stratified sample of five schools, utilizing measures from the climate survey (overall rating given to the school, and four factors of climate), and level of participation in the student

activities program. Social context of community was determined from parent's education level, and schools themselves were examined by location and size. Correlation analysis was undertaken to examine relationships among these six variables.

The literature review, Chapter Two, provided an evolutionary investigation of research which examined relationships between student activity participation and academic achievement; goals for post-secondary education; and attainment of those goals, as well as potential causes for those relationships. In addition to these cognitive areas of student growth, psycho-sociological correlational studies were also examined but found to be less fruitful in consistency of findings.

Student activities are a relatively recent addition to the school program and were initially introduced as a means of providing students with leisure opportunities. They were also viewed as a means of coopting students into the school's normative structure, but concern was expressed that they diverted too much attention away from the classroom. This concern provided the impetus for a series of studies conducted during the past two decades.

The first area of study examined the achievement variable. Comparative measures of student marks between activity participants and non-participants found positive correlations with the former. Using ever-widening samples

and controlling for antecedent variables, a well validated and positive correlation has been found contradicting earlier concerns that academic achievement would suffer when students became involved in student activities.

Parallel studies examined the relationship between participation and post-secondary educational goals. Once again, positive correlations were established, suggesting that in addition to better academic performance, participants had a heightened academic orientation.

Longitudinal studies next examined the relationship between participation and actual attainment of both educational and career goals. This was a challenging and useful area of study utilizing objective and potentially more meaningful data. The positive correlations with participation were maintained, supporting the previous findings and suggesting that not only were there benefits from participation in student activities, but that these benefits appear to last well into adulthood.

While the correlations between student activity participation and academic achievement and orientation are significant and have been replicated many times, they remain at best correlations. Research attempting to determine the causes of these correlations remains very much at the pioneering stage, as does research dealing with participation and the affective domain of student growth. It may be that these two have an interdependency and that a

breakthrough in findings in one area will impact findings in the other.

The findings for this study were summarized into the following categories: a. correlations between climate and participation;
b. student activity participation; and
c. perceptions of school climate.

When overall rating of school was compared with level of student participation, the analysis failed to reveal any relationship. Additionally, no significant correlations were found between participation and any of the four climate factors. However, different correlations were revealed when data was dichotomized according to either urban or rural location. In the rural schools the correlation between participation and Factor 2 (positive orientation toward school) approached significance.

The fact that this separation of data additionally produced a socio-economic division (that is, rural = low SES; urban = high SES) suggested that location and/or socio-economic status might be variables which have a moderating impact upon the participation:climate relationship.

When total student activity participation was compared on an intra-school basis, an inverse relationship was found between school size and participation. While this

relationship was most obvious when examining participation in student government activities, the inverse relationship was not consistent in the other seven student activity categories:

In terms of the total sample, 80 % of the students reported participation in at least one activity, while more than half of the students participated in athletic activities alone. At least two in five students participated in activities which provided service to others. Total participation rates and participation rates by activity were generally higher than rates reported in previous research.

When responses to individual items from the climate survey were grouped into four factors, positive correlations were found between each factor and overall rating of the school. Positive correlations were found between each of the four factors as well. Additionally, Cronback alpha scores for the four factors were quite similar to previous research with the instrument. This analysis suggests that the survey items provide a reliable and valid measure of school quality in the eyes of the students.

However, multiple regression analysis using the four factors accounted for only 20.5 % of the variance of the overall rating of the school. This suggests rather strongly that there are other influences responsible for the overall rating of the school. Intra-group inconsistencies between

climate factors and overall rating of school were found when data was dichotomized by school location. The dichotomization divided the sample schools into two groups: high SES, urban setting, large school enrollment and low SES, rural setting, low school enrollment. These characteristics provided additional avenues to interpret the inconsistency.

CONCLUSIONS

PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND PERCEPTION OF CLIMATE

The failure to find a correlation between participation in student activities and perception of school climate appears to reject the hypothesis; there does not appear to be a significant relationship between the level of a student's participation in student activities and his/her perception of school climate factors. While this finding (or non-finding) is at variance with what the literature suggested, a further examination of the literature, as well as an examination of the procedures, have provided some reasonable explanations for the variance.

Spreitzer and Pugh (1973) examined the correlation between participation and educational expectations. When they differentiated their sample schools according to student value climate, they obtained differing results. In those schools where the athlete was valued, the

participation:expectation correlation was found to be quite strong. However, as the value climate shifted away from the athlete toward the scholar, the magnitude of the correlation diminished, and in those schools where the scholar was more valued instead, the correlation was found to be non-existent. Spreitzer and Pugh concluded that the peer value climate moderated the correlation between academic expectation and participation in student activities. Similarly, Otto and Alwin (1977) found that the potential influence of student activity participation was mediated by social-psychological processes which they referred to as the significant others influence.

It must also be remembered that the literature was almost wholly American, while the study was conducted in Canadian schools. Downey surveyed educators throughout Canada and the United States to determine whether there were regional differences in their educational systems, and found "...basic differences in the educational viewpoints of the two countries" (1960:199). Differences were observed following a distinct pattern from south to north. While greater emphasis was placed on intellectualism, aesthetic appreciation, and world citizenship in the Canadian schools, the American schools placed more importance on physical and personal development. Student activities, particularly athletics, would likely be valued less in the Canadian schools than American. This finding suggests that in Canadian schools, where the value climate is more scholarly,

the relationship between participation in student activities and areas of academic growth would be relatively weak. The non-finding in this study could likely represent a cross-cultural variation between the value climates of the Canadian schools, in which the research was conducted, and schools from the predominantly American research on student activities.

Zentner and Parr (1968) found a similar cross-cultural variation when examining student criteria for membership in the leading crowd, a term which Coleman first used when he found participation in athletics to be the main criteria (1961). Zentner and Parr, conducting research in Canadian schools, found instead membership to be positively correlated with high intelligence, and high academic achievement, in addition to participation in athletics.

The climate instrument in this study used items which were developed from a thorough analysis of school effectiveness literature (Wright, 1985). The instrument concerns itself with cognitive climate and measures students' perception of the school as an academic institution. It appears that although substantial numbers of students in this study participated in student activities, they were attracted to school for more than their own personal and physical development. Although these needs could be met through their participation in the student activities program, this

did not appear to influence their overall appraisal of the school as an academic institution.

Finally, it may be that the non-finding was due to a weakness in the design of the study itself. While the measurement of participation in student activities replicated the procedure used in previous research (e.g. Barker and Guap, 1964; Gholson and Buser, 1981; Kleinert, 1969; Otto 1975), this procedure is limited in the information it provides. The check-list approach does not, for example, differentiate the extent of involvement between a participant who is uncommitted and only marginally involved, and one who is totally immersed. It does not indicate the degree of importance of the activity to the school as a corporate body, and the potential variance in both peer and self recognition which would occur as a result of that degree of importance. The procedure then fails to take account of the quality of the respondent's participation when it is precisely the quality of the participation experience which potentially influences the perception of school climate.

Each of these provide tentative explanations for the failure to find a significant relationship between the key variables under study, and point to the need for further research.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Overall participation, as well as rates of participation within activity categories was found to be similar to student participation in the American studies, and also to the only other Canadian study (Burnett, 1981) for which data were available.

The inverse relationship between school size and student participation was found to be similar to the results of previous studies. Barker and Gump (1964) were the first to cite this relationship, and Willems (1967) concluded that the relationship was due to a heightened sense of obligation in smaller schools upon marginal participants to "man" these activities. This is often the case with athletic activities. In large schools there is often vigorous competition to fill a set number of positions on school teams, while small schools must inevitably recruit participants to make up the team.

Morgan and Alwin (1980), however, found a diversity in the manning effect which was dependent upon the characteristics of the school activity. This manning diversity phenomenon provides an explanation for the individual activity inconsistencies which deviated from the overall inverse relationship between total participation and school size.

The centrality of an activity determines the likelihood that the organization will commit scarce resources to ensure its

performance. The elasticity of an activity is its capacity to absorb further participants. In this study, the larger School 5 had a similar athletics participation rate (52 %) to School 1, but had three times the number of students. School 5 had additional athletic teams (elasticity) to absorb those students who failed to make the varsity-level team, while students in School 1 participated more intensely to fill varsity team positions (manning effect with central activity).

Summarizing these findings, the activity participation rates of the Canadian students in this study were found to be similar to the American research, as was the inverse relationship between school enrolment and student participation. Examples of Morgan and Alwin's concepts of centrality and elasticity were also in evidence, and appear to provide an explanation of why certain activities in certain schools attract more student participation than others.

CLIMATE MEASUREMENT

School effectiveness research at the secondary school level has been limited, particularly with climate studies. The current study provided an opportunity for this climate instrument to be used in the field for a third time, but in a multi-school context, instead of a single-school study. The findings suggest that the instrument provides a reliable

measure of students perception of school climate.

Reliability analysis scores were slightly higher for two factors and slightly lower for the other two when compared with data from the previous, LaRoche (in progress) study. Each of the four factors had similar correlation coefficients with overall rating given the school, when compared with the Wright (1985) data. When data from this study is categorized by urban/rural location, the urban correlation coefficients are almost identical to the Wright study which was conducted in a large urban school. However, in this multi-school study the factors accounted for only 20.5 % of the variance in overall rating, while in Wright's (1985) single-school study 32 % of the variance was accounted for. This latter finding suggests a potential need to consider location characteristics when interpreting subsequent results from this instrument.

The dichotomization of data revealed another interesting finding which also supports the need to consider place specific characteristics when attempting to measure school climate. While the students in one group gave their schools a higher overall rating they responded less favourably to the climate factor items. The dichotomization provided a socio-economic categorization, as well as a urban/rural location categorization. Hallinger and Murphy (1986) provide an interpretation for this finding: their study found that while effective schools exhibit similar characteristics, there were striking differences in the

manner in which some of these characteristics were implemented in schools serving differing socio-economic communities. The dichotomized data exhibited many of the patterns discussed in the Hallinger and Murphy (1986) study. Wright (1985), who initially developed the climate instrument, raised the concern that place-specific variables might have an impact on climate measurement, and these findings tentatively suggest that this might be the case.

Finally, the suggestion that the climate of the school operates as an interactive variable, influencing the student activity participant's perception of climate in an interactive manner, finds support from Anderson (1982). In a comprehensive review of the research, the actual mechanism behind the climate relationship was examined and Anderson concluded that although the interactive model "(is) more reflective of reality, it is infinitely more complex" (1982:385).

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The measurement of school climate is a complex task and the methodology remains very much in the pioneering stage. This multi-school study has demonstrated the potential for place-specific variables affecting the measurement of climate factor perceptions. Subsequent research should include schools which have been carefully matched in enrollment, location, and socio-economic status of community

served which would enable further examination of these place-specific variables.

Subsequent student activity research, dealing with the social-psychological dimension, should examine other variables, and should be more narrowly defined. While this study was concerned with cognitive climate, there are social-psychological variables which could be examined.

These variables include achievement orientation, alienation, goal alignment, deviance, and satisfaction. The complexity of these variables and their potential for an interactive relationship suggests that they be examined in isolation through separate studies.

There is reason to suspect that the path toward establishing a causal effect for student activities lies in the area of this social-psychological dimension. There may be a need, after this dimension has been adequately examined, to conduct longitudinal research to assess the impact of student activities both before and after participation.

There is a concern that participants and non-participants are dissimilar populations (Stevenson, 1975); that participants already possess the affective and cognitive qualities which are "found" to correlate with their participation. This should be addressed through a sample which has been exposed to compulsory participation.

IMPLICATIONS

Continued research on the identification and measurement of school climate has confirmed that it is possible to reliably measure differentiations in a multi-school analysis. This research has identified some potential concerns which may provide direction for the on-going refinement of the instrument. Nevertheless the current data will be found useful to district and school-level decision-makers for both measuring attainment of school effectiveness goals and providing directions for future growth.

While this study failed to provide a useful appraisal of the value of student activities, it may have been the result of cultural differences between Canadian and American schools in the cognitive climate measured by the instrument, as well as the study's failure to consider quality of participation. However, there have been established, in numerous and varied research situations, well validated correlations between student participation and desirable academic behaviors. While it has not been established that participation in the student activities is a cause of these desirable academic behaviors, the overwhelming body of research correlating the two cannot be overlooked.

Given the current controversy over student activities, the examination of existing research, from a decision-making perspective, is a productive exercise. Notwithstanding the

findings of this limited study, it is reasonable to conclude that the student activities program is educationally valuable and worthy of both fiscal and personnel support.

Any action which grossly removes support for these activities fails to understand their multiple roles within our schools, and is in direct conflict with the educational goals of our profession. The association which claims to represent this profession would be well advised to seek other, less educationally damaging strategies to fulfil its political and economic goals.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND CLIMATE SURVEY

This survey is being given to grade 11 students from twelve secondary schools chosen throughout the province. Its purpose is to look at the role of activities which take place outside of the classroom (sometimes called "extracurricular"), and what they might contribute to the learning climate of schools. Research in Britain and the United States has shown that this climate is an important factor in encouraging students to learn.

Your anonymous responses to this questionnaire will help us to examine this relationship in secondary schools throughout British Columbia. If there are questions which you are unsure of or which you prefer not to answer, please leave the response space blank.

Your participation and accurate completion of the survey are essential to the usefulness of this project. Thank you for your cooperation.

STUDENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE:

I agree to participate in this research questionnaire on a voluntary basis. I am aware that my participation or non-participation will not influence my grades in any way.

TO ENSURE YOUR ANONYMITY, PLEASE DETACH THIS PAGE AND RETURN IT SEPARATELY TO YOUR TEACHER.

student signature

APPENDIX B
TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND CLIMATE SURVEY

This survey is being conducted in twelve secondary schools in order to gather data for a graduate thesis.

TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONS

Students are to sign the consent form, detach it from the questionnaire, and submit it separately. They should not place any identifying marks on the questionnaire in order to protect their anonymity.

Part 1: after completing the two demographic questions, students are to consider the school extracurricular activities which they have participated in during the current school year (1985-86).

STUDENTS ARE TO INDICATE THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT CLUBS, TEAMS, ETC. WHICH THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN FOR EACH CATEGORY.

Examples are provided for each extracurricular category to assist students. Those activities which do not seem to fit should be listed under "other".

Part 2: students should consider each question individually, as it is the individuals' perceptions which are being measured. Only ONE of the four response choices provided is to be used. While some questions may seem similar, it is hoped that each question will be given careful consideration. Before collecting the survey please ask students to check their response to the final question. Students are to put the NUMBER of their response in the box to the right.

Thank you for your assistance.

Jack Pope

APPENDIX C

THE INSTRUMENT

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND CLIMATE SURVEY

1. School Identification

1	2	3	4	5

To answer: Place the number of the most appropriate answer in the box beside the question in the right hand margin.

2. Sex

1. male

2. female

 6

3. What is the highest formal education level attained by either of your parents?

1. Elementary school

5. Completed university degree

2. Some secondary

6. Some graduate study

3. Completed secondary

7. Other - please specify

4. Some post-secondary

 7

PART 1 : DIRECTIONS:

Think about the extracurricular school activities which you have been involved in during this school year (i.e. since September 1986), as well as the activities you plan to participate in before the end of June.

For each category listed below, indicate the number of different activities you have been, or will be involved in, during this year.

4. How many Classroom related activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: Science club, Spanish club, computer club, Debating team, Reach for the Top, etc.)

 8

5. How many Athletic activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: intramurals, sports teams, individual sports, etc.)

 9

6. How many Music and Drama activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: Band, Choir, School Plays, etc.)

 10

7. How many Service School/Community activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: sports managers, scorers and timers, poster club, awards committee, community volunteers, etc.)

11

8. How many Publication related activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: annual, student newspaper, etc.)

12

9. How many Governing activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: Student Council, Class reps, Sports Council, etc.)

13

10. How many Hobby/Leisure activities have you participated in this year? (Examples: photography club, etc.)

14

11. Please list any other activities you have participated in this year? Put the number of "other" activities in the box to the right.

15

PART 2: DIRECTIONS:

Please respond to all the statements on the survey with specific reference to this school. Your answers should reflect your perceptions of the school as a whole. Put the number representing the most accurate response, in your opinion, in the box to the right of each statement.

SELECT YOUR RESPONSE FROM THE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVES:

1. Strongly disagree
2. disagree
3. agree
4. strongly agree

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----|
| 12. Teachers in this school expect students to do well in their schoolwork. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 |
| 13. In this school, students and teachers work together to help students do well. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17 |
| 14. This school provides good opportunities to make friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 |
| 15. Students are reminded regularly about school goals and course objectives by the teachers and administrators. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19 |
| 16. I believe the better I do in school, the better prepared I will be in the future. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 |
| 17. Students in this school believe it is important to do well in their schoolwork. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21 |
| 18. This school offers the necessary courses to prepare me for the future. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22 |
| 19. Staff in this school try to resolve student concerns. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 23 |

SELECT YOUR ANSWERS FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES

1. Strongly disagree
2. disagree
3. agree
4. strongly agree

20. Most students agree with the expectations of the teachers in this school. 24
21. Teachers in this school encourage students to do better in their schoolwork. 25
22. My success in later life does not depend on how well I do in school. 26
23. In this school, most students do homework every night. 27
24. My teachers cannot help me when I have had trouble with homework. 28
25. In my classes, good effort results in good marks. 29
26. Students generally respect one another in this school. 30
27. Generally, most of my teachers are teaching the courses they are trained to teach. 31
28. I am trying to do the best I can in school. 32
29. My friends don't care about how well they perform in school. 33
30. Teachers are willing to give extra help to students who are doing poorly. 34

SELECT YOUR ANSWERS FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES

1. Strongly disagree
2. disagree
3. agree
4. strongly agree

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|
| 31. Teachers in this school do not seem to care about their students. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 35 |
| 32. Students in this school respect their teachers and the administration. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 36 |
| 33. Very little class-time is taken up by teachers to discipline their students. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 37 |
| 34. I feel good when I do well in school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 38 |
| 35. Students in this school come to class well prepared to work. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 39 |
| 36. There is no shortage in this school of reference materials or facilities for my schoolwork. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 40 |
| 37. My teachers are usually open and understanding. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 41 |
| 38. There are many conflicts among students in this school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 42 |
| 39. My teachers regularly let me know how I am doing. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 43 |
| 40. I believe I can do the work my teachers assign me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 44 |
| 41. My friends think it is great when I do well in school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45 |
| 42. I have competent teachers instructing me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | 46 |

SELECT YOUR ANSWERS FROM THE FOLLOWING CHOICES

1. Strongly disagree
2. disagree
3. agree
4. strongly agree

43. Marks are given in a fair manner in this school.

 47

44. My teachers almost never check to ensure the homework they assign is done.

 48

45. My friends feel good when they do well in class.

 49

46. Discipline in this school is handled in a fair manner.

 50

47. Please assign a letter grade to this school. Put the number of that letter grade in the box on the right.

 51

- letter grades:
4. A
 3. B
 2. C
 1. D
 0. F

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